



The Wine Press

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

Helwig Winery
Sierra Foothills - Amador County





2012 “Amador” Zinfandel Amador County

2,150 Cases Produced

Grown in Amador County, the Helwig 2012 is an excellent example of a complex red Zinfandel that emanates from the Sierra Foothills. Dark and rich on the palate, it features soft chewy tannins that fill the mouth with flavors of raspberry jam, Christmas cake spice, light smoke and vanilla. It is deep crimson in color and is quite approachable despite its complexity. The Helwig 2012 Zinfandel is ready to drink now but will continue to age beautifully for the next five to seven years.

This Zinfandel was meant to accompany most grilled meats and a variety of hearty Italian dishes. If you are searching for a wine to stand up to any barbeque sauce, check this one out. You will agree that it's the real deal.

GOLD MEDAL - *San Francisco Chronicle Wine Competition*



2014 “Sloughhouse” Viognier Central Valley

851 Cases Produced

The Viognier (vee-on-yay) is a remarkable Rhône varietal that has suddenly gained much favor in California. Originating from the Sloughhouse AVA in the far northeast section of the huge Lodi AVA of the Central Valley, the resultant wine is an elegant example of the delicate Viognier. Peach, pineapple and white nectarine are noticeable as well as the presence of ripe pear and white stone fruit tartness that graces the finish. It is ideal to drink this wine as an aperitif or by the glass.

The balance (acid, fruit, tannin and alcohol) is apparent from the start. Any chicken or fish dish will be fully complemented by the Helwig 2104 Sloughhouse Viognier. Even a lightly cooked pork chop or any of the lighter meats would also prove a worthy accompaniment to this remarkable wine.

DOUBLE GOLD MEDAL - *San Francisco Chronicle Wine Competition*

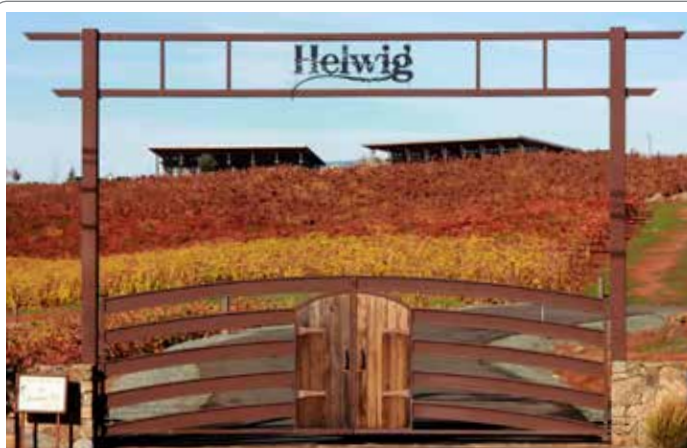
HOW WE CHOOSE OUR WINES: Gold Medal Wine Club showcases two wines each month from only the best small wineries of California. Featured wines include those which have earned medals in the top wine-industry competitions or have been highly rated by a respected national wine publication (see goldmedalwineclub.com/resources/wine-ratings). 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.



Helwig Winery



Highly-rated Sierra Foothills Winery offers more than incredible views and ambiance, Helwig Winery produces marvelous wines and has achieved impressive scores that have made them one of the top wineries in spacious Amador County.



The entry to Helwig Winery winds through beautiful vineyards before arriving at their new, state-of-the-art Tasting Room. Visitors can also enjoy world-class wines on the Outdoor Pavilion, or experience the custom 5,000 square foot Wine Cave.

It is indeed fortunate that Nancy Helwig is originally from around Sacramento, California. Were she not, it is debatable that there would be a Helwig Winery to occupy this month's *Gold selection* of the Gold Medal Wine Club.

"In 1998, we were living in Thousand Oaks just outside Los Angeles," recalled Dave Helwig, Nancy's husband and co-owner of Helwig Winery. "We would go up north to visit Nancy's folks and Sacramento is just a short distance from the great wine regions of California. The more we visited the more we became impressed with wine and grape growing."

When the couple's interest in grapes and wine piqued, Helwig then took the remarkable action of, planting some 50 vines on his southern California property. He worked as an insurance actuary but looked optimistically at the time when he could devote more time to his plants and amateur winemaking.

"A few years after the millennium, we started looking for real," Helwig added. "The process was harder than we expected,

the prices on real estate and vineyard land were astronomical. We actually spent between 7 and 8 years looking for the right spot. We were always impressed with what the Sierra Foothills offered and we eventually found our perfect spot just outside the town of Plymouth. I was nearing my retirement age so we went ahead with our plans and started buying some land. It was the best decision we ever made."

After planting, the 2009 crush produced the first useable fruit for the newly-formed Helwig Cellars.

The initial release of between 1,500 and 2,000 cases occurred two years later. The winery has grown steadily and will process around 12,000 cases this year.

Helwig Winery has also become a destination spot since its first wines hit the shelves more than seven years ago. In addition to the incredible vistas of the surrounding Sierra and Coastal mountains, Helwig offers meeting and conference rooms, a terraced concert amphitheater as well as a picnic Pavilion.



