

WINE RECOMMENDATION

**Cline Cellars****2004 Ancient Vines Mourvedre
(Contra Costa County)**

One of California's finest pre-Prohibition wine regions, Contra Costa County was first planted in 1846. Many Italians settled in the area and planted the bulk of what remains today, especially Zinfandel and Mourvèdre. It's only in the last few decades that the area has been recognized as a source of premium fruit. The Rhône Ranger movement started in Oakley, with its old-vine Mourvèdre still a much sought after fruit source.

Vineyards in Oakley are on flatlands at the confluence of the Sacramento and San Joaquin rivers and have very deep sandy soil. A soft breeze comes through each afternoon and evenings are 10–35°F

cooler than afternoons. Fog sometimes comes up on the water, but it doesn't come out onto the vines.

Mourvèdre is around a century old here and finds particular success. It has to struggle to ripen and produces a small crop. Opaque ruby with dark, earthy notes, Cline's is a benchmark American wine. It is richly textured and voluptuous with silky tannins and brilliant underlying natural acidity. This multi-faceted wine has notes of chalk, dried herbs, brush, garrigue, mineral, tar, mocha, truffle, and Asian Five Spice with fig, raisin, and vanilla flavors on the long, sweet tart finish.

Reviewed November 20, 2006 by [Catherine Fallis](#).

THE WINE

Winery: [Cline Cellars](#)

Vintage: 2004

Wine: Ancient Vines Mourvedre

Appellation: [Contra Costa County](#)

Grape: [Mourvedre / Mataro](#)

Price: \$18.00

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.