



Garagiste

WINE CLUB

[gar-uh-zheest'] noun - A French term used to describe independent, artisan winemakers crafting small batches of wine in garage-type settings and not yet discovered by the mainstream.

Silver Wines

Owner/Winemaker: Benjamin Silver

Location: Santa Barbara County, CA

Who would have guessed that a kid from Amherst, Massachusetts, with a Bachelor of Science degree in Animal Sciences (Pre-Veterinary) and a Bachelor of Arts degree in Italian from the University of Massachusetts, would end up in Santa Barbara County as an up-and-coming winemaker? Benjamin Silver did just that after catching the wine bug in 1993 at a summer job at Chicama Vineyards on Martha's Vineyard.

In 1994, after graduating from college, Benjamin secured a harvest intern Lab Technician position at Zaca Mesa Winery in Santa Barbara County, working under iconic visionary winemaker Daniel Gehrs. Following harvest, Zaca Mesa offered Benjamin a full-time position as Daniel Gehrs' assistant. "Dan took me under his wing as an apprentice winemaker and nurtured my passion for viticulture and winemaking," Benjamin recently explained. When Daniel Gehrs left Zaca Mesa in 1998, Benjamin took over as head winemaker.

Over the years, Benjamin began to experiment with small quantities of Zinfandel, Sauvignon Blanc, Cabernet Franc, and Nebbiolo, and this experimentation laid the foundation for the eventual formation of Silver Wines. In 2000, Benjamin left Zaca Mesa to launch his own label, while also taking over the winemaking program and vineyard re-development for the owner of White Hawk Vineyard, located just a couple of miles north of Los Alamos.

Benjamin's initial release of Silver Wines was just 250 cases, a number that steadily grew to over 4,000 cases at one point, but has since retreated to its present annual level of between 1,000 and 1,500 cases. This is a level that Benjamin is comfortable with, and he is content to remain small for the foreseeable future.

"Our main emphasis at Silver Wines has always been focused on terroir-driven wines that possess complex personality," explained owner/winemaker Benjamin Silver. "We have always sourced our fruit from older vines in both the Santa Maria and Los Alamos growing areas, and we have seldom been disappointed."

Silver Wines currently produces small bottlings of Pinot Noir, Cabernet Franc, Syrah, Nebbiolo, and two proprietary blends (Saviezza, Sangiovese-based, and I Tre Figli, a blend of Cabernet Sauvignon, Sangiovese, and Cabernet Franc). For each wine, Benjamin strives for complete balance with enough acidity, fruit and tannin structure to maintain through longer barrel aging. He finds that his wines seem to appeal most fondly to Old World-loving palates.

Silver Wines recently opened a tasting room in El Paseo of downtown Santa Barbara. The space is comfortable, casual, and inviting, allowing visitors an up close and personal experience with the wonderful wines that Benjamin Silver has to offer. If you ever find yourself in the area, it is definitely worth a visit. We are happy to share Silver Wines and this up-and-coming Santa Barbara winemaker with our Garagiste Wine Club members.



Silver 2013 Cabernet Franc

150 cases produced

Santa Barbara County, California

The Silver 2013 Cabernet Franc comes from the Coghlin Vineyard in the Happy Canyon AVA of Santa Barbara County. Rich, elegant and balanced, this Cabernet Franc opens with aromas of vanilla, blueberry, leather and tobacco leaf and creamy, juicy flavors of blueberry, mulberry, black currant, and hints of spice and juniper on the palate. This wine aged for 36 months in oak, which has led to its persistent and complex flavors. 77% Cabernet Franc, 15% Sangiovese, 5% Cabernet Sauvignon, 4% Petit Verdot. Enjoy!

Gold Medal Wine Club Price: \$25.00 / bottle

To order, visit the Wine Store at www.GoldMedalWineClub.com or call 1-800-266-8888

*2 bottle minimum per wine, per order. Shipping and tax (if applicable) not included. Call for details.