With stunning 360-degree views, the terraced amphitheater at Helwig Winery hosts concerts each Friday during summer months. Enjoy a glass or bottle of award-winning wines while listening to some live music.

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Scott Helwig WINEMAKER

Thirty-seven-year-old Scott Helwig has been the winemaker for Helwig Winery since its inception. Scott is mostly self-taught and has worked in a number of wineries prior to taking over the chores at his family’s winery. He began as a cellar rat and worked his way up to assistant winemaker. He also completed a number of courses given by the iconic University of California Davis, the country’s premier viticultural teaching institution.

Scott Helwig has also benefited from the help given by consulting winemaker Joe Schebl, a veteran of the California winemaking fraternity. Schebl has been associated with Renwood Winery, Fiddletown Cellars and Borjon Winery after graduating from Sacramento State University more than ten years ago.

According to co-owner Dave Helwig, his son is a detail-oriented winemaker that pays particular attention to the locations of the fruit he uses. “He has learned from the best and has made the most of his chances. His scores and awards attest to the fact that he really knows the finite art of winemaking.”

HELWIG WINERY

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The Helwig Winery label is a thing of beauty. The name Helwig is fashioned after grape leaves in tribute to the wonderful fruit that is featured. There is also a rendering of the company’s cave space that is used for aging its barrels under pristine conditions and temperature.

Since its inception, Helwig Winery has excelled in wine competitions at the highest levels.

“It has been quite gratifying,” explained Dave Helwig. “It seems the judges and the buying public is quite happy with our style and our presentation. It is good for us and great for Amador County where many of our wines originate. We won’t be changing anything anytime soon. I’m sure you can see why.”



Owning over 90 acres of planted vines between 4 vineyards, Helwig Winery can ensure that only the best possible grapes are included in their final wines. As they say, “Good Grapes Make Good Wine at Helwig Winery!”





Food pairings from Helwig Winery



BACON WRAPPED PRAWNS

PAIR WITH THE HELWIG 2014 "SLOUGHHOUSE" VIOGNIER

- | | |
|---|-----------------------------------|
| 1 bag frozen 16/20 size raw Prawns, peeled and deveined | 1 jar Sweet Pickled Red Peppers |
| 2 lbs Applewood sliced Smoked Bacon (thin sliced) | 1 cup Mae Ploy sweet Chili sauce |
| 4 Tbsp Vegetable or Canola oil (for sautéing) | Juice of 2 Lemons |
| ½ jar Banana Pepper Relish | ½ medium fresh Pineapple (minced) |
| | 1 pinch of Salt |
| | 1 packet of Knox Gelatin |

Gently simmer all relish ingredients in a saucepan for 5 minutes on low flame (without the gelatin). Meanwhile sprinkle 1 packet of Knox gelatin over 4 Tbsp of cold water and let it "bloom". Remove relish from heat and stir in bloomed gelatin. Pour into bowl and let cool in refrigerator for at least 1 hour. This can also be made 1-2 days ahead. If you like it spicy add 1 tablespoon of Sriracha! In the meanwhile thaw prawns and pat dry and then tightly wrap each prawn in one slice of bacon. Right before serving heat canola/vegetable oil in a sauté pan and gently fry prawns about 2-3 minutes on each side, until center of prawn is no longer opaque. Transfer onto paper towels to remove excess oil, then arrange on a platter. Stir up chutney and serve with prawns.



LAMB MEATBALLS

PAIR WITH THE HELWIG 2012 "AMADOR" ZINFANDEL

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1 lb ground Lamb meat (coarse) | 2 c. Yellow onion (medium dice) |
| 1 lbs ground Pork (coarse) | 4 T. Garlic (sliced) |
| 1T. Garlic (minced) | 2T. Balsamic Vinegar |
| ½ T. Thyme (fresh, chopped) | 2 cans 14 oz. Fire roasted diced tomatoes (drained) |
| ½ T. Oregano (fresh, chopped) | ½ tsp. Chili flakes |
| Salt and Pepper to taste | 2 Portobello Mushrooms (grilled and sliced) |
| 4 Tbsp Vegetable or Canola oil (for sautéing the meatballs) | 1 bunch Kale (cleaned and cut into ribbons) |
| ½ c. Extra Virgin Olive Oil | |

In a medium sized mixing bowl add lamb meat, pork meat, garlic, herbs and salt and pepper. Use your hands to mix well. Once you are done mixing the meats start to portion into 1.5 oz meatballs and place on a sheet pan. In a large pot add olive oil and sear all the meatballs. Try to get some nice browning/color on the meatballs. When all meatballs are browned take them out of the pan and hold them in a clean bowl while you build the sauce. Please leave all the crusty bits and browned pieces of meatballs in the pan...that is great flavor that will add depth to your sauce! Add more olive oil, onions and garlic to you pot. Take the time to develop nice color and caramelize the onions and garlic. Use a medium heat and develop those flavors slowly. Once you have toasted the onions and garlic turn up the heat to high and add balsamic vinegar, let simmer for 2 minutes and add the fired roasted tomatoes and chili flakes. Bring to a simmer and simmer for 10 minutes. Now that your sauce is done...add meatballs, grilled Portobello mushrooms (sliced) and chopped Kale to the sauce. Stir everything together and pour onto your favorite pasta.





