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Limestone, Pinot, and a bit of Batman.

in **PLACES** **WINE EDUCATION** by **Jasonb** — September 24, 2010 at 10:00 am | **0 comments**

Talking to Adelaida Cellars winemaker Terry Culton is almost like chatting with an old friend. Perhaps part of the feeling is that he's been to my hometown of Pleasanton and remembers the McDonald's that sits just off the freeway when it was still surrounded by mostly open space. He's also a childhood fan of the original Batman series, the one with Adam West, before it turned into something darker and somewhat more violent. There was certainly an element of nostalgia to the conversation for me, a nice little reminder of childhood and pieces of old. But there's nothing wrong with older, especially when it comes to vineyards. Just ask Terry. He has the privilege to work Adelaida's HMR Pinot Noir vineyard, one of the oldest in the state. It was planted in the mid-60's, during the time of the original Batman. That's not why Terry loves it, though. The calcareous limestone soil has the most to do with that.

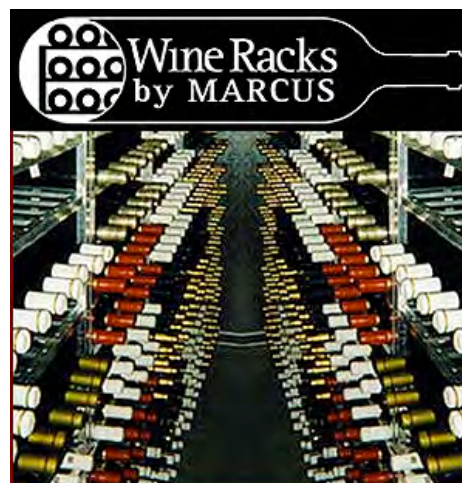


Winemaker Terry Culton

As Terry explains, the soil gives back a unique mineral character that provides a real sense of "terroir." He first experienced this element in a Pinot Noir back when he was "still wet behind the ears as a cellar rat." A Cheval Sauvage he tried back in the early 90's was actually sourced from the HMR Vineyard. Later, while working with Pinot Noit legend Josh Jenson at the Calera Wine Company on their Mount Harlen Vineyards, Terry cemented himself as a "limestone-head." Thus, when the opportunity to join Adelaida Cellars came about, the chance to work with fruit that was not only from a calcareous limestone vineyard but also the same HMR Vineyard he'd been impressed by fifteen years prior was too much to pass up.




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While being a Pinot Guy at heart, the limestone soil of Adelaida’s estate vineyards are ideal for growing Rhone varietals as well. Some of the best Rhone producers in France have calcareous soil, and Terry considers it a blessing to have such similar conditions on the west-side of Paso Robles. The weather patterns are quite favorable, too. Forty to fifty degree temperature changes from day to night allow the grapes to thrive. They need heat to ripen, but too much heat results in wimpy wines. The cool nights preserve the grapes’ acidity and give them freshness that Terry feels “keep the wines more focused.” Try any of Adelaida’s Rhone-style wines and it’s easy to understand what Terry means. They are all quite good.

Part of the reason for such high quality are Adelaida’s sustainable farming methods. They’ve employed such practices ever since Terry joined the winery, and he feels the result is much more balanced vineyards and much more balanced fruit. There are more “good bugs” in the soil and the ground is much happier. Plus, it eliminates the “angular sort of sterility” that can appear with heavily commercially farmed vineyards, and, as Terry puts it, “It’s just the right thing to do. It feels good.” This year, the folks at Adelaida finally decided to become SIP Certified, working in conjunction with the Central Coast Vineyard Team’s “Sustainability In Practice” program. They didn’t have to change anything about the way they farmed. It was a matter of keeping up on a great deal of documentation and paperwork. For their efforts, starting next year, they will be able to proudly display the SIP logo on their labels, and they are helping to preserve the quality of their wine, as well as the earth.

With great soil conditions, favorable weather, and a philosophy of preserving and protecting their vineyards, Terry would be hard pressed to ask for more from his work. The conditions this year have been especially favorable as cool summer temperatures have allowed the grapes to ripen slowly. Barring any inclement weather in the next couple months, Terry is very optimistic about the upcoming harvest. A reprise of the classic Batman series could be the icing on the cake, but I think a fantastic Point Noir crop would be better. Let’s just hope the HMR Vineyard comes through.

To read reviews of Adelaida Cellars wine, [click here](#).



