



# The Wine Press

Medal Winning Wines from California's Best Family-Owned Wineries.

*Castoro Cellars*  
*Paso Robles*





## Castoro 2015 Reserve Petite Sirah

Paso Robles, California

750 Cases Produced

Castoro Cellars' 2015 Reserve Petite Sirah is a blend of fruit from the winery's estate Blind Faith and Hog Canyon Vineyards in Paso Robles. Petite Sirah is typically a tannic, huge wine, but the long hot days in Paso Robles with cooler evenings creates concentrated flavors and fresh acidity to balance it out. Dark purple in color, this Petite Sirah offers aromas of wild strawberry, blackberry preserves and violets. The palate is jammy, lush, and full of polished tannins that linger on the finish. According to winemaker Tom Myers, "A couple of mistakes to avoid when making a Petite Sirah is over extracting it during fermentation or adding too much oak character during the aging process. Over extracting creates a very tannic and harsh finish. Because it is a tannic wine, oak aging is necessary to tame it, but not too much that the oak flavors cover the jammy fruit characters. It's a careful balance of higher alcohol, plentiful tannins and acidity that make this wine such a treat." Try pairing the Castoro Cellars 2015 Reserve Petite Sirah with any hearty grilled meat dish. Aged 18 months in oak. 100% Petite Sirah. Enjoy!

**Gold Medal Special Selection**



## Castoro 2016 'Balena' White Blend

Whale Rock Vineyard, Paso Robles, California

525 Cases Produced

Castoro Cellars' 2016 'Balena' White Blend is a delicate, aromatic blend of 37% Pinot Grigio, 32% Falanghina, 18% Albariño, 10% Grenache Blanc, and 3% Viognier. 'Balena' is Italian for 'whale,' and this wine was named as such to honor the organically-grown Whale Rock Vineyard that these grapes call home. Made in an Italian Pinot Grigio style, Balena is crisp, fruity, lean and refreshing. Yellow straw in color, the 2016 Balena opens with fresh aromas of sandalwood, orange blossoms, mangoes, and yellow-delicious apples. The palate is fruity, light and refreshing with tropical fruit notes lingering on the finish. Winemaker Tom Myers adds, "What I love about creating blends is the ability to make a better or more complex wine than having the individual wines on their own. Pinot Grigio provides the acidity and structural base; Falanghina is added in for texture, creating a lush mid-palate; and Albariño and Grenache Blanc are blended in to life the aromatics with tropical fruit notes." This wine is the perfect pairing for light seafood dishes, salads or classic Italian food. Enjoy!

**Gold Medal Special Selection**

HOW WE CHOOSE OUR WINES: Gold Medal Wine Club showcases two wines each month from only the best small wineries of California. Featured wines include those which have earned medals in the top wine-industry competitions or have been highly rated by a respected national wine publication (see [goldmedalwineclub.com/resources/wine-ratings](http://goldmedalwineclub.com/resources/wine-ratings)). On occasion, we feature a pair of wines which are newly released by the winery and which medals and reviews are forthcoming. Each and every selection is a superb wine made in small quantities and with very limited distribution. There are over 3,000 wineries in California producing thousands of different wines. Only wines fitting the above criteria are considered in choosing the featured selections each month.



# Castoro Cellars



One of the oldest and most respected wineries in Paso Robles, Castoro Cellars has played a major role in the development of the region with its dedication to sustainable farming practices and its award-winning collection of ‘Dam Fine Wines.’



Located on the desirable Westside of Paso Robles, Castoro Cellars offers a laid back, warm and welcoming setting for wine country visitors. Surrounding the Mediterranean-style winery is a Zinfandel vineyard, a garden featuring lush native plants and cork oak trees, a walk-through grape arbor, a space for hosting live music entertainment, and a Disc Golf course set amidst the vines!

Niels and Berit Udsen began their winery in 1983 while Niels was still working at Estrella River Winery. Gaining valuable experience in just about every phase of the business, he would make his own wine on the weekends and his wife, Berit, would go out and sell it. “At first, we just wanted to make a few barrels of wine for our friends and family,” recalls Niels. “Everyone thought it was great wine so we started selling to area restaurants and stores. We just kept making more and more each year.”

