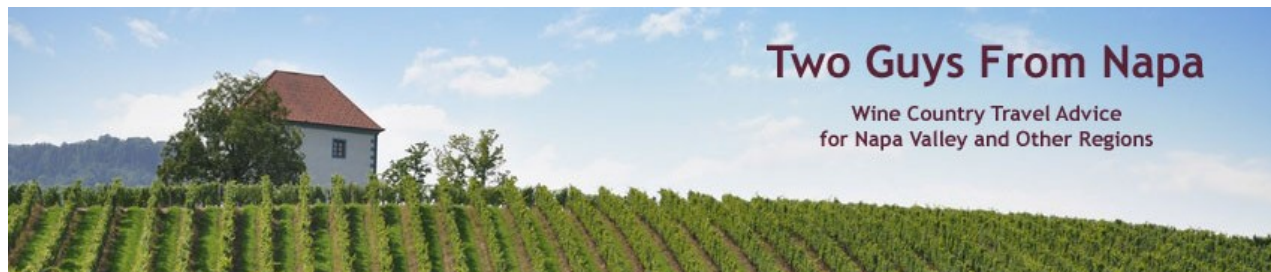


Two Guys From Napa



Stags Leap District: Time to Visit

May 15, 2016

Have you been to **Napa Valley's Stags Leap District** recently? A few weeks ago, we had the pleasure of attending the region's **Vineyard to Vintner** event, a weekend of fun opportunities to taste the appellation's world-class wines while mingling with the winery owners and winemakers in their historic wineries (which in some cases meant we were actually visiting their homes).



Stags Leap District, at Taylor Family Vineyards

Keep reading and we'll let you know our favorite experiences of the weekend, and which wines (*and wineries*) we highly encourage you to taste (*and visit*). We found delicious Stags Leap wines made from Sauvignon Blanc, Chardonnay, Malbec and Cabernet Franc grapes. Of course, we also found some awesome Cabernets.

Known worldwide for its Cabernet Sauvignon, the Stags Leap District produces wines critically acclaimed for their lush fruit and soft tannins with complex layers of flavor. The appellation is bounded on the east by the towering Stags Leap Palisades, to the west by gently rolling hills and the Napa River, to the north by the Yountville Cross Road, and to the south by low-lying flatlands.



Clos Du Val Open House Offerings

The **2016 Vineyard to Vintner** offered attendees Winemaker Dinners, Winery Open Houses, and then a Closing Brunch which also offered a sneak peek of the upcoming vintage release of the region's Appellation Collection. If you weren't one of this year's happy participants, we encourage you to read the below for a detailed insight as to why you should attend next year.

Recommended Stags Leap District wineries

There were way too many wineries offering **Vineyard to Vintner** Open Houses on April 30 to even attempt to visit them all. Of the wineries we were able to visit, these were our favorite destinations (*and our favorite experiences while there*):

Chimney Rock Winery – Fully owned by the Terlato family since 2004, Chimney Rock's mission is to produce wines of exceptional quality that are capable of standing shoulder to shoulder with the great and important wines of the world. Winemaker Elizabeth Vianna pursues that goal by applying artistically minimal winemaking principles to grapes grown on the winery's 119 acres of vineyards (*divided into 28 distinct blocks*).

During **Vineyard to Vintner**, the wines we enjoyed the most were their **2012 Cabernet Franc**, **2013 SLD Cabernet Sauvignon**, and **2012 Ganymede Vineyard Cabernet Sauvignon**. *5350 Silverado Trail, Napa (707-257-2641) [open daily]*

Clos Du Val – Started in 1972, the winery showcases Splendor, Mirth, and Joy (*The Three Graces, the daughters of Zeus*) on their distinctive labels. In the last few years, Clos Du Val has begun focusing almost exclusively on making estate-grown wines, with an emphasis on the exceptional Stags Leap District Cabernet Sauvignons that first catapulted them to fame.



