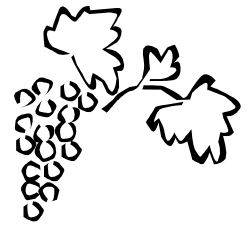


January 2005



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The Grape Vine Newsletter

This Month's Wine Club Selections

Every month our Wine Club members receive one or two bottles of our featured wines. The wines you get depend on the membership you are enrolled in. If you are not yet a member, we invite you to join the fun. Happy wine tasting.

Livermore Valley Wine Country

Visitors to San Francisco's Bay Area are bound to be aware of the wine country to the north, but most are surprised to find another flourishing expanse of vineyards and wineries less than an hour to the east: the Livermore Valley Wine Country. Sharing the picturesque canyons and ridges of the area with outposts of suburbia, the welcoming sight of vines and tasting rooms defines the quality of life in the Livermore Valley. To the delight of residents and visitors alike, the region is experiencing a wine renaissance harking back to the golden years of early California wine history.

The Livermore Valley is one of California's oldest wine regions and played a pivotal role in shaping California's wine industry. Robert Livermore planted the first commercial vines in the 1840s, several decades before pioneer winemakers C. H. Wente, James Concannon and Charles Wetmore recognized the area's winegrowing potential and founded their wineries in the early 1880s. International recognition followed when the Livermore Valley captured America's first international gold medal for wine in 1889 at the Paris Exposition - putting California, forever, on the world wine map.

The Livermore Valley also played a leading role in revolutionizing the state's enology and viticulture industry, with innovations including overhead irrigation, mechanical harvesting and roller crushing in the vineyard. Livermore Valley wineries were also the first wineries in California to bottle varietally labeled Chardonnay, Sauvignon Blanc and Petite Sirah. Nearly 80% of California's Chardonnay vines trace their genetic roots to a Livermore Valley clone.

Attracted to this rich winemaking tradition, climate, soil and geography, new winemakers and vineyardists are working alongside fifth generation winegrowers to create a Livermore wine renaissance. The region now has over 5,000 acres of vineyards and numerous, wonderful wineries boasting tasting rooms galore. Wineries vary in size from limited release, 100-case labors of love to 400,000-case industry heavyweights, while the grapes range from familiar Merlot and Chardonnay to exotic Italian, Rhone and Spanish varieties, making it possible to find award winning Livermore Valley wines around the globe.

Fenestra Winery

Owners: Lanny & Fran Replogle

Winemaker: Lanny Replogle

Location: Livermore, CA

With a Ph.D. in Organic Chemistry, owner and winemaker Lanny Replogle strives to produce a variety of unique and flavorful wines. "My aim is to produce flavorful, well balanced wines with a lot of varietal character," says Lanny when asked about his wine and the varieties that Fenestra produces. Lanny made his very first batch of wine over 40 years ago. "It wasn't good wine, but it sure was a heck of a lot of fun," said Replogle, 69. Lanny's dream of opening his own winery and retiring from teaching came to fruition in 1976 and now Fenestra Winery celebrates over 28 years of award winning winemaking in the Livermore Valley of California.

The building in which the winery currently occupies dates back to 1889, when a German immigrant by the name of George True started his own winery in this location. Due to Prohibition, the True winery faded out and in the late 1960's a catholic church acquired the property, using it for cattle raising, and carpentry work among other projects.

The Replogles began leasing the building and the surrounding lands in 1980. At that time, the building had been vacant for years and was badly neglected. Tons of trash was hauled away, new roofing was installed and the building was strengthened. It took a lot of work to reconstruct the century-old George True building but the outcome was the enchanting Fenestra Winery and the many wines it produces, which currently number more than twenty.

The winery is located in the Ruby Hill area of the Livermore Valley which includes a Jack Nicklaus designed golf course, luxury homes and over 900 acres of vineyards. Fenestra Winery is proud to claim the honor of being Livermore Valley's very first boutique winery and helped pave the way for what is now one of California's fine wine growing regions.

Thanks to great wineries such as Fenestra and many others in the Livermore Valley, this region has come a long way. When Fenestra first started, the Valley was just a handful of wineries. "Livermore Valley is in a renaissance," says Lanny, who is not alone in his belief that the Livermore Valley produces some of California's finest wines.