

## daily news

### **New Releases: Tangent Winery Focuses on Alternative Cool-Climate Whites**

**By Cyril Penn** *From Daily News Links, 01/08/2007*



Tangent Winery, which launched just seven months ago, focuses exclusively on "alternative white wines." The wines are all sealed with screwcaps and no oak barrels or malo-lactic fermentations are associated with any of the wines. [Tangent](#) is meant to "explore the limitless possibilities of alternative cool-climate white wines."

"We found that no California winery was purely focused on alternative whites," tangent vice president of sales & marketing John Niven told *Wine Business Online*. "We've had a tremendous reception both from the trade and consumers. We're already sold out of three of five wines, and are gearing up for a spring release of the 2006s."

The concept was conceived by John Niven and Michael Blaney, third-generation grape growers in Edna Valley. Chardonnay is not part of the lineup, as the Niven family, a pioneer in Edna Valley with the planting of the Paragon Vineyard in 1973, owns Baileyana Winery, which is well known for its quality Chardonnay.

The inaugural release of Tangent wines was a combined 10,000 cases including Sauvignon Blanc, Pinot Gris, Albariño, Pinot Blanc, and Ecclestone, a blend of six white wines rolled into one. and by the end of next year will among other things have planted 50 acres of Albariño in Edna Valley, the largest planting of the Spanish white varietal in the U.S. to date. Tangent is also working with Grüner Veltliner, Grenache Blanc, Riesling, and Viognier.

The recommended prices range from \$13 to \$20 per bottle. The wines are distributed in 29 states.

"We call these alternative white wines and one could argue that Sauvignon Blanc and Pinot Gris aren't alternatives, but we look at this as life beyond Chardonnay," Niven said. "Chardonnay carries the torch with Baileyana so there's no reason to replicate it."

The wines are made by Christian Roguenant, the winemaker at Baileyana since its inception in 1999. Regarding the market for Albariño, Niven said he hopes Tangent will grow, but that if it doesn't, "there's a fruit market for Albarino all day long, albeit not a large one, but there are always people out there looking for fun different stuff."

Niven believes the timing is right for the alternative white wine concept. "I think the market has been crying out for wines that are not oak influenced," he said. "Recently, we've seen these reports and studies about consumer interest in no-oak Chardonnay. This takes it to the next level."

"We think the consumer palate is trending towards some of these fresher, crisper, non-oak wines," Niven said. "There will always be a huge demand for oak-influenced wines, but there's a flipside."