

WINERIES OF THE *Sierra Foothills*

Risk-Takers & Rule-Breakers



Banana K&K

PHOTOGRAPHY BY JOHAN MARTIN

Includes a Directory of California Sierra Foothills Wineries

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FROM THE AUTHOR

It's not all about the wine; it's also about the *courage*.

The Sierra and its Foothills are packed with history we all know – Kit Carson, Mark Twain, the Donner Party. Now the region is packed with more than 280 wineries and tasting rooms.

The wine is in the Sierra and its Foothills stretched throughout the California counties of Alameda, Butte, Colusa, El Dorado, Eastern Madera, Mariposa, Nevada, Placer, Tuolumne and Yuba counties. These have a significant place in the history of viticulture in California, a long place in the production of wines in the vineyards today, and they have provided food memories for tourists seeking fine wines.

In the following pages, I'll read about the winemakers who have established a passion for winemaking and a dream of establishing vineyards and wineries in California that they take as a natural risk. Some of the risk takers put their kids and sites in a race and had to win. Raising California and coming to the wine with the rising price of grapes growing land in the famed Napa and Sonoma areas, they led to the hills the Sierra specifically. Otherwise, the most famous wine with different tastes. Risk is the underlying theme that made a passion for winemaking in this region.

Who hasn't heard of the California Gold Rush? In the case of family trips to gold mining towns spread across the area for possible wine yields, from the first settlement in 1842 to 1846 into the Sierra Nevada with Kit Carson as his guide, the hard-won establishment of the Mormon Immigrant Trail that carried the first east-west road for wagons into Northern California. Mark Twain's description of Lake Tahoe as the "fair-est picture the white earth affords" the day of the Donner Party, John Muir's rhymed description of Yosemite ... "adventure and romance and the Wild West ... held to the allure of the Sierra and its Foothills."

Apart from Gold Rush history and other colorful tales of exploration in the Sierra Foothills, today's adventurous wine tourist comes quickly to realize that the region's long agricultural history makes this a fascinating viticultural area. Many vineyards planted in the mid 1800s still survive today, protected by their remote locations. These vineyards may have been an adjunct to the Gold Rush, but today they bring forth another precious product – wonderful wine.

Growing grapes a high labor in prices but a long and joyous and wine farming in the foothills has a special requirements. Figuring out the spread price of the land, the payment of the sun through the day, the weather throughout the year. Think about the variety of the grape-growing deer and mountain birds the few inches of land on top of the unique, decomposed granite soils that are found nowhere else in the world. Fret about water – to much or not enough, it's never just right. Wonder how to get equipment up the narrow and twisting roads and what you must offer to attract labor, winemakers and tasting room help to the remote locations.

Establishing a winery in the Sierra Foothills takes incredible determination. These vineyard owners and winemakers are a tightly knit family who have shared growing tips, tractors and even corks when they run out in the middle of a bottling.

The wine is well and down the road to take in the next wine; the book is therefore indispensable.

And, take it well. The grapes have had to struggle on the way to becoming the wine in your glass. The result is wines with an intensity, character, flavor and complexity that are a wonderful matter. Grapes tend to be picked later here than in other regions so the flavor is a little more full of taste in wines with a big, full-bodied character.

Take it on the mountain roads. Enjoy a lovely day. Bring a picnic from one of the restaurants or delis as you go along the way.

Make time to spend at the historic park and for good. Play on the golf. Have a magnificent afternoon at the charming B&B.

The listings in the last part of this book will guide you to more than 280 wineries and tasting rooms in the Sierra Foothills. Practically all of the wineries use fruit from grapevines that are thriving at close to 1,000 feet elevation and higher.

The easiest way to find wine is in the Sierra and its Foothills. The 21 individual profiles here give you just a representative taste in location, variety, history, place and people. The recipes are original to the winemakers' families of friends and have been prepared over and over again because they pair wonderfully with the winemakers' products. Take a bottle of wine home and enjoy the perfect day.

