

# EcoVine EcoEsprit™



## SHEEP IN THE YORKVILLE VINEYARD LIVING AN ECO LIFESTYLE - EVERYDAY

### The Yorkville Cellars Story

Yorkville Cellars is the only North Coast estate to organically grow all seven of the Bordeaux varietal grapes. They bottle each of them as a varietal wine and blend another two. Yorkville is a small, family-run winery, specializing in hand crafting premium wines. They are committed to making small lots (typically fewer than 1,000 cases of each) of superior quality wines that receive as much TLC (tender loving care) as possible. Consumer demand often exceeds supply. Because all of their wines are estate-grown and bottled and farmed organically, their fruit is ensured to be of exceptional quality. They believe that their farming practices promotes a healthy soil that will be sustainable. Healthy soil and robust plants yield vibrant, complex grapes, the basis of great wine.



Yorkville Vineyards have always been farmed organically and was one of the first dozen in the state certified in 1986 by CCOF (California Certified Organic Farmers). Yorkville Cellars, located in spectacular Mendocino County, is the most awarded Californian winery using certified organically grown estate grapes over

the last three years. The vineyard is 1,000 feet above sea level, where sun-filled days and cool nights, tempered by coastal fogs, combine to produce premium quality grapes.

There are dramatic changes in the seasons, with wet, cold winters; mild springs; hot, dry summers; and colorful, hazy autumns. Nearly every vineyard is bordered with trees, riparian areas or wild lands. Wine critics often cite Mendocino as the “hidden secret” of the premium North Coast growing area with excellent value for discriminating consumers.

It was in the mid-eighties when after reading a Sunset magazine article about Mendocino County that the Waldo family discovered this special place, a highland valley where the waters of the Russian and Navarro Rivers start and part, and where the giant coastal redwoods and valley oaks come together.



Intuitively convinced that such a place would foster complex and interesting grapes, they bought a

110 acre ranch in the town of Yorkville. There were already a few acres of neglected Sauvignon Blanc but the quality of the small amount of fruit that these vines yielded was encouraging. It is truly due to the dedication of their vineyard manager, Steve Williams, whose knowledge and interpretation of the latest organic practices has restored those vines to fine, healthy plants. The vineyard has been expanded to 30 acres and the first estate wines were bottled in 1994. Yorkville Cellars now has two main vineyards on their ranch. Randle Hill Vineyard, a total of 13 acres, is planted with Sauvignon Blanc and Semillon. Rennie Vineyard includes all five of the main red grapes originating in Bordeaux, France: Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Cabernet Franc, Malbec and Petit Verdot.

*Greg Graziano is a third generation Mendocino County winemaker attended U.C. Davis to study viticulture & enology. While he was winemaker at La Crema in the mid 1980's his wines were served at The White House & at the Moscow Summit. In 1988 Greg & his wife Trudi established their own winery, "Graziano Family of Wines".*





## Farming Practices of Yorkville Cellars

Since the planting of Yorkville Vineyards in 1982, there has been a commitment to following organic farming practices. Yorkville believes that their farming practices will ensure a healthy soil that will be sustainable for

agriculture in the future. They respect the delicate land and the balance of nature. Healthy soil and robust plants yield vibrant, complex grapes, the basis of great wine.

Organic farming practices in a small-scale vineyard are approximately above 120 percent of the costs of a conventionally farmed vineyard. However, in spite of the costs, organic farmers believe that the benefits of organic farming outweigh the costs and ensure the highest possible quality fruit. In the Mendocino Highlands, the Waldo's have been fortunate to find a "natural" (and generally cooperate) ally in nature. Summer breezes ensure low humidity, reducing the chances of fungus. Cool nights help reduce the bug population. Resident vultures keep the rodents under control. Ladybugs and lacewings help to fend off unfriendly pests.

## Grape Notes: Cabernet Franc

If you are a relatively new wine enthusiast, you may have never had a Cabernet Franc wine. Cabernet Sauvignon is more widely known with more notoriety. Although it is the proud genetic parent of Cabernet Sauvignon, Cabernet Franc wines are lighter and fruitier than those of its offspring.

Cabernet Sauvignon is the dominant red grape of the California wine industry and the basic ingredient of many of the most famous wines of Bordeaux. Cabernet Franc is the shining star in France's central Loire Valley. Bordeaux wines commonly contain a blend of both Cabernet Sauvignon and Cabernet Franc varietals, a practice increasingly being followed in California and elsewhere. Young wines from these two grape varietals have a deep purple color and an herbaceous aroma. Cabernet Franc is often used in Bordeaux blends to add acidity and aroma. Although not extremely fussy about where it is grown, North American growing of Cabernet Franc is mainly near the cooler coastal areas; California, Long Island (N.Y.) found in northern Italy, Australia and on the Niagara

Peninsula of Canada. Australia, New Zealand and Argentina are showing great promise for this grape. In cooler climates, the Cabernet Franc grape ripens earlier than most grapes. With shorter growing seasons, the shorter the ripening period for a grape and the better off the wine will be. A lot of California wineries are starting to produce more and more wines made from Cabernet Franc, particularly, the smaller or boutique wineries that are choosing not to make just another Cabernet Sauvignon or Merlot.



Cabernet Franc does not typically produce the ultra-complex wines that thicker skinned grapes produce, but their flavors are definitely distinct. Having thinner skin than Cabernet Sauvignon, Cabernet Franc produces less tannin and the tannins are softer than those of Cabernet Sauvignon. Because it ripens earlier it has much less acidity. Although it can be cellared very effectively (often for 10-15 years), the tannins and acidity are two very important factors in a red wine's ability to age. Depending a great deal on vineyard practices, the flavor profile of Cabernet Franc may have a tendency to show red fruit flavors such as blackberry, raspberry, cherry, plum and strawberry. It may show floral notes of violets in the nose and frequently has herbal overtones of grass, tobacco and bell peppers. A little bottle age can produce more earthy flavors of mushroom, cedar, musk and cigar box, producing a slightly more pungent or earthy wine with lively aromas. Historically people have loved its aromas of raspberry, cherry and licorice and the balance of delicate, supple tannins. When it has had light oak barrel treatment it may smell of vanilla, coconut and sweet wood. When heavy oak is used, more tar, toast, smoke and oaks flavors are evidenced. The more exposure to sunlight the grape gets, the fruitier the wine style will be and the less it is exposed to sunlight, the more vegetative qualities it will display. The vegetative quality gives it an edge over other red wines when paired with strong flavored vegetable dishes, a plus for vegetarians.

Cabernet Franc has a reputation as a grape of sophistication, purity and class. Cabernet Franc wine is lively and food friendly. This wine has moderate aging ability and can also be enjoyed young. When enjoyed while it is still young, the fruit will be most predominant. The tannins are soft and gentle, and the finish is smooth. It is optimally served at 61°