



One of Baileyana's four climate controlled barrel cellars.

OUR  WINERY



BAILEYANA WINERY *Baileyana Winery*



The recently constructed Baileyana winery is perched on a knoll overlooking the Edna Valley of San Luis Obispo. In 1998, the Niven family, viticultural pioneers in the valley and owners of Baileyana, gave Burgundian born and educated Christian Roguenant a blank slate to design the winery of his dreams. From the fruit delivery system and open top fermentors, to the three climate controlled barrel rooms, the winery is a high tech marvel. "I've seen wineries all over the place," says Roguenant, who has made wine on five continents. "This winery is compact, versatile, and easy to operate. Also, the natural light makes it a very pleasant place for people to work." The winery is located in the Niven family's Firepeak Vineyard, just a few miles from the Pacific Ocean.

The winery built to Roguenant's specifications is dramatic and unusual. Each of the massive bays is lined with huge double-paned windows, which allow sunlight into what usually is a very dark and damp environment. "While keeping mildew down, we can turn off rows of lights," says Roguenant, "and conserve energy while enjoying the view." In addition to this innovation of extensive sunlight, the winery contains state-of-the-art equipment, which is especially geared to the production of world-class Pinot Noir (a wine that demands delicate handling) and Syrah.

Beginning with hand picking in the showcase Firepeak Vineyard, the Pinot Noir grapes are treated with kid gloves. Since the fruit is hand-sorted on tables in the vineyard into small, ½ ton bins there is no need for belt sorting in the winery. The fruit is transferred from the receiving hopper into a variable-pitch auger, which, according to Roguenant, "...is non standard, and gentler than most. There is minimal impact on the fruit, it just moves along." The fruit is diverted to the destemmer, where berries are separated in a colander-like cylinder, falling through holes while the stems are swept away by rubber fingers. "We don't use rollers. It is all so very gentle," states winemaker Roguenant.

The must—berries and juice—travels through a unique system of 4" stainless steel underground pipes to the small open top fermentors. This delivery system avoids the use of gravity to transport the must. In a typical winery, must is transported by lines sometimes reaching 30' in the air, which can crush and damage the fruit. "This means at Baileyana there is minimal pressure on the fruit," confirms Roguenant. The configuration of the winery is such that whole berries from the destemmer could be diverted into ½ ton containers and taken by forklift directly to the tanks as well. Approximately 50 small custom tanks enable the winemaker to treat each Firepeak clone or lot as a separate wine. Each tank has a computer monitoring and control system, which not only regulates the wine's temperature, but also automatically notifies the winemaker if a predetermined temperature fluctuation is detected—even if that means calling Roguenant at 3 AM! (Continued...)



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While these short, small fermentors are an expensive way to produce wine, they provide the ideal cap ratio essential for quality wines. “Additionally, because of the available space between the tanks, we can partially drain for pump-over without using a mechanical system,” says Roguenant. “As the solids are screened they collect in small bins and then are dumped back into the tank. Again, this is a much gentler method.” After fermentation is complete, the tanks are fully drained and the wine transferred to barrels for aging.

Overhead, catwalks provide easy access to four rails which cross above the tanks. Hanging from these rails are large pneumatically controlled rods used to punch down the caps on the fermenting wines. The system is designed so that the rods are easily positioned over the tanks. By attaching a wide plate to the bottom of the rods, “Just two guys can punch down all the tanks in about an hour,” says Roguenant. The catwalk system also provides access to a hoist for adding or removing lids on the fermentors, as well as easy access to hot water, nitrogen gas, carbon dioxide and compressed air. The fermentation room is monitored by a carbon dioxide sensor, which has both an alarm and an automatic venting system. Sensors open vents and turn on fans, pulling fresh air into the room as needed, ensuring the safety of people in the building.

For Chardonnay production, whole clusters are transported by the gentle conveyor belt delivery system to small presses. Rather like switching trains on a track, pneumatic doors on the presses can be opened, partially opened, or closed. The fruit is easily routed to one or more of the small presses without damage. Each of the presses is equipped with a flow meter that is pre-programmed to accurately measure and control the amount of juice per ton. While this method decreases the gallons available for Baileyana wines, it ensures the wines’ quality. After pressing, the juice is transferred to stainless steel fermentation tanks, where it is cold stabilized and then racked to barrels for fermentation.

In an adjacent building are four large climate-controlled barrel rooms. The rooms, separated by rolling doors, are individually computer monitored and adjusted for temperature and humidity. Roguenant laughs, “I could be on the beach with my laptop and control the wine!” While one barrel room might be at a warmer temperature for Chardonnay undergoing malolactic fermentation, the room next door can easily be held at a different temperature and humidity for red wine aging.

Roguenant also left plenty of room for the brand to grow. Baileyana is expected to reach 25,000 cases within the next few vintages, and there is space in the winery to spare. The winery also supplies custom crush facilities to several highly respected labels.

From the large windows offering bright natural light to the conveyors, small open top fermentors, and the ability to ferment and age each lot on its own, Baileyana is a showplace of high technology responding to an ancient craft. Winemaker Roguenant confirms, “Baileyana wines are an expression of the vineyard, of our wonderful winery, and of the vision of the Niven family.”



The Winery Building

KEY SELLING POINTS

- ☞ Designed and built to Christian Roguenant's specifications. He literally started with a clean sheet of paper.
- ☞ Finished in 1999.
- ☞ *State-of-the-art* from top to bottom, yet Old World winemaking concepts are the backbone of the facility.
- ☞ Designed with the purpose of making *world class* Pinot Noir, Syrah, & Chardonnay.
- ☞ Made up of a multitude of small *open top fermentors* ranging from 500 gallons to 3,000 gallons.
- ☞ Small fermentors enable Christian to treat each clone as a *separate lot* and treat it as its own wine up until final blending. They also give him the ability to conduct various *experiments* with some of the *number of clones* coming out of the Firepeak Vineyard.
- ☞ Each tank can be controlled by a remote computer (at the winery or when on the road). The computer will even call (via telephone) the winemaker if there are any out of the ordinary fluctuations in tank temperature.
- ☞ A *state-of-the-art* crush pad that is extremely *gentle* on the fruit from the second it arrives at the winery. Complete with three brand new European Bladder Presses.
- ☞ Four different barrel cellars. Each cellar has its own climate control giving Christian tremendous *flexibility* in determining barrel aging locations.
- ☞ Located in the heart of the Firepeak Vineyard in the *Edna Valley*.