By 1986, things got to be more than Niels could handle on a part-time basis, so he quit Estrella River to devote full time to his own venture. “We had no employees,” states Niels. “It was just my wife and I doing everything. Out came a thousand cases, then two the next year, then three the year after that. We made a little bit of a lot of different wines for a winery of our size,” admits Niels. Aside from the Zinfandel that a lot of wineries were giving up on in the 1980’s, Niels crafted small batches of Cabernet Sauvignon, Chardonnay, Sauvignon Blanc and White Zinfandel.

Niels owned no vineyards or winery building in those days, so he purchased grapes from dozens of different vineyards

and leased facilities to make the wine. “I’ve bought grapes from over 40 different vineyards,” says Niels. “It has given me great flexibility in producing a consistently good product every year.” And that consistency has paid off. Throughout the 1980’s, they methodically carved a small but comfortable niche in the wine market.

Niels developed another niche during the period. He recognized that wineries on the Central Coast needed ‘custom-crush’ services readily available. A lot of wineries like his were still too small to have their own crushing equipment. And even more wineries did not have on-premise machinery to bottle the finished wine. Consequently, Niels purchased a large Europress for these small wineries to have available to lease. He also developed a mobile bottling line that could be transported right to the winery site. Now, instead of having to transport grapes and/or finished wine to other parts of California, wineries had a local source. With less handling and faster turn-around time, a potentially better quality wine could be made.

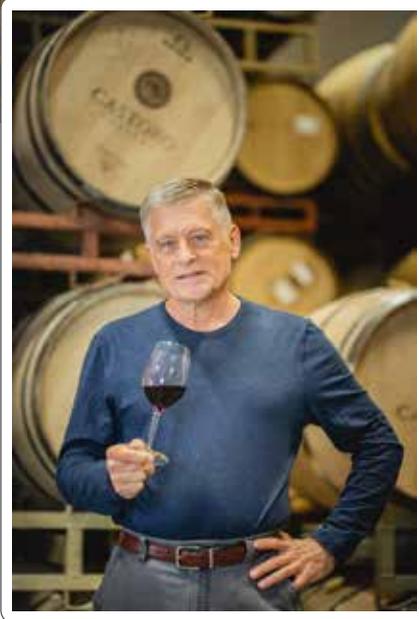
By the early 1990’s, there were no facilities available on the Central Coast that were big enough to house his rapidly growing custom-crush operation and his own ever-expanding winery



Castoro Cellars has been at the forefront of sustainable farming and winemaking in Paso Robles for over 35 years. Their newest solar installation, completed in 2018, is one of the largest solar arrays in Paso Robles, designed to offset all the winery’s energy use.

*Continued on Page 4*





## Tom Myers, Winemaker

A science aficionado, Tom Myers earned his both his bachelors and masters in Biological Science/Botany from Michigan State University. His interest in winemaking is what then brought him west to UC Davis, where he earned a second masters degree in Food Science, with a focus on Enology and Viticulture. "The wide range of science that is incorporated into winemaking - microbiology, chemistry, physics - is what piqued my interest from the beginning," Myers has stated. Although he is certainly a master in his field, Myers has a humble and welcoming spirit with no semblance of elitism. He believes wine should be an integral part of daily meals, and thus welcomes all wine palates, from the most experienced wine drinker to those encountering wine for the first time.

Tom Myers is one of the most highly respected winemakers in California. He has been crafting wines in the Paso Robles region since 1978, and has been involved, in one way or another, with every vintage at Castoro Cellars. Myers began his winemaking career at Estrella River Winery, which is where he met and mentored Niels Udsen. Niels went on to create the Castoro Cellars brand, and in 1990, Myers joined the Castoro team as Head Winemaker. Voted the **2002 Winemaker of the Year** by the *California State Fair*, Myers takes an active role in the local wine industry and is fully committed to the Castoro Cellars brand.

## Castoro Cellars

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business. So, in 1991, the Udsens found a permanent facility for their enterprises - an old abandoned winery building located in the same area, situated on 200 acres of land. The land surrounding the building had been planted with various varietals including Viogner, Cabernet Sauvignon and Petite Sirah and since it was just a stone's throw from the office at the winery, it was named accordingly - "Stone's Throw Vineyard." Niels also now owns six other estate vineyards named Whale Rock, Cobble Creek, Hog Heaven, Blind Faith, Dos Vinas, and Jackknife.

