

Lone Pine Wine

Reds, whites and green: a quick guide to some alumni vintners in the Central and Sacramento valleys of California, where *in vino veritas* is more than just a motto. **by JESSICA FEDIN '17**

1 PEAY VINEYARDS Cloverdale

ANDY PEAY '92
Notable Wines: 2012 Sonoma Coast Ama Estate Vineyard Pinot Noir Ama (awarded 94 points—considered outstanding—by Wine Spectator)

When Peay left brand consulting in 2003 to team up with his brother after buying land on a ridge overlooking the Pacific, many people doubted that grapes would ripen in the cold locale. No worries. Although it's difficult to plant in their location, Peay, who worked in retail and harvested grapes to prepare for his new career, says his vineyard "produces wines with good acid, less fruit and alcohol, and more secondary aromatics of earth, tea, and spice, imprinting our wine with a distinct profile and coaxing out that unique personality."

2 CALLUNA VINEYARDS Windsor

DAVID JEFFREY '79, TU'80
Notable Wines: Calluna Estate, (2012 and 2013)

Focused on Bordeaux varietals with what he describes as "good natural acidity" and "moderate alcohol levels," Jeffrey turned to winemaking after a career with Seagram's in New York City. "My Dartmouth friends tend to think I have retired out here, but I actually work harder than ever," he says. Many people don't realize how "very competitive" the wine industry can be, he adds, but the stresses of raising capital and running a business is offset by "working outdoors and being involved in every process, from planting our own vineyard to making our wine."

3 GRACE PATRIOT WINES Placerville

TYLER GRACE '94
Notable Wines: 2012 Tempranillo (2015 California State Fair Best of Show Red); 2013 Cabernet Sauvignon (2016 California State Fair Best of Region)

Acquired in 2000 by Grace's father, this winery with views of the snowcapped Sierra Nevada Mountain Range is a family enterprise—something especially appreciated in crush season, when the breakneck pace "paralyzes you," says Grace. An earth sciences major, he realized that working in remote areas of Nevada as a field geologist studying drill-core samples was not his calling, but as a winemaker with an advanced viticulture degree, he still finds his science background helpful.

4 BELDEN BARN Santa Rosa

LAUREN BELDEN '97
Notable Wines: 2013 Sonoma Mountain Serendipity Block Pinot Noir (topped Wine & Spirits' 2016 Best U.S. Pinot Noir list); only vineyard in Sonoma growing Grüner Veltliner

Belden never imagined juggling entrepreneurship, writing and motherhood, but Dartmouth "instilled a strong belief that you really can do anything you set your mind to," she says. An English major, she loves the storytelling aspect of brand development—and "walking through 50 acres of gorgeous Sonoma landscape with neither a person nor vehicle in sight." She is a tenacious marketer, too: "You have to push past the nagging belief that [buyers and sommeliers] are just not that into you," she says.

5 TREFETHEN FAMILY VINEYARDS Napa

JON RUEL '95
Notable Wines: 2014 Trefethen Cabernet Sauvignon, 2015 Trefethen Chardonnay

An environmental and evolutionary biology major, CEO Ruel was drawn to winemaking by his scientific interest in how plants interact with their environments as well as by an Italian LSA to Siena, where he conducted an independent study on the wines of Chianti. "There is so much science in what we do here, yet we produce something so tangible and delicious, which requires understanding how the grapevines interact with the soils and the constantly changing weather," he says.

6 CLOS DE LA TECH Woodside

T.J. RODGERS '70
Notable Wines: 2009 and 2010 (Twisty Ridge) Clos de la Tech Domaine Lois Louise Pinot Noir (95 points from Wine Enthusiast)

Rodgers' technology-driven approach has yielded elegant and earthy Pinot Noirs that appeal to Burgundy lovers. Of his three vineyards, he recommends visiting Domaine Lois Louise, nestled in the Santa Cruz Mountains, and stopping at his Half Moon Bay Wine & Cheese Co. tasting bar and store. Clos de la Tech also has tastings. The CEO of Cypress Semiconductor has designed his own tractor (for use on the 25-degree side slope at Domaine Lois Louise), an entirely gravity-flow-based and temperature-controlled process from tank to barrel to bottle, and a patented steel wine press that squeezes the grapes more gently.

7 KIRIGIN CELLARS Gilroy

DHRUV KHANNA '83
Notable Wines: Malvasia Bianca, Vino de Mocca

Khanna, a former Intel lawyer, says he has found it rewarding to rehabilitate this century-old winery. He has expanded the vineyard in nontraditional ways: New soccer and cricket fields have hosted close to 1,000 youth soccer games in recent years. All 35 acres are equipped with drip-irrigation systems and there's a new venue for weddings and corporate gatherings. He still uses his legal training, he says, to deal with frustrating government regulations but takes pride in the fame achieved by his dessert wine, Vino de Mocca, which is "infused with orange-chocolate and coffee flavors" to delight sweet teeth.

8 FOUR LANTERNS WINERY AND SCJS VINEYARD Paso Robles

STEVE GLEASON '82
Notable Wines: 2014 Fire Light Syrah, 2015 Lamplight Viognier

Gleason says the most rewarding aspects of his lifestyle are "great quiet moments when I am out in the vineyard." He and wife Jackie "may be knee deep in mud or elbow deep in grape must," but sharing the fruits of their labor with customers makes it worthwhile. "Seeing the light in someone's eyes when they taste our wine makes it all magic," he says. In addition to SCJS Vineyard (named with their kids' initials), Jackie's Vineyard surrounds their home and produces Bordeaux varietals.

9 EPOCH ESTATE WINES Templeton

JORDAN FIORENTINI '99
Notable Wines: 2012 Authenticity (in International Wine Report's Top 100) and 2013 Ingenuity (awarded 93 points by Wine Spectator)

An engineering major and Italian minor—an asset while working at Tuscan vineyard Antinori—winemaker Fiorentini credits an LSA in Italy and her love of pushing the boundaries of science for her embrace of viticulture. A chance phone conversation in 2010 led to her fortuitous partnership with Bill and Liz Armstrong, who own Epoch Estate. Its location provides a high concentration of limestone soil that affords Fiorentini the artistic license to craft site-specific wines that have earned praise from critical palates, she says.

10 II MOONS WINES-CLAVO CELLARS Templeton

JOHN GLEASON '76
Notable Wines: 2012 Aporia, 2012 Ardor, 2012 Angst

Gleason—Steve's brother—tended bar at the Hanover Inn as a student, and then sold and marketed semiconductors in Silicon Valley before realizing that what he enjoyed most about that world was choosing wines at business dinners. From the label artwork, courtesy of Daniele Genadry '02, to his wine being available at the inn's restaurant, Pine, Gleason's collaboration with celebrated viticulturist Neil Roberts has a strong Dartmouth connection. Their wine is harvested at a lower sugar level than usual in the area, allowing for a lower alcohol content that shows off the quality of the local fruit.

11 BAILY VINEYARD & WINERY Temecula

PHIL BAILY '62
Notable Wines: 2011 Temecula Valley Riesling, Temecula Valley Cabernet Sauvignon (2007-13)

Inspired by a Dartmouth education that promoted "free-thinking" and "not following the crowd," he says, Baily left actuarial consulting at age 41 to move from Los Angeles to wine country. He and his wife, Carol, planted a small, backyard vineyard and started to create their own medleys. They took winemaking and viticulture courses before launching their winery 30 years ago with a loan from Farm Credit and have since added an eatery, Baily's Old Town Temecula. "I still make the wine and Carol runs the restaurant," says Phil.

