

# KAUTZ FAMILY VINEYARDS

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*4th Generation*  *Family Growers*

## **Background Info**

Pioneers came to California to seek their fortunes in Gold during the great Gold Rush of 1849. They braved the elements, hot, arid plains, the Rocky Mountains and Sierra Nevada Mountain Range to seek their fortunes.

The Ironstone Winery is in the heart of this historic Gold Rush area in the foothills of the Sierra Nevada mountain range. Here, nestled amongst the native oak and pine trees those early settlers planted a new kind of gold – winegrapes.

## **Ironstone Winery**

In 1989, development of the winery, where it stands today began. A specialized crew was brought in to hand blast 10,000 square feet of aging caverns from solid rock. It's the crew that branded "Ironstone". As they were blasting and tunneling through this rock, they bitterly complained how the stone was "as hard as iron." From their comments came the winery's name – Ironstone.

Ground breaking for the winery building itself started to in 1992 and as the structure took shape, it became evident that the Kautz Family intended to honor this historic region with a magnificent replica of a mid-1800's gold stamp mill. Completed in 1994, the main building rose seven stories above ground level housing the tasting room, Alhambra music room, culinary center, bottling facility, and administrative offices.

Two years later, the Heritage Museum and Jewelry Shoppe were completed where the renowned world's largest single specimen of gold leaf crystalline is on display. This 44 lb. treasure was found in 1992 at the Sonora Mining Corporation's mine just a few miles from the winery complex.

## **The Family**

John and Gail Kautz had a vision to create one of the most magnificent wineries in the state and a legacy for their children's children. And they chose a location rich in history with a tradition of winemaking that is as unique as the area itself. Ironstone Vineyards is currently the 10<sup>th</sup> largest family-owned winery in California and the Kautz Family is considered to be one of the top ten grape growers in the state. They are also the largest grower of Cabernet Franc in the world.

While John and Gail maintain an active role in the winery, now their children play a major role in every aspect of the operation. Stephen Kautz, President, oversees day-to-day operations of the winery and travels throughout the United States promoting their award-winning wines. His sister Joan Kautz, Vice President of International Operations, oversees the family's business in over fifty-one international markets. Their brother Kurt Kautz is responsible for all vineyard operations managing the 5,000 plus acres of winegrapes plus the operations at Bear Creek Winery and their brother Jack, handles real estate development projects.

## **Growing Green for 30 Years - Sustainable Viticultural Practices**

For the Kautz Family, a healthy environment is important to their family, their friends, their neighbors and the community. By practicing Sustainable Viticultural Winegrowing, for over 30 years, they continue to reduce water use, build healthy soil, and maintain the surrounding wildlife habitat.

There is an old time expression that the best thing a farmer can put on their field is their shadow. This means being out in the field and observing what is happening is the best way to manage the crops. Sustainable viticulture is a comprehensive time-honored approach to vineyard management that involves all aspects of farming including human resources, viticulture, soil management, water management, pest management, habitat management, and wine quality.

The foundation of Ironstone's sustainable viticultural practices includes monitoring the vineyards on a daily basis to determine what is needed. Each year Mother Nature brings variations in weather, climate and a wide variety of pests and depending on the growing season, some or all of these techniques can be employed to ensure development of the highest quality winegrapes.

## **The Vineyards**

For decades, the Kautz Family has made it their mission to grow the best winegrapes possible. Over the years, they have acquired land in three distinctly different growing areas and developed exceptional vineyards. Each parcel was carefully selected to create a stylistically diverse mix of varietal character. In the Sierra Foothills, remnants of Zinfandels planted over 100 years ago can still be seen. Many varieties have taken to the soils and climate producing some of the most distinctive wines that can be found. Its close neighbor, known as the Lodi Appellation, is at a lower elevation where the soils are richer producing characteristically large grape clusters and ripe juicy fruit.

