



D'ARGENZIO WINERY

From woodworking to winemaking, the D'Argenzio family keeps tradition alive, upholding a legacy of craftsmanship with a portfolio of limited production, Italian influenced wines from Sonoma County vineyards.



Fog lingers in the vineyard, creating an ideal environment for Pinot Noir; Grapes are hand harvested and sorted to ensure the highest quality; Twin brothers Ray and Richard D'Argenzio were destined for the wine business as young boys; D'Argenzio wines are stored in straw and clay mortar to keep cool.

At the D'Argenzio Wine Tasting Room in Burbank, an old framed faded photo of six year old twins dressed in matching overalls, each holding a bottle of wine, seems to speak about what fate had in mind for the brothers long before they knew it.

Raymond and Richard D'Argenzio, now co-owners of D'Argenzio Winery, grew up in the family winemaking business, watching their father and grandfather make wine for family and friends when they were young. As they grew older, the twin boys began experimenting as well, and a weekend hobby quickly turned into something much more.

"At the time, we were living in Burbank and helping our dad with his cabinetry business," Ray D'Argenzio explained. "I had real estate up in Sonoma, and we'd go up there on the weekends to make wine together, just for fun."

Their father, Alfonzo D'Argenzio, had started the Burbank cabinetry shop in the 1940's, working out of chicken coops in the back of their family home. He built the storefront from the ground up, and he has now been a premium woodworker for 65 years. Alfonzo also served as an

excellent teacher for his sons, and helped guide them into the winemaking practice.

"We were getting better bit by bit and started taking it more seriously with each new vintage," Ray remembered. "In 1993 we made 100 cases of Old Vine Zinfandel that we were really proud of, and entered it into harvest festivals where it won medals and immediately sold out! So, we knew we were doing something right."

Thus was the beginning for D'Argenzio Winery, which officially became a commercially bonded winery in 1994.

Ray moved to Sonoma and took the reins as head winemaker while Richard concentrated on the business side of their new entity. They started buying grapes from Sonoma Valley, primarily from the Dry Creek Valley and Russian River Valley appellations, focusing on Zinfandel, Pinot Noir, and Cabernet Sauvignon which were among the leading varietals of the region.

"Each year we add a little bit more to our production, refining the wine styles on an ongoing basis, but also adding new wine programs as we see fit. All of our wines are vineyard designate and we don't make more

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D'Argenzio Winery sources Pinot grapes from the Thorn Road Ranch Vineyard in the Russian River Valley; bottles on display in the D'Argenzio Tasting Room; fermenting wine in steel tanks; D'Argenzio grapes ripen on the vine.

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than 300 to 400 cases per wine. This year we made about 3,000 cases overall," Ray clarified.

D'Argenzio Wines are entirely handcrafted and produced with methods very similar to those used in Italy long ago. In fact, the winery uses a hand operated 100-year-old press to gently crush their grapes, and with frequent trips to Italy, the D'Argenzios are constantly learning new techniques to incorporate into their practices.

Family is another important value to the D'Argenzios, and although Ray and Richard officially own the winery, it's really more of a team effort with three generations of D'Argenzios actively involved in running the day-to-day winery activities.

Ray and his daughter Briana reside in Sonoma at the winery; Briana actually attended school in Florence, Italy for over a year and recently passed the course to become a wine Sommelier. She helps out her father by managing the Wine Club and Santa Rosa Tasting Room. Richard lives in Los Angeles runs the secondary Burbank Tasting Room with help from his father (Alfonzo) and his three children. Come harvest season, everyone gets together to lend a helping hand.

D'Argenzio Winery also pays tribute to its Italian heritage with its unique label art. Tracing their roots to St. Angelo Cancelli, a mountain town just outside of Naples in the region of Campania, the D'Argenzio ancestors were renowned artisans of ornate silver work destined for the noble families of Campania. Today, the tradition is reflected through the rich silver colors used on the D'Argenzio Winery logo. The name D'Argenzio even means "people of silver." The Lo Iodice family crest is also pictured on the label and represents Ray and Richard's mother's heritage, which is also Italian.

From the exquisite wines and renowned vineyard sites to the uncompromising dedication to family and tradition, D'Argenzio Winery is truly a gem in California's wine country, building a lasting and memorable legacy of craftsmanship.

ABOUT THE VINEYARD



The D'Argenzio 2005 'Thorn Road Ranch' Pinot Noir was grown in the Russian River Valley Appellation. One of the cooler regions for Pinot Noir, these rolling hills near Sebastopol experience lingering fog and cold air from the nearby Sonoma Coast, just the right elements for growing superb Pinot grapes. Planted in 1995, Thorn Road Ranch Vineyard is situated seven miles from the Pacific Ocean at a 1,000-foot elevation.

The area is known as "Sebastopol Hills" to locals and consists mostly of northeast-southwest-oriented ridges on the lee side of a transverse

ridge that separates the Russian River Valley from the Petaluma Gap. Though the area has not even been proposed as an official wine appellation, growers and winemakers sometimes talk about Sebastopol Hills as if it were. The Pinots produced here are distinctly different from others grown nearby, showing darker fruit, more earth and more minerality than wines grown in the heart of the Russian River Valley. They are a bit more "masculine," with a bit more weight to them and stronger, bolder flavors. This D'Argenzio Pinot takes full advantage of the unique "Sebastopol Hills" microclimate and achieves a distinctive, immensely enjoyable flavor profile.

