

# Diamond Series



## Venge Vineyards

Many youngsters dream of being firemen, policemen or even movie stars. Not so for Kirk Venge (Ven-gē), who remembers exactly when he accurately predicted his future business path. Venge was only four years old when he determined his potential fate.

“My family was at church and a questionnaire went around about what each child wanted to do as he got older,” Venge, now 34, recalled recently. “I answered, ‘winemaker,’ and thought nothing about it. In our family, you could say that wine was of paramount interest to everyone.”

The Venge family is well known to just about anyone with a serious interest in Napa Valley wine and winemaking. Kirk Venge is the fourth generation of his family that emigrated from Denmark around 1940. After stopping in New York, Kirk's great-grandfather and grandfather moved to Los Angeles and eventually started a wine import business. In 1945, Kirk's father Nils was born and was brought up in the world of wine distribution.

Nils Venge attended UC Davis and after graduation began a career as a renowned winemaker with a resume that included Sterling Vineyards, Villa Mt. Eden and Groth Winery. In 1976 Venge also partnered with his father-in-law in purchasing a 17-acre Cabernet property in Oakville that would form the basis for the family's Saddleback Cellars, the entity that would one-day form the basis for Venge Vineyards.

Kirk Venge followed his father to UC Davis and earned a degree in Viticulture and Oenology and worked for Mumm Napa Valley while attending school. He also spent a year

in New Zealand and honed his winemaking skills before returning to Napa Valley.

During this time, 1992, to be exact, the Saddleback Cellars was formally changed to Venge Vineyards, a move that propelled the new winery into the hierarchy of Napa Valley wineries. Many awards and accolades followed and, in 2003, Kirk Venge became the winemaker for his family's named winery.

“I was pleased the family had the confidence to give me control of the winery's future,” Venge stated. “Following in my father's footsteps was great for my career, but it was also a little tough. Many people thought our wines were still Nils' products, and the wines were judged and evaluated on that basis. I wanted to do my own thing, and it all took some time.”

In fact, the Venge Vineyards winery has hardly skipped a beat. Awards and accolades have been plentiful and, in 2009, Kirk took a giant step by purchasing a 12 and a half-acre Cabernet ranch to serve as Venge Vineyards' new home. Work there will be completed later this year and will house a complete winery operation and tasting room. An old house that accompanied the property will serve as the tasting room and give the facility a complete look and feel.

“I will finally be able to produce wines that I can call my own,” Venge related. “I feel the style of many wines has been changing over the past few years fueled by the dictates of the consumer. The overly ripe wines of today tend to lose some of their finesse. I am constantly looking to my peers and seeing what their wines are all about. I hope this all leads to my making wines that really make a difference.”



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Kirk Venge - Owner



For the record, the Venge Vineyards is just one of Kirk Venge's myriad of winery responsibilities.

He is also the winemaker for 11 other California wineries and will probably add others along the way. Venge Vineyards will produce a little over 5,000 cases this year and will grow in the next two years to

somewhere between 7,500 and 8,500 cases.

The winery's famous Scout's Honor Blend (named for the faithful yellow Labrador retriever, Kirk's first dog, who

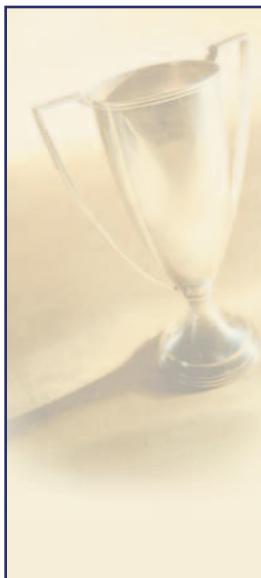
died in 1996) will continue on as one of the winery's bell weather offerings.

Kirk Venge is also upbeat about his company's place in the recession-ridden wine market.

"Since we had limited distribution (six states) when the recession started, it didn't affect us all that much," he finalized. "In recent months, we have expanded our distribution network and can now be found in eleven states. We tend to work close with small distributorships and have great working relationships with all of them. It really bodes well for the future."

Venge and his wife Sarah are expecting their first child in early summer, an event that will make Venge Vineyards another truly family operation.

## Accolades and Tasting Notes



### Venge Vineyards 2006 Family Reserve Cabernet Sauvignon

**95-Points**, Robert Parker — "The 2006 Cabernet Sauvignon Family Reserve is an exceptional 2006. Blackberry liquor intermixed with crème de cassis, licorice, incense, and floral notes as well as a hint of subtle oak emerge from the glass of this full-bodied, super-concentrated, rich, intense wine. A baby in terms of its potential development, it will benefit from 5-10 years of bottle age and should drink well for 20 or more years — that's a given."

*Winemaker Notes* — "Our Flagship wine. Young and vivacious, yet seductive and dark. Very fruit forward, with bright elements of ripe cherry, currants, plum and hints of raspberry. On the palate you discover the vivacious cherry, firm acidity with hints of chocolate and oak. 100% new French Oak is employed to give this wine its warmth. "Old World" by nature, it will continue to improve for the next 3-5 years, and cellar well for 15 years or more."

## Reorder

With just 175 cases produced, the Venge Vineyards 2006 Family Reserve Cabernet Sauvignon is among the impossibly hard-to-find, rare wine gems of California. Iconic winemaker Kirk Venge leaves his mark on this special bottling, and we are thrilled to present it to you as a *Diamond Series* selection.

Winery Direct: \$125.00

**Diamond Series Price:**

2-Bottle members.....\$99.00 / bottle

4-Bottle Members &

Multi-Series Members...\$94.00 / bottle

(Plus shipping)

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