Anna Maria, please send a gift subscription to the following person:

Recipient’s name ____________________________
Address_____________________________________
City________________State____Zip______________
Phone no.____________________________________
Message__________________________________________________________________________

No. of months______  Please bill me monthly ______  Please bill total ______

My name__________________________________________________________________________

Credit card billing address______________________

My phone no. (______) ______ - ____________

Please charge my Mastercard/Visa/Discover_____

Card number__________________________ Expiration_____/_____/______

Send this form to: Celebrations Wine Club
75 Pelican Way G1
San Rafael, CA 94901

Or call 1-800-700-6227 or fax this form to 1-415-457-3362
Or order from our website at www.celebrationswineclub.com

WINERY OF THE MONTH

Byington Vineyard & Winery

The Byington name is on two signs about a half hour apart, one in Santa Clara in the heart of Silicon Valley, the other in the Santa Cruz mountains due east. The two signs couldn’t mark two more dissimilar places. To get to the Santa Cruz site, the driver takes Bear Creek Road off of Highway 17 and winds almost to the top of the mountain at 2000 feet above sea level. The road threads its way through an evergreen forest with a smattering of oak, turned brilliant red, orange, and yellow for the season, fallen leaves piling like snow drifts at the sides of the road. At the top of the mountain a road sign points ahead, “Byington Vineyard and Winery.” The 95-acre estate slopes down from the road, and a huge chateau rises from the ground like a mirage. Its stone exterior is covered with ivy, and second-floor balconies extend beyond French doors, a red tile roof enclosing the building. On this parcels, people can party in paradise. Most wineries now offer their facilities for events, and not only do events generate significant income, but the winery sells its wines for these occasions. So what has Dean learned from the wine business? First, he’s learned that the adage is correct. In the wine business, it takes a large fortune to make a small one. Second, they knew nothing about the wine business when they started, and the learning curve surprised them. Third, once you drink good wine, you can’t turn back to the cheap stuff. “When I was younger, I could drink a cheap bottle of wine and think nothing of it. I can’t do that anymore. If I wasn’t in the wine business, I might still be drinking cheap wine, you can’t turn back to the cheap stuff. “When I was younger, I could drink a cheap bottle of wine and think nothing of it. I can’t do that anymore. If I wasn’t in the wine business, I might still be drinking cheaper stuff.”

He recently purchased 234 unplanted acres, surrounded by vineyards, in Paso Robles, which like Santa Cruz, has a growing reputation for fine wine.

Dean (right) poses with his sister Sheryl and their father Bill.
John Byington now runs the family businesses.

In an industrial section of Silicon Valley in Santa Clara, a large but modest white sign with black letters reads Byington Steel Treating, attached to the front of what seems to be a typical industrial warehouse. Offices are in front of the building, consisting mainly of cubicles, except for founder Bill Byington’s office, paneled with the kind of material that covers the inside walls of trailers. It imitates dark wood but would never have passed for elegant, of material that covers the inside walls of cubicles, except for founder Bill Byington, who was born on an Idaho farm, served in World War II, learned the heat-treating trade and, at 26-years old in 1950, came with his wife Mary from northern California and founded Byington Steel Treating with $800. The company is among the largest of its kind in Silicon Valley, servicing aerospace, government, technology, and construction industries.

Beginning to love wine
But his Idaho farming roots didn’t wither and die in this new world. In 1958, Bill purchased the mountainous Santa Cruz property for a family retreat. But a funny thing happens to people who migrate to California. They begin to love wine, some more, some less. His 30-year wine evolution eventually led to his planting the only part of the estate that wasn’t too steep with three different clones of Pinot Noir, and he released his first vintage in 1987. By 1990, Bill had completed the 18,000 square-foot winery chateau. He recently purchased 234 unplanted acres, surrounded by vineyards, in Paso Robles, which like Santa Cruz, has a growing reputation for fine wine.

Finding out the hard way
These were the hopeful, roaring nineties, and the winery was built to accommodate a 20,000 case production, so eight years later, they were there. Dean says they grew way too fast. “The trouble is that when you produce 20,000 cases, you have to be able to sell them. We didn’t realize that quite quick enough. We found out the hard way. You have to build it slowly and let it sell itself... It’s a lot of work trying to sell it, a lot of marketing. Customers want to see family; that’s just the way the business is. But none of us had the time to do it with all the other stuff we had to do.”

Cutting back
So like a lot of wineries in this current economy, they cut back production to 8,300 cases. “I hope to keep it that way. I’m not into going back to where we were. We didn’t get into this business to make money. We got into it because we love wines. So I would just as soon stay small, make better wines...”

—Don Blackburn

Joan Byington now runs the family businesses.

“I didn’t go back there, I imagine an expanse of space with concrete floors, machinery, furnaces, random piles of materials stacked here and there, workers concentrating on the task at hand.

Back and forth
Several times a week, Dean goes to the winery for meetings and then returns to the plant. But every day, Byington Steel Treating, COO Rod Bravo begins his day at the plant and then drives west to the winery, where he is the general manager. Both men love these opposite worlds. Rod says that when he’s at the steel plant, a door in his mind closes, and he forgets the winery. Not true for Dean. Although he goes to the winery only a couple of days a week, Rod gets a regular stream of phone calls at the winery. At 59, Dean says he has no desire to retire. “I don’t know what I would do with myself. I don’t mind getting up and going to work during the hard day. I like it.”

The founder of these two worlds is Bill Byington, who was now retired, as is his oldest son Tom. Middle son Dean now runs the company, which hardens or softens steel, softening it so that it can be machined or hardening it, like scissors or knives so that they will hold an edge. The real work takes place behind the offices. Although I didn’t go back there, I imagine an expanse of space with concrete floors, machinery, furnaces, random piles of materials stacked here and there, workers concentrating on the task at hand.

RECOMMEND US
to family members, friends, business associates, and clients whom you think would appreciate Celebrations Wine Club

RECEIVE a complimentary third bottle of outstanding wine with your regular shipment of two bottles, when they join Celebrations Wine Club.

Send this form to: Celebrations Wine Club 75 Pelican Way G1 San Rafael, CA 94901
Or call: 1-800-700-6227

Anna Maria, please send information and a complimentary issue of our newsletter to the following people. Please mention your name.

1. Name ______________________________ Address ______________________________ City __________ State _____ Zip

2. Name ______________________________ Address ______________________________ City __________ State _____ Zip

3. Name ______________________________ Address ______________________________ City __________ State _____ Zip

4. Name ______________________________ Address ______________________________ City __________ State _____ Zip

5. Name ______________________________ Address ______________________________ City __________ State _____ Zip

Call toll free 1-800-700-6227 or email celebrate@celebrationswineclub.com

Cut 1.5 inches exactly off this side of the sheet.