

Pinot Noir Press



JAX VINEYARDS

A brother-sister collaboration in Napa Valley, JAX Vineyards takes a modern, simplistic winemaking approach to crafting their terroir-driven wines that reflect authentic varietal character and a true sense of place.



The naming of a winery can be of prime importance to the success of the entity involved. This *Pinot Noir Wine Club* selection is the work of JAX Vineyards, an easily remembered name. JAX designates a pruning (no pun intended) of the name 'Jackson,' whose family members originated, funded and operated the resultant enterprise.

Let's go back to the beginning. Some twenty-three years ago, David Jackson purchased an exceptional dry-farmed vineyard above Calistoga in Napa Valley. Everyone who knew David Jackson swore he had an exceptionally green thumb. Shortly thereafter, Jackson's son Trent contracted the 'wine bug' and used his father's grapes to produce some wines in his San Francisco garage.

Several years passed and since Trent Jackson was employed in technology, he soon realized his promising hobby required full-time attention. In 2002, Trent turned to his sister Kimberly, who had just received her MBA from Vanderbilt University. Kimberly Jackson embraced the idea of a winery with a blend of tenacity and passion. In 2003, she restructured the business, re-branded the wine, made placements in high quality restaurants on both coasts and received rave notices from the wine industry press.

"We use a sustainable approach to farming," Kimberly Jackson Wickham stated. "We use cover crops to impart nutrients into the soils and only use organic compost. We harvest by hand to control our fruit quality and are extremely selective in only using the finest grapes for our wines. After the harvest, we drop fifty percent of our crop either during the growing season or through the hand-selection process."

Such business acumen has propelled JAX Vineyards to the very top of the list of Napa Valley wineries. From their original release of a smallish 200 cases, the venture has grown to an annual production of around 12,000 cases. While this isn't a boutique-like figure, it must be remembered that JAX Vineyards only produces extremely high quality wines. Many Napa Valley wineries would like to have their production admired in such lofty climes.

The Jackson Family story isn't quite complete. Jane Jackson (David's wife) is an incredible artist and designer and is partly responsible for JAX Vineyards' label design, as well as designing the provincial style tasting facility and grounds in the hot new SoMa section of San Francisco. The "wine oasis," as Kimberly Jackson Wickham describes it, features olive trees, 50 year-old vines from the

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estate in Calistoga, and a fire pit that offers the Napa Valley experience to urban wine lovers. It is located near the corner of Brannan and 2nd Street, some two blocks from AT&T Ballpark. Tastings and private events can be scheduled through the company's website.

Perhaps the most important decision that Kimberly Jackson Wickham made for the company occurred quite early in JAX Vineyards' evolution. She realized that for her company to evolve and prosper, she needed the help of a proven industry winemaker who could offer JAX access to some of Napa Valley's premier growers. She selected third-generation winemaker Kirk Venge, whose association began in 2004. Venge is a Rutherford born and raised grower and winemaker from a famous winemaking family. Kirk Venge was also a proponent of dry farming in the mold of founder David Jackson. It is difficult to wander throughout Napa Valley without Kirk Venge's name coming up and his following is among the largest in Northern California.

JAX Vineyards could easily be considered the ultimate success story. A son's vision and his sister's business acumen have made the Calistoga winery into one of the country's elite growers and vintners. We hope you enjoy this month's featured wine from JAX Vineyards. Cheers!

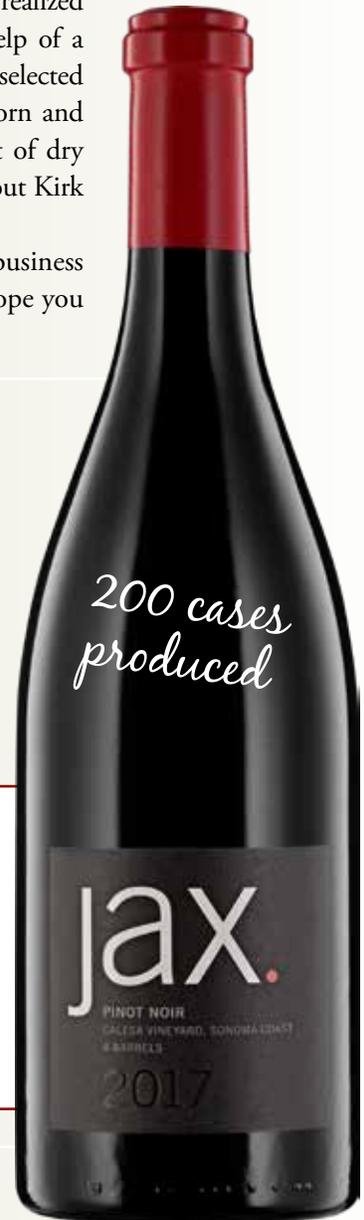
JAX 2017 PINOT NOIR

Calesa Vineyard, Petaluma Gap, Sonoma Coast

The JAX 2017 Pinot Noir comes from the Calesa Vineyard in the Petaluma Gap of the Sonoma Coast. The vineyard was named 'Calesa,' which means 'stagecoach' in Spanish; long ago, this site served as a resting stop for horse drawn carriages! Medium ruby in color, this Pinot Noir offers a very pretty nose with aromas of dried violets and rose petals, bergamot, wood-smoke and cola, with a core of ripe red and black fruits with spicy hints. The palate is concentrated with spicy red and black fruits, an earthy touch, and just the right amount of acidity. Aged 18 months in oak. Enjoy!

92 POINTS

– Robert Parker's
The Wine Advocate



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