### ***Lodi Appellation***

Some of the richest farm land in the world can be found in the Lodi appellation where two major rivers, originating in the Sierra Nevada Mountain Range, have brought rich, granitic-based mineral soils to the valley floor. Nestled between the San Francisco Bay Area and the Sierra Foothills, this region boasts a classic Mediterranean climate. The dry warm summer days softly ripen the fruit while the areas distinctive early evening maritime breezes cool them off just enough to maintain their natural acidity and structure creating complexity in the finished wine. The Kautz Family has over 5,000 acres located in four of the seven sub-appellations in the Lodi region which is being touted as one of California's most exciting "new" appellations.

#### ***Alta Mesa ~ 50-100 ft. elevation***

The Sheldon Ranch vineyard is located in this northern sub-appellation which contains both sandy loam and heavy red clay loam soils.

#### ***Clements Hills ~ 90-400 ft. elevation***

Both the Frasier Ranch and Block 50 vineyards are located in this south-eastern sub-region that skirts alongside the Sierra Foothills. Soils can vary from brown to red to yellow loams, clay loams to gravelly and stony river deposits. Heavier clay-based soils can be found in the rolling hills along its eastern edge.

#### ***Mokelumne River ~ 10-85 ft. elevation***

Several vineyard blocks are scattered throughout this area where the soil is predominantly a fine sandy-loam. Here, the Kautz family grows Chardonnay, Cabernet Sauvignon, Malbec, Merlot, Petite Sirah, Petite Verdot, Pinot Gris, Pinot Noir, Riesling, Sauvignon Blanc, Shiraz/Syrah, Symphony, Tempranillo, Viognier and Zinfandel.

#### ***Sloughouse ~ up to 590 ft. elevation***

Also found in the Lodi Appellation is an area known a Sloughouse. On the northern-eastern edge of the Lodi area are gently rolling hills at the base of the Sierra Nevada Mountain Range. Cosumnes Ranch, Deer Creek Ranch, Dillard Road Ranch, Sloughouse Ranch, and Lakeview Ranch are all located here where the diverse topography combined with a mixture of sandy loam, river rock and cobblestone soils, provides grapes with even more distinctive character.

### **Sierra Foothills Appellation**

The Sierra Foothills Wine Region has, for many years, been California's best kept wine secret. At 2,400 feet, this area is blessed with warm summer days, but the cooling effect comes from the mountains at night. Thousands of visitors explore this region each year discovering its full-bodied reds and distinctive white wines. At the southernmost end of this region is the area of Calaveras County. Here lies the historic gold mining town of Murphys where Ironstone is located. Our 100 acre Hay Station Ranch vineyard is planted in soils of decomposed granite, volcanic sediment and red clay. These estate grown vines produce Ironstone's distinctive Reserve wines which exhibit rich flavors and varietal character that can be found from these mineral and rocky soils.

### **Our Winemakers**

Our winemaking team, lead by Steve Millier, Vice President/Director of Winemaking, has over 75 years of combined experience winning hundreds of awards both nationally and internationally. Steve is the founding winemaker for Ironstone Vineyards and founding member and past President of the Calaveras Wine Association. He has been instrumental in establishing the history and credibility of Calaveras County's wine region.

### **The Wines**

Ironstone Winery produces several varietals under its Ironstone label; Chardonnay, Cabernet Franc, Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Petite Sirah, Sauvignon Blanc, Syrah, Symphony "Obsession", Xpression Rosé, and Old Vine Zinfandel.

Ironstone Reserve wines, estate grown from the family's vineyards in Calaveras County, include a Chardonnay, Cabernet Franc, Cabernet Sauvignon, and Meritage. Their Reserve Old Vine Zinfandels, which round out the portfolio, are sourced from various vineyard sites in Lodi and Amador County. One of the vineyard designated Zins is from the Rous Vineyard that was planted in 1909 in the famed Lodi appellation.

In addition to the Ironstone brand, Ironstone produces Christine Andrew wines, named after the 4<sup>th</sup> generation of the family — it's the great-grandchildren's middle names combined. This brand offers an interesting varietal mix, from the family's Lodi vineyards, of Viognier, Malbec, Tempranillo, Petite Sirah, and Old Vine Zinfandel.

The Kautz Family also produces Sonoma Creek and Leaping Horse Vineyards wines.