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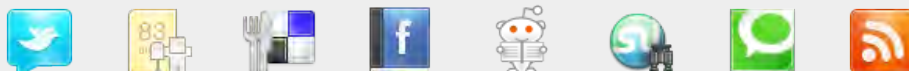
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Author: [JasonBarlow](#)

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An alumni of Sonoma State University, being in the heart of wine country only furthered the fascination and appreciation Jason had for the majestic drink. Now, as FBWorld.com’s wine editor, he hopes to convince people who claim to not like wine that they simply haven’t tried the right bottle yet. He also does not understand why more twenty-somethings don’t drink wine and wants to promote their appreciation for the stuff.





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Tag Archive



[Adelaida Cellars 2007 Syrah](#)

September 23, 2010 No Comments

This is the last vintage of Syrah from Adelaida's esteemed neighbor, Glenrose Vineyard. Future Adelaida Syrah will be coming from their own vineyard. Glenrose is a special site, located just a few hundred yards from their Viking property on the south side of Peach Canyon Rd. in the limestone inflected hills of Paso Robles. ...

Tags: [\\$45-50](#), [89-91 Points](#), [Adelaida Cellars](#), [Paso Robles](#), [Syrah](#)
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[Adelaida Cellars 2007 Version](#)

September 22, 2010 No Comments

“Version” demonstrates the synergy of blending grape varieties with vastly different flavor profiles.

Mourvedre, Grenache, Counoise and Cinsault from our much acclaimed neighbor, Glenrose Vineyard and distinctive Syrah clones from our own Anna's Vineyard were combined in this 5 grape blend. These mountain elevation vineyards share steeply sloping sites, calcareous soils and marine influenced ...

Tags: [\\$30-35](#), [92-94 points](#), [Adelaida Cellars](#), [Paso Robles](#), [Rhone Style Blend](#)
[CWL Red Wine Reviews](#)



[Limestone, Pinot, and a bit of Batman.](#)

September 21, 2010 No Comments

Talking to Adelaida Cellars winemaker Terry Culton is almost like chatting with an old friend. Perhaps part of the feeling is that he's been to my hometown of Pleasanton and remembers the McDonald's that sits just off the freeway when it was still surrounded by mostly open space. He's also a childhood fan of the ...

Tags: [Adelaida Cellars](#), [Paso Robles](#)
[CWL Features](#)



[Adelaida Cellars 2006 Viking Estate Cabernet Sauvignon](#)

September 20, 2010 No Comments

Clearly defining its mountain heritage "The Viking" shows a pedigree of intense Cabernet fruit which speaks of its unique limestone soil and precarious canyon slope. Planted on Paso Robles Westside, some 14 miles from the cooling Pacific Ocean, its 1,600 foot elevation and 30 degree slope guarantee low yields of highly aromatic blue skinned ...

Tags: [\\$70-75](#), [92-94 points](#), [Adelaida Cellars](#), [Cabernet Sauvignon](#), [Paso Robles](#)
[CWL Red Wine Reviews](#)



[Adelaida Cellars 2008 Viognier](#)

September 17, 2010 No Comments

A capricious grape variety, Viognier shows its true complexity in difficult sites. Characterized by low yields the vine is a bit eccentric, an inconsistent producer, often with poor fruit sets. Originally grown on steep granitic soils in the south of France, its aromatic purity shines in our local mountainous limestone soils. Grape(s): Viognier Winery: ...

Tags: [\\$25-30](#), [89-91 Points](#), [Adelaida Cellars](#), [Paso Robles](#), [Viognier](#)
[CWL White/Rosé Wine Reviews](#)



[Adelaida Cellars 2007 Reserve Pinot Noir](#)

September 16, 2010 No Comments

Of the roughly 130 acres of Adelaida's total Estate, the cool micro climate that encircles the celebrated 32 acres of Pinot Noir HMR vines is truly unique in the region. Planted in 1964, this historic mountain vineyard, running between 1,600 to 1,900 feet of elevation, is configured in a west to east direction ...

Tags: [\\$45-50](#), [89-91 Points](#), [Adelaida Cellars](#), [Paso Robles](#), [Pinot Noir](#)
[CWL Red Wine Reviews](#)



[Adelaida Cellars 2008 Version](#)

September 16, 2010 No Comments

The Glenrose Vineyard, at 1,200 – 1,600 feet in elevation and 16 miles from the Pacific Ocean, is adjacent to our own Viking Estate Vineyard. Precipitous and steep, its terraced rocky out-croppings and ledges are hewn from a massive limestone-ingrained pyramid. The grapes struggle in this inhospitable environment to give the wine a true ...

Tags: [\\$25-30](#), [89-91 Points](#), [Adelaida Cellars](#), [Paso Robles](#), [Rhône Style Blend](#)
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