

## THE VINEYARDS OF DUTCHER CROSSING WINERY

Winemaker Kerry Damskey describes his winemaking style as “hands on.” In crafting the wines, Damskey reveals the varietal and vineyard personality by sourcing special blocks of choice grapes, using small open-top fermentation tanks and being mindful of all details required to produce wines exhibiting intense flavors and character. With access to several esteemed vineyards throughout Dry Creek and Alexander Valleys in northern Sonoma County, the wines of Dutcher Crossing are unique tributes to the land from which they originate.

### DRY CREEK VALLEY

Dry Creek Valley is approximately 70 miles north of San Francisco Bay and about 20 miles from the Pacific Ocean. Well situated for winegrowing, Dry Creek Valley stretches east to west, framed by hillsides and the largest concentration of bench lands in Sonoma County. Dutcher Crossing Winery is located at the northern end of the small valley, which measures ridge-to-ridge about 16 miles long and two miles wide. The climate is one of the warmest of the Sonoma County appellations, although fog and cool breezes moderate daytime temperatures, with afternoon and evening cooling. A patchwork quilt of diverse, well-drained soils and terrain, Dry Creek Valley is ideal for growing an array of grape varieties and contains around 9,300 vineyard acres. Dutcher Crossing sources grapes from the Dutcher Crossing Vineyard, Taylor Vineyard, and Maple Vineyard in the Dry Creek Valley.

### DUTCHER CROSSING VINEYARD

- History: Originally planted to Cabernet Sauvignon in the 1970s, the vineyard is located adjacent to Dutcher Creek and its crossing into Dry Creek. An initial replanting began 10 years ago with new clones of Cabernet. In 2003, Syrah and Petite Sirah were planted along with additional clones of Cabernet Sauvignon, Zinfandel, Sauvignon Blanc, Viognier and other small-lot varieties. Now owned and operated by Debra Mathy, the Cabernet Sauvignon grapes are used in the Proprietor’s Reserve.
- Planted Acres: 20
- Microclimate: Typical Dry Creek Valley — warm days and cool nights during the growing season.
- Soils: Combination of bench land and valley floor (rich loam).
- Trellising: Vertical Shoot Positioning
- Exposure: Valley Floor

(DRY CREEK VALLEY CONTINUED ON THE FOLLOWING PAGE)

## TAYLOR VINEYARD

- History: Located on hillside and bench land in the northeast corner of the Dry Creek Valley, the original vineyard was planted more than a century ago; eight acres of old head-trained Zinfandel remain to this day. Forty years ago, Patrick and Eivor Taylor purchased the 100-acre property, and in 1998, planted the Cabernet Sauvignon and Syrah vines that produce the fruit for the Taylor Reserve Cabernet. The west-facing 6-acre Cabernet vineyard is situated on a rocky ridge at an elevation of 400 feet, producing small berries and low yields. The 3-1/2-acre Syrah vineyard is planted lower down along the steep slope.
- Planted Acres: 24
- Microclimate: One of the warmest areas in the appellation, with cooling coastal breezes in the mornings and afternoons.
- Soils: Uplifted river rock; well drained; low in nutrition; and low yields.
- Trellising: Cabernet and Syrah vines are trained in Vertical Shoot Positioning. The Zinfandel is a combination of head-trained and cordon on wire trellis.
- Exposure: Western

## MAPLE VINEYARD

- History: Quintessential bench land planted mainly to Zinfandel, this dry-farmed vineyard is about a quarter of the way up the Dry Creek Valley. Some of the vines approach 100 years old, although the average age is approximately 40 years. Owners Tom and Tina Maple purchased the 40-acre property more than two decades ago. Accompanied by their three dogs, they personally prune each of the head-trained vines. Dutcher Crossing selects most of their Zinfandel grapes from the Twisted Oak block, named for three small volunteer oak trees that have been twisted together into one, as well as the limited Bill's Block, a classic Zinfandel based Italian Field Blend planted in 1940. Many of the blocks are field blended with Petite Sirah, Carignane, and Mataro among others, as is seen in Bill's Block; however, Dutcher Crossing prefers blocks that stay a bit more pure for the more refined vineyard wide bottling--Zinfandel with a touch of Petite Sirah for the soul and depth in the wine.
- Planted Acres: 24
- Microclimate: Classified as a Region II, the growing season enjoys average daily high temperatures in the mid-80s to low 90s with afternoon and evening cooling.
- Soils: A combination of rock cobble and clay, adding water-holding capacity.
- Trellising: Head-trained
- Exposure: Western

