



SIGNORELLO

E S T A T E

HISTORY

STARTING THE VENTURE

Ray Signorello Jr. began his journey as winemaker and vineyard owner in the Napa Valley during the mid 1980's. Ray, born in San Francisco, California, moved to Vancouver, Canada where the Signorello family continues to maintain their permanent home. Ray divides his time between San Francisco, Napa Valley, Vancouver and business related travel. Rays' father, Ray Sr. initiated the vineyard project during the mid 1970's by purchasing the 100-acre estate located on the Silverado Trail in the beautiful Napa Valley. Ray Sr. worked side by side with Ray Jr. establishing the winery's reputation for excellence until his passing in the fall of 1998.

NO TURNING BACK

The Signorello's original plan was to grow quality grapes to sell to existing wineries, but the harvest of 1985 changed this plan into a new level of evolvement. After years of providing grapes to award winning wineries, the bountiful crop allowed the Signorello's to custom crush a selection of grapes. This opportunity further demonstrated what fabulous wine these vineyards were capable of producing. The project continues to grow, as do the spectacular 53 acres planted in several different varietals. Ray's continuing effort represents the invested energies that created this reality from a dream.

In 1986, the Signorello's began the second phase of the venture; this was the building of the main winery structure. This beautiful building was used for barrel storage, wine tasting, and retail sales. Along with the building of the winery, wine production was expanded to include Cabernet Sauvignon and Pinot Noir. By the end of the 1980's the Signorello family was thoroughly committed to making wine as well as growing grapes.

The decade of the nineties proved to be pivotal for Signorello Estate. In 1990, the first planting of red varietals began on the property- Cabernet Sauvignon, Cabernet Franc, Merlot, and Syrah.

What brought the Signorello's to the Napa Valley was the romantic side of winemaking; growing grapes, working the land, and enjoying the wine country lifestyle of camaraderie, good wine and great meals. While the valley lifestyle is a very real part of the business, there is a serious responsibility to making a dream become a reality, both father and son realized this fact early in the endeavor.

This venture was a dream; now it is reality. We have enjoyed every moment of it, and we look forward to continuing on to make quality wines from the Napa Valley!



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OUR VINEYARDS, SOIL COMPOSITION & CLIMATE

- ACREAGE:** Approximately 100 acres; 42 planted, 5 planted to Chardonnay, 2 acres to Semillon, 0.5 to Sauvignon Blanc, 0.5 to Viognier, 2 to Syrah, 24 to Cabernet Sauvignon, 3.0 to Cabernet Franc and 4.5 planted to Merlot.
- GROWING REGION:** Low 2
- SOIL TYPE:** Shallow hillside clay and valley floor sandy loam

SIGNORELLO ESTATE CURRENTLY OFFERS THE FOLLOWING WINES NATIONALLY:

- ⌘ CABERNET SAUVIGNON ESTATE ~ Cabernet Sauvignon blended with a little Merlot and Cabernet Franc
- ⌘ PADRONE ~ Cabernet based Bordeaux blend (only made in exceptional vintages), Estate
- ⌘ SETA ~ Proprietary white wine blend: 60% Semillon; 40% Sauvignon Blanc, Estate
- ⌘ CHARDONNAY VIEILLES VIGNES ~ 100% Chardonnay, Estate

The rigorous vineyard program begins with the soil. The Chardonnay vineyards, planted in 1980, were planted on rocky, sloping hillsides and the sandy loam valley floor. The red varieties; Cabernet Sauvignon, Cabernet Franc, and Merlot, are all planted in shallow soil on the rocky hillside; one vineyard benefits from an eastern exposure, the other a western creating widely diverse fruit that help make our wines more complex and balanced. The fruit for the Pinot Noir comes from the Carneros appellation in the cooler, southern part of Napa Valley better suited for growing this varietal.

Throughout the growing season, the vines are carefully monitored. Shoot positioning and leaf thinning done in June keeps foliage up and away from the fruit, this provides the proper ratio of sun to clusters, insuring ripeness at harvest. The vines are primarily dry farmed, watered only when necessary during the summer months in order to keep the plants healthy. Cluster thinning reduces the overall tonnage to 2 to 2.75 tons per acre (half the normal average), this is done to concentrate flavor and complexity.

The decision to harvest is based on testing for pH and sugar balance and most importantly actually tasting for ripe flavors. The house-style requires ripe fruit, usually picked at 25 and 26 Brix. The grapes are hand harvested by hand and sorted early in the cool mornings between 7-10 A.M. The fruit is put into half-ton bins so that it will not be crushed under its own weight, then sorted twice to insure only quality grapes are fermented. Within an hour after picking, the white grapes are gently whole cluster pressed to minimize skin contact, which reduces the harsh phenolics. The red varieties are de-stemmed and lightly crushed so that 20-30% of the whole cluster berries remain intact, after de-stemming, the grapes are sorted a third time for absolute assurance of quality.



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WINEMAKING PHILOSOPHY

WINEMAKERS: **RAYMOND SIGNORELLO, JR. & PIERRE BIREBENT**

CONSULTANT WINEMAKER: **LUC MORLET**

Signorello Estate makes limited quantities of premium varietals that blends classic French wine making characteristics with California fruit. Our style of winemaking is directly tied to our vineyards. We strive for lush, concentrated fruit flavors, firm tannins and good acid balance in all of our wines. The goal is to have wines with early accessibility, as well as the potential to develop additional complexity as they mature.

