



SIGNORELLO
E S T A T E

House of Padrone & Other Fine Estate Wines

Signorello Estate is a one-of-a-kind reflection of a wholly unique Napa Valley hillside vineyard and terroir. Planted and cultivated by the Signorello Family since 1977, these grapes are the foundation of their richly structured, intensely flavored Estate wines. Ray Signorello, Jr. has left no stone unturned, no philosophy unexplored, no ancient or modern viticulture and winemaking idea untried in his decades-long quest to produce the perfect Napa Valley Cabernet Sauvignon for his customers.

Starting the venture

Ray Signorello Jr. began his journey as winemaker and vineyard owner in the Napa Valley during the mid-1980s. Ray, born in San Francisco, California, moved to Vancouver, Canada where the Signorello family continues to maintain their permanent home. Ray divides his time between San Francisco, Napa Valley, Vancouver and business related travel. Ray's father, Ray Sr. initiated the vineyard project during the mid-1970s by purchasing the 100-acre estate located on the Silverado Trail in the beautiful Napa Valley. Ray Sr. worked side-by-side with Ray Jr. establishing the winery's reputation for excellence, until his passing in the fall of 1998.

No turning back

In 1986 the Signorellos began the second phase of the venture by building the main winery structure. This beautiful building was used for barrel storage, wine tasting and retail sales. By the end of the 1980s the Signorello family was thoroughly committed to making wine as well as growing grapes.

Cabernet Sauvignon Joins the Portfolio

The decade of the nineties proved to be pivotal for Signorello Estate. In 1990 the first planting of Cabernet Sauvignon began and quickly became the dominant varietal of the Estate. At the same time, small parcels of Cabernet Franc, Merlot and Syrah were planted.

The Dream Is Realized

What brought the Signorellos to the Napa Valley was the romantic side of winemaking - growing grapes, working the land, and enjoying the wine country lifestyle of camaraderie, good wine and great meals. While the Valley lifestyle is a very real part of the business, there is a serious commitment required to create a premier vineyard and produce world-class wines. Both father and son embraced this vision early in the endeavor.

This venture started as a dream; now it is reality. Ray, Jr. has started the third generation of the Signorello family and looks forward to continuing to push the benchmark that defines quality Napa Valley wine.



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Winemaking Philosophy

Winemaking and Viticulturalist Team: Priyanka French - Winemaker

Celia Welch - Consulting Director of Winemaking

Steve Matthiasson - Viticulturalist

Winemaking Style

Devotion is the word that best describes the intense attention the vineyards and wine receive in order to produce limited quantities of world-class wines. We blend classic French wine making methods with Napa Valley fruit to achieve lush, concentrated, complex fruit flavors and balanced structure. Our goal is to create wines with early accessibility as well as the potential to develop additional complexity as they mature.

Signorello Estate's style of winemaking is based on the idea of "winegrowing" described by a French word "Vigneron." It means that everything done in the vineyards is intimately connected to the winemaking. Our winemaker is also our vineyard manager, and the entire winemaking team is responsible for growing and harvesting the grapes as well.

Triple Sorting

Only the most perfect grapes make it to fermentation. Just harvested grapes ascend the first ramp, passing under the eyes of the crew who discard leaves and other non-grape matter. After being de-stemmed, the grapes are gently rocked to discard tiny, unripe berries. The final ramp carries the grapes past the eye of eight more workers hand-sorting for under or overripe fruit.

Fermentation

Once sorted, the grapes are put into four and eight-ton fermenters and cold-soaked to extract significant color and tannin before fermentation actually begins. We then ferment at 90 degrees in stainless steel tanks and the cap, (skins and pulp that rise to the surface during fermentation) is pumped over twice daily. The wine is then racked into French oak barrels (medium-plus toast from Saury, Nadalie, Treuil, and Remond).

The white varietals begin barrel fermentation with the grapes' own native yeast which produces a wine with more complexity, individuality and personality plus a broader, creamier texture. After two to four weeks – when alcoholic fermentation is complete – 50% of the Chardonnay is inoculated and undergoes malolactic fermentation in barrels. The Sauvignon Blanc and Semillon are not inoculated for malolactic fermentation.

Ageing

The Cabernet Sauvignon is racked selectively, approximately four times before bottling. The white wines are also selectively fined and racked just before bottling. This careful handling allows the wines subtleties and finer nuances to stay intact. To preserve fruit intensity and body, we do not fine or filter our wines before bottling.

The time the wine spends in the oak barrels varies according to varietal. Cabernet Sauvignon remains in the barrels an average of 22 months while the whites remain in barrels for approximately 11 months.



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Our Vineyards, Soil Composition & Climate

Acreage: Approximately 100 acre parcel, (40.91 acres planted): 25.6 acres Cabernet Sauvignon, 5.12 acres Chardonnay, 3.18 acres Cabernet Franc, 2.10 acres Syrah, 1.77 acres Merlot, 1.54 acres Semillon, 1.06 acres Sauvignon Blanc, 0.54 acres Viogner.

Growing Region: Low Region 2

Soil Types: Hillside: Hambright rock outcrops
Valley: Yolo loam

Signorello Estate currently offers the following wines nationally and internationally:

Padrone ~ Cabernet Sauvignon based Bordeaux style blend, Estate
Cabernet Sauvignon Estate ~ Cabernet Sauvignon blended with Merlot and/or Cabernet Franc, Estate
Hope's Cuvee Chardonnay ~ 100% Chardonnay, Estate

The rigorous vineyard program begins with the soil. The Chardonnay block, planted in 1980, was planted on the sandy loam valley floor. The red varieties (Cabernet Sauvignon, Cabernet Franc, and Merlot) are all planted in shallow soil on the rocky hillside. One part of the vineyard benefits from an eastern exposure, the other a western, creating widely diverse fruit that helps make our wines more complex and balanced.

Throughout the growing season, the vines are carefully monitored. Shoot positioning and leaf thinning done in June keep foliage up and away from the fruit. This provides the proper ratio of sun to clusters, ensuring ripeness at harvest. The vines are primarily dry farmed and watered only when necessary during the summer months in order to keep the plants healthy. Cluster thinning reduces the overall tonnage to 1.75 to 2.75 tons per acre (half the normal average), done to concentrate flavor and increase complexity.

The decision to harvest is based on testing for pH and sugar balance and most importantly, actually tasting for ripe flavors. The house style requires ripe fruit, usually picked between 24 and 26 Brix. The grapes are night harvested by hand and sorted early in the cool morning between 5-10 A.M. The fruit is picked into 30 pound trays so that it will not be crushed under its own weight, then sorted three times to ensure only quality grapes are fermented. Within an hour after picking, the white grapes are gently whole cluster pressed to minimize skin contact, which reduces the harsh phenolics. The red varieties are de-stemmed and triple sorted to assure that only the finest whole berries go into the fermentation tanks.