Niels and Berit have grown from making a few barrels of wine for their friends in a rented corner of someone else's winery, to developing a 15,000-ton custom crush operation and

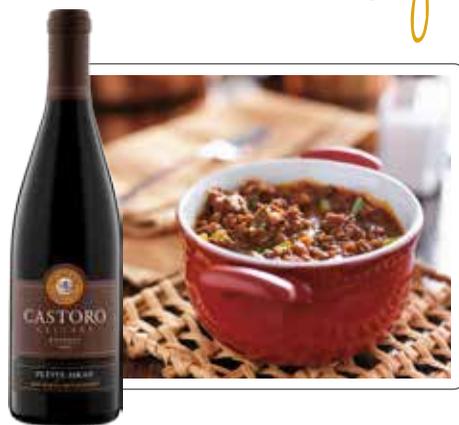
a 60,000-case winery. And they are now in their own building, with their own equipment, using grapes from their own 750 acres of vineyards! Quite the accomplishment.

Castoro Cellars still produces many different wine varietals, most of which are crafted in very limited quantities. "We'd like to build up production on all of our wines," admits Niels. "But, we'll do it like we always have - by ramping up slow and easy." Their method has certainly paid off as the winery is now one of the most prominent on the Central Coast with the hundreds of awards earned over the years.





# Food pairings from Castoro Cellars



## Dam Fine Chili

Pair with the Castoro Cellars 2015 Reserve Petite Sirah

### The Meat:

- Smoked pork shoulder seasoned with southwest seasoning blend
- Smoked tri-tip, cleaned and seasoned with all-purpose seasoning salt
- 1 lb smoked bacon applewood or hickory
- Ground beef, seasoned with chili spice or equivalent

### The Components:

- 3 of each: red and white onions, diced
- 20 cloves garlic, sliced
- 5 jalapenos, diced and de-seeded
- 4 red bell peppers, diced
- 4 poblano peppers, diced
- 4 green bell peppers, diced

- 10 fresh tomatillos, peeled, cooked and pureed
- 2 8-oz. cans crushed tomatoes
- 3/4 bottle of red wine
- 1 quart dry overnight water-soaked black beans (Strain, cover with 2 in. of water and bring to boil, turn off heat and let sit for 20 min)
- 1 quart dry overnight water-soaked pinto beans (Strain, cover with 2 in. of water and bring to boil, turn off heat and let sit for 20 min.)
- Vegetable stock, beef stock, and chicken stock, plus the liquid from smoking the meat and half of the liquid from the beans (32 oz. of each stock)
- Herbs and spices to your liking - Remember it will take a lot of dried spices and a lot of salt.

Start by slicing the bacon into matchsticks and then begin to fry in a large pot. This will be what you cook the chili in, so make sure it is a large one. Keep all the fat in there, but once the bacon starts to get medium-brown in color, take it out and set it aside. Add the garlic. Saute it until the first sign of brown shows, and then add the onions. They will help cool down the pot and slow the browning process of the garlic. Add the peppers and cook on medium-high heat, but don't let it sit; it needs to be stirred. Add the ground beef and turn the heat down to medium. Add the red wine and then reduce for a while (almost let the wine cook out fully). Add the tomatoes and beans. Once the tomatoes are in, you can add the stock and the diced, smoked meats. Once the meat is added, just cook and constantly stir. Taste the flavors periodically and adjust spices as needed. This recipe is usually made on a large scale, so you may want to adjust to your own custom amounts. This is a rendition of an award-winning chili, with a few changes, because after all, it's the art of having fun while cooking rather than following every step. Enjoy! Recipe provided by Castoro Cellars.