Signorello Estate began to develop a style of winemaking based on the idea of "winegrowing" described by a French word "Vigneron". It means that everything done in the vineyards is intimately connected to the winemaking. This technique or style is used in the Burgundy region of France. Ray Signorello's preferences and tastes are decidedly Burgundian; striving for lush fruit to produce rich Chardonnays, like those of Domaine Coche-Dury and Domaine Leflaive. The winery focuses on elegance, balance, and depth thus producing the magnificent Pinot Noirs like those from Domaine de la Romanee-Conti and Domaine Leroy.

The gentle treatment the fruit receives when it first comes to the winery is also evident in the winemaking process. The white varietals go directly to temperature controlled, stainless steel tanks to settle off heavy sediment. From there they are pumped into French oak barrels (40-50% new barrels with medium to heavy toast) from coopers Francois Freres, Damy, and Sirugue. All of these coopers use wood type Allier, Tronçais, and Vosges.

Barrel fermentation begins with the grape's own native yeast. This produces a wine with more complexity and a broader, creamier texture. Ultimately, the wine will develop greater individuality and personality from allowing the native yeast to produce fermentation. After two to four weeks - when alcoholic fermentation is complete - 100% of the Chardonnay is inoculated and undergoes malolactic fermentation in barrels. Approximately 20% of the Sauvignon Blanc and Semillon are inoculated for malolactic fermentation.

The red varietals are treated in a different manner. After de-stemming and crushing, the reds are fermented in four and eight-ton open top tanks, again native yeasts are allowed to do the fermentation. The cap, (skins and pulp that rise to the surface during fermentation) is hand punched down three times each day. The red wines go through extended maceration periods, usually 25 to 35 days, to allow for a more natural balance of fruit and tannins. The juice of the red grapes is then pressed off the skins and settled in stainless steel tanks for two days. The wine is then inoculated for malolactic fermentation and racked into French oak barrels. The barrels are (medium-plus toast) from Seguin Moreau and Radoux. The Pinot Noir cooperage is very much like that used for the white wines.

Pinot Noir and the white varietals remain on the lees for the duration of the oak aging. The Cabernet Sauvignon is racked selectively, approximately four times before bottling. The white wines are also selectively fined and racked just before bottling. This careful handling allows the wines subtleties and finer nuances to stay in tact. To this day, Signorello Estate Winery is proud to say that our red wines have been bottled without filtration.

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The time the wine spends in the oak barrels varies according to varietal. The white remains in barrels for approximately 11 months. The Pinot Noir ages for 17 months, while the Cabernet Sauvignon remains in the barrels an average of 22 months and is blended with Merlot and Cabernet Franc before bottling.

The Reserve program consists of wines that Ray Signorello tastes throughout the time the wine is aging in the barrels. The Padrone is a classic Bordeaux blend of Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot & Cabernet Franc. This reserve Cabernet Sauvignon is dedicated to the memory of Ray Signorello Sr. The reserve Chardonnay is limited to a 50 case production, with only two barrels being blended together to create the highly celebrated, delicious Hopes' Cuvee, named after Ray, Jr's mother, Hope Signorello.

Devotion is the word that best describes the intense attention the vineyards and wine receive in order to produce varietals that are softer and more subtle with complex fruit and balanced structure. Signorello Estate takes pride in producing world class wines that are very enjoyable upon release yet can benefit from additional bottle aging.



SIGNORELLO

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THE TEAM

RAYMOND SIGNORELLO JR. ~ PROPRIETOR/WINEMAKER

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BIOGRAPHY:

Ray Signorello Jr. began his journey as winemaker and vineyard owner in the Napa Valley during the mid 1980's. Ray, born in San Francisco, California, moved to Vancouver, Canada where the Signorello family continues to maintain their permanent home. Ray divides his time between San Francisco, Vancouver and business related travel. Ray's father, Ray Sr. initiated the vineyard project during the 1970's by purchasing the 100-acre estate located on the Silverado Trail in the beautiful Napa Valley. Ray Sr. worked side by side with Ray Jr. establishing the winery's reputation for excellence until his passing in the fall of 1998.

PIERRE BIREBENT ~ WINEMAKER/VINEYARD MANAGER

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BIOGRAPHY:

Pierre Birebent is a sixth generation winegrower. He grew up on the family vineyard in Corsica France. Pierre studied viticulture and enology in Macon, Burgundy. In 1985, he moved to California to continue his employment in Winemaking. Pierre worked as vineyard manager for Stags Leap Winery from 1994-1995 and Kuletto Family Vineyard between 1997-1998. In addition, he was making wine for Costello Vineyards from 1992-1993 and 1995-1997.

Pierre has been with Signorello Estate since 1998. His dedication, hard work, knowledge, and passion for wine is a key component in the quality wines that are produced here at Signorello Estate.

LUC MORLET ~ CONSULTANT WINEMAKER

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BIOGRAPHY:

Born in Epernay, France, **Luc Morlet** grew up amongst the vines on his family's fifth generation estate. He holds a Masters in enology from Rheims University and an MBA in wine business from the Dijon Business School in Burgundy. After holding several winemaking positions in France and Napa, he created his first Bordeaux blend at Newton Vineyards, elevated already highly-acclaimed Peter Michael wines, and designed, developed and patented a premium sorting device named *LE TRIEUR*™.

Since 2005 Luc has been crafting his own wines under the Morlet Family Vineyards label while continuing his consulting work with Peter Michael Winery, Vineyards 7 & 8, and Chateau Boswell. He joined Signorello Estate in August of 2010 as a consultant, collaborating with winemaker Pierre Birebent in further refining the Signorello style. Luc cheerfully calls his winemaking philosophy "neo-classical laissez-faire without compromise".



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