

CALIFORNIA SANTA CRUZ MOUNTAINS

VARNER WINES MENLO PARK



OVERVIEW | In 1980, twin brothers Jim and Bob Varner began their labor of love when they planted Spring Ridge Vineyards in Portola Valley in the northern part of the Santa Cruz Mountain Appellation. Located 10 miles from the ocean, Spring Ridge is made up of several separate blocks of vines, each with its own microclimate and soil difference. The vineyard has been dry farmed and hand-hoed since 1988. Insecticides have never been used, nor fertilizers. The grapes are hand-harvested only in the morning into small lug boxes to allow natural cooling of the juice.

VINEYARD AREA: 9.5 acres

ANNUAL PRODUCTION: 1800 cases (Varner), 30,000 cases (Foxglove)

SOIL TYPES: porous, young (1-3 million years old), fractured sedimentary rock

GRAPE VARIETIES: chardonnay, pinot noir, zinfandel, cabernet sauvignon

In addition to his wines for the Varner label, Bob also makes Foxglove, a modern style line that's meant to bring out the flavors of the Central Coast. He adds the same quality standards and attention to detail to Foxglove that he puts into single vineyard Varner wines. A very important part of the concept of this label reflects the realities of today's market - the wine has to taste better than it's price. He and Jim work on keeping the overhead costs low so they can invest more in the quality of the vineyard source and the integrity of the winemaking process. Foxglove offers the level of pure flavors and natural balance that the Verners have become known for.

VINEYARD/CELLAR PRACTICES | Bob works in the rows during each harvest, insuring that sorting is done at the vine rather than at the winery. The wine is treated as naturally as possible, using indigenous yeast and malolactic bacteria from the vineyard. Rather than fining and filtering, the barrels (typically between 30 and 40% new French) are hand-racked, using a fontaine d'aspiration and a hand-cranked barrel lifting device. With this method, the lees are not disturbed and the wine is clarified without filtration.

WINES | Foxglove Chardonnay - Purchased fruit from San Luis Obispo County. Hand harvested, whole cluster pressed. Stainless steel 55 degree fermentation, lees stirred with no malo-lactic fermentation. Crisp and aromatic no oak style Chardonnay with Edna Valley notes of tropical flavors but also pears and a good dose of minerality.

Foxglove Zinfandel - Zinfandel with some Petit Sirah from Paso Robles. Zin fruit aromatics with supple Petit Sirah berry flavors playing a supporting role.

Foxglove Cabernet Sauvignon - Cabernet Sauvignon, Petit Verdot, Cabernet Franc from Paso Robles. Blends red and black fruits with peppery, herbal, cedar and bittersweet chocolate. Nice tannic backbone and good length. Atypical for Paso Robles, almost Bordelais.

Chardonnay Amphitheater Block - From vines planted in 1981 on their own roots, this is the most mineral and Chablisienne of all the Varner Chardonnays. This two-acre, amphitheater-shaped southeast-facing block is planted to old California Heritage clones. Always full of meyer lemon, wet stone and a rich core with beautiful, balancing acidity. A subtle smokiness on the palate gives way to a lean and persistent, citrus finish. 715 to 760 ft. elevation from bottom rows to top.

Chardonnay Home Vineyard - a 2-acre south facing slope that produces wine somewhere in between the leanness of the Amphitheater and the roundness of Bee Block. Like Amphitheater, the vines, which were planted in 1980, are planted on their own rootstock. More white fruits and bright green apple notes predominate here, with layers of texture and a fresh finish.

Chardonnay Bee Block - Their youngest vines, planted in 1986, Bee Block was so named because the plot was home to many bees before being transformed into vineyard. This is from a 3-acre block planted with 19-year-old vines using budwood from the Home Vineyard on 5C rootstock. The 10% extra new oak on this wine gives it relative suppleness in comparison to the other two Varner Chardonnays. Seemingly the richest Chardonnay with deeper flavors of golden apple, cream and honey/nutty notes--almost like a domestic Meursault!

Pinot Noir Hidden Block - Two and a half acre north-facing slope planted in 1997, 650 to 700 ft. elevation from bottom rows to top. Dijon clone 115, Head trained, Cane pruned. Springtime shoot removal, Cluster wing removal. Cluster thinned mid spring, veraison and pre-harvest. Perfumed, dark cherries, red plums, forest floor, supple with sound acidity.



trriage wines

4755 Colorado Avenue South, Ste A
Seattle, WA 98134
206. 763. 5994
fax 206. 883. 0215

2210 North Lewis Street
Portland, OR 97227
503. 236. 6262
503. 236. 3660 fax