

Wine Travelers Blog: Acorn Winery – Where Field Blends Rule

By Joe in Russian River Wine Country - Sonoma Cty.
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Old Vine Zinfandel

At Acorn Winery, Betsy and Bill Nachbaur do things a little differently than most wineries and vineyard farmers. Their winery is located on prime acreage in the Russian River Valley and most of their vines are very old, including a Zinfandel block that is over 100 years old.

The Nachbours purchased the property, Alegria Vineyards, in 1990 and farmed the grapes and sold them off to various wineries. When winery after winery starting winning awards for their Alegria Vineyard wines, Bill decided it was time to try his hand at making wine and in 1996 established Acorn Winery. The Nachbours still sell their grapes but keep 20% of their crop to produce 3000 cases of wine per year.

So what about field blends? Few wineries practice this tradition today. The Alegria Vineyard contains blocks of various field blends in which the grape varieties are interplanted. They are harvested together and fermented together. So, for example, take the old vine Zinfandel block. Interspersed among the Zin are a few vines of Petite Sirah, Alicante Bouschet, and a few other varieties. The vines are all harvested and fermented together. The blending is done in the field and not in the barrel.

Acorn Winery is open by appointment only, and the tasting takes place in their rustic combination tasting and office room in the back of their home. The tasting fee is \$5. Betsy also gives visitors a quick tour of their interesting vineyard blocks.

As far as the wines, they are all well made and one thing is very clear. None are huge, big wines that overpower. These wines are made for food. We liked and purchased the Alegria Rosato, the Sangiovese, and Heritage Zinfandel. The wines however are not inexpensive; the price range is from \$19 for the Rosato to \$34 for the Zinfandel.

If you are looking for wines that are different, unique, and pair well with food, try the Acorn Winery.



Betsy and Bill Nachbaur,
Owners of Alegria Vineyards
and Acorn Winery