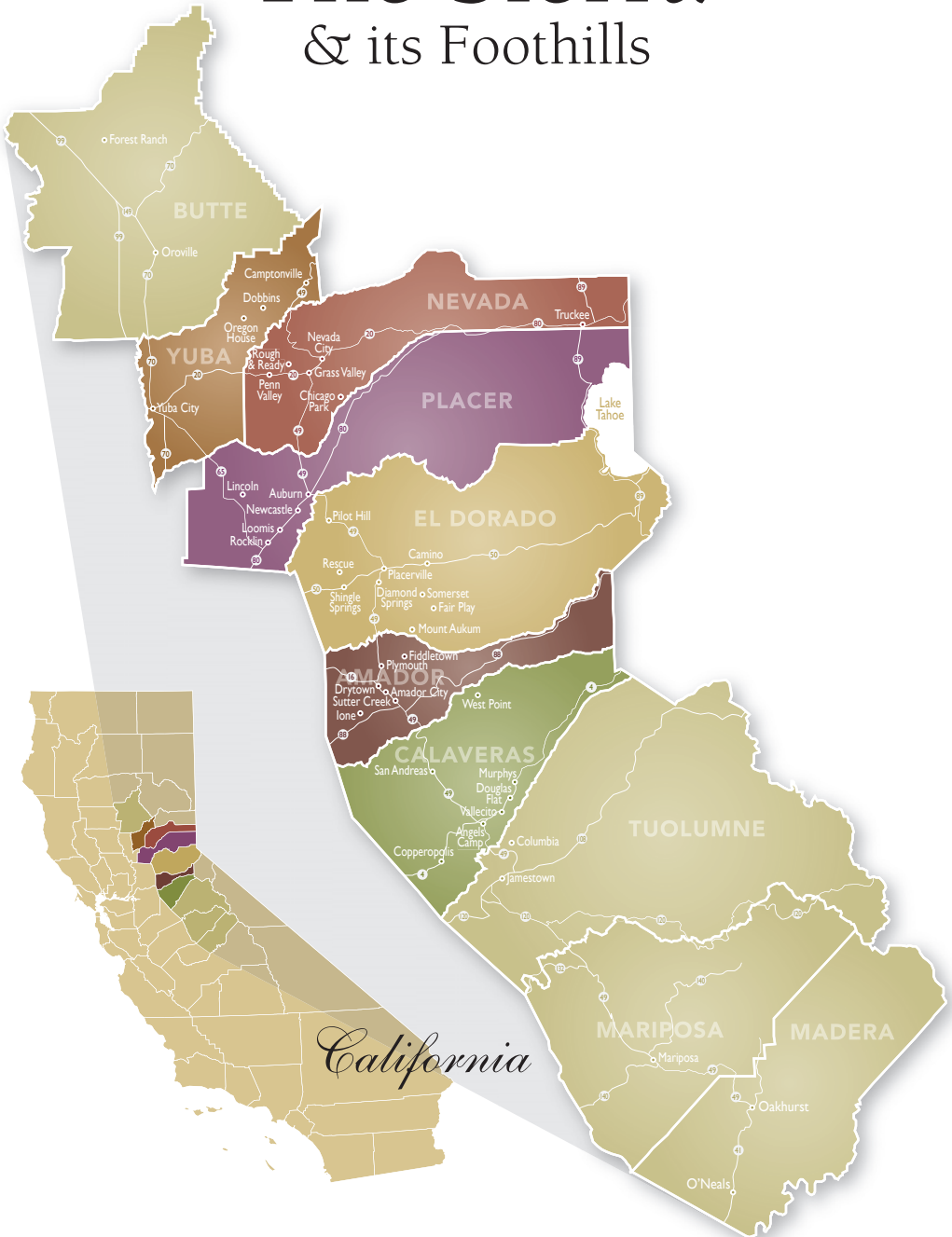
Proceed to explore the 2 wine is. The index is organized geographically to make that easy to do.

Remember: More winemakers discover the joy of winemaking in the Sierra and its Foothills every year. You'll no doubt discover a new winery just around the corner of the winding road. Be sure to stop.

— Barbara Keck

MAP OF THE REGION

The Sierra
& its Foothills



Vino Noceto

PLYMOUTH · AMADOR COUNTY

AMADOR COUNTY

Vino Noceto



Setting the Standard for Sangiovese in California

The estate will wait until the next time a Vino Noceto. That's not only appropriate, it's necessary. In Italian, the word for 'wait' is 'aspettare'. Almost 200 years ago, the first agricultural use of the land in the Shenandoah Valley was in Plymouth in Amador County. That's where Jim and Susan Gullett bought the land in 1984 to establish the Vino Noceto vineyard. Before the Gulletts started concentrating on Italian varieties, the property had many links to Europe and the Mediterranean.

A man named Lebec was the first European who farmed this land, when it was still part of Calaveras County. Stillwaggon, an original 49er miner, bought the farmland from Lebec and, in 1887, built a home that was dedicated to a grandmother's use. In 1987, the Gulletts purchased the original homestead property and its 18.5 acres from a descendent of Stillwaggon. Today, the Gulletts live in that home, updated many times since 1887. From that home base, they tend to the 40 acres of Vino Noceto's vineyards and orchards.

Susan and Jim started down the path to the Vino Noceto winery venture back in the 1980s when they were first dating. They were eye to eye on many things, including liking a country living. In the spring of 1984, they rented a

born in Andover, and started looking to buy land in the Shenandoah Valley. This was prime agricultural area before the Civil War and grapes were first grown there in the 18th century. It's a natural transition to viticulture and the next day, they started.

During a trip to Italy in 1981 with their two sons, then aged 2 and 4, the Gulletts spent the first and wine that makes family meals in Italy so meaningful. In particular, they became interested in Chianti. A trip to Tuscany in 1985 brought them in contact with the well-established Chianti and Brunello producers. It was a short hop from that experience to obtaining cuttings of Italian varietals to plant on their land. By 1999, 21 acres were under their cultivation in the Shenandoah Valley.

"Our goal has always been to make a really pure wine," said Jim. "We wanted to the point that our wines taste distinctive. Our goal is to have our wine taste like a Sangiovese that you'd enjoy on a hillside in Italy." Today, many vines are cuttings from the mother vine. Noeto Sangiovese is the standard against which all other U.S. Sangiovese wines should be compared.



Jim and Suzy Gullett

The first vintage of VINO Noeto wins in 1990, 110 gallons was made with the assistance of a consulting winemaker and a neighboring winery helped by 1995. In 1999, the Gulletts built their own winery

and from that point on are produced annually, and most of the fruit for those wines comes from their own vineyards. They produce about 6,000 cases of a few different Sangiovese wines, a few Merlot, Pinot Grigio, Barbera, Zinfandel and a few red blends.

"We worked hard to preserve the flavor and delicate feminine character of this Sangiovese grape. We want the wine to show that it originates from a beautiful fruit, but we use our modern, winemaking methods to produce a modern style Chianti wine," said Jim. "And, this is far from the inexpensive imported Chianti that many people remember as best at providing a round bottle of old-fashioned but rather than a good glass of Italian wine."

The Chianti wine is produced by VINO Noeto will undergo fermentation primarily in stainless steel with some fermentation in large-format barrels. It will have the fruit character is preserved, and be able to be bottled and aged as a premium. It will be available with food, from lamb to lamb to pasta to pizza. And, to make it a more approachable VINO Noeto has

didn't tell the us of a bite, but I'm a bit of No. 10. So I give the
fits into a 1/2 cup. The dip is a 1/2 cup. The dip is a 1/2 cup. The dip is a 1/2 cup.