ABOUT THE WINEMAKER



Crafted by head winemaker Ray D'Argenzio, the D'Argenzio wines are Italian influenced varietals grown in premium regions throughout Sonoma County and the Russian River Valley. Ray's wine list is constantly evolving and he enjoys implementing new techniques he picks up on his visits to Italy. Traveling to Italy also helps Ray get in touch with his family's heritage and the tradition of hand craftsmanship that's been carried down through generations.

Surprisingly enough, Ray has had no formal education in winemaking and is proud to say he learned the "old school" way

– lots of hands on instruction from his father and grandfather while studying books and taking online courses over the years.

Ray might arguably produce one of the most extravagant, small-production "boutique" wine lists in Sonoma County, with a collection of premium varietals from some of the most desirable spots in the region. He currently makes over ten wines for D'Argenzio Winery, including a few Zinfandels and Pinot Noirs, a Petite Sirah, Cabernet Sauvignon, Sangiovese, Gewurztraminer, Chardonnay and a Tocai Friulano, an admired Italian varietal celebrated for its freshness and floral profile. Ray produces his wines without compromise and stays committed to his family's tradition of hand craftsmanship.

D'ARGENZIO 2005 'THORN ROAD RANCH' PINOT NOIR

The D'Argenzio 2005 'Thorn Road Ranch' Pinot Noir invites with an alluring range of aromatics. Generous black cherry wraps around subtle notes of cinnamon, mint and dried rose petals, while in the mouth, a velvety richness balances the bright acidity. Succulent cherries, ripe strawberries and lively black pepper fill the palate. The long, dimensional finish flows to shades of cloves, field mushrooms and roasted coffee. It is balanced with finesse and precision, and truly distinctive, highlighting the terroir of this Russian River Valley vineyard. This lovely Pinot Noir from D'Argenzio Winery would pair beautifully with grilled salmon, skirt steak, and pork chops.

Cases Produced: 285
 pH Balance: 3.55
 Alcohol: 14.4%
 Enjoy now until: 2012

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Grilled Salmon with Sweet Onions and Red Bell Peppers

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| 1/4 cup Soy Sauce | 2 Red Bell Peppers, stemmed, cored and quartered lengthwise |
| 1/4 cup Light Brown Sugar | 1 tsp. Balsamic Vinegar |
| 2 Tbs. Extra-Virgin Olive Oil, plus more for drizzling | Salt and freshly ground Pepper |
| Four 6-ounce Salmon Fillets, with skin | 1 tsp. chopped Thyme |
| 2 small Sweet Onions, halved crosswise but not peeled | 1 Tbs. chopped Marjoram |

In a large, shallow dish, combine the soy sauce and brown sugar with the 2 tablespoons of oil; add the salmon and coat well. Cover and refrigerate for 1 hour.

Light a grill. Drizzle the cut sides of the onions with oil and grill over moderately high heat, cut side down, until nicely charred and starting to soften, about 15 minutes. Turn the onions and cook until tender, about 15 minutes longer.

Push the onions to the side of the grill. Oil the peppers and grill them, skin side down, away from the hottest part of the grill until lightly charred, about 5 minutes. Turn and grill for 5 minutes. Push them over to the onions. Remove the salmon from the marinade and grill, skin side down, for 8 minutes. Turn and grill until the salmon is just cooked through, 4 minutes longer.

Drizzle the onions with oil and the balsamic vinegar. Season with salt and pepper and sprinkle with the thyme. Transfer the salmon, peppers and onions to plates, sprinkle with the marjoram and serve.



Grilled Skirt Steak with Peaches

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| 2 Garlic Cloves | Salt and freshly ground Pepper |
| 1 small Bay Leaf | 1 1/2 pounds Skirt Steak, cut into 4 pieces |
| 1 small Shallot | 1 Tbs. Dijon Mustard |
| 1 Jalapeño, halved and seeded | 1/2 cup very hot Water |
| Finely grated zest and juice of 1 Lemon | 2 Tbs. Honey |
| 2 Tbs. Soy Sauce | 1/2 tsp. Cinnamon |
| 1/2 tsp. chopped Thyme | 1 1/2 tsp. finely grated Fresh Ginger |
| 1/2 cup plus 1 tablespoon Canola Oil | 4 Peaches, halved and pitted |

In a blender, puree the garlic, bay leaf, shallot, jalapeño, lemon zest and juice, soy sauce and thyme until combined. With the blender on, slowly pour in 1/2 cup of the canola oil and puree until smooth. Season the marinade with salt and pepper. Pour half of the marinade into a shallow baking dish, add the skirt steak and turn to coat. Let the skirt steak stand for 20 min. Add the Dijon mustard to the remaining dressing and blend. Transfer the dressing to a small bowl.

Meanwhile, light a grill. In a small saucepan, combine the water with the honey, cinnamon and ginger and let stand for 5 min. Transfer the mixture to a bowl along with the remaining 1 Tbs. of oil and the peaches.

Scrape the marinade off the skirt steak. Generously season the steaks with salt and pepper and grill them over high heat, 6 to 7 min, turning once, for medium-rare meat. At the same time, grill the peach halves, turning them frequently, until they are charred in spots and softened, about 8 min. Cut the peaches into wedges and thinly slice the steaks. Transfer to plates and serve, passing the dressing on the side.

Find these recipes and all of your favorites online at GoldMedalWine.com/recipes. We have a delicious collection of recipes to pair with your favorite Gold Medal wines!



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