



ACORN Winery: One of Sonoma County's very best

By Gabe Sasso on November 9, 2018

If you're driving down Old Redwood Highway in Healdsburg looking for ACORN Winery, you just might miss it. The winery sits about halfway between Rodney Strong on one side and Foppiano Vineyards on the other. The sign is on the smaller side, and ACORN is tucked down a somewhat long access road that at first doesn't seem like it's headed anywhere. Pretty soon, though, you'll find yourself surrounded by vines, and then you'll see the winery itself in front of you. If it feels like you've reached the Promised Land, it's because you have.

Betsy and Bill Nachbaur have been farming Alegría Vineyards, sustainably, since 1990, and it's certified as such. On their 32 acres in Russian River Valley, they grow more than 70 grape varieties. In addition to bottling approximately 3,000 cases of their own wines, they also sell grapes to other producers. Each of the ACORN offerings is a field blend. The oldest vines on their property are some Zinfandel blocks that date to 1890.

The Nachbours are shepherds of their land and producers of some of the finest wines in Sonoma County – selections that always exhibit true character reflective not only of the grapes in question but also the very specific place in the world they were grown. ACORN wines are more than food friendly; each works so harmoniously that they inhabit that space where they are in fact food themselves, which is how it should be with wines of this caliber.

Every bottle I've ever tasted from ACORN, over many years now, has also been proportionate, acid-rich and deserving of the patience it takes to age wines and wait for them to achieve that next level of greatness. I've had a number of opportunities to drink their wines with age on them and they've consistently been a revelation. Adding to the allure of what Bill and Betsy are achieving is that they do it at prices (\$28-\$50) suited for regular consumption. These are not trophy wines priced out of reach for the average consumer. However, once you taste what they've been doing for close to 30 years, you will certainly want to give ACORN Wines a place of honor in your cellar.

Here's a look at some current releases I tasted recently and **highly recommend**.

ACORN Winery 2017 Rosato (\$28)

This rosé, a field blend like all of their wines, is composed of Zinfandel, Cabernet Franc, Sangiovese, Syrah, Petite Sirah and more. The salmon hue shimmers in the glass. Aromas of fresh red fruit lead the way. The palate shows off cherry and bits of strawberry. Cranberry and juicy melon flavors emerge on the finish. Racy acid keeps

everything in check. The ACORN Rosato is the perfect wine for your Thanksgiving feast, Taco Tuesday or just about anything you're eating.

ACORN Winery 2015 Sangiovese (\$32)

23 clones of Sangiovese (98%), Canialo Nero (1%) and Mammolo Toscano (1%) make up this wine. There are a very small handful of California producers bottling a Sangiovese that reveals the true identity of the grape, and this is one of them. Fine acid is a trademark of all the ACORN wines, but none more than this Sangiovese. Red berry fruit tinged with hints of black fruit are evident from the first whiff to the last sip. Bits of spice and leather are evident as well. Slightly chewy tannins yield with some air. This will work with an incredibly broad array of different foods, but tomato-laced dishes will really shine.



ACORN Winery 2014 Dolcetto (\$35)

In addition to Dolcetto (92%), some Barbera (5%) and Freisa (3%) are contained here as well. Black fruit aromas lead the charge along with a dollop of spices. The palate is stuffed with an engaging array of berry fruits and complementary characteristics. Cranberry and pomegranate flavors lead the long finish along with black tea and a copious array of spices. This will work particularly well with any mushroom-based or -laced dishes.

ACORN Winery 2015 Cabernet Franc (\$38)

Small amounts of Malbec, Merlot, Petit Verdot, Cabernet Sauvignon and Tannat are in play here along with the Cabernet Franc (92%). Cherry, leather and Mexican vanilla bean are part of the aromatic mix here. Flavors of raspberry, cherries and spice follow. Bits of dusty cocoa and a touch of oak are evident on the long finish.



ACORN Winery 2013 Acorn Hill (\$48)

This take on a "Super-Tuscan" is composed of Syrah (49%), Sangiovese (49%), Viognier (1%), Mammolo (0.5%) and Canaiolo (0.5%). Dark fruit aromas are punctuated by a core of spices. Black cherry and bits of raspberry are evident on the palate. Black tea, chicory and continued berry fruit flavors round out the long finish. What's most striking about this wine is the texture and mouth-feel, which are impressive. Pair this selection with substantial foods such as Cassoulet for most delicious results.

ACORN Winery 2015 Heritage Zinfandel (\$48)

Zinfandel (78%), Alicante Bouschet (11%), Petite Sirah (9%) and more than 15 other varieties are part of the mix here. Spiciness is a classic trait of Zinfandel grown in Russian River Valley, and this wine is no exception. Black plum, cherry and a treasure trove of spices light up the nose. The palate is stuffed with red and black berry fruit, espresso, dark chocolate and continued spices. The long finish is persistent, deep and mouth-watering.

ACORN Winery 2014 Medley (\$50)

This wine features more than 60 of the varieties planted at Alegría Vineyards. While it's not their largest production wine, it's the one that best represents their entire vineyard. Ripe wild strawberry and a tiny hint of funkiness are present on the nose. The palate is a who's who of red fruit flavors buttressed with dark fruits. Bits of toast and a dusting of earth are evident on the long finish. This is a seamless blend where the whole becomes something more than the sum of its parts.

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