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JAN 17 2007

NAPA CO. CONSERVATION
DEVELOPMENT & PLANNING DEPT.

January 15, 2007

Ms. Hillary Gitelman, Director
Conservation, Development and
Planning Department, Napa County
1195 Third Street, Suite 210
Napa, CA 94559

Dear Ms. Gitelman,

I respectfully request that you investigate the compliance of Alpha Omega Winery, 1155 Mee Lane, Saint Helena, (Parcel 030-080-046), with its use permit and regulations relating to building permits. If compliance is lacking, I request that appropriate enforcement action be taken.

I live diagonally across from the winery at 1156 Mee Lane, a rural, narrow country road with a number of residences. During the last six months there has been substantial activity and traffic at the winery. This activity appears to be associated with tasting room patronage, construction, including the installation of new tanks, and preparation for a large scale construction project. I am concerned that continuation of these and other similar activities at the winery will result in noise, traffic difficulties and a degradation of the environment adversely impacting my neighbors and me.

Very truly yours,



CC: Ms. Patricia O. Hornisher

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AUG 08 2008

NAPA CO. CONSERVATION
DEVELOPMENT & PLANNING DEPT.

J. James and Linda Lee Meehan

999 Mee Lane

St. Helena CA 94574

August 7, 2008

Napa County Conservation Development & Planning Department

Ms. Patricia O. Hornisher, Planner III

1195 Third Street, Suite 210

Napa, CA 94559

Re: Planning Commission Hearings – Alpha Omega Winery

Dear Ms. Hornisher:

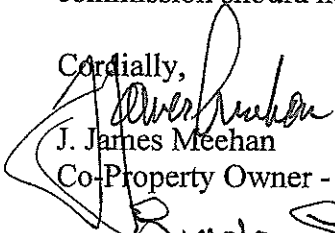
Thank you and John for taking time to attend a meeting of the Mee Lane neighbors. My wife Lee and I felt you took our concerns about the Alpha Omega development plans seriously. You were both professionally prepared and informed about the issues involved and we sensed that you genuinely were seeking input from the neighborhood. As you suggested, we will give you our personal observations about Mee Lane and its environs since we purchased our property at 999 Mee Lane in the spring of 1998.

- While we bought our property at 999 Mee Lane in 1998, we did not live here full time until 2001, but visited the property and Quail Ridge Winery, now known as Alpha Omega, at least four to five times per year. The tasting area was in one narrow room, facing west at the north corner of the building. This was the only room we tasted in and bought wine and most often we were the only visitors. On these occasions, we were never invited into any other part of the facility – never the barrel room. We seldom saw cars merging from the winery – the same for winery delivery trucks.
- After Michel Perrett (owner and seller of this 10.79 Acre parcel) reopened the winery, as Esquisse, we continued to visit the winery – usually to buy Voss wine. We had the same experience as before – very few cars – limited number of tasters (to our memory the max we ever saw was six) and never saw any trucks during harvest that we remember. When I talked to Michel about a custom crush of my own grapes (ten tons of Cabernet Sauvignon from our property at end of Mee Lane), I saw the full facility for the first time. Michel told me I would need my own winemaker, but he had plenty of barrel storage in the room next to the tasting room. This is now the location of Alpha Omega's new tasting room – there were very few barrels when I saw it and no tasting room space that I remember in the year 2003.

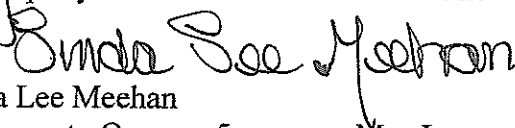
- Mee Lane is a very small county road (essentially a one lane with no traffic markings) that would be greatly impacted by any increased trucking or car/bus visitations. We walk the length of Mee Lane almost daily from our home to Highway 29 all during the year. When we saw the construction and changes happening at Alpha Omega we walked in several times to get a closer look at the work being done. We were always met cordially and in fact, one time spoke with Eric Sklar and another with the architect. They both told us they wanted to keep the neighbors needs in mind which seemed honest and was appreciated.
- We are deeply committed to preserving the agricultural and rural heritage of our valley and yet obviously recognize that businesses also must survive in this environment. But while we think it's a priority for our valley's long term success to support local farmers, growers, vintners and businesses. We do oppose speculative development of wineries. We have been told openly by Mr. Sklar that they have a number of investors and that the ultimate goal is to develop a first class winery with the intent to sell it.
- I am aware that when Quail Ridge Winery was in operation at this site it was operated largely by out-of-state investors and their operations were not successful. Their business failed and had to be reclaimed by the then owner Michel Parrett.
- Specifically to the points of increasing the maximum of weekly visitors to 1,350 (500 on busiest days) to the winery - this not only seems excessive but incomprehensible considering the size and condition of Mee Lane, not to mention the volume of traffic on Highway 29. Add to this number the increased volume of winery production by nearly **3 times**. This will add significant traffic at harvest times due to Alpha Omega having only 3% of their wine production coming from grapes on their adjoining acreage.

In our considered view, this variance request is heading along a similar path to the V. Sattui problems that resulted in law suits and significant complications for neighbors in that neighborhood. We are strongly opposed to the plans of Alpha Omega in their present form. It is our thinking that without a new road directly to and from Highway 29 to this winery, the commission should not grant a variance beyond the original permitted usage.

Cordially,


J. James Meehan

Co-Property Owner - 5 acres on Mee Lane


Linda Lee Meehan

Co-Property Owner - 5 acres on Mee Lane

Matthew R. Hooper
1687 St. Helena Hwy South
Saint Helena, CA 94574

August 12, 2008

Patricia Hornisher
Napa County Planning Commission
1195 Third Street, Suite 210
Napa, CA 94559

Dear Ms. Hornisher:

Re: Alpha Omega Permit Application

I own the parcel at 1687 St. Helena Hwy South. My parcel is one of four residential parcels on the west side of Hwy 29. It is between Provenance winery and Rutherford Grove Winery, several hundred feet north of the Mee/29 intersection. I attended the recent meeting with you and your colleague at Mr. Blakewell's home and wanted to again thank you very much for taking the time to meet with us.

Although I am not a resident of Mee Lane, I share many of the concerns about the level of expansion that is being proposed, both from a marketing and a production standpoint. My concerns are as follows:

● Control of Outdoor Noise and Music is Critical. The outdoor terrace opens toward HWY 29 and toward my property (although I am slightly north). I am very concerned that noise levels from music piped onto the patio will be a continuing nuisance to me and my neighbors along 29—not to mention the neighbors on Mee. During the recent Film Festival event that was held at Alpha Omega, the music emanating from AO was not merely audible at my property, it was very loud—and it was annoying. I would respectfully ask that any permit granted to AO will make control of outdoor music and other amplified event noise a very high priority.

● The Number of Proposed Marketing Events Seems Excessive. I understand AO is seeking permission for 16 annual large events (10 events at 75avg/100max visitors, and 6 at 150avg and 200max); and 84 medium sized events of 35avg/50max visitors. I believe this would be significantly more than Provenance, which has far more acreage, larger capacity and uncomplicated access directly off 29. Based on the level of event activity we have seen from the neighboring wineries over the years, a reasonable number of events for AO would more likely be 4 large events of avg75 to max200 guests and 15-30 medium sized events of avg35 to max50 guests. I hope you will weigh the possibility of bringing the number of events down to something more reasonably geared to the size and unique traffic challenges of AO. In addition there should be additional mitigation measures spelled out in the permit for handling traffic and noise associated with events.