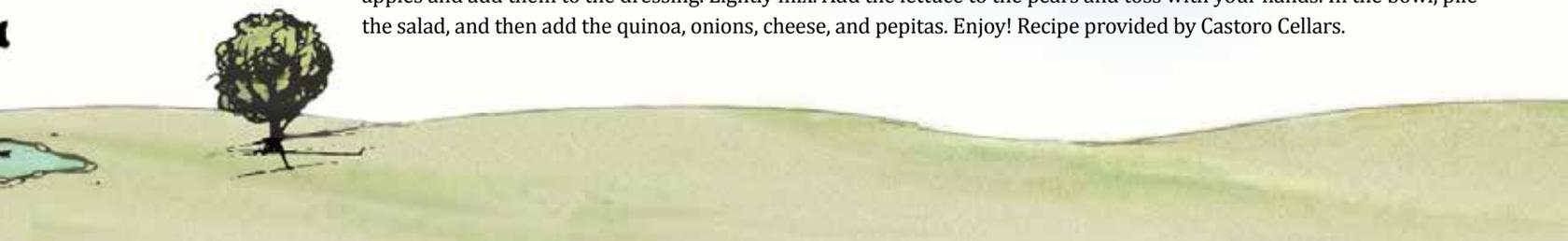


## Quinoa Salad

Pair with the Castoro Cellars 2016 'Balena' White Blend

- 1 bag mixed greens lettuce
- 1/4 red onion, thinly sliced
- 1-2 Bartlett pears, sliced or diced
- 3/4 cup uncooked quinoa
- 1-2 Pink Lady apples, sliced or diced
- 1/4 cup fresh lemon juice
- 2 Tbs freshly chopped parsley
- 1/2 cup Queso Fresco or Feta Cheese
- 1/4 cup Pepitas (pumpkin seeds)
- 1 tsp freshly chopped thyme leaves
- 1 1/4 cup olive oil
- Salt and pepper, to taste

Start off by cooking the quinoa, and once cooked, cool and set aside. Make the vinaigrette by separating the herb leaves from the stems and finely chop. Put the herbs into a medium size bowl and squeeze the lemon into the bowl. Slowly whisk in the oil and once it becomes slightly thick, taste to make sure it isn't still tart. If so, add more oil. It will need salt and pepper too, so adjust as needed. Slice the red onion as thin as you can, and if you like, you can run it under cool water to take away some of the strong flavor. Chop or slice the pears and apples and add them to the dressing. Lightly mix. Add the lettuce to the pears and toss with your hands. In the bowl, pile the salad, and then add the quinoa, onions, cheese, and pepitas. Enjoy! Recipe provided by Castoro Cellars.





## Niels Udsen, In The Spotlight

"I had no idea what I wanted to do," Niels Udsen candidly says about his career plans. "Until one of my last classes in my final year of college." At the time, Niels was a student at California Polytechnic University in San Luis Obispo, studying Agriculture. That particular course required him to do a marketing project and vineyard feasibility study for nearby winery, Zaca Mesa. "From that point on, I knew I wanted to be in the wine business," he says.

Niels was born and raised on California's Central Coast, in the city of Ventura. His father is from Denmark and came over in the late 1940's with a dream to be an American farmer. "I spent a lot of summers in the field," Niels remembers. His father's dream turned into a highly successful business that produced bulk-seeds for use by farmers and packaged seeds for consumers.

When Niels was a teenager, he went to live in Denmark with the family of his father's best friend. The trip proved to be a fortuitous event in Niels' life. While he was there, he met his future bride, Berit. He also learned to make wine, taught by his father's



friend. Not yet knowing the impact that visit would have on his life, Niels returned to California to finish high school and college. He and Berit kept in touch through the years and when Niels went back to Denmark after college, they married.

When the newlyweds returned to California, Niels was willing to take on just about any job that would get him into the wine business. After knocking on the doors of dozens of wineries throughout the state, he was hired by Estrella River Winery. Ironically, it was located very near San Luis Obispo where he attended school. There he paid his dues as a "cellar rat" before graduating to various other duties. "I did a little bit of everything while I was there," he recalls. "It was a good way to learn the business."

And learn he did. Under the direction of Estrella's then winemaker, Tom Myers, Niels learned all aspects of winemaking from the ground up. The Paso Robles AVA was still in its infancy for winery development and Niels took advantage of working with a leading winery in the developing region. While he was there, the winery had begun to lease their facilities to independent winemakers who were producing their own private-label wines. Niels figured he could do that as well, so he too began making wine. He stayed at Estrella River for five years, until 1986 when his own winemaking venture required full attention.

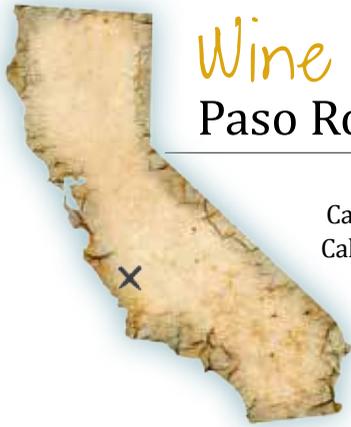
Niels and Berit (or "Bimmer" as her friends call her) live about a half-mile from the Castoro Cellars tasting room just off Highway 46, near Templeton. They have two boys, Max and Luke, so family remains a top priority to them, and Luke is actually now involved in the family business, helping with sales, marketing and social media.

