

In the Lime(stone) Light

HIGH-ELEVATION ADELAIDA VINEYARDS & WINERY RISES UP WITH NEW RELEASES AND A STELLAR NEW TASTING ROOM

by Meredith May

HOW FORTUITOUS THAT ADELAIDA VINEYARDS HAD AN AVA NAMED AFTER IT.

The family-owned winery, established in 1981, is a breathtaking settlement up mountain roads in Paso Robles, developed long before the region's breakout into 11 distinct sub-AVAs, with one district given the name Adelaida. The district—like the winery—is situated on the western boundary of the Paso Robles AVA.

High elevation and close proximity to the Pacific make an ideal site, the line of walnut trees lined up against craggy slopes visible for long stretches, bordering vineyards and dry brush.

Although the reputation of this small boutique-y winery has been solid for decades, as a longtime fan I have noticed an ongoing refinement in the wines' quality—taking them to heights that match ADELAIDA's geographic elevation.

The vineyards comprise seven properties totaling 157 acres in the Adelaida District. The district as a whole, as well as these distinct sites, features chalk rock limestone soils, afternoon blasts of cool coastal air and a diurnal swing from day to night of 40 to 50 degrees. Winemaker Jeremy Weintraub notes that limestone soil adds fresh mouthfeel and ripeness to the wines—that certainly is apparent. "The limestone-heavy soils allow water to soak through and limit the vines' ability to take in potassium and other nutrients, leading to wines with lots of acid."

In 2015, ADELAIDA earned the designation of being a Certified California Sustainable Winegrowing Winery & Vineyard (CCSW). "For years, we have carefully farmed our vineyards with earth-friendly practices," says General Manager Jessica Kollhoff.

An array of varieties are able to be grown in ADELAIDA's estate vineyards because the diversity of microclimates allows the team to plant in the appropriate location for each grape's genotype. It's all hillside and mountain fruit; nothing is grown on the flats.

We recently tasted some of the new releases with ADELAIDA's Vineyard & Winery Ambassador, Glenn Mitton. Here are highlights of some of their selections that I tasted for the first time.

ADELAIDA 2015 Picpoul Blanc, Anna's Estate Vineyard (\$35)

Light lime and caramel brioche comes off as perfume, but the silky, broad lemon curd mouthfeel is a textural surprise. Also surprising is that it is fermented in (10 yr. old) neutral French oak and aged ten months in barrel. It finishes with a mineral zing.

ADELAIDA 2014 Pinot Noir, HMR Estate Vineyard (\$45)

With a warmed spiced-cinnamon nose, the liquid has a satene sheen with a hint of salinity and cranberry-rhubarb. The fruit is from the Hoffman Mountain Ranch (HMR), developed by Dr. Stanley Hoffman in 1964; this is the oldest planting of Pinot Noir on the Central Coast.

ADELAIDA 2014 Gamay Noir, HMR Estate (\$30)

A treat to taste this Cru Beaujolais Morgon-style red with its lacy, lean and racy soul and delicate dry finish. Cinnamon-spearmint is a knockout flavor. Aged 14 months in neutral French oak.

ADELAIDA 2013 Signature Cabernet Sauvignon, Viking Estate Vineyard (\$80)

100% Cab and aged 26 months in 50% new French oak (the 2015 will ferment in concrete and five-ton French oak casks); vineyards first planted in 1991. This is world-class texture. Big, rich cigar, leather and lean fruit;

bright and thrilling with scintillating acidity. "The grapes are small and non-fleshy, especially obvious because of the drought," offers Mitton. Our teeth and tongues were coated for an extended amount of time which kept us thinking more about this wine. **\$J**



The stunning undulating hills at
ADELAIDA Vineyards & Winery.