



Diamond Series



Levendi Vineyards

It is not widely known that wine was an important aspect of Greek culture and life and was part of Greek commerce and worship from earliest times. That tradition is alive today in the form of Levendi Winery, owned mostly by the Gianulias Family of California.

In fact, co-owner David Gianulias, 44, is the tenth generation of his family in the wine business, a span of over several hundred years.

As far back as 1926, David Gianulias' grandfather produced wine that was mostly consumed by his family and friends. It wasn't until David and his father Jim, now 75, along with family friend Todd Rustman, banded together to found Levendi Winery that the family entered the commercial wine business.

Located in Napa Valley, Levendi Winery first saw the light of day in 2001 when it produced its first 1,000 cases.

David Gianulias tells the rest of the story. "We were told we were foolish to produce so many cases the first time around. Then a forklift dropped some pallets and suddenly we had less than 900 cases to sell," he smiled. "It wasn't all that funny at the time, but it all worked out quite nicely."

This year Levendi Winery will produce more than 2,000 cases, and has a lofty goal of 10,000 cases to be achieved in 3 to 5 years. The company owns more than 300 acres of prime Napa Valley acreage and has long-term contracts with several top Napa growers.

The story of Levendi Winery's initial success is a tale unto itself. The first restaurant approached by the company just happened to be Wolfgang Puck's flagship restaurant, Spago, located in Beverly Hills. Puck liked what he tasted and ordered the wine for all his restaurants. His high profile clientele agreed with the chef's choice

and the rest is history. Levendi Winery was off and flying and added numerous awards and accolades along the way.

For the record, *levendi* in Greek is part of a phrase *yasou levendi*, a toast that basically ascribes hard work and a good life. The Levendi Winery label is an elaborate sketch that depicts a young person in a vineyard or farm raising a glass to the sun, the most important element in the development of good vines and grapes. The coloring on the label reflects the varietal inside the bottle.

"It is our way of depicting our thanks to God in the form of the sun," related David Gianulias. "It is part of our ancient Greek culture and has been around for centuries. One of my uncles suggested it and it seemed an incredibly appropriate name for the winery."



The wines of Levendi Winery have consistently scored high marks thanks to the efforts of winemaker Alison Doran. A graduate of renowned UC Davis, Doran was a student of iconic winemaker Andre Tchelistcheff (Beaulieu Vineyards and others) and spent time in the historic Alsace Region of France. Doran is a 30+ year veteran of the wine industry with a strong background in vineyard management. She has developed a style of her own – exceptional taste and a velvety feel on the palate; factors that have helped distinguish Levendi Winery's wines from those of its competitors.

The future looks remarkably bright for Levendi Winery and its splendid portfolio of wines. While still a family operation, the winery has already made inroads abroad with its wines. Naturally, Greece was the first country to accept Levendi Winery's selections.

"Rather than attempt to sell our wines in the overcrowded European markets," added David Gianulias, "we have decided to concentrate in another direction."



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Todd Rustman, Jim Gianulias, & David Gianulias – Founders

Negotiations are underway for our wines in China and India and we expect to contact Korea, Taiwan and Australia in the not too distant future. It seems that there is still a good deal of room for California wines in those

countries, and we let our quality speak for itself.”

In terms of quality, this smallish winery has come a long way in its relatively brief history. Its wines have consistently scored in the 90s in top publications and competitions and it has developed a loyal following through its continuing efforts.

Another unique feature is the wine room at the popular Antonello Ristorante, located on the restaurant’s second floor in Orange County’s luxurious South Coast Village. All of Levendi Winery’s varietals are displayed in the room that is both temperature and humidity controlled. The room seats 14 and even contains private wine lockers. It is one of the few such rooms devoted exclusively to a winery in the entire country.

Accolades and Tasting Notes

Levendi 2008 Stagecoach Vineyard Cabernet Sauvignon

94 Points, Cellar Selection, *Wine Enthusiast magazine* — “Despite being nearly six years old, the tannins in this wine are still huge and hard. But the beautiful acidity and the incredibly intense fruity concentration suggests this has more time left to evolve in the bottle. It is the essence of black currant, crème de cassis and mineral, focused into a single sip.”

Best of Class, *Los Angeles International Wine Competition*

Winemaker Notes — “From the Stagecoach Vineyard on the eastern volcanic ridge above Napa, comes this rich and decadent, limited production Cabernet Sauvignon. The vivid red soils and rocky slopes come together to produce a wine with an aroma of sweet blackberry and cassis fruit that carries over into a superbly balanced and polished palate. Only 1,000 cases produced.”

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