

## **NOTRE VUE ESTATE WINERY: VINEYARD BACKGROUNDER** **GRAPE GROWING IN THE CHALK HILL & RUSSIAN RIVER APPELLATIONS**

### **Estate Vineyards:**

208 planted acres, 11010 Estate Lane, in Windsor, 14 miles north of Santa Rosa in Sonoma County

350 acres are protected open space, denoted “Forever Wild” (includes two lakes)

A number of prestigious North Coast wineries buy grapes from the property.

### **History of the property:**

The property was established as Balverne in 1972 and known also as Windsor Oaks and acquired in 1992 by Bob Stein and Renee Brown Stein and then re-launched as with the first vintages of wines from Notre Vue Estate in 2014.

**Appellations:** The estate encompasses two world-class growing regions--the Chalk Hill appellation, with its ashy volcanic soils suited perfectly for Bordeaux varietals, and the ancient river bed of the Russian River appellation, ideal for Burgundian varietals.

### **Chalk Hill AVA**

The Chalk Hill AVA, consisting of 1,600 acres, was established in 1983. Its borders encompass 33 square miles within the northeast corner of the Russian River AVA. The majority of vineyards are located to the east of Hwy. 101, near the town of Windsor. The name comes from its signature unique volcanic soil of chalky white ash, a mixture of quartzite, sand and silty loam. Most of the AVA's vineyards are located on the western slopes of the Mayacamas Mountains and some are at altitudes of 200 – 1,300 feet. Compared to the Russian River Valley, the Chalk Hill AVA is relatively warm due to the influence of a thermal belt that runs through the area.

### **Russian River Valley AVA**

The Russian River AVA, consisting of 10,000 acres, was established in 1983 and enlarged in 2005. Centered on and around the Russian River, it stretches between Sebastopol and Santa Rosa in the south and Forestville and Healdsburg to the north. The Russian River Valley has a characteristically cool climate, heavily affected by fog generated by the Valley's proximity to the Pacific Ocean. Despite its name, the Russian River Valley AVA does not cover the entire Russian River Valley. The AVA has three soil types—“Goldridge soil,” “Sebastopol soil” and a third type found in the benchland areas of the River. The climate is characterized by cool morning fog that comes in from the ocean through the Petaluma Gap and burns off during the day. The cooling influence of the fog is responsible for the large diurnal temperature variation with nighttime temperatures dropping as much as 35 to 40 degrees Fahrenheit from the daytime highs.

### **Varietals planted:**

Chardonnay, 44.47 acres

Pinot Noir, 37.97

Cabernet Sauvignon, 71.26  
Cabernet Franc, 4.94  
Petite Verdot, 2.14  
Malbec, 5.93  
Merlot, 0.66  
Sauvignon Blanc, 6  
Pinot Gris, 5.93  
Sangiovese, 6.99  
Petite Syrah, 3.25  
Viognier, 1.00  
Dolcetto, 0.39  
Grenache, 1.08  
Mourvedre, 1.00  
Muscat, 0.70  
Syrah, 5.97  
Zinfandel, 16.93

**Farming:**

Notre Vue Estate is a California Certified Sustainable Winegrowing operation that is dedicated to the enhancement and quality of the fruit through progressive vineyard practices. We are consistently undergoing vineyard trials to identify which practices best fit the needs of our vineyard while keeping in mind the sustainability of our environment, our community, and our business.

**Elevation:**

The vineyards sit at elevations between 200 and 650 feet.

**Slopes:**

The steep slopes of our vineyards provide countless benefits, including drainage, sun exposure, and thermal radiation. They range from 5-25% slopes on most of the vineyard blocks, with an occasional 25-40% slope on some of the terrace blocks. The slopes present significant farming challenges. Operating equipment on a slope can be dangerous to the unskilled operator, but we have multiple experienced veterans behind the wheel. The benefits of hillside planting make it a welcome challenge.

**Row direction:**

The direction of our rows is based on mainly two factors: the direction of the sun and the slope of the hill. As much of our ranch has steep slopes, we adjust row direction to run with the slope, thus diminishing the need to alter the natural slope of the property. When the slope is low enough for us to layout the way we want, we plant in a North-South orientation. This allows for gentle light exposure on the morning side that is necessary for the development of a rich color and ripe flavors, and also protection from the scorching heat of the afternoon sun by leaves left on the west side to provide shade to the fruit.

**Soils:**

Our estate vineyards have distinct soils from the majority of the Russian River Valley, as our location puts us above the alluvial fan. This means in general that our soils are generally shallow and are comprised of material from either the bedrock or volcanic activity. The high clay soils provide ample nutrients to our vines, while the steep slopes and shallow nature of the soil allow for increased water runoff and drainage beyond normal alluvial clay soils. This creates an ideal situation where the vines have all the nutrients, they need to produce high quality fruit, while good drainage keeps vegetational growth in check.

The lower end of the ranch is comprised of Spreckels Loam, which is a soil created by the weathering of ancient volcanic lava flows. Like the top half of the ranch, these soils are shallow and well drained. As volcanic rock breaks apart, a rich bank of necessary nutrients is made available to the vines. These volcanic soils contribute to the prized value of our ranch as an agricultural haven.

**Vine spacing:**

All our rows are spaced 8 feet apart to create uniformity for our farm equipment. Plants are spaced at 6 feet apart, which was common when the majority of the ranch was planted. New plantings are being spaced at 5 feet apart to encourage a little competition between the vines as well as lessen the demand of each individual vine.

**Wildlife:**

Deer, turkeys, bobcats, foxes, coyotes, rabbits, turkey vultures and red-tailed hawks. There are native minnows in the two lakes.

There is also a myriad of insects, including local honey bee colonies.

Vegetation includes oak trees, native bay trees, chamomile and mustard.

**Local landmarks:**

Russian River area: Armstrong Redwood State Reserve

Town of Windsor

Town of Healdsburg

Proximity to the Pacific Ocean, such as Goat Rock Beach, where Russian River flows into the Pacific, in town of Jenner

Town of Jenner

Mt. St. Helena

Micro-breweries in Santa Rosa