

california & france napa valley & roussillon

orin swift
st. helena & maury



overview | In 1998, with a single harvest under his belt, Dave Phinney started Orin Swift Cellars, the winemaking enterprise bearing his Dad's middle name (Orin) and his Mom's maiden name (Swift).

annual production: 35,000 cases

grape varieties: cabernet sauvignon, petit verdot, merlot, grenache, carignan, syrah, petite syrah, sauvignon blanc, muscat, semillon

Encouraged by a college roommate while studying in Italy and contemplating a law career, he decided instead to follow his new found bliss into the wine business. Working in an Italian-focused fine wine shop back in the U.S. led him to a short stint as an intern with the Agricultural department, then on to a temporary harvest job on the nightshift in Napa, his first crush, and eventually to his own label. Today, Phinney has grown Orin Swift to include wine from the Roussillon in France.

vineyard/cellar practices | Most fruit for Orin Swift is purchased from growers like Doug Wight (Lewelling), Gary Morisoli, and Vince Tofanelli, whose dry-farmed, trellis-free vineyard is farmed with an organic philosophy-no pesticides, herbicides or irrigation. Wines are produced at a custom crush facility in Napa. Orin Swift also owns land in the Roussillon, France, based in the 900 person town of Maury.

wines |

Papillon - Orin Swift's first true Bordeaux style blend. Grapes are sourced from Howell Mountain, Saint Helena, Rutherford, and Oakville to gain better complexity and structure. The label is an image of 3rd generation Napa Valley grape grower Vince Tofanelli's hands taken by our friend and world famous photographer, Greg Gorman.

Mercury Head Cabernet Sauvignon - Mercury Head is the slang term for the authentic Liberty Dime which serves as the wine's "front label". As a kid Dave Phinney collected these dimes. Years later, after getting one with some change, he was reminded how striking they are. 100% Cabernet Sauvignon, the 2008 vintage hailed from Morisoli, Lewelling and Taplin Vineyards.

Palermo Cabernet Sauvignon - Orin Swift purchases Cabernet Sauvignon grapes for Mercury Head and Papillon. Every year they buy more grapes than they need for the two blends. They do this to always have multiple vineyards and corresponding wine characteristics to choose from. They also experiment with different grape maturity levels, French barrel producers, and fermentation techniques. This is done to try to learn more with each vintage and create a wine with greater complexity and balance. These multiple lots either add something to the final blend or become their own parts, parts they consider to be separate among equals. They blended these separate but equal parts together in a Napa Valley Cabernet Sauvignon called Palermo.

Veladora Sauvignon Blanc - Sourced primarily from the Tofanelli Vineyard in Calistoga, the Veladora Sauvignon Blanc is blended with small amounts of Muscat and Semillon. The name Veladora references the candles that grace the photograph on the front label. We chose to use an image of Our Lady of Guadalupe to further convey our deep respect for and recognition of the Latino heritage of our fellow farm workers.

D66 Vin de Pays de Côtes Catalanes - D66 is the first release from Orin Swift's new winery and vineyards in Maury, France. The small town of Maury is in the outer Roussillon very close to the Spanish border and nestled in the Pyrénées-Orientales. They own approximately 235 acres (93 ha.) of mostly Grenache vines with a little Syrah and Carignan. The majority of the vines were planted more than 60 years ago, with many of the vineyards being even older. The terrain is dominated by black schist with a couple small deposits of Granite and Limestone in red rocky soils known as Argile. Schist is a crystalline rock based soil that retains heat well but is poor in organic nutrients and nitrogens. In other words, these vines really have to struggle. The result is a very dark, concentrated, and rich wine.

Abstract - Abstract is a blend of Napa, Sonoma, and Mendocino Grenache, Petite Sirah, and Syrah primarily from hillside vineyards. The aromas are laced with crushed black fruits and Bing cherry. A mouth coating entry leads nicely into a mid palate with excellent structure and balanced acidity. Ripe cherry and strawberry dominate the finish which is clean and long.

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