



Platinum Wine Club

90+ Rated, Ultra Premium, Collectable Wines from California's Best Winemakers.

Croix Estate | Sonoma County

The name 'Venge' (pronounced *ven-gee*) has become synonymous with top California winemaking for the past five decades - with good reason. For four generations, this Danish-roots family has been involved in the wine industry at its highest levels and have enjoyed incredible success with all of their wine endeavors.

The most celebrated of the Venge Family are 44 year-old Kirk Venge and his renowned father, Nils, both considered world-class winemakers. Both father and son are graduates of storied UC Davis, the country's most celebrated wine incubation facility for anyone interested in wine and the ambiance it provides. Wines produced by this dynamic duo (either alone or in tandem) have consistently scored at elevated levels and won numerous competition awards for years.

Croix Estate is the sole responsibility of Kirk Venge. He explained, "My mother originally came from Sonoma County and her roots and heritage are still there. I had in the back of my mind a notion that a void existed in our business in the form of a crossover winery (hence the name 'Croix' or 'cross') that could explore the relationship between Napa Valley and Sonoma County."

Beginning in 2009, the project that would become Croix Estate began to take shape. Kirk Venge launched his quest for finding a suitable property to buy and eventually settled on the storied Russian River Valley and its natural components that influence the eventual quality of grapes and wines.

"The conditions in the Russian River Valley are absolutely ideal," continued Kirk Venge. "The million-year-old soils are set in a juxtaposing relationship between the valley floors and surrounding mountains; maritime and riparian influences breath life into the fruit; a balance of degree days verve in varietal character along with the area's cultural commitment to managing land in an environmentally responsible manner." Like the wines he produces, you might say that's a full mouthful to swallow.

Venge credits his close association with Jason Williams in the development of Croix Estate. Williams has considerable experience in the wine industry, first with iconic Williams Selyem Winery and followed by stints at Merryvale Vineyards, Opus One Winery, Robert Mondavi Winery and Lancaster Estate. For the past nine years, Jason Williams has

worked exclusively with Venge Vineyards. In addition to creating the label for Croix Estate, Williams was termed a 'visionary' for his inputs into the establishment of Croix Estate where he serves as general manager.

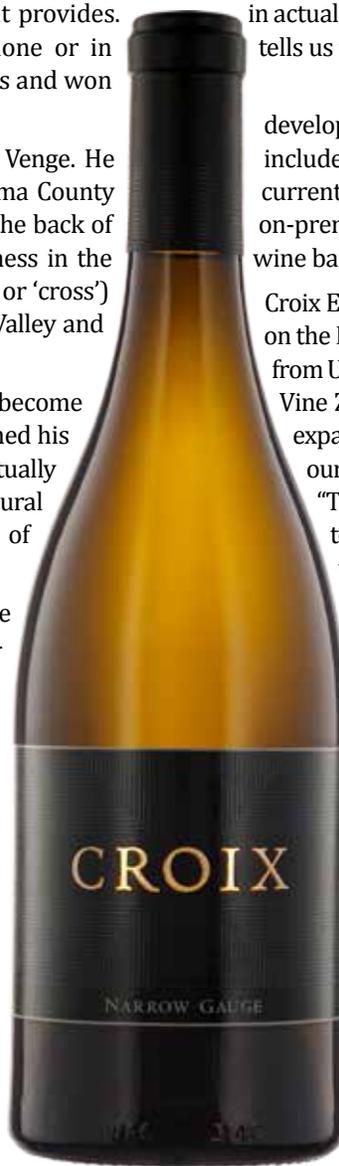
The first releases of Croix Estate (around 250 cases of Pinot Noir and Chardonnay) came in 2012 and were met with instant success. The winery has slowly expanded its production to around the 2,000-case level but expects to grow within the next 3 to 5 years. "Our modest growth rate is fine for us," Venge went on, "and, in actuality, we have no real limit. We will grow until the market tells us to stop."

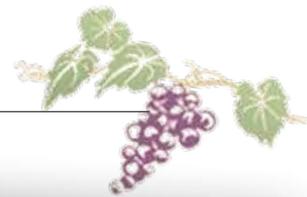
To accomplish that aim, Venge and Williams have developed a customer base for Croix Estate that does not include any customers from Venge Vineyards. They are currently marketed in just under ten states and are mostly an on-premise brand that is featured in high quality restaurants, wine bars and top hotels.

Croix Estate proudly calls home a 10-acre vineyard and facility on the Eastern edge of the Russian River Valley, a stone's throw from US Highway 101 that intersects the area. Nine acres of Old Vine Zinfandel surround the winery and Kirk Venge plans to expand the operation this year (2019). "We intend to grow our operation and build a new barrel room," he stated. "That will allow us to store more barrels here and not have to rely on Venge Vineyards for storage space. Since the varietals we feature don't share the same season (Pinot Noir and Chardonnay ripen early while Cabernet Sauvignon and Zinfandel are late to ripen), we don't expect to have any problems."

Why the name 'Narrow Gauge' Pinot Noir and Chardonnay? "The name 'Narrow Gauge' is an attempt to highlight some of Sonoma's heritage and history," Venge finalized. "In its early days, Sonoma County was served by a narrow gauge railroad that was used to remove the timber from the woods and hills and also the grapes on occasion. We decided to feature the railroad term on some of our wines. The great thing about the name is that we are actually located very close to the tracks that still exist as a tribute to Sonoma County's early history."

