

Robert Pecota Winery

Robert Pecota Winery was established in 1978 near Calistoga in northern Napa Valley. After working as a coffee buyer in San Francisco in the early 1970s and earning a Masters' Degree in business from the University of California at Berkeley, Robert Pecota switched careers and got involved in the wine business. In 1974, while working for Beringer Winery as a grape and bulk wine buyer, Bob acquired 40 acres of land at the base of Mt. St. Helena a few miles north of Calistoga and four years later fulfilled his dream of opening a small family winery.

For the next 28 years, Bob and his daughters, Kara and Andrea, managed the winery and its 37-acre estate vineyard, producing 10,000 cases annually of handcrafted, ultra-premium Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Cabernet Franc, Syrah, Sauvignon Blanc and Muscat Canelli, earning a loyal following among wine lovers. According to Robert Whitley of the *Copley News Service*, "Pecota is a vastly underrated Napa Valley winery, producing top-notch whites and reds virtually every vintage with very little fanfare."



In July, 2006, the Pecotas sold their Calistoga winery and estate vineyard to Jackson Family Farms, owned by Jess Jackson of Kendall-Jackson fame, while retaining ownership of the Robert Pecota Winery name and all Pecota-branded wines. Simultaneously, the family purchased 27 acres of land on Bennett Lane, a ¼ mile south of their former property and just across the Napa River from Chateau Montelena. This choice parcel, boasting incredible views of Mt. St. Helena and the Palisade Mountains and a 40-foot pond for irrigation and fishing, has become the site of the new Robert Pecota Winery and estate vineyard, which will consist of 12 acres of Petite Sirah, 4 acres of Cabernet Sauvignon, and 1.5 acres Grenache. The new winery is slated to open in time for the 2009 harvest.

The new vineyard, with its rocky, alluvial soils, is ideally suited to grape growing. While daytime temperatures during the growing season in the Calistoga region are warm, the influence of the Pacific Ocean and its coastal hills result in cool, crisp evenings, producing the greatest day-to-night temperature differentials of any Napa Valley region. These conditions ensure the grapes ripen fully while retaining healthy levels of acidity.

As a cutting-edge Napa Valley grape grower, Robert Pecota utilizes rootstocks, budwood, and trellising systems ideally suited to his vineyard's exposures, soils and microclimates. He farms sustainably, relying on winter cover crops and natural methods of weed and pest control to maintain soil health.

Pecota's winemaking philosophy is to maximize quality and character by fully capturing the unique attributes of each variety and site – the singularity of place the French call *terroir*. Each vineyard block is harvested, vinified and barrel-aged separately, with extensive blending trials to determine the final *cepage*. Pecota's minimalist winemaking approach, derived from age-old European winemaking traditions, is geared to achieving balance through aging in small French oak barrels and bottling his wines unfiltered.