Vino Noceto is a 1/2 cup. The dip is a 1/2 cup. The dip is a 1/2 cup. The dip is a 1/2 cup.

His 1/2 cup. The dip is a 1/2 cup. The dip is a 1/2 cup. The dip is a 1/2 cup.



Enjoying VINO NOCETO's wine and Braised Short Ribs at a Tahoe dinner party: Barbara Keck, Joseph Weinberg and Allen Weinberg.

Vino Noceto has a 1/2 cup. The dip is a 1/2 cup. The dip is a 1/2 cup. The dip is a 1/2 cup.

1/2 cup. The dip is a 1/2 cup. The dip is a 1/2 cup. The dip is a 1/2 cup.

Wine and food go hand in hand, the Grillets believe. Suz has created many family recipes with an Italian flair, and the White is full of ideas for dishes that pair with the wines.

You'll understand how much the team at VINO NOCETO views food as an important adjunct to wine when you drive into the winery parking lot. The employees of the Grillets are a grinning dog with a white tie and a black shirt. The dog is the iconic emblem of the Grillets. The dog is a popular character and has been in San Francisco and London. The Grillets' dog is a popular character and has been in San Francisco and London.

SEE VINO NOCETO'S RECIPE ON FOLLOWING PAGE.

www.Noceto.com

Vino Noceto Winery · 11011 Shenandoah Road · Plymouth, CA 95669 · (209) 245-6556

Tasting Room · Open Monday to Friday from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m., and Saturday and Sunday from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Production · The winery makes 10,000 cases of 14 wines, primarily Sangiovese. Other wines include the varietals Pinot Grigio, Barbera, Zinfandel and Moscato.

A complete listing of Amador County wineries begins on page 103.

Vino Noceto's One Pot Short Ribs Recipe

CREATED BY ANDY WASSERMAN

Suz and Jim Galletta tune to hear friends who both love the VINO NOCETO and like to create recipes that go with the wines. One such is Andy Wasserman, a wine aficionado who lives in Piedmont and has been a Galletta family friend for more than 40 years. Andy loves the Italian varietal wines and this recipe is a favorite with the flagship Noceto Sangiovese. Suz refers to this as the “putting in a r-f wine.” Modeled after the Tuscan Chianti, it is packed with fruit, easy to drink, medium bodied, well balanced and a mile with it.

Short ribs

4 lbs. beef short ribs

Olive oil

3 C carrots, sliced

½ C parsley, chopped

Pepper

8 or more cloves of garlic, chopped

3 C onions, sliced

8 whole cloves

Sauce

1 large can (approx. 29 oz.) chopped or diced tomatoes, including the juice

2 C (or more) Noceto Sangiovese

¼ C red wine vinegar

2 t salt

¼ to ½ C brown sugar

Dash of cayenne pepper

Sprinkle the ribs generously with freshly ground pepper; then sear all over in the olive oil in a large pot or Dutch oven. Don't overcrowd. Remove each batch to a platter and hold aside. When done searing all the ribs, discard the oil and fat in the pot.

Layer half the ribs back into the cooking pot. Cover with half of the vegetables. Repeat.

Mix all the sauce ingredients in a large bowl. Pour over the ribs. Bring to a boil. Cover and simmer for about 2 hours, until the meat is falling off the bone. Serve while enjoying the rest of the Noceto Sangiovese.

Andy Wasserman is a self-taught cook who started cooking in high school using recipes in the “Joy of Cooking.” In college and his own apartment, he cooked at least once a week and found that he enjoyed cooking's creative aspects. His grandmother, who equated food with love, was an inspiration. Andy and his wife, Marcia, met Suzy and Jim at a young couple's group at their synagogue in Lafayette. The old friendship group from that time still gets together in Plymouth at VINO NOCETO for food and wine.



VALLECITO & MURPHYS · CALAVERAS COUNTY

Twisted Oak Winery



Where Fun and Serious Wines are Made

Wine h u l d b fun. This is the c d o b i w n n a k e Jeff Stä b Twis d
 W n e y in E u a C nty, w o p r e s the title E Jefe, by the way.
 No f i f m the tw b Murphy w e e Tw s ed h a a t a s i n g r n
 to m m d a e t h o w o d n ' t w t to d r i e a r u n d the t w i s y r o d s b
 this p a t b the S i e r a F o h i l l s J e f m k s i n t a s w i n e that he d e s r i b e s i n a
 s i n g e w o r d, "Yummy."

Twis d D p e h i s i n m k n g i w n s f m R h n e a n d l b e i a v a i e a s
tha d o w l i n t h i s p a t b t h e F o h i l l s T h e g a p s f r o m t h e T e m p r a n i l l o
G n h a G u a n o M u r d r e V i g i e a n d S y r a h v i n e s p l a n t e d o p a r t b
t h e l a d h e a n d i w f M a y, o w n a t h e i w n e y i n V a l e t o f i n d t h e i r w a y
i n t o i w n s f i t f u l l y n a n d i w t h f u n i n m i n d : T h e S p a i a r d , R i v e r b S k u l l s
% & @ ! M u r g t r o d , D ' E u m b k , T o i d o a s w e l l a s m e w i n e s w i t h
m u n d a e n a n s

Jeff always wanted to grow grapes and Mary always wanted to buy land, and neither of these things were happening in Orange County where Jeff worked as an engineer on data storage products and Mary created handcrafted gifts.

They took a lot of faith and built the business in Calaveras County because they decided to live where they love. And so they moved, dug the plots, planted vines, and help and began to unlock the creativity in making wine.

Now, but that rubber chicken thing. That started when Jeff and Mary were trying to write something interesting about the back label of their first wines in 2004. "It was a terrible joke," said Jeff. "We were supposed to add that this was a wine that should be enjoyed with a bunch of friends and a rubber chicken."

