



Jeff Runquist WINES

JEFF RUNQUIST BIO

Jeff started his adventure in the wine industry in 1977 when he interned with Seagram's at their Paul Masson Sherry Cellars in Madera while he was studying enology at the University of California at Davis. Upon graduating in 1980, he worked in the cellar at Montevina in Amador County's Shenandoah Valley and was promoted to winemaker in 1982. After a three-year stint at the Napa Valley Cooperative Winery from 1987 through 1990, Jeff became the winemaker for the J. Lohr winery in San Jose. In 1994 Jeff took advantage of the proximity of the J. Lohr Winery to Santa Clara University and enrolled in the Leavey School of Business where he completed his MBA in 1997. It was during his tenure at J. Lohr that it became clear that he was going to have to make wine for himself.

In 1995, Jeff crushed ten tons of Zinfandel from the Massoni Ranch in Amador's Shenandoah Valley and on April 1, 1997 he released 700 cases of that Zinfandel under his own label. In 1996 and 1997 Jeff made his wine at the Sycamore Creek Winery in Morgan Hill and then from 1998 through the 2010 vintage at the McManis Family Vineyard Winery in Ripon. In 2006 he finally returned to Amador County, having purchased a small five-acre walnut orchard on Shenandoah Road. In the spring of 2008, Jeff and his wife Margie opened their tasting room. Production facilities followed and Jeff was able to crush the majority of their production in Amador in 2011. In 2016, the adjacent property with 10 acres of grapes (five acres of old vine Zinfandel) became available for sale. Jeff and Margie purchased the property and added an Estate Bottled Zinfandel from grapes that were planted in 1890.

When one looks at the portfolio of wines he offers, one sees a road map of his career. He produces six wines from the Sierra Foothills, two from the Napa Valley, and four from Paso Robles. His time in the northern interior introduced him to the grapes and growers of the Lodi, Clarksburg and River Junction appellations. Those regions provided him with another nine different varieties. It seems that every year brings a new grape or opportunity to Jeff, and his exploration and adventures with new varieties and growers keep his wines fresh and alive.

Jeff prides himself on his relationships with growers, which he regards as partnerships. He only works with growers who share his passion and know the value of harvesting grapes at their peak of flavor, color and character. When to pick is a decision he leaves up to the growers and part of their contribution to his wines. Jeff's wines share a similar theme of fresh fruit reflective of the varietal flavors inherent in the grapes and Jeff has selected his grapes from vineyards that provide rich, full flavors without loads of astringent tannins. All of his wines will age and become more complex with time, but they can be enjoyed in their youth as well.

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