

# WINE ENTHUSIAST

MARCH 2006



Palmeri Wines  
 Featured in  
 March 2006  
 Wine Enthusiast  
 article  
 "Labels Gone Wild"

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## BEHIND EVERY LABEL...

...there is a story. It can be difficult for a budget-minded winery owner to decide between a buttoned-up, conservative, old-school design approach and the more free-wheeling, quirky one on display in these pages. For small wineries, it can be a wrenching personal process for the owner's vulnerable ego.

The three labels of California's Palmeri Vineyards, based in Geyserville, are both quirky and classic. Winery co-owners Denise Prentice, Kerry Damskey and Damskey's wife, Daisy, decided to highlight the environment of their vineyards, choosing the name from the scrubby *Quercus palmeri* oak that grows in the dry mountain ranges that winemaker Damskey favors for his wines.

As graphic elements for the labels, they chose animals that inhabit the vineyards: the wild boar (really, it's a feral pig), an offbeat choice since most growers consider the pigs nuisances; the fox, an appealing animal that eats gophers and other pests, though it also loves ripe grapes; and the bat, a vineyard hero because it will eat insects that threaten vines and grapes.

Having chosen the subjects, the Damskeys and Prentice decided they liked the style of old naturalists' pen-and-ink drawings, a style that seemed classic while distinctive.

To implement the designs, they turned to Australian Linda Schroeder, an artist married to winemaker Mick Schroeder of Geyser Peak Winery; Shroeder has designed wine labels for 17 years. For Palmeri's project, she researched old illustrations on the Internet for inspiration, and used ancient paper as background for the images.

She found it took a lot of tweaking to give the animals more kindly mouths—let's face it, none of the three is warm and cuddly. She did the drawings by hand, then scanned them to complete the process on the computer. After numerous iterations, she showed the labels to the clients, who found them perfect.