The truth of Twisted Oak's wines is that Jeff is serious about making good wine and in the bottle, he and Mary want people to have fun with the



Jeff and Mary Stai

wine. Jeff intended the fun element by putting up silly signs on the twisty road to the winery to make sure visitors to the property took the correct turns; the road runs past the original 350-year-old twisted California blue oak from which the wine gets its name. Then, E. Jeff decided to hang on the rubber chicken from the signs and the tree. The Rubber Chicken National Forest was born.

When visitors arrive at the tasting room at the winery, they are enjoying the flight of wine. The Spanish is a delight. This is a big Ripley blend of Tempranillo, Garnacha, and Grenache with lots of berries and black currant and a nice, long finish. It is a wonderful wine.

An interesting bit about the River of Skiffs is an appealing Mavedra with grapes from a vineyard in Napa. A legend says (you have to love the irony). The label was the banishment of a draw, who was given various tasks to punish a disobedient phone bill that annoyingly came out of nowhere. He bit his tongue and he had to do with his to a girlfriend during a family trip to a local cruise (Niece job A draw.)

On the 60th anniversary of Twisted Oak Winery produces a year, none of the wine is produced more than 10 years. Putting the wine-drinking public

with a diversity of tastes is one of Jeff's goals. His wines are balanced, produced with minimal intervention. Some wines are crisp, some are full-bodied. You'll have fun tasting to find the one you like. Don't be afraid to try them regardless of name and then go to the Page Station,

Jeff has added to the fun in Calaveras County with his summer notes. Six times on the summer, the twists of Red Hill Road to the flat hilltop on his land fills with a squippd with the binding harsh bark and the other thing you need to have a good time. It's a lovely melody, the performance is a good one, the wines are great, the food is delicious. Twisted Oak is a great place to go to the next season's events to be a part of. The happy pass in the spring

You might be wondering what to do with wines so interestingly named. What a dish that's simple to prepare and will no longer be from the fun? Jeff says, "If it goes on the grill, it goes with Twisted Oak."



SEE TWISTED OAK WINERY'S RECIPE ON FOLLOWING PAGE.

www.TwistedOak.com

Twisted Oak Winery · 4280 Red Hill Road (at Highway 4) · Vallecito, CA 95251
· (209) 736-9080

Winery and Tasting Room: The winery tasting room is open Monday to Friday from 11:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m., Saturday and Sunday from 10:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.

Twisted Oak Tasting Room (downtown Murphys) · 363 Main Street · Murphys, CA 95247
· (209) 728-3000 · The downtown tasting room is open Monday to Friday from 11:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m., Saturday and Sunday from 10:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.

Production: The winery makes 6,000 cases of 18 wines using fruit from the Twisted Oak and other Calaveras County vineyards focusing on the varietals of Tempranillo, Viognier, Syrah, Touriga Nacional, Petite Syrah, Graciano, Garnacha, Albariño, Mourvedre and Carignane.

A complete listing of Calaveras County wineries begins on page 120.

Boeger Winery

PLACERVILLE · EL DORADO COUNTY

EL DORADO COUNTY

Boeger Winery



Working With History

Greg Boeger's family is grounded in the wine business. He is the grandson of Alton Nibbelini, a Swiss Italian immigrant who planted one of Napa's early vineyards. Greg's grandfather Alton came to California during the Gold Rush and put his hands to work in pursuit of gold, but instead of mining. A century later in 1972, grandson Greg purchased a former Gold Rush-era vineyard and winery in El Dorado County and founded the county's first modern winery.

The path from Napa to El Dorado is a familiar one to many vineyard owners and winemakers in the Sierra Foothills. Greg had worked harvests at the Nibbelini Winery in Napa. His uncle insisted on him to join the business after he gave his hands to make a business in agricultural economics and viticulture. "I don't see Greg hardly had a taste for his own property but when the early 1960s prices of Napa and Sonoma land were high, 'There were plenty of vineyards and wineries there but none were really interested in helping me out,' Greg recalled.

A article in the *Santa Ana* about Ben's report about the expensive vineyards that were being planted in El Dorado County piqued Greg's interest. Planting had started declining rapidly in the late 1960s due to insect

problem s a d the e w o e n tha this g r i a l t u r a l a d w a l d be l o
to h u i n g s a d i v i s i o n s “The g o n m i s s i o n e and the f a m a l v i o p r e t y
m u h g h h b d o m e – g t o d o i n e I w a s w o k i n g f o the p a r t -
m a t o b g i a l t u r e i n S a a n a t o – a d h e p d m e f i n d l a n d,” G g a i d. He
b h t the h i s o i c F o i R a h t h a w l o e d a l a n d b o f u l l y a l d
The I m m i g a t R i x n e V g e b s a d f u i t s o f a l t y p e s h a d b e g r o w n
the e h S i v s I t a i a , F r a h a d G m a i m m i g r a t s a d b d t o w o k e s
i n the G d R u h a n p s The F o i W i n e y, l o a t d a n the i s t e w a a t h r i v -
i n g i n g d a d w i n e y u n t i l p r h i b i t i o n i n the 1920s B u t the e w a s s i l l the



Justin Boeger

o i g i n a l w i n e r y a d a n a l,
p r d u c i n g v i n y a r d a n the
F o i t i a n h .

G g a d h i s f a n i l y
h a v e w o k e d h a r d t o b u i l d
B o g e W i n e y t o the
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h o m e s e a d e s I t w a s b u i l t
f r o m s o s f u n d w h e n
the v i n y a r d s w e c l e a r e d
i n the 1860s W h a y u g o
t o t a e t d a y, y u l l w a k
b y t h i s 1860's b u i l d i n g a d
e s the F e d e r a l s a n p o
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l i a s t o p r d u c e a n a t a w i n e d u r i n g P h i b i t i o n .

