

SINCE 1880

GEYSER PEAK WINERY

Frank Foote
Noled
MM

"Best U.S. Wine Producer"

2003 International Wine & Spirits Competition

August 24, 2005

Mr. John Manfreda
Administrator
Alcohol and Tobacco Tax and Trade Bureau
U.S. Treasury
1310 G Street, NW
Washington, DC 20220

Re: Vintage Date Regulation

Dear Mr. Manfreda:

I am writing today in support of the proposed changes to the vintage dating rules which would reduce the percentage of wine that must be derived from grapes harvested in the labeled calendar year from 95% to 85%. Specifically, I am in favor of modifying subsection (a) of Section 4.27. I am petitioning the TTB to change the subsection to permit wine labeled with a state, multi-state, county, or multi-county appellation of origin to bear a vintage date if at least 85% of the wine is derived from grapes harvested in the labeled calendar year.

As the winemaker for Geysler Peak Winery in Sonoma County, California, I am focused on providing high quality wine to consumers, I believe this change will have no significant effect on the integrity of wine but instead will provide US winemakers with the ability to compete more effectively with our international counterparts which enjoy a lower vintage dating threshold.

Top wine producers around the world, including Australia, New Zealand and the European Union require only that 85% of the grapes from a given vintage be labeled with that vintage date. When making wine, where consistency is always desirable, there is a considerable advantage in being able to use either a younger or older wine in the blend. Allowing for 15% of the wine to be used from an older vintage or a younger vintage provides winemakers with the flexibility that will lead to improved taste appeal and quality perception of wines for our consumers.

While I am aware that current regulations require that all wine imports meet the 95% standard, I am also aware that this is almost impossible to enforce and very rarely adhered to by our international competition. In order to alleviate this problem, I suggest making the aforementioned changes. It will not only provide us with the ability to compete more effectively with wine imports, it will also provide us with the ability to meet consumer demands for consistent, high quality wine.

Thank you for your consideration of this important issue.

Sincerely,



Mick Schroeter
Geysler Peak Winemaker



FOR PEOPLE PASSIONATE ABOUT WINE

22281 Chianti Road, P.O. Box 25, Geyserville, CA 95441-0025 PHONE: 800-255-WINE FAX: 707-857-3545 WEB: www.geyslerpeakwinery.com