Chimney Rock Winery

We've been wine club members here for years, but our favorite Stags Leap District wines this weekend were their **2013 Cabernet Franc** and **2012 SLD Cabernet Sauvignon**. To go with the wines, **Clos Du Val** offered attendees a buffet of choices in their picturesque Olive Grove including Croissants, Cheeses, Charcuterie and Fresh Crepes (*Ham and Mozzarella, Spinach and Mozzarella, or Sausage and Scrambled Eggs and Cheddar*). *5330 Silverado Trail, Napa (707-261-5251) [open daily]*



Malk Family Vineyards – This small producer of hand-crafted wines is headed by owners Brian and Nancy Malk whose goal is to make their Cabernet Sauvignon in a way which showcases the Stags Leap District terroir. Griffin, the couple's late (*and beloved*) Staffordshire Bull Terrier served as the inspiration for their adorable logo.

During our visit here, the highlights were Malk's **2014 Sauvignon Blanc** and **2011 Cabernet Sauvignon** as we enjoyed the view from



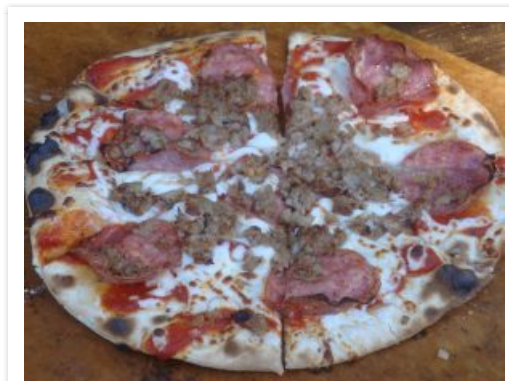
Malk Family Vineyards

their old-fashioned tree swing. *5850 Silverado Trail, Napa (858-795-0699) [wines primarily sold online or over the phone]*

Pine Ridge Vineyards – Established in 1978, Pine Ridge Vineyards produces classically proportioned, expressive wines that showcase the qualities of their diverse vineyards. Today, Winemaker and General Manager Michael Beaulac oversees the Estate’s 200-acres spanning over five Napa Valley appellations (*including the Stags Leap District*).

Our favorite Pine Ridge wines at the Open House were the **2014 Let Petit Clos Chardonnay** and the **2012 SLD Estate Cabernet Sauvignon**. *5901 Silverado Trail, Napa (800-575-9777) [open daily]*

Stags’ Leap Winery – Wine grapes have been growing on the lands of Stags’ Leap Estate since the 1880s and the property itself has always been a working ranch. Nowadays, the 240-acre estate houses a nineteenth century stone winery, a Victorian-era manor house and 90 acres of vineyards down a long, private road off of the Silverado Trail.



Pizza from Napa Valley Crust

At Vineyard to Vintner, our favorite wine here was their **2012 “The Leap” Estate Cabernet Sauvignon**. In front of the manor, we happily sampled through the many pizza offerings from **Napa Valley Crust**. *6150 Silverado Trail, Napa (800-395-2441) [reservations required]*

Steltzner Vineyards – Since 1965, the **Steltzner** family has been dedicated to producing wines of exceptional quality. While the former winery building, production facility and some vineyards were sold in 2012, the family retained over 30 acres in the Stags Leap District and continues to produce wines. The V2V Open House tasting took place on their vineyard estate, poolside, overseeing the Pool Block vineyard.