We are delighted to give our *Platinum Wine Club* Members a rare opportunity to discover these exceptional wines from Croix Estate. Enjoy!





94 POINTS

— Robert Parker's
The Wine Advocate

94 POINTS

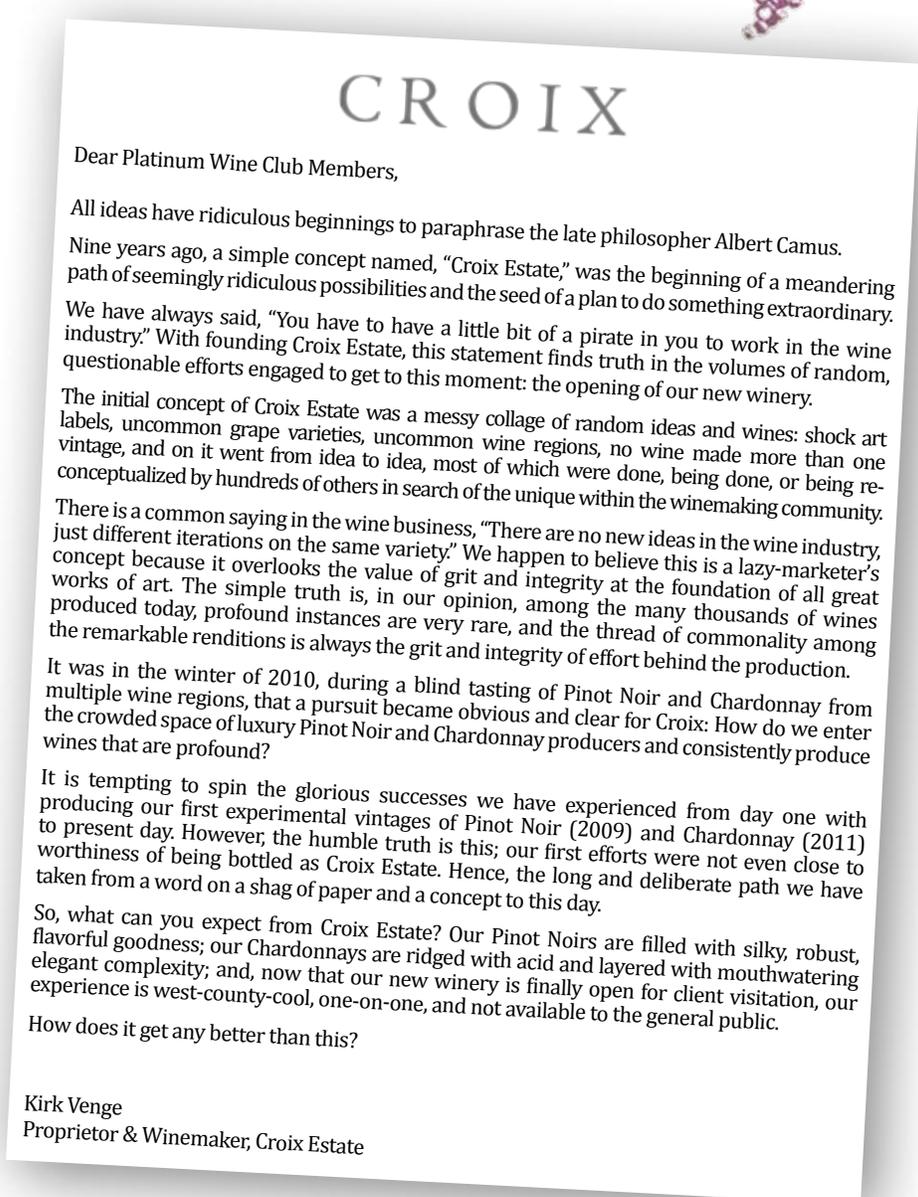
— Jab Dunnuck

386 cases produced

The Croix Estate 2016 "Narrow Gauge" Chardonnay was named to honor northern California's narrow gauge railroad movement in the late 1870's - a revolution that rapidly expanded agricultural and industrial development, and ultimately made Sonoma County into the agricultural and winemaking powerhouse that it is today. This Chardonnay is a blend of fruit from esteemed vineyards Morelli Lane, Floodgate, Bacigalupi, and Ritchie, all located within the Green Valley sub-appellation and the greater Russian River Valley. A full bodied, yet bright and refreshing style of Chardonnay, this wine has a golden straw color and a bouquet of raw honey, marmalade, fresh citrus zest, toasted pine nuts, rocky flints, all spice, toasted oak and lusciousness on the nose that is ever so inviting. Flavors of island ripe pineapple, apple, stone fruit, and crisp pear blend together in a beautifully balanced palate. Aged 15 months in oak. 100% Chardonnay. Enjoy now until 2021.

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This month's Platinum Plus!
Featured Wine:
Picayune 2015 'Rive Gauche'
Red Blend, Napa Valley
93 Points + Editor's Choice - *Wine Enthusiast*
203 Cases Produced



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