T d x s m d e n l G a b t a i n g r o m , b u i l t i n 2001, i s a h w -
e s b m o e t h a f i v i n s m a d e f r o m 0 d i f f e r e n t v a i e t i e s f r o m the f i v e
i n g d s n o w f i m d b the B e g f a n i l y. “W h e n w e c a m e t o t h i s a r e a ,
the e w e n o s b l i h d v i n y a d s t o p k o f , a d the e w a s n o r e a l l y a
h i s o y b w a h a d d o e w e l i n the b d i v i n g d s t h a s r v i d e d . Z i n f a n d e l ,
M i s n a d M u s w e g w o b the m i n e s ” G g a i d. “I a m s i l l t r y i n g
t o f i n d a t w a g w s b e i n the x i a s m i c r o i m a t e a n d t e r r o r b o u r
s p a d h i l l y i n g d s The e i s a p l a o a y v a r i e y y u w a n t t o g r o w
d u e t o the x i a i n s i n i p e x p a r e a d e r a t i o n .”

B e g p l a t s i t s i v n s i n a l b b t h a o f o m t o the h i l l s d e w i t h -
a t u s o t e r i n g B a b a i s the x i e y t h a s p l a n t e d a n the m a j o r i t y o

the range. Italian and Spanish are also highlighted, to add our Zinfandel is an E.D. County special. Greg won one of the first California produce show awards in Merlot, then a more unheard of. From the hotel, the land looks like a heavenly delight just the place for Greg to focus attention on the vineyards and grape growing.

The next generation of Boeger family members includes Justin Boeger, who made the red wine mark in 2000. With his 1998 U.D. designation in the Merlot-tailored wine life, Justin's education and international experience in wine is in the Franco-Italian region of Germany, he is well prepared for a rising star. Boeger Winery has not only a place in his own heart but also in the future.



Sue and Greg Boeger

Justin has introduced several new wines and winemaking techniques to Boeger Winery. One result is a popular Pinot Noir. Justin's skill is in making well-balanced wines that you can drink now and also cellar for later enjoyment.

"It's both a blessing and a curse," the small lots of wine and all the varieties," Justin said. "But this gives an opportunity to the public to try all these varieties from one region. Boeger Winery has something for everyone." He is proud of his "M" series featuring unique blends of grape varieties from around the world. Merlot, Cabernet, Bordeaux blends, Merlot are Rhone blends, Migliorini are Spanish Italian blends. It's a possibility of varieties, but Justin is determined to let the grapes speak. You'll enjoy Boeger wines because they are not overly manipulated, and there is his own in every glass.

SEE BOEGER WINERY'S RECIPE ON FOLLOWING PAGE.

www.BoegerWinery.com

Boeger Winery · 1709 Carson Road · Placerville, CA 95667 · (530) 622-8094
or (800) 655-2634

Tasting Room: Open daily from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Tasting Fee: Taste up to six wines for \$5 (refundable with wine purchase). The Reserve wine tasting, for \$10, includes a wine glass with the Boeger Winery logo.

Production: The winery makes 24,000 cases of 15 wines including the "M" blends and also Sauvignon Blanc, Pinot Gris, Moscato, Tempranillo, Barbera, Merlot, Primitivo, Zinfandel, Cabernet Franc, Petite Sirah, and Pinot Noir.

A complete listing of El Dorado County wineries begins on page 132.

Susan Boeger's Salmon with Soy Butter Sauce

FROM BOEGER WINERY

This beautiful recipe and the beautiful recipe were created by Susan Boeger to pair with the Boeger Pinot Noir and Sauvignon Blanc. Boeger Pinot Noir is a blend of a variety of grapes that are grown in a complex and the place with red people like he and pie to the Boeger Sauvignon Blanc has a big and strong taste with a round mouth, and is highly aromatic with a crisp acidity.

4 Salmon Steaks or a Salmon Fillet large enough for 4 people

6 T butter

4 garlic cloves, minced

¼ C ketchup

½ C soy sauce

⅓ C sherry (*Amontillado, optional*)

Melt the butter and stir in the minced garlic. Simmer so gently that it doesn't get brown. Add the ketchup and sizzle for awhile, then add the soy sauce and simmer for about 10 minutes, reducing to a paste or barbecue sauce consistency. Add the sherry and cook for a couple minutes more. Use this as a baste, not a marinade. If it doesn't look dark enough to you, use more soy sauce.

Baste the salmon just before grilling. If you are using salmon steaks, baste them on both sides, and baste while turning on the grill.

If using a salmon fillet, put it on a double thickness of tin foil. Baste the top, grill it with the lid down, 15 minutes or so, until it's done. Baste it again before removing from the grill.

Serving suggestion: Place the salmon on a platter with a bed of Spinach or Swiss Chard, and consider Basmati rice as a side dish.

Susan Boeger's Asian Pear, Lemon Verbena & Tequila salad

Asian pears any variety (*sometimes called apple pears*)

Fresh lemon verbena leaves

High quality olive oil

Fresh lemon

Black pepper

Quality tequila

Thinly slice Asian pears and toss them in a bowl with fresh squeezed lemon juice to coat.

Finely slice or chop lemon verbena leaves and add to bowl. About 2 to 3 leaves per Asian pear.

Drizzle with olive oil to coat.

Grind fresh pepper over fruit to taste. Top with a splash of tequila. Toss everything together. Serve.

Susan Boeger is co-founder of Boeger Winery and has been involved in its many facets. She is a talented artist whose current work is in clay sculpture, and is an avid collector of the modern art that is displayed throughout the winery.