While my concerns lean more heavily toward noise abatement, the fear I have—and I believe it is one shared by my neighbors—is that AO's marketing ambitions, if not scaled back, will tragically erode the tranquil and delicate balance that currently exists between the wineries and the residences in this beautiful Mee/Galleron quadrant of Rutherford.


● Approved Visitor Levels Should be Pegged Closer to True Historical Levels. The applicant's claim of existing weekly traffic at 925 visitors seems, frankly, incredible. It is my understanding that AO is currently approved for only 70 visitors per week. The applicant is proposing to increase that number to 1350 per week, with a 500 daily maximum! This radical increase in traffic coupled with an excessive number of marketing events will transform a sleepy winery into a crass tourist marketing venue (V. Sattui comes to mind) with not nearly enough regard for the neighbors or the bucolic ambience of the surrounding vineyard and residential parcels. Is there even enough parking for the proposed numbers? Will buses be waiting with engines idling? Will cars and limos stack along Mee Lane? I have lived here for 6 years and have frequently (multiple times a week) walked the length of Mee Lane. I have never seen any traffic at the winery approaching even a fraction of the levels which I believe are now being asserted by the applicant as historical precedent.

● The Proposed Capacity Expansion Will Further Exacerbate Noise and Traffic Problems. AO is proposing an increase from 50,000 gallons capacity to 144,000 gallons and plans on trucking in 97% of its grapes. This almost 3 fold increase will result in additional traffic throughout the year related to crush, bottling and daily wine related activity. I am concerned that this will further contribute to an unacceptable increase in noise and traffic in the vicinity of the Mee/29 intersection.

In summary, the proposed expansion strikes me as a misguided effort to shoehorn a dramatically expanded commercial operation into a space that cannot handle it. The result, I fear, will be an irretrievable loss in the character and quality of life in the surrounding neighborhood.

I greatly appreciate your consideration of my concerns.

Sincerely,



Matthew R. Hooper

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NAPA CO. CONSERVATION
DEVELOPMENT & PLANNING DEPT.

Willis Blakewell
1081 Mee Lane
Saint Helena, CA 94574

August 12, 2008

Patricia Hornisher
Napa County Planning Commission
1195 Third Street
Napa, CA 94559

Dear Patricia:

Re: Alpha Omega Winery major modification #P07-00869-MOD

I wanted to thank you and John for taking time out of your busy schedule to meet with the neighbors on August 4, 2008. We appreciate your insights into the planning process and the history of the Alpha Omega (AO) permit currently under review. As you and John suggested, I am writing this letter to give you my observations over the years, and also to share with you my specific concerns on the proposed permit modification.

Before moving into the neighborhood in 2001, I visited the winery a few times in the late 1980's and in the 1990's as a retail customer. On each of those occasions, the winery had a small tasting bar in the corner and there were very few guests (maybe 3 or 4 others). Until the last two years, the winery remained very quiet with few visitors.

As you are aware, there have been a number of meetings between the neighbors and AO over the past couple of weeks. Although we seem to have made some modest headway in those discussions, we have not been able to reach a satisfactory resolution on four elements of the proposed permit modification:

- Production Capacity: increase from 50,000 gallons to 144,000
- Visitors: Increase from 70 per week to 1,350 and a max of 500 per day
- Marketing events: Increase from none currently approved to:
 - 7 events per month small events (under 50 people)
 - 10 events annually (maximum of 100 people)
 - 6 events annually (maximum of 200 people)
- Traffic Congestion on Mee Lane leading to the Winery Entrance.

Before I give you my specific thoughts and recommendation on these issues, I must tell you candidly that any comfort level I and the other neighbors may have on being able to

reach common ground with AO on the above topics has been colored substantially by a troubling pattern of events:

- Contrary to normal planning procedures, AO evidently started construction, increased its visitor numbers and conducted marketing events, all without seeking prior approval via a facility master plan. As I see it, we are now nine months into a strategy of “ask first, and then seek forgiveness” (or make amends).
- The winery’s domestic waste system is not operational and hasn’t been for a number of months, yet the winery is now seeking greatly increased visitor numbers, with events as large as the recent film festival.
- With no formal approval of the County, AO has (according to its application) increased the number of visitors to 350 per day and over 925 per week
- According to AO, it has held marketing events weekends (at least two occasions) without proper approval (I am not counting the film festival)
- “The Disappearing Tent.” Last summer, and again this summer, a large tent was used to host tasting events. The neighbors had their first meeting (7/23/08) with AO in that tent. When queried about the tent, AO explained to the neighbors that it did not need a permit if the tent was up less than six months. Upon inspection by the county on August 4, 2008 the tent had disappeared.
- Despite what I understand is an ongoing “agreement to disagree” between county planners and AO on the size of the tasting room, the winery forged ahead with an expanded layout for the tasting room without formal county approval. The new configuration, without question, much larger than the tasting room I and other neighbors visited on several occasions under the prior ownership.
- AO recently hosted a film festival that spilled excessive amplified noise throughout the entire neighborhood. Contrary to the conditions of the special permit for the event, the event ended after 10pm with cleanup that continued until midnight.

I have a further perspective that adds to these concerns. On our first meeting with Mr. Sklar, he informed the neighbors that AO is owned by an investment group of 40 investors who had a business plan to sell the winery in 5 to 10 years. Their marketing strategy was to sell all the wine direct to consumer which we assume will be through the tasting room, marketing events and the internet. While this may be a growing practice in the winery industry, the magnitude of what is being proposed in this permit application,

coupled with a troubling pattern of action before approval, reminds the neighbors of V. Sattui Winery.

The protections afforded by appropriate limits and conditions expressly written into the permit will be essential to ensure that future owners can be held to a standard of conduct consistent with any compromises and understandings we are able to reach with the current owner. With that in mind, I'd like to summarize my thoughts on each of the four principal issues raised above.

I. The Capacity Expansion from 50K to 144K Gallons Would Mark a Significant Liberalization of Existing County Precedent

Based upon information from the county data base you sent me, and my discussions with you, there are a total of 64 wineries with production permits between 50K and 144K, either pre WDO (with expansion permits issued post WDO) or post WDO. Of these, there are 10 wineries on similar streets to Mee Lane. Of these 10 wineries, AO will be processing significantly less grapes from their own property than other comparable wineries (see attachment A). With only 3 % of AO's grapes grown on the property, I believe the county would be setting a precedent by approving such a large gallonage permit on such a small parcel, especially considering lack of direct access off a major artery. There needs to be a reasonable balancing of factors, including gallonage, property size and related traffic challenges from grape deliveries, bottling and other winery functions. In my view, if we are to strike that balance correctly, the proposed capacity expansion needs to be scaled back substantially. The county should not break new ground to allow an expansion in a space that simply can't handle it.

A further consideration on the proposed magnitude of the capacity increase is that the winery's property floods almost on an annual basis making both the domestic and processed waste systems vulnerable to flooding. This poses a significantly increased risk of contamination of the neighboring streams and wildlife.