## ALEXANDER VALLEY

Alexander Valley is located at the northernmost end of Sonoma County, 80 miles north of San Francisco and 30 miles inland from the Pacific Ocean. It stretches 22 miles in length and varies in width from two to seven miles. The Russian River winds through the valley from north to south, providing a cooling effect throughout the appellation. Formed through the tectonic and volcanic activity of the nearby Mayacamas Mountains, the soils range from deep well-drained sandy loam on the valley floor to gravelly, rock volcanic soils on the mountains and hillsides. Alexander Valley is generally warmer in the north and cooler in the south, similar to Dry Creek Valley. The valley's extensive terrain allows for a wide variety of wines produced from the more than 15,000 acres of vineyards. Dutcher Crossing sources grapes from the Nevins Vineyard, Stuhlmuller Vineyard, and Costello Vineyard in Alexander Valley.

### NEVINS VINEYARD

History: Bruce and Sindy Nevins started growing grapes in 1991. The Nevins Vineyard is placed in the southernmost part of Alexander Valley on southwest facing slopes at an elevation of 900 feet. The complex soils, comprised of river and volcanic rock and tuffa, reflect a great landslide eons ago. The low vigor *terroir* is an excellent site for growing Cabernet Sauvignon and produces small berries packed with flavor. Winemaker Kerry Damskey sources grapes from the two hillside blocks, the highest and steepest. The vineyard has been recently sold to Gary Cooney, and Dutcher Crossing remains in contract, now with the Cooney Vineyard.

- Planted Acres: 18
- Microclimate: On slopes above the Russian River in the Southern, cooler part of the warm-climate Alexander Valley.
- Soils: A complex combination of river rock, volcanic rock and tuffa.
- Trellising: Vertical Shoot Positioning
- Exposure: Southwest

## STUHMULLER VINEYARD

Stuhlmuller Vineyard is situated on a river bench in the lower reaches of the Alexander Valley, where the three appellations of Alexander Valley, Russian River Valley and Chalk Hill converge. Roger Stuhlmuller has owned the vineyard for more than 25 years. The original vineyard was 90 acres, and in 1988, he added another 60 acres. Half of the vineyard is planted to Chardonnay and the other half is planted to Cabernet Sauvignon, Zinfandel, Petite Sirah and Petit Verdot. The Stuhlmuller Chardonnay vineyard is planted on an ancient gravely riverbed derived from the meandering flows of the nearby Russian River. The gravel beds contribute a delicate mineral aspect to the wine. Winemaker Kerry Damskey selected one of his favorite blocks planted with bud wood from the old Wente clone for Dutcher Crossing's Stuhlmuller Vineyard Chardonnay.

- Planted Acres: 150
- Microclimate: A cool bench land adjacent to the Russian River.
- Soils: Gravely river rock
- Trellising: Vertical Shoot Positioning
- Exposure: Multiple

## COSTELLO VINEYARD

In 1970, John and Christianne Costello purchased 40 acres of land, high in the eastern hillsides of Alexander Valley overlooking the town of Geyserville. Ten years later they planted a vineyard on the precipitous site. At 900 to 1,100 feet, there is a natural cooling phenomenon during the summer months; and in this mountainous part of Alexander Valley, the northwest facing vineyards also assure a leisurely maturation of the small berries for a lush flavor profile. The vineyard is planted 100 percent to Chardonnay. Winemaker Kerry Damskey prefers the fruit grown on the vines planted to the shale-colored stony serpentine soils. Low yields of ½ to 1 ton are normal at the Costello Vineyard, and that contributes to the layered flavors of the wine.

- Planted Acres: 15
- Microclimate: Warm in the summer with cooling breezes. Vineyard receives sun during 80 percent of daylight hours.
- Soils: Serpentine
- Trellising: Vertical Shoot Positioning
- Exposure: Northwest