Avanguardia Wines

NEVADA CITY & GRASS VALLEY · NEVADA COUNTY

NEVADA COUNTY

Avanguardia Wines



A Disregard for Traditional Winemaking

The winding road to Avanguardia – Bitney Springs Road, bridge over Deer Creek, Newtown Road, Jones Bar, look for the sign – takes you to an in-winery tasting room that is charmingly set in the midst of cases of wine, b tling m h i n s a d i w n e n k n g q i p m e t. The s g n that finally p o n t s in the d i r e i n b the p u r p h i l t i w n e y a l d g “varietal-free z n e h a d ” a d t h a w l d t i p u b f t h a u a e i n f o a n b h e r w o l d l y w i n e t a i n g e p e i n e

R b k r i s n a i s d d i a d t o m k n g i w n s i n h i s u l t r a b o u t i q u e w i n e y t h a p r o d e a m x i m u m s o y p l a r e t o t h e w i n e d r i n k e r. H e r e f e r s t o h i s s y l e b i w n e n k n g a “h e n i c b e n d i n g ” I t d o n ’ t t a k e l o n g b e f o r e u r e i z t h a h e h a a h a t h y d i s g d b t h e t r a d i t i o n a l C a l i f o r n i a a p p r o a h t o i w n e n k n g a d i s a i v n g u t a b x e n e w w o l d w i t h h i s w i n e s

Y u l l b g e e d b y s u m p t u o s i w n s i w t h f a n i c f u l n a m e s l i k e S e v a i o C i s h l o D e F i o e P e n i a o, S a g n e o, A n p i o H i s t a s i n g n o e s a y m d - s l y t h a h i s i w n s a e h a d c f i d i w t h a x a n t - g a r d e f l a i r, a n d m e n t i o n t h a u a e i n b a n e w t a e x p e i n c e I t i s a n e p e i n c i e n c e y u l l e n j o y .

Rob spent his winter making philosophy during his life working in computer programming in the Ags. Like many of us, he began his wine drinking as a hobby trying to get bottles of wine on the cheap. He refined his palate through wine, and decided to look for bottles of wine. "A lot of them were Italian wines and I found that I preferred Italian wines," Rob said.

When he and his family moved from the Ags to Tulare County, it was to a hill district about 20 feet elevation. He had been farming apples in the area and took his family's side-hill grapes. "I started a three-acre seed vineyard in Tulare," Rob said. "I planted it, and my wife Marilyn, took care of it."



In 1977, he visited the Foundation Plant Materials Service grape harvest in California. This independent team of the university processes grapes and distributes disease-free plant material with a particular emphasis on grapes from the list of

the 20 wine varieties. Rob selected 29 varieties to put in his seed vineyard in Tulare and to perpetuate the varieties we have in origin. Thus he began many years as a grape grower of the seed material kind, and a winter maker.

The decision was made to move to Nevada County in 1990, and the interest in growing and wine making moved with them.

"I believed that Sierra Foothill wines would be as good as those from any area and would plant vines in 1990 and 1991 in 3 1/2 acres here." Now, Avanguardia Wines produces proprietary blends using more than 20 Italian, German, Russian and French varieties and diversity of California and crosses that he grew in his seed vineyards. "Many of the grape varieties have been imported by the university especially for us and are available now. We are excited to be here." To his wine state growers, he adds to the Sierra Foothills fruit: for example, Rob found an Eldorado vineyard that had excellent grapes. He started to produce outstanding blends and they found a lot of living.

"I think my wine is a variety-free one as we don't produce traditional blends, Zinfandel and so on. Although I expect my wines would be considered as they are in the same area as the vineyard."

to be told that, instead of who to give them fanciful names," he said.

Rob's next byline is that blending is the way to get the best quality, takes wines. Sometimes he uses a many a mix grapes in a blend. "I do not realize that blending is a technical blending, because I am looking for the maximum of yield to the vine. I want to produce wines that are extremely friendly." His wines are not high alcohol, not are they fruitless. Subtle and dignified. He produces 1,000 cases of wine each year, and 90 percent of the grapes in those wines come from his vineyards in Nevada County.

Although the names of his wines is informative and tantalizing. Pinot Noir is a primary wine. Sangre is a 19th century name of Sangre. Apio means sample grapes. Cristóbal means crystal. Selenio is a delicate blend of Italian wine. Haute is the traditional to describe a world of renowned and famous. De Fio is two flows.

Avanguardia hopes to introduce many wine drinkers to these unique blends and just in case you don't like a twist-and-turn red-wine type of culture (that's a pity, since you will miss an extraordinarily beautiful country's depth and understanding), they produce a tasting room in Grass Valley.



Rob Chrisman

SEE AVANGUARDIA WINES' RECIPE ON FOLLOWING PAGE.

www.AvanguardiaWines.com

Avanguardia Winery · 13028 Jones Bar Road · Nevada City, CA 95959 · (530) 274-9482

Winery: Winery open Saturdays and Sundays from noon to 5 p.m. and by appointment.

Avanguardia Tasting Room · 209 W. Main Street · Grass Valley, CA 95945 · (530) 274-9911

Tasting Room: Tasting Room open Wednesday to Sunday from noon to 5 p.m.

Production: The winery makes 800 to 1,000 cases of wine. Eight wines are currently offered and are proprietary blends of Teroldego, Tempranillo, Tannat, Peverella, Tocai Friulano, Forastera, Pinot Grigio, Semillon, Chenin Blanc, Orange Muscat, Flora (a UC-patented variety), Dolcetto, Sangiovese, Refosco, Barbera, Brunello and the patented UC Davis hybrid Carmine.

A complete listing of Nevada County wineries begins on page 152.

Viña Castellano

AUBURN · PLACER COUNTY

PLACER COUNTY

Viña Castellano



A Piece of Spain in the Sierra Foothills

When the Auburn-based Spanish wine producer Viña Castellano was awarded a Best California wine in the 2014 California State Fair, Teena Wilkins was on hand. “All the press had worked, family investment and in the end, risk taking and a sense of direction all that was finally rewarded.”

