

Brosseau Wines



Brosseau Wines represents 30 years of commitment to farm a family dream. Jon and Jan Brosseau planted a vineyard in 1980 with the hopes of providing their children a well-balanced and rewarding lifestyle. Fast-forward 25 years, husband and wife team, Bill and Kilene Brosseau are expanding upon that dream with the 700 case production of Brosseau Vineyard designated wines.

Some time ago, when Bill and Kilene first set out to make wine from Brosseau Vineyard, they wanted to go commercial, yet have the flexibility to experiment. Since they were very cautious of attaching the family name to experimental wines, they decided to select the name “Gabilan Estate” to pay homage to the mountain range where their vineyard exists. Vinifying five vintages has taught them a lot about the potential of the vineyard as well as their personal preferences. In 2005, they felt it was time to showcase the family name and celebrate 25th year of grape growing.

Brosseau Vineyard is located in the heart of the Chalone Appellation, West Pinnacles, Monterey County. Their wines are produced at the 19th Century Novitiate winery, where Bill is also the winemaker for Testarossa Winery and Black Ridge Vineyards. Brosseau Wines produces ultra premium Chardonnay, White Wine Blend, Pinot Noir, Syrah, and Red Wine Blend.



Some Pinot Noir clusters turning color.

Mission Statement

Brosseau wines is dedicated to crafting wines that represent the place where the grapes were grown, not by who grew them or turned them into wine. Bill and Kilene certainly do not win the award for wildest attire, quirkiest personality, nor the biggest party animals, rather they want the marketing focus of their brand to be on the product alone. “We feel that when a unique, high quality product is created, that focus can be taken away if one’s ego gets too large.” From the days when Bill was a drummer, he always felt that it was important to be restrained and focused on the balance of self-expression, synchronicity, and volume. If musicians are not balanced within the con-

fines of a band, then the music will not be hedonistic. Bill takes this mentality to the winemaking craft. He believes in balancing the art, science, nature, and social aspects of winemaking. If he were to focus too much on one element, the other elements would be out of balance, and the hedonistic enjoyment would be lacking in the wine.

Along with the notion of balance comes that of a minimalist belief. Having grown up in a vineyard setting, Bill is of the opinion that truly great things come from nature and that in the case of grapes, they will never improve once they are removed from the vine. It’s his passion to preserve that integrity through the vinification process.

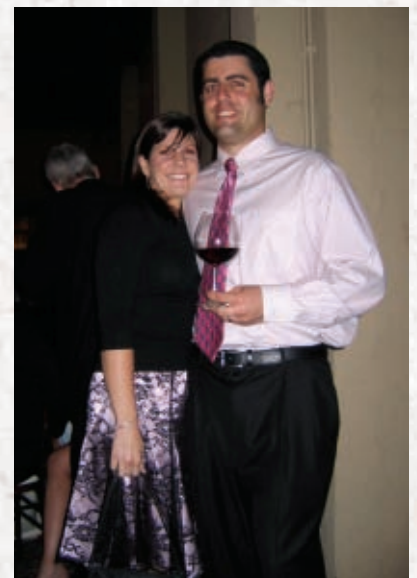
Lastly, Bill and Kilene believe that wine quality achieves ultimate balance when every step from pruning to hand-selling the wine is performed. They are big believers in vertical integration and that is why they immerse themselves in every facet of the process. Brosseau Wines is committed to staying small and focused on the highest quality. They plan on capping production at 1000 cases, such that they can remain a husband and wife team solely, without the need for additional employees.

The People

Bill Brosseau – As a second generation “weekend warrior,” Bill spent many a weekend working at the family vineyard while living an urban lifestyle during the week. Bill received his education from the UC Davis Viticulture and Enology program. He has worked in Monterey County and Napa wineries before settling at Testarossa Winery, in the Santa Cruz Mountains. While being winemaker at Testarossa and Brosseau Wines, Bill is also the winemaker for Black Ridge Vineyards.

Kilene Brosseau – An East Bay native, Kilene grew up around fine wine and cuisine. She received her education from the UC Davis Viticulture and Enology program as well. She also supplemented her degree with harvests in Napa and the Santa Cruz Mountains. Today, Kilene takes care of the day to day operations away from the winery, with the help of their young son and daughter.

