

Vineyard 7 & 8

MAY/JUN 10

By Stephen Tanzer

2007 Vineyard 7 and 8 Chardonnay "8" Spring Mountain District
(\$50) Medium yellow. Aromas of peach, orange zest, honey, creme brulee and minerals. Fat, round and silky, with a distinctly saline, savory quality to its sweet, spicy, leesy flavors. This has the texture of a red wine. A suggestion of orange rind lifts the finish. From an old Wente clone planted in volcanic ash soil at an altitude of 2,000 feet.

90

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2007 Vineyard 7 and 8 Cabernet Sauvignon "7" Spring Mountain District
(\$125; the first release for this estate wine, from vines that date back to 1983) Bright medium ruby. Crushed blackberry, licorice and a whiff of blond tobacco on the youthfully medicinal nose. Densely packed and powerful, with concentrated flavors of crushed black fruits, bitter chocolate and cedar. Finishes with strong but smooth tannins that call for at least a five-year moratorium. Estate manager Wesley Steffens noted that this fruit was picked in multiple passes until November 5.

93

2008 Vineyard 7 and 8 Cabernet Sauvignon Estate Spring Mountain District
(\$125) Medium saturated ruby. Black cherry and cedary, smoky oak on the nose. Concentrated and supple but less expressive today than the more opulent 2007. Less perfumed and filled in but showing plenty of chewy mountain-style cabernet fruit. Today the rather powerful tannins are a bit youthfully brutal.

90-93

2007 Vineyard 7 and 8 Cabernet Sauvignon "7" Spring Mountain District
(\$75; includes fruit from younger estate blocks as well as hillside vineyards from Spring Mountain Vineyards and another grower on Spring Mountain) Good deep ruby. Currant and fresh herbs on the nose. In a serious mountain style but with less depth to its purple fruit and bitter chocolate flavors than the estate wine is showing today. A less refined style, finishing with tannins that are a bit tough for 2007 and a lingering note of bitter chocolate. Incidentally, this seems considerably more vibrant in bottle than a somewhat porty barrel sample I tried a year ago.

89