

PlumpJack venture joins rush into caves

Cade Winery releasing its first vintage

BY CHRIS RAUBER
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PlumpJack Group's latest wine enterprise, Cade Winery, is releasing its first vintage this month and nearing completion of a nearly \$2 million, 14,300-square-foot wine cave.

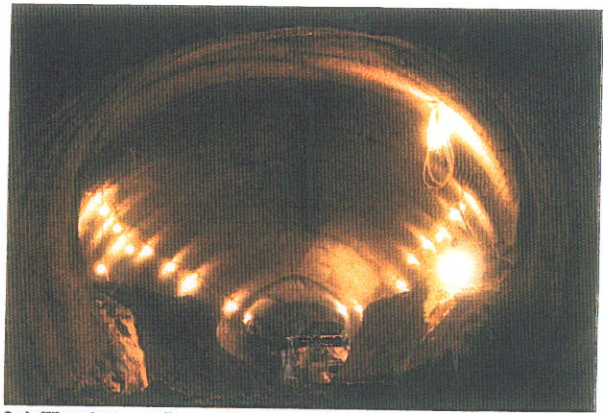
The name Cade refers to the Shakespearean-era term for a wine cask or barrel, in keeping with PlumpJack's tradition of honoring the Bard with its nomenclature.

The wine cave will be ready for use within weeks for storage purposes, but still requires permits to store filled barrels of wine, a process expected to be complete by September. The opening of the \$12 million Cade winery, located near the town of Angwin on Howell Mountain in the Napa Valley appellation, is also slated for September, followed by a new administration building to be finished next spring.

The complex will be LEED-certified by the U.S. Green Building Council and feature solar power, said John Conover, general manager for Cade and the existing PlumpJack Winery. Starting in 2008, he added, Cade's Howell Mountain vineyards will be organically farmed.

The new winery's first offering, the 2006 Cade sauvignon blanc, is priced at \$26 per bottle and produced from grapes grown in Napa's Oakville and Rutherford areas. It's available at the group's PlumpJack Winery in Oakville and its PlumpJack Cafes in San Francisco and Squaw Valley, Conover said, and will soon be sold at a few select restaurants in New York, Los Angeles, Dallas and Chicago, with exact locations yet to be determined.

Cade will ultimately produce two cabernet sauvignons as well, a Howell Mountain cabernet slated for release next year, followed by a Howell Mountain estate cab in 2009. The former will blend



Cade Winery's Napa Valley cave is expected to be ready to store wine in September.

cabernet and merlot grapes from artisan growers in the Howell Mountain area; the latter, fruit grown on the winery's own estate vineyards.

Cade is the group's second winery, following in the footsteps of PlumpJack Winery, which launched in 1997.

When complete, the Angwin winery will include a 6,700-square-foot production facility and a 5,000-square-foot administrative building with offices, a small lounge and a kitchen. Tours and

tastings will be by invitation only.

Conover said that due to Howell Mountain's unique terroir, Cade's new wines will be "larger" and more structured than PlumpJack's "softer, rounder" wines, some of which have received ratings in the mid-90s, on a scale of 1 to 100, from influential wine critic Robert Parker. Parker is known to prefer large, powerful wines.

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