II. Requested Visitor and Event Levels are not In Line with Comparable Wineries

Visitors. The requested number of weekly visitors (1,350) and daily (500 max) visitors seems out of line with other wineries established about the time period with public tasting (see attachment B). The only wineries with larger number of visitors were established in 1970's. The average number of visitors for wineries established in the 80's is 520 visitors. Upon reviewing the Franciscan Winery permit (over 4,000,000 gallons) I learned that it has have over 80 parking spaces for 500 visitors a day, while Alpha Omega is proposing only 43 for 500 visitors a day. I believe the parking does not support 500 visitors per day.

Marketing Events. AO's request for marketing events (16 requested) with over 100 guests per year appears to be excessive based upon review of other wineries of similar size. Based on data from the county similarly sized wineries are requesting between 4

and 5 events over 100 people. With only 43 parking spaces, and 2.5 visitors per car, the parking would only support roughly 110 guests.

II. Mee Lane Cannot Accommodate The Proposed Increase in Capacity, Visitors and Events

Mee Lane is a narrow street, and the Winery has no access directly on 29. The additional trucks during crush, coupled with daily visitors will result in very difficult circumstances for all parties that need to use the lane. While the traffic engineers from Cal Trans outline the problem during crush, the challenges resulting from the narrow width of the road do not seem to have been given sufficient weight. In reviewing the traffic study prepared by Crane in exhibit in figure 15 it shows the road width at 20.35 feet just barely above the 20 foot minimum. Further down the lane where the telephone pole is across from the vet's kennels, the existing road does not even meet county standards; (I measured its width at between 18 and 19 feet).

Up until the last couple of harvests the AO facility had very few visitors and was crushing probably less than 10,000 cases (maybe less than 5,000 cases) per year and saw very few visitors. In considering the proposed increase in visitors and production capacity from actual operational history we are looking at an increase in truck traffic of 6 to 10 times related to production and an increase of just less than 20 times as it relates to visitors.

I would also question the traffic study as the baseline for determining traffic flow throughout the year, as the study was done on the property while it was under construction (November 2007), thus not seeing the current number of visitors and flow. Over the last 8 months I believe the net effect of AO's expansion efforts would result in a higher baseline and a more accurate picture of the real traffic flow.

In view of the foregoing, I am asking that the County to expressly condition the permit modification on the following requirements.

PROPOSED CONDITIONS

- Limit AO to 300 total visitors per week and a maximum of 100 per day. This is over a 4x increase from the existing permit.
- Visitor parking to be 20 spaces
- Limit the number of marketing events to a maximum of 100 people, and one event per quarter.

- No temporary events allowed unless approval (via e-mail notice and approval) from the majority of the interested neighbors, including neighbors located across Highway 29 (1679 thru 1691 St. Helena Hwy S). This would prevent future film festival like events.
- No offsite parking allowed
- Increase width of winery drive and entrance from Mee Lane to facilitate the turning of all vehicles including the largest anticipated trucks.
- Increase visibility of winery drive and Mee Lane intersection by altering landscaping, fencing and signage.
- Install appropriate striping and clear stop at drive intersection with Mee Lane.
- Prohibit parking and offloading of all vehicles on Mee Lane and install appropriate signage. Require winery-paid monitors to enforce prohibition during all times in which attendance at the winery is anticipated at any one time to exceed fifty people and during periods of significant construction and harvest.
- No amplified music; and lighting must be contained to the property.
- There shall be no events or activities on winery premises which are unrelated to wine production or tasting.
- All tastings and events to be held either indoors or, if outdoors, on the side of the winery facing Highway 29 and all noise must be contained to the property. There shall be no tents or other temporary structures constructed without neighbor approval,
- All events and winery activities to cease between 11PM and 6AM, Events should be over by 10pm and all clean up done by 11pm.
- No events on the days you are harvesting grapes unless the winery is closed to the public for the entire day. No events over 100 people during harvest.
- Expansion of capacity conditional upon construction of an entrance off of Highway 29 and the Mee entrance only used for emergency traffic only and is chained across, or similar method, to stop traffic flow.

Conclusion

Since inception, AO has trended toward a compliance ethic that concerns me. Acting first and then seeking formal approval on construction, visitors and events is not a posture of compliance, but is reminiscent of the neighborhood situations involving Sattui, Del Dotto and Frank Family. It places an unfair burden on the neighbors, and shifts the county into the role of enforcer. Moreover, the prospect

of new owners in five to ten years heightens our sense of urgency in seeking the County's help in crafting clear and reasonable limits on the proposed expansion.

Thank you so much for taking the time to listen to me and my neighbors on these important issues.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Willis J. Blakewell". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Willis Blakewell

Attachment A

Winery's with Production Permits between 50K and 144K Sorted by Street

(includes pre WDO winery's who have received expansion permits and post WDO)

Name	Address	Acres	Established Date	Original Production	Curr. or Expan Total Prod.	% Grown on Property *
Winery's on dead end streets (original or current permit of similar size)						
SULLIVAN VINEYARDS WINERY	1090 GALLERON RD	26.17	9/1/1983	10,000	22,500	100%
FRAZIER WINERY	40 LUPINE RD	45.98	9/1/2005	50,000	50,000	100%
MAYACAMAS VINEYARDS	1155 LOKOYA RD	25	9/1/1944	50,000	50,000	85%
CHAPPELLET WINERY	1581 SAGE CANYON RD	125	9/1/1969	59,445	59,445	100%
TWO ROCKS WINERY	135 LONG RANCH RD	45		62,500	62,500	n/a
MOSS CREEK WINERY	6015 STEELE CANYON RD	41.6	9/1/1987	100,000	100,000	85%
FLORA SPRINGS WINE CO	1978 W ZINFANDEL LN	220	9/1/1979	60,000	120,000	60%
ALPHA OMEGA Proposed	1155 MEE LN	10.79	9/1/1986	50,000	144,000	3%
HEITZ WINE CELLARS	500 TAPLIN RD	159.65	9/1/1961	90,000	144,000	30%
JOSEPH PHELPS VINEYARDS	200 TAPLIN RD	400.49	9/1/1975	96,000	420,000	25%
Highway 29						
BALLENTINE WINERY	2820 ST HELENA HWY	21.12	9/1/1995	50,000	50,000	
SEQUOIA GROVE VINEYARDS	8338 ST HELENA HWY	24.36	9/1/1980	50,000	50,000	
FREEMARK ABBEY	3022 ST HELENA HWY	10	9/1/1967	60,000	60,000	
PROVENANCE VINEYARDS	1695 ST HELENA HWY	60.65	12/1/1987	85,000	85,000	
OPUS ONE WINERY	7900 ST HELENA HWY	49.31	9/7/1992	82,000	110,000	
PEJU PROVINCE	8466 ST HELENA HWY	30	12/1/1984	60,000	120,000	
ARROYO CREEK VINEYARDS	STATE HWY 29	86.09		125,000	125,000	
DOMINUS ESTATE WINERY	2570 NAPANOOK RD	61.74	10/1/1997	75,000	125,000	
NICKEL & NICKEL WINERY	1884 ST HELENA HWY	32.19	9/1/2006	125,000	125,000	
WHITEHALL LANE WINERY	1563 ST HELENA HWY	25.34	9/1/1980	50,000	125,000	
SAINTSBURY	1500 LOS CARNEROS AVE	15.83	8/1/1983	60,000	135,000	
LUNA VINEYARDS	2921 SILVERADO TR	47.6	9/1/1980	50,000	150,000	
CARDINALE WINERY	7600 ST HELENA HWY	70	9/1/1981	50,000	1,280,000	

