

The Wines of Goosecross Vineyards



I get the feeling that the word "can't" is simply not in Christi Coors Ficeli's vocabulary. And while beer - Coors, to be precise - may be in her DNA, wine is definitely in her soul.

After spending time in the wine business with Gallo Wines, Christi was bit by the wine bug. But she really had her "ah-ha" moment in 2002 while sipping a glass of T-Vine Contra County Grenache at the bar in Bistro Jaunty in Napa. She turned to her fiancé Dave Ficeli and said, "One day, we're going to do this." At that moment, they both knew that they wanted to settle down in Napa Valley, make wine and raise a family.

You would think that finding a niche in the wine market would be a natural fit for the great great-grand daughter of Adolf Coors, one of the most recognized names in the beer industry.

But Christi is not only determined, she is also deliberate. She took her time and looked at several different properties in the Valley before finally discovering Goosecross. She was immediately drawn to the heritage and reputation of the vineyard and knew that she had found her spot.

While Goosecross is an estate winery steeped in Napa Valley history, it was in desperate need of a little TLC. The house and winery on the property were both long overdue for a makeover and the vineyards were not living up to their potential. So Christi razed the structures and built a beautiful tasting room, overlooking a paved patio and the vineyard grounds. She then enlisted winemaker Bill Nancarrow to design a state-of-the-art winery and help her restore the vineyards to their former glory.

Bill's background is well known in Napa. He was involved in winemaking operations at both Paradux and Duckhorn before joining Christi at Goosecross. His nickname around the winery is Duck Duck Goose (personally, I think he has a fowl disposition). Bill and his team are crafting traditional wines that express a sense of "place", giving voice to the vineyards and regions in which they were grown while also introducing new varietals and blends into the portfolio. Christi, of course, remains committed to the true spirit of Goosecross. She is determined to take the winery to new heights and one day introduce the wines to a broader national market.

I really like Sauvignon Blanc wines that have a fresh, clean mouthfeel, and the **2013 Goosecross Sauvignon Blanc** from Napa Valley, California fills that prescription beautifully. It is bright and lean in the mouth, with fantastic balance between fresh citrus fruit, passion fruit and grapefruit flavors and mouth-watering acidity. There's just a hint of ripe nectarines on the back end to keep you reaching for more. **\$28**

The **2012 Goosecross State Lane Merlot** is all about balance and concentration. Daytime temperatures moderated by the cool marine air currents from the San Pablo Bay, provide an extended ripening period for the grapes which allows them to deliver an extracted flavor profile. There are purple blue fruit aromas that dominate the bouquet. The mouth feel is smooth and mellow, with flavors of blueberry, dark cherry, violets and cherry cola on the front of the palate. Notes of mocha and licorice pop up on the back end, leading the way for a long lush finish featuring appealing ripe plums. **\$50**

The Goosecross State Lane estate vineyards features millennial coastal deposits over a wash of river rock, interspersed with gravelly silt loams, which provides a moderately fertile growing environment for vines. That is the secret to the beautiful **2012 Goosecross State Lane Cabernet Franc**. The wine exudes concentrated aromas of rich red cherry pie, red currant and mocha scents. The lovely mouthfeel offers up a core of solid fruit, including dark plum, red cherry, dark raspberry and a touch of mocha. There is just the slightest hint of lavender and sage on the ultra-fine tannin finish. **\$59**

Napa Valley is known for their big, rich Cabernet Sauvignon. And the multi-layered **2012 Goosecross State Lane Cabernet Sauvignon** is a fine example. It spends 15 months in French oak barrels in an attempt to tame the powerful nature of the wine. It has a warm nose of black fruit, dark cherry and a touch of bramble. The powerful palate is laden with ripe blackberry, black cherry and rich cassis. There is just a tell-tale sign of tomato leaf on the very edge of the palate. The wine finishes strong with highlights of baking spices and leather, supported by firm tannins and juicy acidity. The estate suggests that you can enjoy it now or wait for a few years for the wine to develop. **\$65**