

The World of Wine

Stags' Leap Winery

FOUNDED IN 1893 BY HORACE CHASE AND his wife Minnie Mizner Chase, the century-old, 240-acre wine estate known as Stags' Leap is located seven miles north of Napa at the heart of the Stags Leap District. The property was named after an old Indian legend that tells of a stag leaping across the palisades to elude a group of hunters.

In addition to the old stone winery, the Chases built a gracious manor house and guest house that still stand, excavated the first wine storage caves on the east side of Napa Valley, and installed what is thought to be the first in-ground fresh water swimming pool in Northern California. Mrs. Frances Grange acquired Stags' Leap from Horace Chase in 1913, and carefully transformed the property into a working ranch and the Napa Valley's preeminent resort.

After the Grange era, the winery, Manor House, and cottages fell into disrepair, but wine production began again in 1971 when the property was purchased by Carl Doumani and underwent an extensive restoration.

Under the direction of Winemaker and General Manager Christophe Paubert, Stags' Leap Winery continues the tradition of stewardship today. Its unique terroir and ideal microclimate support a classical standard of viticulture, land use, and winemaking that is as relevant today as it was over a century ago. The 85-acre estate vineyard is divided into 23 separate blocks based on soil type and exposure to the sun, in a combination of valley floor and hillside slope plantings. The combination of Napa Valley's extended growing season with the accentuated warmth and cooling of the Stags' Leap District results in an ideal balance of acid and sugar in the fruit. The grapes are given time to mature and develop their characteristic soft texture and intense flavors. The primary varieties of Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, and Petite Syrah are enriched by plantings of Cabernet Franc, Malbec, Petite Verdot, Grenache, and Syrah.

Stags' Leap is one of California's earlier and most enduring wine estates revered for its history and tradition as well as its elegant and delightful wines. ●

*Napa Valley Cabernet Sauvignon (top right); Palisades (top left);
Stags' Leap Manor House (middle); Christophe and the grapes (right)*