Silverado Trail

HAGAFEN CELLARS	4160 SILVERADO TRAIL	12.23	9/1/2003	50,000	50,000
SILVERADO HILL CELLARS	3105 SILVERADO TR	35.68	10/1/1979	50,000	50,000
CHATEAU MONTELENA WINERY	1429 TUBBS LANE	15.54	9/1/1982	60,000	60,000
HEITZ WINE CELLARS	8649 SILVERADO TR	74.03	9/1/1983	60,000	60,000
DARIOUSH WINERY	4240 SILVERADO TR	30.11	9/1/1989	100,000	100,000
NAPA KNOLLS WINERY	4089 SILVERADO TR	29.44	9/1/1985	100,000	100,000
CHIMNEY ROCK VINEYARDS	5350 SILVERADO TR	130.53	9/1/1989	59,250	145,000
CUVAISON	4550 SILVERADO TR	14.59	9/1/1970	120,000	155,048
MINER FAMILY VINEYARDS	7850 SILVERADO TR	13.5	9/1/1996	120,000	300,000
PINE RIDGE WINERY	5901 SILVERADO TR	50.31	9/1/1978	120,000	300,000
STAGS LEAP ASSOC (DOUMANI 5)	6150 SILVERADO TR	106.52	9/1/1993	60,000	315,000
STAGS LEAP WINE CELLARS	5766 SILVERADO TR	33.43	6/1/1973	55,500	330,000
SILVERADO VINEYARDS	6121 SILVERADO TR	10.03	9/1/1981	96,000	360,000
VILLA MT EDEN	8711 SILVERADO TRAIL	5.99	9/1/1980	50,000	850,000
ROUND HILL CELLARS	1680 SILVERADO TR	17.37	9/1/1987	144,000	1,250,000

Spring Mountain

PRIDE MOUNTAIN VINEYARDS	4026 SPRING MTN RD	22.37		50,000	50,000
ROBERT KEENAN WINERY	3660 SPRING MTN RD	147.39	9/1/1977	50,000	50,000
CAIN CELLARS	3800 LANGTRY RD	492	9/1/1982	59,000	59,000

HWY 29 / Silverado Cross

HERMAN WINERY	2120 BIG RANCH RD	20		50,000	50,000
MONTICELLO VINEYARDS	4242 BIG RANCH RD	90.75	9/1/1980	60,000	100,000
CAYMUS VINEYARDS	8700 CONN CREEK RD	69.53	9/1/1971	110,000	110,000
CLOS PEGASE INC	1060 DUNAWEAL LN	20.39	9/1/1986	55,000	200,000

Oakville Grade

DIAMOND OAKS WINERY	1595 OAKVILLE GRADE	18.5	9/1/1980	144,000	144,000
FAR NIENTE WINERY	ONE ACACIA DR	13	9/1/1982	60,000	175,000

Pope Valley

NORMAN ALUMBAUGH WINERY	1996 POPE CANYON RD	80.92		50,000	50,000
CATACULA LAKE WINERY	4105 CHILES AND POPE VAL	247.55	9/1/2003	59,000	59,000
BURGESS NAPA CELLARS	5445 SOLANO AVE	50.64	9/1/2001	75,000	75,000
CEZV WINERY (COSENTINO)	1784 POPE CANYON RD	98.8	9/1/2007	100,000	100,000
PALISADES WINERY	POPE VALLEY RD	158.66		120,000	120,000

Other main Roads

ALTAMURA WINERY	1701 WOODEN VALLEY RD	40		50,000	50,000
MONT ST JOHN CELLARS	5400 OLD SONOMA RD	4.37	9/1/1983	50,000	50,000
HENDRY RANCH WINERY	3104 REDWOOD RD	60.68	9/1/2005	59,000	59,000
LONGWOOD RANCH WINERY	1006 MONTICELLO RD	94.23		70,000	70,000
KULETO VILLA VINEYARDS	2460 SAGE CANYON RD	102.83	9/1/2000	75,000	75,000
PRAGER FAMILY ESTATE WINERY	3180 HIGHWAY 128	15.6		75,000	75,000
KENZO WINERY	3154 MONTICELLO RD	40		85,000	85,000
CASA LAS TRANCAS WINERY	622 TRANCAS ST	11.63		100,000	100,000
ETUDE WINERY	1250 CUTTING WHARF RD	29.81	9/1/1983	76,000	150,000

* Obtained from the winery

Winery's of Similar Size (between 50K and 144K gallons) Pre WDO (sorted by Established date)

Name	Acres	Establish Date	Original Sq Ft	Original Production	Current or Expan Total Production	Tours & T. Weekly Tasting	Weekly Visitors
HEITZ WINE CELLARS	159.65	9/1/1961	16,250	90,000	144,000	PUB	60
FREEMARK ABBEY	29.81	9/1/1967	18,975	60,000	60,000	PUB	1800
CUVAISON	14.59	9/1/1970	12,000	120,000	155,048	PUB	2800
CAYMUS VINEYARDS	69.53	9/1/1971	24,455	110,000	110,000	PUB	180
STAGS LEAP WINE CELLARS	33.43	6/1/1973	2,500	55,500	330,000	PUB	700
PINE RIDGE WINERY	50.31	9/1/1978	19,700	120,000	300,000	PUB	922
MONTICELLO VINEYARDS	90.75	9/1/1980	11,500	60,000	100,000	PUB	84
VILLA MT EDEN	5.99	9/1/1980	10,000	50,000	850,000	PUB	500
WHITEHALL LANE WINERY	25.34	9/1/1980	7,600	50,000	125,000	PUB	500
SEQUOIA GROVE VINEYARDS	24.36	9/1/1980	9,000	50,000	50,000	PUB	600
DIAMOND OAKS WINERY	18.5	9/1/1980	37,800	144,000	144,000	PUB	700
SILVERADO VINEYARDS	10.03	9/1/1981	43,970	96,000	360,000	PUB	850
CHATEAU MONTELENA WINERY	15.54	9/1/1982	14,000	60,000	60,000	PUB	250
FAR NIENTE WINERY	13	9/1/1982	18,000	60,000	175,000	PUB	210
ETUDE WINERY	29.81	9/1/1983	65,900	76,000	150,000	PUB	740
MONT ST JOHN CELLARS	4.37	9/1/1983	5,200	50,000	50,000	PUB	350
NAPA KNOLLS WINERY	29.44	9/1/1985	43,600	100,000	100,000	PUB	350
CLOS PEGASE INC	20.39	9/1/1986	24,100	55,000	200,000	PUB	725
ALPHA OMEGA current	10.79	9/1/1986	5,400	50,000	50,000	PUB	70
MOSS CREEK WINERY	41.6	9/1/1987	24,000	100,000	100,000	PUB	600
PROVENANCE VINEYARDS	60.65	12/1/1987	16,000	85,000	85,000	PUB	300
DARIOUSH WINERY	30.11	9/1/1989	21,252	100,000	100,000	PUB	350
CHIMNEY ROCK VINEYARDS	130.53	9/1/1989	14,000	59,250	145,000	PUB	475
MINER FAMILY VINEYARDS	13.5	9/1/1996	17,500	120,000	300,000	PUB	1308

Average of Winery's established in the 80's

520

August 13, 2008

Trish Hornisher
Napa planning Department
1195 Third Street
Napa, CA

Dear Ms Hornisher:

Alpha Omega

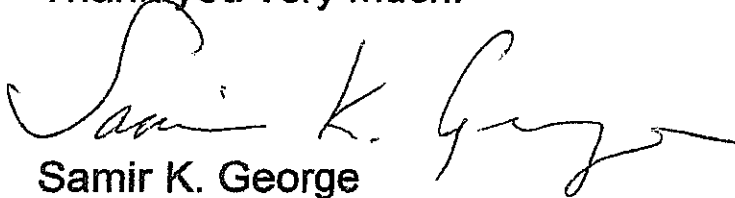
I am writing to register my concerns about the proposed expansion at Alpha Omega which I recently learned about from my neighbors. For some reason, the residences along 29 across and diagonal from the winery were evidently not given notice of the proposed expansion.