Teena is the owner of Viña Castellano Estate Vineyards and Winery in Auburn, which started in 1999 when she and her late father, George Mendez, put in Tenorio and Syrah. The vineyard, now 10 acres, is its own land owned by Teena and her father. The Mendez family. From the beginning it was a family venture. When you visit today, you’re likely to see Mendez family siblings and friends all contributing to the work of the winery in the way.

Shared cultural traditions are what led Teena into this enterprise. “I grew up with my grandmother, Mercedes Maria-Mendez, living next door; she made 200 gallons of wine every year from the time she was a young girl until she was a very old woman,” Teena recalls. “Wine was part of our food life, and Sunday dinners introduced us to the taste of wine with food from a young age.”

In 2014, Teena started taking care of a U Davis that we’re doing with world wine in mind. She was inspired in part by her father’s

trips to visit relatives in the Cile region of Spain. He met with the grandson of Tempranillo in his grandfather's vineyard in the Sierra Foothills landscape similar to the terroir in which Spanish wine grapes were growing. They produced roses and daisies and planted the Tempranillo and Syrah.

By the vintage day, he had a good fruit for a first crush, which the place a family in California. He was under way to see a new property. The owner of the vineyard

ing lining it with large granite stones that had been removed when the vineyard was planted, the owner says. But, by 2005, winemaking began there.

Today, the owner provides the land and the winery. The owner, Dick Irwin, with plenty of room to produce 2,000 cases of estate wine. The estate now has 10 planted acres and another 15 acres will be planted in the future. Barrels take up a goodly portion of room in the cellar; the Old-World winemaking style for which Viña Castellano is known means that many of their wines are aged in



the barrel for three or more years. This wine has a good, ripe feel and is healthy with a balancing touch.

"We call ourselves Old World Winemakers with a Modern Twist," she says. "We have to deal with the tendency of Sierra Foothills wines to have higher alcohol and yet make sure our wines are food-friendly and balanced." Viña Castellano's Mediterranean-like soils combine with warm days and cool nights to produce luscious grapes that result in intense and full-bodied wines.

Although known as a Tempranillo expert, Viña Castellano is continuing to build a reputation for producing Spanish heritage and signature

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 6 n h a 6 n h 6 Mn a rē l M u r v d rē and they h o m k e e a R d o
 R 6 u s n g Sy h . To n phā z the f n ilys Spanish h e itg e, the winery is
 n n d i n h n o f the f n ilys 6 illa r o s “Viña is the Spa ish wo d fo
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 Spā n f m h n e the M d e n d
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 l a o is h a u w l d h l a m a
 f o m thā r g n .”

The wine is a king's peace in
Viña. "It is a peace that is
a living. "You don't have to be a
nobles to enjoy it." "It is a
peace that is a living peace."
When he was coming to a
tavern, a man told him that the
wine was with him. He properly
asked them and names like E. Madrid,
E. Toledo, Br. and S. George. To go
with him, he was a first time visit to
wanting to try a flight of wine with
a taste. Spanish makes his and
travels to a house and they
are in, the wine and vineyard of
the Sierra Nevada. The peace of
from with a new Viña.



Teena Wilkins

SEE VIÑA CASTELLANO'S RECIPE ON FOLLOWING PAGE.

www.VinaCastellano.com

Viña Castellano · 4590 Bell Road · Auburn, CA 95602 · (530) 889-2855

Tasting Room: Open Thursday to Sunday from noon to 5 p.m. Weekday tastings are by appointment. There is a tasting fee of \$5 for seven to nine wines selected monthly by Teena, or \$7 for a full flight of nine to 13 wines. The fee is waived when a bottle is purchased.

Production: The winery makes 1,600 to 1,800 cases yearly of estate wines from 10 acres of vineyards focusing on the varietals of Tempranillo, Syrah, Garnacha, Monastrell, Cabernet Franc and Verdejo. Other Spanish varietals will be offered over time, too.

A complete listing of Placer County wineries begins on page 158.

Viña Castellano's

Roasted Red Pepper & Tomato Gazpacho

with Sweet & Spicy Corn Relish

Teena Wilkins and her family are the quintessential hosts during the River Wine Cub's tasting featuring, in all places Spanish tapas to pair with their wines. A gazpacho ring is with the rest of a traditional Spanish-style red blend. The primo Moa relandón is a

Gazpacho

- | | |
|---------------------------------|--|
| 1 T extra-virgin olive oil | 1 large red onion, peeled & sliced |
| 8 whole garlic cloves, peeled | 3 red bell peppers, seeded & cut in quarters |
| 3 C canned diced tomatoes | 1 ½ t dry oregano |
| 1 qt chicken stock | 1 T fresh basil, chopped |
| 1 T cane sugar | 1 ¼ t sea salt |
| ¼ t freshly ground black pepper | 3 T heavy cream |
| 8 t nonfat sour cream | ½ C whole wheat croutons |

Preheat oven to 400 degrees F. Coat a baking sheet with olive oil spray. Place peppers skin side up on the baking sheet. Fill in spaces with sliced onion and garlic cloves. Roast for 15 to 20 minutes, or until skins of peppers turn brown. Run peppers under cold water and remove skins. Set aside.

In a large saucepan, combine tomatoes, oregano and chicken stock. Bring to a boil, reduce heat to medium low and simmer for 1 minute. Add peppers, onions and garlic. Cook for 10 minutes.

Transfer to blender and puree until smooth. Return to saucepan and add basil, sugar, salt and pepper. Cook briefly. Remove from heat and add heavy cream. Chill in refrigerator while preparing relish.

Sweet & Spicy Corn Relish

- | | |
|--------------------------------|--|
| ¼ C finely chopped hot peppers | 9 C corn kernels, fresh or frozen thawed |
| 2 lb. sweet onions, chopped | 2 C red and green bell pepper, chopped |
| 1 ½ C cups granulated sugar | 3 C cider vinegar (at least 5% acidity) |
| 1 T kosher salt | 1 t celery seed |
| 2 t dry mustard | 1 t turmeric |

In a large kettle combine corn, onions, bell and hot peppers, vinegar, sugar, salt, mustard, celery seed and turmeric. Bring to a boil over medium-high heat. Reduce heat to low and simmer for 15 minutes.