Bill and Kilene enjoying a wine dinner.



Vineyards

From the Paris Tastings of 1976 to today, Chalone Appellation wines have consistently garnered critical acclaim. What led Jon and Jan Brosseau to the area, which also led the legendary Dick Graff, and those before him, was the limestone. This calcareous soil is an important attribute of world class French vineyards and is an essential element of why the wines from Brosseau Vineyard are so unique in California. The other important characteristic of the soil profile at Brosseau Vineyard is the decomposed granite. This decomposed granite soil contains an abundance of silica which aids in the refractive index of light from the soil.

This unique blend of limestone and decomposed granite lead to well drained soils which minimize excessive vine growth and encourage phenolic ripeness of grapes. From a winemaking standpoint, these soils enhance grape acidity, austerity, and richness.

Climatically, Brosseau Vineyard is quite distinct as it has warm breezy days and cold nights. Given the proximity to the Pinnacles and Mount Chalone, soil temperatures are warmer than most vineyard sites. Humidity is quite low due to the wind-swept Monterey Bay influence and annual precipitation of 12 inches. Minerals are actually pulled upward through the soil as water evaporates out of the soil due to the arid climate. "Minerality," ironically is a common term used for wines from Brosseau Vineyard.

Brosseau Vineyard currently grows Chardonnay, an array of white varieties, Pinot Noir, Syrah, and an array of eclectic red varieties for Brosseau Wines. Yields range from 1 to 3 tons per acre. Each block of vines has differing levels of nutritional needs, as well as vine age, hence yields are not consistent from block to block. Following 25 years of sustainable farming, Brosseau Vineyards is shifted towards organic practices as a means to farm the land with an even greater care than before. Full certification commences in 2010. Brosseau Vineyards provides fruit to a number of high end wineries and has benefited from these relationships as well.



High altitude farming.



Rare blend of Limestone and Decomposed Granite soils.



View of the Pinnacles.

Since Brosseau Wines is vertically integrated, they will always be guaranteed a consistent and high quality supply of fruit. As they grow their production, Brosseau Vineyard will be ready to match the needs, whether it is additional fruit from one variety or for clonal diversity. In today's current market of wineries sourcing from multiple vineyard sites, Brosseau Wines is hoping to rekindle the excitement for Estate-based wine programs.



Winemaking

As does the Brosseau Family believe in minimally manicuring vines in the field, do Bill and Kilene believe that minimal handling of wine will yield the purest expression of the vineyard. Many vineyards are grown in locations where soils are too fertile or the climate is unforgiving. This leads farmers to work extra hard to manicure, hedge, prematurely remove crop, etc. How can vineyard quality be expressed if vineyard management is heavy-handed and the effects carry over to the finished product? Bill and Kilene believe that wines should display somewhere, not someone, and feel fortunate that Brosseau Vineyard encourages balanced vines naturally.

At the winery, they combine age-old traditions with new world processes. Age old traditions would encompass the use of small oak cooperage and gravity for wine movements. Modern processes used in winemaking would be measures towards enhancing quality control. While they like to defer to their palate for winemaking decisions, the use of lab analysis can help predict unforeseen circumstances. Processes such as using oxygen meters or checking the acidity of the wine analytically can aid in quality control and consistent winemaking.

Perfect vine balance, naturally.

Their white wine program comprises of hand sorting, gentle whole cluster pressing, barrel fermentation, sur lie aging, and careful blending prior to bottling. Their red wine program comprises of hand-sorting, partial wholecluster/ partial destemming, fermentation in bins for ease of temperature control, barrel aging, and careful blending prior to bottling. They have no set calendar for bottling, rather when the wine tastes at its optimum. Whether it is hand-sorting every cluster, checking the oxygen levels, or gravity winemaking, they believe any available tool to complement the subtle ageing process, will generate wines of depth, concentration, and a true expression of where the grapes were grown.



The gentlest handling from sorting table to bottle.

Taste our story, enrich your life...



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