My biggest concern is that with all the marketing events and visitor numbers being talked about, the expansion will lead to an increase in noise and traffic at the Winery. Very recently, for several evenings, I heard loud music coming from the film festival event. If that level of noise is something we can expect on a regular basis, then my concerns are amply justified.

I have owned the property at 1685 St. Helena Hwy South. (West side of 29, just north of Mee Lane and south of Galleron) for the past six years. There seems to be a very good relationship between the wineries and the residences in this part of the valley. While there are events, I have not seen excesses or abuses. I would hate to see the winery location at AO become ground zero for the kind of noise, traffic and marketing hype that would be completely out of character with this stretch of the valley.

Please limit events and visitors to a reasonable number and help us ensure that noise is carefully contained so that neighbors cannot hear it.

Thank you very much.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Samir K. George". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Samir K. George
1685 St. Helena Hwy South
Saint Helena, CA 94574
707-321-9779

Diane R. Flyr

1691 St. Helena Hwy S., St. Helena, CA 94574

Cell: (707) 696-6877 - Home: (707) 963-3385 - email: diane-flyr@yahoo.com

August 13, 2008

Patricia Hornisher
Napa County Planning Commission
1195 Third Street
Napa, Ca 94559

Re: Alpha Omega Permit Application

Dear Ms. Hornisher,

I am a neighbor of Alpha Omega Winery. I live at 1691 Saint Helena Hwy, across the highway and next to Provenance. I was not notified of the plans to expand Alpha Omega, but heard about it through neighbors on Mee Lane who were notified.

I am very concerned about the impact of such a large expansion. This concern grew especially after the very noisy Film Festival Event held there recently. The music was extremely loud and went on until 11 PM. Their loudspeakers face my house, so it was very unpleasant. Can they be required to lower the levels of noise and perhaps have only acoustic music? When there are events at Franciscan, Provenance and Rutherford Grove, I hear them but they are muted and end promptly at 10 PM. Those wineries work hard to have a good relationship with their neighbors. I was told that AO Winery is requesting the right to have up to 16 large and 84 medium events per year. This would have a huge impact on my neighborhood with noise and traffic. Are those many events really necessary to run a winery in the Ag Preserve?

Another concern is that they want to increase gallon capacity to 144,000 gallons, with almost all of their grapes trucked in from elsewhere. Mee Lane is a lane, not a highway, and increasing the amount of trucks turning into and out of it will have a further impact on the already busy traffic. Increasing their visitor number to 500 per day seems like a huge jump from the 70 I understand is currently permitted.

I hope you will take my comments into consideration when reviewing this expansion request.

Sincerely,

Diane Flyr

Transit

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AUG 15 2008

NAPA CO. CONSERVATION
DEVELOPMENT & PLANNING DEPT.

Dave and Sherlyn Zumwalt
1152 Mee Lane
St. Helena, CA 94574
707-963-4590

August 13, 2008

Napa County Conservation Development
and Planning Department
1195 Third St., Suite. 210
Napa, CA 94559

To Whom It May Concern,

We are writing in regards to invoice #CDP05401 Alpha Omega Variance and Use Permit request.

Our family has lived at 1152 Mee Lane, which is located approximately one quarter mile east of Alpha Omega Winery, for close to 40 years.

Mee Lane at best is a one lane road to enter Alpha Omega Winery.

If you grant Alpha Omega Winery an increased production from 50,000 gallons to 144,000 gallons it will create a traffic nightmare entering and exiting Mee Lane. With 97% of the grapes being brought in from outside vineyards it will back up traffic and make it very difficult to make a left hand turn, southbound direction, on to Highway 29. Traffic will also be impacted by increasing the visitors from 10 per day, 70 per week, to 1350 per week.

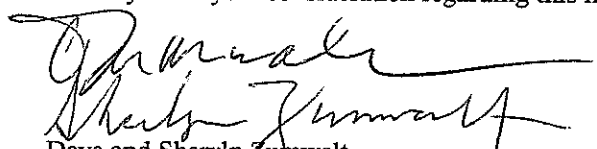
A higher capacity of visitors will add to the increased traffic and congestion at Mee Lane and Highway 29.

Alpha Omega Winery is also asking for an abnormal number of special events. 7 events per month plus an additional 10 per year.

We would have no objection to Alpha Omega Winery's request for increase production and visitors if they can obtain access to the Winery with a turn lane directly from Highway 29.

If Alpha Omega is unable to obtain permission to have a turn lane directly from Highway 29 we feel they should have to operate in the scope of their present Use Permit, which allows for 10 visitors per day and 50,000 gallon production.

Thank you for your consideration regarding this matter.


Dave and Sheryln Zumwalt

Alfred L. Pepin
1156 Mee Lane
St. Helena, CA 94574
Tel. 707-963-0980 – Fax: 707-967-0551

August 14, 2008

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NAPA CO. CONSERVATION
DEVELOPMENT & PLANNING DEPT.

Ms. Hillary Gitelman
Director of Conservation, Development and Planning
Napa County Conservation, Development and Planning Dept.
1195 Third Street, Suite 210
Napa, CA 94559

Dear Ms. Gitelman,

Please, refer to the application of Alpha Omega Winery for a variance request (#P08-00047-VAR), and use permit major modification request (#P07-00869-MOD).

My wife and I live at 1156 Mee Lane, and we are concerned that the proposed expansion of the Alpha Omega Winery will unwarrantedly and adversely affect Mee Lane residents and properties.

Mee Lane is a narrow, poorly paved rural road. The road serves a quiet, stable neighborhood of vineyards and homes with many of the residents having lived on Mee Lane for many years. Prior to the purchase of the winery by Alpha Omega, the winery was for a number of years virtually dormant with little production and few tasting room visitors. We live diagonally across from the winery and overlook its facilities. In the past we have stored barrels of wine at the winery. From repeated personal observations and visits to the winery we can attest to the fact that the pre-Alpha Omega winery was a quiet facility with little activity of any kind. It had an apparent production of less than 1000 cases per annum and the appearance of no more than twenty-five to thirty tasting room visitors a day. We are aware of no winery events held by the pre-Alpha Omega owners.