Oh, and by the way, the name "Castoro" is the Italian word for *beaver*, which was Niels' long-time nickname as he was growing up. He had always liked the name *Castoro* and it seemed an appropriate name for his "Dam Fine Wine!"



Castoro Cellars' Whale Rock Vineyard is a true gem, located within the "Templeton Gap" on Paso Robles' Westside. The name is in reference to the thousands of petrified Whale Bones scattered throughout the property - a beautiful reminder of ancient times past. It is also the source of fruit for this month's featured wine, the 2016 'Balena' White Blend.





## Wine Region: Paso Robles

Castoro Cellars is situated within California's Central Coast in the Paso Robles appellation. Although many consider Paso Robles a newly emerging wine region, the winegrowing roots of the area date back to the late 1700's.

Over the course of the past two centuries, the acreage of wine grapes has flourished in this region, growing from approximately 40 acres of grapevines in 1873, to over 200 acres in 1952, and reaching well over 32,000 acres in 2014. Today, that number is over 40,000 and it continues to grow!

Paso Robles' semi-arid climate, range of soils and topographic varieties creates an ideal growing environment, especially for heartier red grape varieties, as it brings out the large fruit component and ripe characters that dominate the region's wines. Castoro Cellars grows a large range of varietals and produces many different wines and blends to represent the countless possibilities the Paso Robles region offers.



Castoro Cellars farms over 750 acres of vineyards in Paso Robles, 350 of which are certified organic by CCOF (and they plan to continue transitioning to organic farming in all of their vineyards). All of the vineyards are SIP Certified, which stands for Sustainability in Practice. Castoro also sources fruit from a handful of local growers. As explained by former Assistant Winemaker, Mikel Olsten, "By sourcing grapes from all the different microclimates throughout the AVA, we are able to pull from all the pieces of the puzzle and create a complete picture that is truly representative of the Paso Robles region."

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**Tom Mackey 2015 Zinfandel, Sonoma Valley**

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- *Press Democrat North Coast Wine Challenge, SF Chronicle Wine Competition and Sonoma Harvest Fair*

*115 Cases Produced*

Retail Price at the Winery: \$30.00



# Wine Winyard: Test Your Wine IQ!



## When was wine grape growing first introduced to Paso Robles?

Wine grapes were first introduced to the Paso Robles area in 1797 by the Spanish and Franciscan missionaries at Mission San Miguel Arcangel, where more than one thousand vines were planted. The Spanish conquistadors saw the land and envisioned a future full of wine, and encouraged settlers from Mexico and other parts of the state to start growing. Commercial wine grape growing didn't begin in Paso Robles until 1882 when a settler from Indiana, Andrew York, started planting vineyards and established Ascension Winery, which was later known as York Mountain Winery, and today known as Epoch Estate Wines.

## Which styles of wine is Paso Robles best known for?

With a greater day-to-night temperature swing than any other appellation in California, distinct microclimates, diverse soils and a long growing season, Paso Robles is a unique wine region blessed with optimal growing conditions for producing premium wines. Amazingly, more than sixty wine grape varieties are grown in Paso Robles, ranging from Cabernet Sauvignon and Merlot to Syrah, Viognier and Roussanne, to Zinfandel, the area's heritage wine varietal. The region is probably best known for its Rhone-style wines, Zinfandel, and its unique 'Paso blends' with varietal make-ups that do not follow traditional rules and expectations of winemaking.

## How many wineries are located in Paso Robles?

There are more than 200 wineries in Paso Robles, most of which are family owned and operated businesses. They are located throughout the region and offer a huge diversity of distinctive wines and styles.

## The Gold Medal Wine Store



Instant! Membership Rewards saves you 16% to 53% off Castoro Cellars wines!

CASTORO CELLARS	Retail Price at Winery		Gold Medal Membership Rewards Pricing*		
			2+ btls.	6+ btls.	12+ btls.
2015 Reserve Petite Sirah, Paso Robles	<del>\$25.00/btl.</del>	2-Bottle Members:	\$21.00	\$19.33	\$18.50
		4-Bottle Members:	\$21.00	\$18.50	\$17.25
2016 'Balena' White Blend Paso Robles	<del>\$30.00/btl.</del>	2-Bottle Members:	\$18.00	\$16.33	\$15.50
		4-Bottle Members:	\$18.00	\$15.50	\$14.25

\*Effective per bottle prices after Membership Rewards discount is applied at checkout.

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