Chill. When both the Gazpacho base and the relish are chilled, combine and let sit in refrigerator for 2 to 3 hours. Serve chilled and garnish with sour cream or crème fraîche and cilantro or basil.

Carrying on the family tradition of winemaking is important to Augustina "Teena" Wilkins, and she continues to honor her forebears who inspired her and helped her make her dream of a Spanish-varietal winery in the Sierra Foothills come true. The Viña Castellano blends named Abuelito and Abuelita are one way she honors her Spanish background.





DIRECTORY
OF

*Sierra
Foothills*
WINERIES
AND
TASTING
ROOMS

- 103 Amador County
118 Butte County
120 Calaveras County
132 El Dorado County
148 Madera County
150 Mariposa County
152 Nevada County
158 Placer County
165 Tuolumne County
167 Yuba County



For more information
on Placer County wineries:

Placer County Wine Trail
www.placerwine.com

Sierra Vintners Association
www.sierravintners.com

Placer County Visitors Bureau
www.visitplacercounty.com

Placer Valley Tourism
www.placertourism.com

DIRECTORY · PLACER COUNTY

Placer County, located to Sacramento north, has more than 25 wineries. Take a drive southward-winning wineries and its friendly tasting rooms. Follow a special Wine Trail to get the best of the wine to the next.

Placer County has a long wine tradition, and wine grapes were introduced there in 1840. Prohibition kept the wine industry out until the 1970s when vineyards and wineries were established. With a climate similar to France's Rhône Valley, Placer County vineyards produce intense fruit with ripe richness and good structure.

As you head to winery and tasting room, hundreds of directions and people, limo and large group parties.

	FOOD AVAILABLE	PICNIC AREA	PET FRIENDLY	LIVE MUSIC ETC.	WEDDING VENUE	CORPORATE & GROUP EVENTS	BARREL TASTINGS
AUBURN							
AMOUR PRIVÉ							
9630 Miracle Dr. · Auburn, CA 95602 Winery Not Open to the Public Nearby Tasting Room: Sip Auburn 337 Commercial St. · Auburn, CA 95603 (530) 878-5558 www.amourprive.com	•	•	•	•	•	•	

The landmark wine is Cabernet Sauvignon. The hidden gem is Rive Droite, a Merlot-dominant Bordeaux-style blend.

AUBURN continued**BEAR RIVER WINERY AT SIP AUBURN**

337 Commerical St. · Auburn, CA 95722

(530) 878-5558

www.bearriverwinery.com

The landmark wine is Barbera. The hidden gem is Late Harvest Barbera.

BESEMER CELLARS AT SIP AUBURN

337 Commercial St. · Auburn, CA 95603

(530) 878-5558

www.besemercellars.com

The landmark wines are Cabernet Franc and Barbera. The hidden gems are Syrah and Malbec.

BONITATA BOUTIQUE WINE

291 Auburn-Folsom Rd. · Auburn, CA 95603

(530) 305-0449

www.bonitataboutiquewine.com

The landmark wine is Barbera. The hidden gems are Cabernet Franc and Silhouette, a Barbera and Charbono blend.

FAWNRIDGE WINERY

5560 Fawnridge Rd. · Auburn, CA 95602

(530) 887-9522

Nearby Tasting Room: Sip Auburn

337 Commercial St. · Auburn, CA 95603

(530) 878-5558

www.fawnridgewine.com

The landmark wine is Barbera. The hidden gem is Petite Sirah.

FORTEZZA WINERY

10555 Harris Rd. · Auburn, CA 95603

(916) 502-5412 · By Appointment Only

www.fortezzawinery.com

The landmark wines are Sangiovese and Petit Verdot. The hidden gem is Primitivo Rose.

LONE BUFFALO VINEYARDS

7505 Wise Rd. · Auburn, CA 96503

(530) 823-1159

www.lonebuffalovineyards.com

The landmark wine is Where The Buffalo Roam, a Rhone-style Syrah blend. The hidden gem is Noble Beast, a Cabernet Sauvignon.



WINERIES OF THE *Sierra Foothills*

“I’m so proud of Barbara Keck! She took my chats with her on Sierra Foothill grapes and wine to heart, and now we have this great book on our region. She grew to love the wine and wine community here, and I know the readers will, too.”

– John MacCready, *Sierra Vista Winery founder and winemaker*

“An enriching book that highlights the triumphs and struggles of starting a winery. Filled with insightful stories of the men and women who make wine in the beautiful and historic Sierra Foothills of California, this book is a great way to learn more about this special winemaking region.”

– Dr. Liz Thach, MW, *Author of Call of the Vine, Distinguished Professor of Wine & Management, Sonoma State University, CA*

“Finally a book about the wines and winemakers of the Sierra Foothills. This was long overdue. While the region has a rich history dating back to the Gold Rush, the wineries of the Sierra Foothills are true pioneers. That pioneer spirit, including a willingness to push boundaries by trying new things, is one of the reasons the Sierra Foothills is one of the most exciting wine regions today.”

– Cyril Penn, *Editor, Wine Business Monthly*

“‘Risk-Takers & Rule-Breakers’ is an apt subtitle for Barbara Keck’s affectionate and concise “Wineries of the Sierra Foothills.” Of the nearly 300 wineries or brands exploiting Mother Lode grapes, she focuses with a relaxed and friendly voice on 21 wineries – some longtime growers and winemakers, some relative newcomers – who show with intellect and energy that the region can be home to a surprisingly broad and assured range of grape varieties and wine styles.”

– Mike Dunne, *Wine Writer, Wine Judge, Contributing Wine Columnist for The Sacramento Bee*

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