All of this changed with the purchase of the winery by Alpha Omega. From its initial takeover of the winery, Alpha Omega has engaged in noisy traffic, impacting winery construction and greatly increased tasting room traffic. Vehicles of all kinds have caused congestion and pollution in the Mee Lane neighborhood and have parked on Mee Lane often with motors idling. Many times large trucks which can not make a direct turn into the winery have endeavored to back into the entrance with resultant road blockage and horns beeping. Those leaving the winery have created a hazard as they enter Mee Lane without hesitation and have caused increased backup at the intersection of Highway 29 as they have attempted to cross the highway.

Our neighbors and we have had several discussions with Alpha Omega personnel regarding the adverse impact of their operations on Mee Lane but without satisfactory resolution. The discussions were courteous, but Alpha Omega is apparently of the view it can operate without restraint and by ignoring the fact that from a neighborhood viewpoint they are operating from an initial benchmark of an almost dormant facility. The Alpha Omega proposal is not as characterized by Alpha Omega as an increase in production capacity of threefold but, as a practical matter, is an increase of approximately sixty-fold and its impact is fully reflective of that significant increase.

The proposed capacity increase is also out of proportion to the size of the winery property and the narrow Mee Lane access and egress. Moreover, since only three percent of the grapes used by Alpha Omega will come from the winery site, the impact of the proposed capacity increase will be greatly magnified by the resultant substantial increase in truck traffic which is estimated by Alpha Omega's use permit information sheet as more than five hundred additional truck trips per annum.

We fully understand that our neighbors and we have benefited from the beautiful agricultural area in which we live and we accept the fact that a winery in our neighborhood is a permitted use. Keeping this in mind we enclose, a list of conditions which we propose be made part of any permit which allows Alpha Omega to proceed with its proposal. While we understand Alpha Omega would rather not have any condition, we think that the enclosed conditions reasonably and fairly provide for all interests including those of the residents of Mee Lane as well as those of Alpha Omega, and we urge they be adopted.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Eric Sklar", written in a cursive style.

cc: Ms. Patricia Hornisher
Mr. Eric Sklar, Alpha Omega

CONDITIONS TO ALPHA OMEGA WINERY EXPANSION

- A. Existing permit volume of fifty thousand gallons per annum to be re-established with the following conditions:
1. Increase width of winery drive and entrance from Mee Lane to facilitate the turning of all vehicles including the largest anticipated trucks.
 2. Increase visibility of winery drive and Mee Lane intersection by altering landscaping, fencing and signage.
 3. Install appropriate striping and clear stop at drive intersection with Mee Lane.
 4. Prohibit parking and offloading of all vehicles on Mee Lane and install appropriate signage. Require winery-paid monitors to enforce prohibition during all times in which attendance at the winery is anticipated at any one time to exceed fifty people and during periods of significant construction and harvest.
 5. Music, noise and lighting are at all times to be confined to the winery premises.
 6. There shall be no events or activities on winery premises which are unrelated to wine production or tasting.
 7. All tastings and events to be held either indoors or, if outdoors, on the side of the winery facing Highway 29.
 8. All outside events and outside winery activities to cease between 11PM and 6AM.
 9. There shall be no more than three hundred winery public visitors per week and not more than 50 public visitors at any one time. No food is to be served to public visitors and picnic and eating facilities are to be limited to a capacity of not more than twenty people.
 10. There shall be no more than one marketing event of less than 100 people each calendar quarter; two marketing events of 25-100 people each month and 8 marketing events of up to 25 people each month. Such events shall to be by invitation only and shall be in addition to the public visitors.
- B. The proposed increased permit volume of one-hundred-forty-four-thousand gallons per annum to be conditioned on obtaining and using for all vehicles direct access and egress to Highway 29, or failing a good faith effort to obtain such access and egress, the obtainment of access and egress at the beginning of the existing Veterinary property located at the intersection of Mee Lane and Highway 29. Once the new access and egress are in operation, public visitor limitations and events shall be increased to a level appropriate for such new access and egress.

7012
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AUG 19 2008

NAPA CO. CONSERVATION
DEVELOPMENT & PLANNING DEPT.

**Alfred L. Pepin
1156 Mee Lane
St. Helena, CA 949574
Tel.707-963-0980 – Fax:707-967-0551**

August 18,2008

Ms. Hillary Gitelman
Director of Conservation, Development and Planning
Napa County Conservation, Development and Planning Dept.
1195 Third Street, Suite 210
Napa, CA 94559

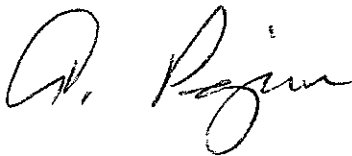
Dear Ms. Gitelman

This letter is further to my August 14, 2008 comments in opposition to the application of Alpha Omega Winery for a variance request (#P08-00047-VAR), and use permit major modification request (#P07-00869-MOD).

A recent article in a local newspaper referred to Alpha Omega personnel stating that their business plan was in effect to sell all of the winery's production from the winery site by means of the tasting room, wine club and internet, by-passing more conventional marketing through offsite distributors. This intent exasperates traffic at the winery site by resulting in small sales with deliveries at the winery site to individual customers or delivery trucks serving individual customers.

The article also mentions the small size of the winery site, although it fails to correctly state that the site is as stated in the Alpha Omega application 10.8 acres. This size parcel does not merit the production capacity sought by Alpha Omega particularly with the site's impaired access and unusually small percentage (three percent) of onsite vineyard. In this regard, it should be noted that the issue of increased capacity differs from that of tasting room visitation since there is no argument that an unrestricted permit exists with respect to the increased capacity. Rather, the increase must be viewed de novo taking into account that from a planning standpoint to allow any parcel of approximately 10 acres in the agricultural preserve to have a winery of the size sought will destroy the preserve. From equal protection and fairness standpoints, if a parcel the size of Alpha Omega's, with its impaired access and lack of vineyard, is permitted increased capacity there will be no foundation to refuse any small parcel winery of similar size. Not a good land use planning outcome, and certainly inconsistent with the intent of the agricultural preserve and winery definition ordinance.

Respectfully,



Cc:Ms. Patricia Hornisher

ST. HELENA STAR

Print Page



Jean Hoeffiger, GM and winemaker of Rutherford's Alpha Omega Winery, is Swiss-born and educated, and has worldwide experience in making wines. Prior to joining AO, he spent five years at St. Helena's Newton Winery.

Understated elegance

Rutherford's Alpha Omega is a work in progress

By David Stoneberg

STAFF WRITER

Thursday, August 14, 2008 12:38 AM PDT

So many story lines exist for Rutherford's Alpha Omega Winery, it's hard to know where to start. Two words, though, seem to embody the winery: Understated elegance.

Not that it's there yet: In late July, bulldozers and backhoes were digging trenches for water pipes outside, and inside the yet-to-be-finished tasting room, carpenters were moving shelving units and plumbing door jams. Only in the barrel room, with its gleaming, state-of-the-art tanks, was there a sense of the finished project.

Another indication of Alpha Omega's elegance is the view out front: A huge reflecting pond, complete with fountains that not only drown out the noise from Highway 29, but will also provide frost protection for the property's 12 acres of vines, planted in both merlot and sauvignon blanc.

Back to the story lines, though. They include:

<http://www.sthelenastar.com/articles/2008/08/14/business/local/doc48a3a46b82576054331...> 8/18/2008

- Ongoing construction;
- Winemaker Jean Hoefliger;
- Seventeen vineyards throughout the Napa Valley;
- Challenges of the current growing season;
- A typical day during harvest;
- The blending and tasting of 120-150 lots each day; and
- The ongoing relationships within and without the winery.

