



Diamond Wine Club

PATEL WINERY

Napa Valley

Patel Winery owner Raj Patel was born in India's Gujarat State and came with his family to California in the early 1970's. They settled in Northern California and became a part of the American scene.

Patel attended the prestigious University of California Davis and majored in finance.

Finance? At the country's top enology school that has produced the cream of American winemakers?

"Yes," Patel explained during a recent interview. "I actually started in bio-chemistry and when I found that pre-med was not for me, I changed to finance. It was actually the best possible thing that could happen to me."

Like most students, Patel needed money to live and he accepted an offer to work in the lab at Napa Valley's iconic Robert Mondavi Winery. The job soon proved to be life changing for the modest businessman.

"I got to work with the winemakers at Mondavi," he continued. "And, I developed a deep respect for both wines and the winemaking process. The winemaking team was impressed with my ability to understand and assimilate the complexities of winemaking. I kept it as a hobby and even started collecting wines that really impressed me."

Patel then entered the banking business and became a vice-president of the Bank of America. He also involved himself in other business enterprises. In the back of his mind, he retained his love of wine along with his desire to one day become a part of the exciting wine industry.

Raj Patel's chance came in the mid-2000's, when he began work on what would become the Patel Winery. His business acumen allowed him to develop a simple plan to produce high caliber wines by utilizing stellar grapes from selected vineyards in and around Napa Valley. He chose the varietals carefully, utilizing fruit from Coombsville, Atlas Peak, Oakville, Carneros, and Rutherford, among

the most sought after AVA's in Napa Valley.

Patel also hired Kian Tavakoli (another UC Davis graduate, this time in Enology) as winemaker. Tavakoli has been a part of two of Napa Valley's most prestigious wineries (Opus One and Clos du Val) and is considered one of the top winemakers in the entire country. However, the current winemaker at Patel is Julien Fayard, who gained his knowledge and defined his core winemaking style while working at grand Chateaux in France such as Lafite Rothschild and Smith Haut Laffite.

In Napa Valley, he has worked alongside renowned winemaker Philippe Melka and has been involved with some of the most highly acclaimed and sought after wines in the region. He currently consults for a handful of small-production wineries including Patel, Scalon, Azur, Purlieu and Empreinte.

But it is Raj Patel who has lead something of a charmed life, at least in the wine-related aspects of his business. He is also unique in the fact that he is one of the few natives of India to own a winery in California.

Because of that fact, none other than Robert Parker decided to rate his first release. "We only made a total of 100 cases of our first wine and Mr. Parker gave it a 95. I guess you can say that his rating gave us a great start."

As the saying goes, "and the rest of the story is history."

Since its impressive debut in 2009, Patel Winery has continued to garner incredible results with its delicately blended wines. Its Cabernet Sauvignons have averaged a whopping 94 Points (many wineries never achieve a mark of 94) and Patel Winery's annual production has sold out every year since its inception.

"With us, it's always about our ability to manage quality. Each year, we exclude the bottom 30% of our production, even if the wine is really good. We sell it to other wineries and

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RAJ PATEL,
PROPRIETOR & FOUNDER

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our reputation is such that there is always great demand for anything we offer,” Patel stated. “Some wineries actually get some marvelous wine to work with and everyone is happy.”

Patel Winery’s production is still small, topping out between 800 and 1,000 cases. All of the Patel wines are now made at Italics Wineworks in Coombsville, where they have the ability to host a limited number of tastings by appointment.

“We are a family-oriented operation that is intent on making well-balanced wines. It’s not all about scores or awards. We simply don’t want to dilute the brand in order to make more wines,” Patel concluded.

Patel Winery is an important addition to Napa Valley and it is easy to see why its early success will be long lived. Its ownership has a detailed plan for its future and exceptional quality fruit to rely on for the forthcoming years. It is our pleasure to feature Patel Winery. Enjoy!

Patel 2014 Cabernet Sauvignon, Rutherford, Napa Valley

165 CASES PRODUCED

95 POINTS — *Robert Parker’s The Wine Advocate*

“The sensational 2014 Cabernet Sauvignon Rutherford comes from Clone 4 and the old Georges III Vineyard now owned by Beckstoffer. This is a floral, earthy wine with a dense purple color and a big, sweet, complex nose that follows through on the palate with loads of kirsch liqueur, black currants, dusty soil undertones, some cedar wood and spicy oak. Opaque purple, full-bodied, and generously endowed, it can be drunk over the next 15-20 years.”

93 POINTS — *Antonio Galloni’s Vinous*

“The 2014 Cabernet Sauvignon Rutherford, from Georges III, is supple, silky and nuanced. This is an especially floral, red-toned Cabernet from Georges III. Sweet red cherry, plum, spice and rose petals are some of the signatures. Silky, polished tannins add to the wine’s incredible appeal. There is a lot to like here. This is one of the most finessed, gracious Cabernets from Georges III that I have tasted in some time.”



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

Corley 2014 Cabernet Sauvignon
Yewell Vineyard, Napa Valley

93 Points - *Wine Spectator* magazine

134 CASES PRODUCED

