



# Diamond Wine Club

## GRASSI WINE COMPANY

*Napa Valley*

Mark Grassi was faced with a conundrum of sorts upon his graduation from Cal State Chico a number of years ago. Although his degree was in viticulture, he loved the challenge of building things with his hands and that aspect of his skill set eventually won out.

He moved to Napa Valley in 1980 and founded a construction company, Grassi & Associates, that eventually constructed a number of ultra high quality homes and also several upscale wineries in both Napa and Sonoma Counties. Through the process, Mark Grassi never lost sight of the fact that he desired the glorified grape to play an important role in his life. He took a number of courses at Napa Valley College that further extended his interest in wine and winemaking.

"I guess it was always meant to be," he recently recalled. "I realized I really loved wine and finally decided to do something about it."

Mark and his wife Jami purchased 14 acres in Napa Valley and went about the task of establishing a wine company. "Our property was once an ancient river bed that sits on a bench above the valley floor at the bottom of Soda Canyon Road, below the Atlas Peak AVA," Grassi continued. "This area had been known for the fine wines it has produced since the 1870's. All the factors pointed to the fact that it was an ideal setting for Cabernet Sauvignon, so that is what we concentrated on from the beginning."

Grassi also pointed out that the soils on his vineyard site are tempered by a host of cobbles that range in size from mini to some eight inches in diameter. These cobbles prevent the soil from being overly fertile, in addition to providing excellent drainage. The vineyard slopes gently to a center drainage running east to west and are planted on a tight grid to allow for excellent density and flavor concentration."

Grassi Wine Company offered its initial release in 2005, a total of around 700 cases of Cabernet Sauvignon. The wines were extremely well received and the fledgling operation was on its way to becoming an important player on the Napa Valley boutique wine scene.

Today, the Grassi Wine Company produces around 1,200 cases, a level Mark Grassi is perfectly happy with. "We had reached around 2,000 cases some time ago, but our current level suits us just fine. We firmly believe that smaller is better and it allows us to concentrate on the terroir of the vineyard that is so important to us. The formula has worked for us for more than a decade and a half, and we don't intend to change it."

Along the way, Grassi Wine Company has enjoyed the help of a number of consultants, most notably George Vare, a wine industry giant who passed away in 2013. Vare was instrumental in developing several obscure Italian varietals in Napa Valley, including one called Ribola Gaiella, a distinctive white grape that became Mark Grassi's favorite drinking wine. Fruit from Vare's vineyard was used to produce wines of the distinctive varietal that have won critical acclaim for Grassi and his company.

*Was the fact of Grassi's Italian heritage the contributing factor in developing these varietals?* "Not really," informed Mark Grassi. "My grandfather made wines in his basement. But, it was the fact that I loved the Italian varietals so much that made me want to produce them. There are numerous Italian varietals that have never made it to California and I thought it would make a statement if we were successful." So far, everything points to their wines (Bianco Sulle Buce included) becoming stars in their own right.

During his company's development,

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THE GRASSI FAMILY

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Mark Grassi assembled a top-notch team that included Winemaker Robbie Meyer (Peter Michael Winery, Lewis Cellars, Jericho Canyon Vineyard) that joined the company in 2009. Noted farming specialist Pete Richmond (Atlas Peak, William Hill, Stag's Leap, Bien Nacido) ensures the vineyards are correctly farmed.

In 2010, Grassi's daughter, Cassandra, joined the company and handles all the sales and marketing while residing on the vineyard property. Her addition was a particular joy to Grassi.

"We are truly a family operation," he concluded. "And, we just were given the right to construct a winery by Napa Valley. We hope to begin the project in the not-too-distant future and have it completed within the next few years."

Grassi Wine Company is an excellent example of an ultra quality boutique winery that adorns the crown of the exalted wine-producing area. We are delighted to introduce this distinctive, award-winning selection.

## Grassi 2015 Riserva Cabernet Sauvignon, Napa Valley

100 CASES PRODUCED

94 POINTS — *Antonio Galloni, Vinous*

"The 2015 Cabernet Sauvignon Riserva presents a fresher and more red-toned fruit profile than the straight Cabernet. Bright floral notes, red cherry, raspberry, mint and cinnamon are all beautifully delineated in this very pretty, gracious wine. The tannins need a bit of time to soften. This is a gorgeous wine from Grassi."

94 POINTS — *Lisa Perotti-Brown, The Wine Advocate*

"One-hundred percent Cabernet Sauvignon, the 2015 Cabernet Sauvignon Riserva is deep garnet-purple colored with a gorgeous nose of perfumed black fruit - roses, violets and dark chocolate over cassis, black cherries and crushed blackberries - with hints of cedar box, lavender, wood smoke, pencil lead and tapenade. The palate is full bodied, rich and densely packed with smoky black fruits and a firm frame of grainy tannins with great freshness, finishing long and layered."



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**This month's Diamond *Plus!*  
Featured Wine:**

Bacio Divino 2018 Red Blend,  
Napa Valley

94 Points

- *Wine Enthusiast* magazine

255 CASES PRODUCED

