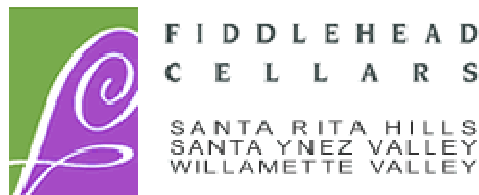




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If you've been into our store before and mentioned you were looking for a fantastic and unique white wine, we have more than likely walked you over to our Sauvignon Blanc section and picked up a bottle of **Fiddlehead Cellars 'Happy Canyon' Sauvignon Blanc** (\$23.99/btl). We've stocked this wine since we opened our doors and it just keeps getting better and better. So recently, we stopped by the Fiddlehead tasting room in the Lompoc Wine Ghetto which is west of Buelton and Solvang. The Ghetto is a necessary visit for any wine enthusiast. Located in a dank parking lot behind a Home Depot is a series of warehouses as boring and as bland as any storage units you've ever seen. But inside these nondescript doors are some of the best winemakers in the world, slaving away at what will eventually be on your dinner tables -- Fiddlehead, Seasmoke, Stolpman, Brewer-Clifton, Longoria, Palmina, Alma Rosa, Foley, Piedrasassi, among others.

Fiddlehead Sales Manager, Terence Livingston, walked us through their current releases, tasting from bottle to barrel their Santa Rita Hills, Santa Ynez, and Willamette Valley wines. One thing we love about Fiddlehead even before gulping down their fantastic wines is that they hold back their releases to let them gain a little complexity in the bottle. There's nothing wrong with a 2005 or 2006 Pinot, but it's a pity that for an affordable price, you can't get many Oregon or California pinots from 2003 or earlier. If you've ever gotten your mits on an old Burgundy, you know what Pinot can do with age -- the texture softens into velvety happiness and complex, subtle flavors unravel on your tongue. It's a rather nice experience to say the least.

Well, that brings us to the **2003 Fiddlehead Cellars 'Oldsville Reserve' Willamette Valley Pinot Noir** from Oregon, which we now proudly sell in our store

(\$39.99/btl). Winemaker Kathy Joseph (picture, bottom left) carts the fruit down from Oregon to her facility in the Wine Ghetto (sounds like a logistical nightmare, but running between Santa Ynez and Willamette Valley during harvest was even crazier according to Joseph). Here are Kathy's notes on this bottling:

"Great color, great spice and great length. This 2003 vintage tames the fruit forward 2002 vintage and brings us back to the dark fruit and briary bits balanced by the earthiness we love in the Oregon aromatic profile. Especially supple and velvety on the palate. Dark cherry and plum notes mingle with hints of currant, cedar and wild sage. An enveloping finish that lingers and lingers. Crafted entirely by hand. Hand picked, hand punched and made to delight the palate. Aged for 15 months in my favorite French oak barrels, 35% of which were new. Cellared perfectly in bottle for an additional 24 months to meld the bright Oregon acidity into silky, foodfriendly goodness."

Well, we couldn't have said that better ourselves. And why is the big silver fermenter on the bottom right labelled 'Nokia'? Because the FiddleChicks (what Kathy and her winemaking assistant like to call themselves) name all their stainless steel fermenting tanks and this one earned its name after Kathy dropped her cell phone into the open tank and consequently had to drain ALL of the juice out to retrieve it. I thought I tasted a hint of Nokia in the '02.