Each of these point to the ultimate goal: The making of no-expense-spared wines, sold directly to customers through the tasting room, wine club and on the Internet.



Construction

The tasting room should be done in about a month. After that, crews will begin building a barrel storage facility, adjacent to the tasting room. Construction is expected to take a year. Currently the winery's barrels of wines are stored at The Ranch, formerly a facility owned by the Trinchero family on Zinfandel Lane.

The construction is just part of an ongoing process that began when partners Robin Baggett and Eric Sklar put in an offer to buy the Esquisse Winery in late 2005. Its appeal included a public tasting room and visibility from Highway 29 in Rutherford. After raising the needed funds, Baggett and Sklar closed escrow on June 30, 2006. The following day, the winery opened under its new name, Alpha Omega.

Hoefliger, who was hired in February, said the wine sold that first day was wine he had made off-premises. With help from friends from the St. Helena Volunteer Fire Department, a small team labeled each of the bottles, erected Alpha Omega signs on the property and prepared to open the doors for business the next morning.

Winemaker Jean Hoefliger

During a late-July interview, Hoefliger talked about winemaking, obviously his passion. He also spoke about his principles and the importance of paying attention to details. It's clear those precise details are what make a difference in his wines.

Hoefliger's rapid-fire delivery spoke of his passion. He loves every part of the winemaking process, from visiting the 17 vineyards every week, to tasting the 120 to 150 lots of wine each day prior to the three or four blendings of the final wines before they are bottled.

Partner Sklar has known Hoefliger for a few years, since the winemaker was employed at Newton Vineyards. Sklar said he was making wine in his garage — his family has grown grapes in the Napa Valley for about 30 years — and would ask Hoefliger his advice. They built a relationship, one that was based on their mutual love of and passion for wine.

After buying the winery, the partners asked Hoefliger to come work for them. The winemaker's initial response wasn't encouraging. He imagined the Esquisse Winery, although its location was prime, to be just another old winery with run-down equipment. But Sklar and Baggett persevered, telling Hoefliger that they wanted to make the best wine possible, and that there was "no budget." That turned out to be the lure that Hoefliger couldn't resist.

Seventeen vineyards

One of Hoefliger's first tasks was to acquire grapes and establish long-term contracts with growers throughout the Napa Valley. His contracts to buy grapes from Andy Beckstoffer and his vineyards in the To Kalon area, from Lee Hudson in the Carneros region, and from Stagecoach Vineyards in the Atlas Peak appellation, among others, are 10 years or longer. Within each vineyard, there are numerous blocks and Hoefliger visits each of the vineyards every week and more often just prior to and during harvest. During a

<http://www.sthelenastar.com/articles/2008/08/14/business/local/doc48a3a46b82576054331...> 8/18/2008

July 21 tour of the vineyards, he said he could see the first signs of veraison, which is when the grapes turn color as they ripen.

He visits the vineyards so he knows he and the grower are "on the same page." It's also his way of making sure everything is done correctly and in a timely manner. If the crews tending the grapes do something wrong — take off too many leaves, for example, exposing the grapes to damaging sun — Hoeffliger said the mistakes can be readjusted in a timely manner.

Alpha Omega buys cabernet sauvignon, sauvignon blanc, merlot, petit verdot, cabernet franc and chardonnay from Spring Mountain, Rutherford, Oakville, Yountville, Atlas Peak and Carneros appellations.

Challenges of 2008

"Ninety percent of the wine is made in the vineyard," Hoeffliger said. "But we have many different challenges each year." He added that each growing season is different and requires different responses to what's happening in the vineyard. This year, for example, those challenges have been damaging frost in mid-April after the vines had flowered; shatter, when the flowers didn't turn into grape clusters; and a wildland fire, which damaged a vineyard in the Wild Horse Valley. The frost damaged some vineyards in the Carneros district, while shatter affected 30 to 35 percent of vines in other vineyards. "It's nature's way of limiting yield," he said simply.

The wildland fire, which began June 21, burned more than 4,000 acres before it was contained five days later. Burned was an 8-acre vineyard between Napa and Solano counties. Although only five rows were lost, Hoeffliger said the rest of the vineyard will be affected, because the fire happened after the berries were set. "We'll make the wine," he said, "but it will probably be tainted by smoke." Although it's possible the smoke didn't affect the grapes, it's likely the ashes that surrounded the vineyard did.

By buying grapes from 17 vineyards throughout the valley, though, the winery has a safety net, allowing Hoeffliger to make the wines — sauvignon blanc, chardonnay, cabernet sauvignon and a proprietary red wine — from this year's harvest.

Because of the challenges, Hoeffliger said it is especially important for the winemaker to adapt to the grapes, rather than the other way around. In this way, he said, what each vintage requires is different and requires different actions from the winemaker.

A typical day during harvest

Hoeffliger writes about his typical work day during the four months of harvest, when he works seven days a week. He arrives at the winery early, when the night crew is finishing up their tasks and before the day shift arrives. "At this time the horizon is bright and the sun is starting to peak out from behind the mountains; everything is incredibly peaceful and tranquil.

"When I arrive at the winery with my tired eyes and as I get ready to taste every single lot, at six in the morning, I usually need a little boost of energy. I find this boost in music. I blast music throughout the tank room to carry me through all the different wines. Some days it is a mellow but happy Cat Stevens, some days it is a depressing and lingering Jacques Brel, and others it is the powerful and energized Red Hot Chili Peppers. After tasting two or three wines, happiness grows back into me through the quality and the emotions that the wine expresses on my palate."

Blending and tasting

During harvest, each of the blocks are brought into the winery, hand sorted and, after they are crushed, stored separately. In that way and for the four months during fermentation, Hoeffliger spends two or three hours each day tasting up to 120 separate wines.

He writes: "After tasting all of the 120 wines (with spitting, of course) the quality of the wine cheers me up and gives me enough energy to go through the day. I run up to my desk and write the work-orders for every single lot of wine so that I adapt myself to the wine and its specific personality rather than making the wine adapt to me. I do this by going back through all of the verbal notes I took throughout my whole morning tasting on my tape recorder."

After the wines become stable, they are again tasted and blended, with the help of his mentor, Michel Rolland, a world-renowned winemaker. The two consult and work together as they did at Newton Vineyards, which is where they first became friends.

For the winemaker, though, Rolland is also "someone to doubt" Hoefliger's judgment. They gather three times a year for blending sessions, once shortly after harvest, which is when the wine is put into barrels, then in January and again in late summer, either in July or August. This year, the two will blend the 2007 vintages on Aug. 21. The wine may be blended again and will be released in 2010.

Ongoing relationships

Finally, Alpha Omega is about relationships; between the two partners and their shared vision, between the young winemaker and his mentor, between Hoefliger and the growers throughout the Napa Valley and between the winery's employees. All have a single goal: To make the best possible wine with no detail unnoticed.

