



HMR Estate Vineyard
Photo by Spin Creative Designs



**Winemaker
Terry Culton**
Photo by Jessica Valpey



Adelaida Cellars winery building/production facility
Photo by Spin Creative Designs

ADELAIDA CELLARS

Historic Vineyards, Exceptional Wines

by Janis Switzer

West of Paso Robles, about 16 miles from the Pacific Ocean, at the southern end of the Santa Lucia Mountains, and about 1,700 feet above sea level, is a majestic piece of land that is home to the oldest and most esteemed vineyard on the Central Coast. Welcome to HMR Estate Vineyard, the flagship planting of Adelaida Cellars. And when winemakers around the world say that “great wine starts in the vineyard,” this is why.

The history of HMR dates back to 1964 when viticultural pioneer Dr. Stanley Hoffman first planted 32 acres of Pinot Noir grapes on this vast 1,300-acre property. Planted on steep rolling ridges in rocky calcareous soil that covers a deep layer of underlying limestone, the growing conditions are almost identical to that of Pinot Noir’s home, Burgundy. The vines that Hoffman planted back then have produced exception fruit over the past 40 years, thanks to the terroir, as well as a persistent marine layer, and cool ocean breezes that drop

temperatures as much as 50 degrees overnight.

In 1973, Hoffman hired famed winemaker Andre Tchelistcheff to be his consulting winemaker, and Pinot Noir made from Hoffman Mountain Ranch grapes began to receive acclaim around the world. In fact, in a 1979 international wine competition in France, the Hoffman Mountain Ranch Pinot won over highly rated red Burgundies, and Paso Robles was put on the world wine map.

In 1994, a 400-acre portion of the original vineyard was purchased by the Van Steenwyk family, owners of nearby Adelaida Cellars. While the property had continued to grow and sell fruit over the previous four decades, it had suffered from lack of care, and required substantial work, investment and patience to return the vineyard to its former glory. But the family’s vision and the talent of their viticulturists paid off, and today, the HMR Vineyard designation on Adelaida wines is as revered as ever.

Winemaker at Adelaida Cellars today is Terry Culton, an industry veteran who was

first introduced to HMR fruit in 1991 while he was working at Wild Horse Winery in Templeton. It was his first job at the time, and he subsequently went on to work at Edmeades in the Anderson Valley, Willamette Valley Vineyards in Oregon, Calera Wine Company in the San Benito County and finally Adelaida in 2003. Ironically he has ended up where he started, with HMR fruit, and his love of the Central Coast.

In addition to HMR, Adelaida owns other vineyards in the same general area. Their Viking Estate Vineyard is similar in soils and climate to HMR, and in 1993 the Van Steenwyks planted 15 acres of Cabernet Sauvignon on the rocky property.

In total, Adelaida Cellars has more than 130 acres planted in over 13 different varieties of grapes. The winery follows strict sustainable growing practices in all of its vineyards, without using chemicals, fertilizers or tilling. With the use of cover crops such as native grasses and wild flowers, along with beneficial insects and natural predators, the winery has not used restricted pesticides since 2001.

The fruit from the three vineyards is exceptional for several reasons. "The rocky calcareous soils of these historic vineyards controls their vigor," Culton explains. "This results in added vine stress and lower yields, but produces more intensely flavored fruit." The age of the vines is also crucial. "Old vines give you a complexity that you don't get with younger vines," Culton says, "it's almost a different animal, more complex on the palate."

Even the way Culton harvests the fruit at Adelaida is unique. Rather than using mechanized equipment and day laborers, Adelaida has its own permanent workforce in the vineyard. They pick berries whole, with little damage, and almost no stems and leaves. "Our guys are paid year round – they work that vineyard from pruning all the way through harvest," Culton explains. "They take pride in it because it's their vineyard."

The wines Culton crafts from these treasured vineyards speak for themselves. They are ripe, intense and beautifully structured. From the history of the vineyards, to the gentle harvest practices, to the use of native yeasts and French oak in the winery, Culton has taken every step to ensure that the special fruit grown in his vineyards translates perfectly into each bottle of his world-class wine.

The Adelaida Cellars winery and tasting room is located at 5805 Adelaida Road on the west side of Paso Robles. Tasting room hours are daily, 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. and until 6 p.m. in the summer

For more information online, go to www.adelaida.com, or call 1-800-676-1232.

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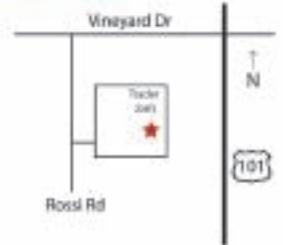
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