



*Baileyana's tasting room. A restored 1909 schoolhouse.*

# OUR HISTORY



## HISTORY OF BAILEYANA *History of Baileyana*



Baileyana Winery is located in the Edna Valley, in central San Luis Obispo County, about half way between Los Angeles and San Francisco on California's Pacific Coast. Founded 20 years ago by Catharine Niven, Baileyana's inspiration continues to come from her passion for life and her philosophy of "being the best you can be in whatever you pursue".

When people met Catharine, they never forgot her. Born and raised outside of Lexington, Kentucky, where her family raised and trained world class thoroughbred horses, she was exposed to a world that provided her with a lifetime of memories and stories. Her childhood passion for horses culminated in her dream of owning her own race horse and having her name shown in the winner's circle at the famous Santa Anita racetrack in Southern California. Her passion did not end with horses; her interests included antiques, gardening, cooking, entertaining and fundraising. Whether you found her in her garden, seeking out rare antiques at auctions or shops, or enjoying food and friendship with Julia Child and many others chefs of renown, she was a woman passionate about her interests.

But let's not forget her husband Jack Niven in this story. It was Jack who introduced Catharine to a new passion – wine. And so when a decision was made in the early 1970's for a new direction for them in their lives, their interest in wine brought them to California's Central Coast and the Edna Valley. Pioneering the planting of the first grapes in this area, they founded Paragon Vineyards. While Jack was busy with the business of growing grapes on a large scale, Catharine focused on her own project – a 3 ½ acre parcel in her own front yard. As with anything Catharine took an interest in, it involved meticulous research, and where better to start that research than in the world's ultimate wine producing region - Burgundy. Back in the early 1970's, the majority of California's vineyards were being planted with wide spacing and trellising known as the California Sprawl (basically a big bush). She found herself drawn to the methods used in Burgundy, with tighter spacing and a more vertical approach to managing the canopy of the vines. Despite what the "experts" were advising, she was sticking with her hunch that with a little modification to accommodate the differences between Edna Valley and Burgundy – such as weather, soil, lay of the land – the Burgundian approach was the way to go.

And once Catharine had outstanding grapes to work with, it was only natural that turning those grapes into equally outstanding wine would have to follow. Named after the neighborhood where Catharine first met Jack, Baileyana was soon born. She was one of the early women owners of a California wine brand, and even though Baileyana's early production was extremely limited, she knew that her dream of the Edna Valley becoming a prestigious wine producing region one day would be realized. (Continued...)



## HISTORY OF BAILEYANA *History of Baileyana*

### (Continued)

From those beginnings 20 years ago, Baileyana was passed from Catharine on to her two sons, Jim and John, who began the long term process of growing the brand that laid the groundwork for the planting of the Firepeak Vineyard and the construction of Baileyana's new home. Now the third Niven generation has taken charge and her two grandsons, Michael and John, are challenged with the task of taking her vision to the next level. And so in 1998 it was decided that the winery would hire veteran French winemaker, Christian Roguenant. Christian was born in Dijon, the capital of France's Burgundy region. As the young son of a banker, Christian would often travel with his father as he called on his clients, many of whom were prestigious Burgundy domaines. This early exposure to the winemaker's craft set the course for him to graduate with a degree in enology and winemaking from the University of Dijon and become the head enologist for one of the grand marques of Champagne – Champagne Deutz. While in that position, he was able to make wines for Deutz on five continents. He made sparkling wine in Champagne, Syrah in the Northern Rhone, Sauvignon Blanc in New Zealand and Sancerre, sparkling wine in Korea (for the 1988 Seoul Olympics) and Pinot Noir and Chardonnay in California.

When Roguenant was brought on the team, he was charged with the responsibility to design a state-of-the-art winery to become the home for Baileyana. The winery was constructed on a knoll in the Edna Valley, surrounded by Baileyana's Firepeak Vineyard which abuts a chain of ancient volcanic cones locally known as the Seven Sisters.

The winery, built to Roguenant's specifications, is dramatic and unusual. Each of the massive bays is lined with huge windows which allow sunlight into what usually is a very dark and damp environment. In addition to this innovation of extensive sunlight, the winery contains state-of-the-art equipment, which is specifically geared to the production of a wine that demands delicate handling – Pinot Noir. The fruit delivery system, small presses, dozens of small open-top fermenters and four individually climate controlled barrel rooms were designed to insure minimum damage to the grapes. The winery is a high-tech marvel.

The winery produces Chardonnay, Pinot Noir and Syrah wines from the Firepeak Vineyard located adjacent to the winery in Edna Valley. Each of these wines comes from new "French clones" which have been planted specifically to produce the highest-quality fruit for that particular varietal.

Baileyana is one of a number of wineries producing wines from the world class Edna Valley appellation. The east-west oriented valley is located four miles (as the crow flies) from the ocean which makes these vineyards some of the closest to the sea of any in the world. Cool Pacific breezes are channeled straight into the mouth of the valley, bringing frequent fog and a remarkably mild climate, resulting in a region II on the U.C. Davis scale. The region II designation is deceiving, however, because it is warmer in the spring and cooler in summer than most regions in that category. This means that leaves appear on the vines up to two weeks earlier than Napa and the ripening season is longer with a later harvest, thus creating an opportunity for exceptional depth of flavor in the grapes and balanced acidity. Edna Valley enjoys one of the longest growing seasons in the state.

The vineyard soils are heavily influenced by layers of fossilized seashells left behind twenty five million years ago when the seas rose at the end of the last Ice Age. This soil is made even more complex by the eroded volcanic rock from the volcanoes that are now marked by the cones known as the Seven Sisters. This unique combination in the soil is another factor for the outstanding quality of the grapes in this region.