

Orangewood Wines

Small Wineries, Great Wines

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Introduction

Last year the normal sales patterns were upended as people bought more from wine stores and drank less at restaurants. We are trying to figure out what to expect this year. September tends to mark the end of summer in Arizona, although it's still over 100 Fahrenheit degrees. School is back in session and people are back at work, some of them remotely. We hope that September will be a normal transition to the more frantic OND, as we in the trade refer to the last three months of the year.

This month, Leslie gives us some of the background and history of the Salvestrin Winery. The Ramble ponders how we will return to normal.

Salvestrin Winery

Portfolio Notes - by Leslie Zellmer

St. Helena is in the center of Napa Valley and home to Salvestrin Winery and their historic Dr. Crane Estate vineyard. Their portion of the Dr. Crane vineyard is one of the oldest continuously operated vineyards in Napa Valley. (The other portion is owned by Andy Beckstoffer.) Dr. George Belden Crane planted the historic vineyard in 1859 to European varietals, one of the first in Napa to do so. Today the famed vineyard is taken care of by Rich and Shannon Salvestrin.



The Salvestrin family (Rich's grandparents) purchased the vineyard and Dr. Crane's Victorian home in 1932, after emigrating from Italy several years prior. The

home is now on the historic register and open to accommodate overnight stays for Salvestrin wine club members.

I had the pleasure of visiting the vineyards and winery twice. The things that linger in my mind (and on my palate) are the genuine hospitality of the Salvestrin family, the historic nature of the property and the lengths the family goes to preserve it, and especially, the beautifully crafted estate wines full of rich St. Helena fruit.

The vineyards have a history of being farmed sustainably (the winery and vineyards are certified Napa Green). Additionally, three generations of the Salvestrin family live on the property, making it even more of an important focus of their farming practices to keep things clean.

They produce several stunning Cabernet Sauvignon wines at different price points. First, the Napa Valley Cab, which has some fruit from the Crystal Springs Vineyard (their other St. Helena vineyard), as well as Dr. Crane, is fresh with red fruit and a luscious palate. This wine is ready to drink. The Dr. Crane Estate Cabernet Sauvignon is deeper and darker with notes of dark fruit, licorice and dark chocolate. A bit more brooding and can handle some aging in the bottle. Their 3D Cab (paying homage to Rich and Shannon's three daughters, the fourth generation), is crafted from select barrels of the Estate Cab and designed to be much more age worthy, with aromas of black cherries and toasted oak.

As a side project, they also produce (not on site) another Cab called Cult. This is a fun and approachable wine that anyone can enjoy and is quite affordable.

Cheers to the Salvestrin family as they are in the midst of their 89th harvest at their estate vineyard in St. Helena.

The Rambler

It was eighteen months ago when suddenly the world changed. We had little clue about what was coming. The Arizona modelers were predicting a peak infection rate of 28 per day and total deaths of 974. Ha! Arizona reported 2,742 new infections yesterday and there have been a total of 19,487 deaths.

Since the start of the pandemic we have been variously locked down, masked, vaccinated and socially distanced. At least some of us have done some of these things. People worked at home or not at all. Restaurants and bars were not open for regular business. Zoom became part of our language, as we mostly met each other using that software. We stayed at home a lot and hoped for things to go back to normal.

I had expected, by now, to be able to peer into the future and have some sense of where we are headed. It is not clear how this is going to work out. It is far more complex, with far more competing interests than I, at least, can imagine.

Let's think about offices. Many people have been, and continue to be, working from home. Does it make sense for everybody to go back to the office?

From a job standpoint it makes sense for some, notably bartenders who have physical transactions with customers. For other jobs it is not so clear. Working alone allows better concentration, working together is important for brainstorming.

Asking people will result in a lot of different answers. Some people prefer to work alone, others prefer the social interaction. Some people prefer an office setting because they do not have a place at home conducive to work. Others need to provide care to children or elderly parents, so staying at home works best for them.

The buildings themselves have no say. But their owners are biased towards wanting to fill their office space, and nearby bars and restaurants would, likewise, like some workers stopping by.

How about transportation? We got spoiled with empty roads. Having long commute times is rarely a good idea. Commuting by bus is going to be a concern for those wanting social distancing. If most people worked from home, this would use a lot less gasoline - reducing our carbon footprint. On the other hand, we have planners and roadbuilders anxious to extend our freeway system. Bus operators are in a similar position: they would like their busses full.

Now as we hope we are nearing the end of the waves of pandemic, we will be putting together our new normal. How will it all work? Given the competing commercial, political and social forces, it will not be easy. There is no one size fits all solution. We will be fumbling our way for a while.

My advice: watch what is happening, be ready to adapt to what is changing around you, and be alert - the world needs more lerts. I know, it's an old joke.

The rambler rambles on...

Cheers,

Richard and Laurie
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