

Stuhlmuller Vineyard

Stuhlmuller's History

The rich history of the Stuhlmuller property goes all the way back to 1800's mountain-man and rancher, Cyrus Alexander, for whom the Alexander Valley is named. Part of Alexander's original 9000-acre ranch, today's Stuhlmuller Vineyard has undergone many incarnations. Although grapes were likely planted on the property before 1900, Prohibition wiped out nearly all of the valley's vineyards and by the 1930s it was dotted with orchards and cattle pastures. In 1982, Roger and Carmen Stuhlmuller purchased a 150-acre property located at the southwestern edge of the Alexander Valley. Impressed by the quality of the 90-acres of original 1970's vine plantings, the Stuhlmullers realized the remarkable viticultural potential of the land. Bordered to the east by the Russian River, the vineyard is situated on a unique geological site that is part river bench and part hillside. There, the vines benefit from gravel, clay, and volcanic soils, formed during thousands of years of alluvial fan movement and flooding, as well as from rocky, uplifted benchland soils that comprise the hillside sections of the vineyard. These ancient soils combined with the area's climatic conditions, including clockwork fog and cool nighttime temperatures, yield fruit with a signature mineral quality, good acidity and complex flavors.

Over the years, Roger and Carmen, along with their son Fritz, have meticulously developed the vineyard into 150 acres of prized Chardonnay, Cabernet Sauvignon and Zinfandel. The Stuhlmullers quickly established a reputation as growers of world-class grapes, supplying such notable wineries as Chateau Souverain, Cronin, and Page Mill with fruit for highly praised single vineyard wines. Fritz was so inspired by the complex, expressive wines being made from his family's vineyard that in 1996, he established a small, artisan winery bearing the Stuhlmuller name. By 2000, working alongside original winemaker Kerry Damskey, Fritz had achieved his goal of turning Stuhlmuller Vineyards into an estate winery by converting an historic barn on the property into a winemaking facility designed specifically for the fermentation of small lots of fruit.

While many wineries claim to be vineyard focused, as grape growers, this belief is a way of life for the Stuhlmullers. Committed to crafting superior wines from the finest blocks in the vineyard, the Stuhlmullers work side-by-side with their talented winemaking team. In 2004, Stuhlmuller Vineyards promoted Danish born Leo Hansen from assistant winemaker to winemaker. Combining his classic European training as a sommelier, with his hands-on experience at such wineries as Clos du Bois, Chateau Souverain and Bowen Estate in Australia, Leo is dedicated to capturing the rich, expressive character of the vineyard. Rounding out the team are Kerry Damskey, who continues at Stuhlmuller in a consulting role, and vineyard director, Dave Collin.

Today, the Stuhlmuller family enjoys a dual reputation as first-class grape growers and as proprietors of a respected, vineyard-driven winery. Stuhlmuller Vineyards produces roughly 9000 cases of Chardonnay and Cabernet Sauvignon annually, with the recent addition of extremely small allotments of estate Zinfandel. The wines of Stuhlmuller Vineyards are available in top wine shops and restaurants throughout California and in select markets around the country.