Alpha Omega

Owners: Robin Baggett and Eric Sklar

Jean Hoefliger, winemaker and GM

1155 Mee Lane at Highway 29

Rutherford

(707) 963-9999

www.aowinery.com

Wines available

2004 Cabernet Sauvignon Napa Valley, \$56

2005 Proprietary Red Wine, Napa Valley, \$74

2005 Chardonnay, Napa Valley, \$38

2007 Sauvignon Blanc, Napa Valley, \$32

2007 Rosé, Napa Valley, \$28

John L. Ziegler, M.D., M.Sc.
Rue W. Ziegler, Ph.D
950 Mee Lane
St Helena CA 94574 Tel 707 967 8074
FAX 707 967 8073
Email: john.ziegler@ucsf.edu

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AUG 19 2008

NAPA CO. CONSERVATION
DEVELOPMENT & PLANNING DEPT.

August 25, 2008

Hillary Gitelman
Director of Conservation, Development and Planning
1195 Third Street, Suite 210
Napa CA 94559

Re: Alpha Omega Use Permit Variance request #P08-00047-VAR

Dear Ms Gitelman,

We are homeowners on Mee Lane, and are writing to raise our objections to the revised use permit submitted by the Alpha Omega Winery. Our objections fall into three categories: increased traffic; local events; and scale of retail operations.

Traffic. Our main objection is the increase in traffic at the junction of Mee Lane and Highway 29. The previous wineries on the southeast corner were always small scale, with minimal traffic impact. The proposed expansion of the winery visitor capacity, number of events, and trucking in grapes during harvest, will produce an unprecedented traffic increase on our rural country lane. Highway 29 has become heavily congested on weekends, and left turns (southbound) are almost impossible under present circumstances. Two short center strips for left hand turns from Highway 29 onto Mee lane (southbound) and to Provenance Winery (northbound) do NOT allow cars to turn out onto Highway 29 and then

merge with traffic. The traffic problem may become more dangerous because winery visitors will be drinking wine that impairs judgment and performance at the wheel.

Our position on the use permit is not to allow any expansion without major mitigation of the traffic congestion at the Mee Lane/Highway 29 junction. At a minimum, this must include: 1) a separate winery entrance off Highway 29; 2) a long center strip on Highway 29 for turning and merging in both directions; 3) widening Mee Lane between the winery entrance and the junction, and 4) proper signage for speed, stopping, and observance of residential traffic.

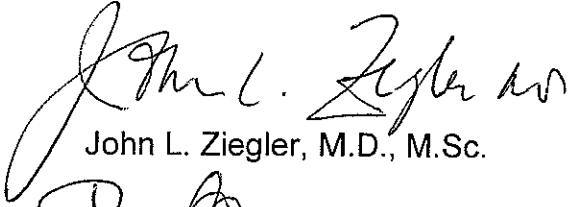
Events. Mee Lane is a narrow country road supporting agriculture and a handful of permanent residents. The proposed marketing “events” will vastly change the character of the neighborhood, encouraging buses, vans, limousines and congestion similar to that in the vicinity of the V. Sattui complex further north on Highway 29. Increase in ambient noise (parties, cinemas, picnicking, tour groups) will be unwelcome intrusions. Winery tourists may park on Mee Lane and wander down the road and enter the vineyards.

Scale. The expansion of wine production and the owners' intention to retail all wine directly to the public makes a sizeable commercial impact on a rural country lane. The proposed number of daily visitors rivals that of large retail outlets in Napa, such as Sears, Tommy Hilfiger, or Radio Shack. Further, as only 3% of grapes are harvested on site, large numbers of 10 - 18 wheel trucks will enter and leave the winery during the ten-week harvest season. The huge retail capacity and the business plan to sell all wine locally will place relentless pressure on commerce, marketing and sales.

We hope the Planning Commission will take these objections into account. Our strong preference is that the winery be maintained at prior capacity and visitor

volume until we have assurances that the traffic, marketing events, and local impact can be mitigated.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John L. Ziegler".

John L. Ziegler, M.D., M.Sc.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Rue W. Ziegler".

Rue W. Ziegler, Ph.D.

950 Mee Lane
St Helena CA 94574
rwzieg@aol.com

cc. Trish Hornesher, Napa County Planner
John McDowell, Planning Deputy Director

Margaret Ann and Jim Watson
990 Mee Lane
St. Helena, CA 94574

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AUG 21 2008

NAPA CO. CONSERVATION
DEVELOPMENT & PLANNING DEPT.

August 21, 2008

Patricia Hornisher, Planner
Napa County Planning Commission
1195 Third Street
Napa, CA 94559

Dear Ms. Hornisher:

We have lived on Mee Lane for the past 30 years. Our primary concern with the Alpha Omega Winery's application for a substantial increase in visitors, events, and capacity relates to the traffic that such substantial increases will generate.

During the 1980's Mrs. Watson commuted daily down Highway 29 to her employment in Napa. We can testify to the very modest impact that Michel Perret's Domaine de Napa Winery (1986-1995 and 2002-2006) and Quail Ridge Winery (1996-2001?) had on our access and egress from Mee Lane to Highway 29.

One was hardly aware that there was an "open to the public" winery in place. It is hard for us to believe that winery visitors ever exceeded 50 to 70 a week before Alpha Omega bought the winery.


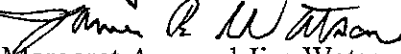
In the 1980's and early 1990's the commute from Mee Lane to Napa was a beautiful drive down a practically empty Highway 29.

The groundwork for the dramatic increase in Highway 29 traffic was laid in 1990 when the County Board of Supervisors set up a commission of growers and wineries to recommend restraints on winery activities. Unfortunately the growers, led by Volker Eisley, 'rolled over and played dead,' and the infamous 'winery definition ordinance' 'grandfathered in' for existing wineries the inappropriate activities which had prompted the Board to take action in the first place.

The result is that southbound access to Highway 29 from Mee Lane is now a hazardous exercise requiring a driver to illegally occupy the extension of the deceleration lane for southbound Highway 29 traffic and wait for a narrow opening in southbound traffic. And this is an existing condition before granting any increase in visitors or capacity to Alpha Omega Winery.

We challenge the contention of the Winery's Traffic Impact Report that the only mitigation needed is an extension of the deceleration lane and Saturday buses. The County needs to acknowledge that Highway 29 is currently over capacity and that no actions that add to the traffic should be permitted.

Sincerely,



Margaret Ann and Jim Watson

Hornisher, Trish

From: Oliver, Shawn [Shawn.Oliver@morganstanley.com]
Sent: Friday, August 22, 2008 3:18 PM
Cc: Hornisher, Trish
Subject: Alpha Omega

Patricia attached letter is regarding Alpha Omega.

August 22, 2008

Dear Patricia:

As a resident and land owner on Mee lane, I have some concerns about the expansion plans of Alpha Omega winery. As you maybe aware, Alpha Omega expansion plan calls for a 10 times increase in visitor traffic and 3 times increase in production. This will put dramatic increases on the traffic, and general wear and tear on Mee Lane. Given the size of the road, the consumption of alcohol and increase in traffic this is clearly a disaster waiting to happen. I believe the only real solution is an exclusive entrance and exit directly off Hwy 29.

Therefore, I urge you to grant an expansion under the conditions of an entrance and exit is built.

Sincerely,

Shawn Oliver

Important Notice to Recipients:

It is important that you do not use e-mail to request, authorize or effect the purchase or sale of any security or commodity, to send fund transfer instructions, or to effect any other transactions. Any such request, orders, or instructions that you send will not be accepted and will not be processed by Morgan Stanley.

08/25/2008