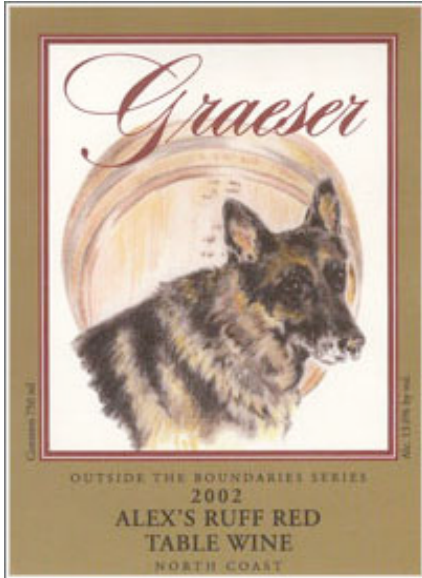


WINE RECOMMENDATION

**Graeser Winery****2002 Alex's Ruff Red Wine
(North Coast)**

Long time Calistoga resident and vintner Richard Graeser, known for Bordeaux varietals from Diamond Mountain appellation vineyards, has created a special series, "Outside the Boundaries." The labels in this program are more casual and inviting than his top tier, but prices are not much less. This North Coast appellation blend of 80% Zinfandel and 20% Cabernet Franc is \$22, and carries the dog theme that seems to have taken on a life of its own recently in California. I think it is wonderful to poke fun at seriousness once in a while, to keep things light, but I am not sure of calling a wine a "rough" red, putting a dog on the label, and

charging this price. Nonetheless, the wine is well made and enjoyable.

Bright, moderately saturated ruby and viscous, the wine has intriguing notes of strawberry, cherry, vanilla, barnyard, tar, and coffee bean. On the palate it is round and soft with sweet, height of season strawberries, moderate alcohol and beautifully integrated oak. This would be delicious with rigatoni pasta with chorizo, a meat-based spicy sausage, with mushrooms and peppers.

Reviewed August 10, 2007 by [Catherine Fallis](#).

THE WINE

Winery: [Graeser Winery](#)

Vintage: 2002

Wine: Alex's Ruff Red Wine

Appellation: [North Coast](#)

Grapes: [Zinfandel](#) (80%), [Cabernet Franc](#) (20%)

Price: \$20.00

THE REVIEWER**Catherine Fallis**

Founder and President of Planet Grape LLC, a company committed to bringing the joy of wine, food, and good living into the lives of everyday people, Catherine is creator of the "grape goddess guides to good living," a series of books, television presentations, seminars, and e-learning programs. The fifth woman in the world to become a Master Sommelier, grape goddess Catherine Fallis is still very much down-to-earth.