Dave Helwig IN THE SPOTLIGHT

The first thing you glean after talking to Dave Helwig for a few minutes is that he is one happy person.

“The wine business features great people who love and appreciate a good wine,” he remarked recently. “It’s all great fun...”

Originally from Illinois, from a family with German/Swedish roots, Helwig credits his father with his interest in wine. “My Dad was a great guy who worked hard all his life. He taught me the value of hard work and the rewards it would bring. When I started learning about wine, he was very supportive.”

The fact that Dave and his wife Nancy spent more than seven years before finally selecting the site near Plymouth is proof of the dedication and spirit that motivated the couple. “We found the area to be very laid back, and filled with people who were good workers. The price was within our budget so we went ahead and bought our first property. It is also important that our winery permit has unlimited production availability. Other growing area permits place a cap on what you can produce.”

Dave Helwig also pointed out that his business is more than a family affair. His wife Nancy handles the company’s marketing and the important website segment of Helwig



Winery. His son Scott is the winemaker and he has amassed a huge number of awards and scores in competitions.

“I come up with most of the basic ideas,” he confessed. “But our family must agree before we proceed ahead. We are delighted that everything has turned out so well. It is absolutely wonderful to have vineyards, make wine and have fun at the same time.”

Many winery owners would love to share Helwig’s positive outlook. In a highly competitive business such as the wine industry, such viewpoints are not commonly found.

“My former business was as a health insurance actuary. I was the CEO of Blue Cross/Blue Shield for California, Nevada and Colorado. It was a great job but the winery is even better. The interaction with our customers has made them our friends, not just our customers. We share many things but are brought together by our common love of wine.”

Dave Helwig’s personal favorite wine is a Barbera, an Italian varietal he firmly believes compliments food better than any other. “I enjoy the softness and the degree of fruit it displays,” he went on. “And I feel that wine is intended to be consumed with food. It makes everything we eat actually taste better.”

After all, who’s to question after his company’s wonderful success?





Wine Region: AMADOR COUNTY

The region correctly referred to as the Sierra Foothills growing area is a gigantic stretch of land (expanding close to 2,600,000 acres in total) that includes its own AVA (American Viticultural Area) as well as five sub regions.

It possesses almost every terroir imaginable from the rocky, rugged mountainous soils of El Dorado AVA to the more accommodating Shenandoah Valley AVA and its wonderfully pristine valley floor soils. Such length allows for the growing of practically every known varietal for the more than 100 wineries located within the foothills' boundaries. As you would guess, elevations vary greatly throughout the entire region, some at elevations of 3,000 feet.

The most accomplished (in terms of reputation) growing area lies within Amador County. These vineyards have been known for their great wines since the early days of the fabulous California Gold Rush. Many vineyards were planted at the time, much to the delight of the miners who flooded the



area from across the country and world. At the time, the area was comprised of more vineyards than both Napa Valley and Sonoma County to its west.

This is one of the base homes of the revered Zinfandel grape and in particular, the ageless, craggy vines that constitute Old Vine Zinfandel. Many of these plants are over a hundred years young and still produce small amounts of excellent, useful fruit. The warm, sunny climate found here is the benefactor to the grapes that yield wines of considerable depth and complexity.

Helwig Winery owns some 90 acres of vineyards that are located in Amador, El Dorado and Solano Counties. The winery also purchases grapes from a number of upscale growers to fulfill the needs of its own extensive portfolio of excellent, award-winning wines.

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Wine Winyard: TEST YOUR WINEIQ!



What cheese pairs best with Viognier?

Creamy and buttery cheeses such as a double or triple cream brie are the perfect match. Try the Brie de Meaux if you can find it. It is considered one of France's finest bries. The caves and commune of Meaux are about 25 miles east-northeast of Paris.

How old do the vines have to be to say 'Old Vine'?

There is no official age but 50 years seems to be an agreed upon number. Vines can live much, much longer and one vine still producing fruit for production is located just outside London at the Hampton Court Palace. It was planted in 1769.

How many grapes does it take to make a bottle of wine?

The average number of grapes it takes to make a bottle of wine is around 736. But that number can vary widely depending on grape variety, and the condition of the grapes when picked. For example, plump berries from rain or small ones resulting from a dry growing season can change the over-all amount of grapes it takes to make a bottle.

The Gold Medal Wine Store

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Helwig	Retail Price at Winery		Gold Medal Membership Rewards Pricing*		
			2+ btls.	6+ btls.	12+ btls.
2012 "Amador" Zinfandel, Amador County	\$24.00/btl.	2-Bottle Members:	\$20.00	\$18.33	\$17.50
		4-Bottle Members:	\$20.00	\$17.50	\$16.25
2014 "Sloughhouse" Viognier, Central Valley	\$20.00/btl.	2-Bottle Members:	\$17.00	\$15.33	\$14.50
		4-Bottle Members:	\$17.00	\$14.50	\$13.25

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

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