Lamb Skewers and Sweet Corn Succotash from Foodshed Take Away

We heartily enjoyed Skewers of Superior Farms Lamb, Spring Onion, Zucchini, and Salsa Verde plated with Sweet Corn Succotash with English Peas, Rancho Gordo Beans, Basil and Arugula from Chef Giovanni Guerrera of **Foodshed Take Away** paired with our favorite Steltzner wines this year: a **2013 Malbec** and a **2013 Martini Clone Cabernet Sauvignon**. *5 Financial Plaza Suite 104, Napa (707-252-7272) [wines primarily sold online or over the phone]*

Taylor Family Vineyards – In 1980, Napa Valley residents Jerry and Pat Taylor converted ten acres of the family’s 23-acre ranch to vineyards with the help of their children. In 2002, their daughter Sandy and her husband

Phil Carlson were the driving force behind the creation of **Taylor Family Vineyards** as a wine brand and Jerry and Pat's son Mike is now also a major partner in the endeavor. Our favorite wines this year were their **2015 Sauvignon Blanc** and **2012 Stags Leap District (*Black Label*) Cabernet Sauvignon**.

At the **Vineyard to Vintner** Open House, the Taylors offered a buffet of options including a selection of Cheeses, Macarons, and Savory Cheesecake Bites. They also prepared gourmet Grilled Cheese sandwiches including our favorites: Redwood Hills Chevre, Dried Apricot and Shallot Compote on Sourdough with Pink Peppercorn Butter and; White Cheddar, Tomato, and Applewood Smoked Bacon on Model Bakery Bacon Bread with Herb Butter. *5991 Silverado Trail, Napa (707-255-3593) [wines primarily sold online or over the phone]*



Savory Cheesecake Bites

Other Recommended Stags Leap District Wines

On May 1, **Silverado Vineyards** hosted an awesome **Vineyard to Vintner Brunch** where we enjoyed a selection of wines paired with the exceptional brunch fare from Michelin-starred **Meadowood Resort** served on the winery's umbrella-filled plaza.



Buttermilk Biscuit with Apple Jam

Menu items included Buttermilk Biscuits with Apple and Raspberry Jams, Fresh Berries, Organic Greens Salad, Scrambled Eggs, Artisan Pork Sausages, Roasted Fingerling Potatoes, a Bacon/Lettuce/Avocado/Tomato bar, and a White Corn Salad with Grilled Prawns and Roasted Sweet Peppers.

Some of our favorite wines at the Brunch which we hadn't been able to taste previously were a **Hartwell Estate Vineyards** 2014 Chardonnay, **Ilsley Vineyards** 2012 Cabernet Sauvignon and the **Silverado Vineyards** 2012 SOLO Cabernet Sauvignon.

Stags Leap District Appellation Collection

One of the major attractions of the Brunch was a Sneak Preview of the upcoming Cabernet Sauvignon portfolio for the region, the **2013 Stags Leap District Appellation Collection**. The Collection, scheduled for official release on October 15, 2016, consists of a single Cabernet Sauvignon release from all of the **Stags Leap District Winegrowers** member wineries and presents a wonderful purchase opportunity for serious wine enthusiasts as well as for those looking to start a wine cellar.

Not all of the 20 wines were actually available for tasting, as some wineries felt that their releases still weren't ready for consumption (*even as a preview*). Of the wines we were able to try, these are the **2013 Stags Leap District Appellation Collection** selections we were most excited by:

- **Baldacci Family Vineyards** 2013 Black Label Cabernet Sauvignon
- **Stag's Leap Wine Cellars** 2013 Fay Vineyard Cabernet Sauvignon
- **Steltzner Vineyards** 2013 Martini Clone Cabernet Sauvignon
- **Terlato Family Vineyards** 2013 Cabernet Sauvignon

We completely enjoyed this year's **Stags Leap District Vineyard to Vintner** weekend, and it truly was an "unparalleled appellation experience." We enjoyed outstanding wines, delicious food, gracious hosts, and a sneak preview of the appellation's upcoming releases.



*Grilled Prawns with White Corn at V2V
Brunch*



Terlato Family Vineyards

Stags Leap District Winegrowers is a

non-profit association of 20 wineries and 12

grower members whose mission is to grow the reputation of the appellation and share its quality with the wine-loving world. To learn more about the District, and next year's **Vineyard to Vintner** (*tickets available in February 2017*), please follow the link at the start of the paragraph to their website or find them on **Twitter**.