



SONOMA-CUTRER

Brand Education Guide

NOVEMBER 2024


THE DUCKHORN PORTFOLIO



By marrying Californian ingenuity with Burgundian tradition, Sonoma-Cutrer has always captured the essence of Sonoma, its people, and its land.

This is the story of Sonoma-Cutrer: steeped in tradition, innovation at every turn.





Our History and Heritage



OUR STORY

What began more than forty years ago in a quaint corner of Sonoma's rolling hills is now much as it was then: a welcoming winery flanked by rows upon rows of neatly-kept vines. A stone cave carved into a hillside sits quietly nearby, bearing Sonoma-Cutrer's signature hop kiln doors. The historic nature of the property hearkens back to a storied past, but the pristine architecture and perfectly manicured vines hint at a certain modernity.

This is the ethos of Sonoma-Cutrer. It is a new barn made only for red wine production juxtaposed with vines planted in the 1970s and a cave with walls made of millennia-old stones. It is barrel fermentation all the same as it was decades ago on the same grounds as a state-of-the-art cooling tunnel. It is a historic style, but modern methods. It is tradition and innovation in perfect harmony.

This beautiful synergy has always been geared toward one goal: expressing and appreciating Sonoma County's remarkable terroir.



A Rich 50+ Year History



1973

Founded as a vineyard company

1999

Brown-Forman purchases Sonoma-Cutrer

2005

Sonoma Coast Chardonnay release



2010

Tasting Room opens to the public



2024

Joins The Duckhorn Portfolio



1981

State-of-the-art winery and inaugural vintage of Russian River Ranches Chardonnay

2004

First release of Russian River Valley Pinot Noir



2009

Club Cutrer launches

2015

All six of our estate vineyards and winery are certified sustainable

2018

First unallocated release of Rosé



The Burgundian connection at Sonoma-Cutrer dates to its original founders and collaborators, who utilized Burgundy's complex varieties, Old World practices, and free exchange of ideas.



OUR HERITAGE

- In 1974, Brice Cutrer Jones, a founding figure of Sonoma-Cutrer Vineyards, planted Pinot Noir and Chardonnay cuttings with a vision to craft California wine in the French tradition.
- Sonoma-Cutrer's early vision to plant Chardonnay in the cooler parts of the region emerged when only 300 acres of Chardonnay existed in the county.
- William "Bill" Bonetti, Sonoma-Cutrer's first winemaker and an early proponent of barrel-fermented Chardonnay, believed that "to allow a wine to express its heritage, the winemaker must not intrude."
- In 1981, production totaled just 5,000 cases. With an eye on growth, Sonoma-Cutrer focused on securing distribution in fine restaurants nationwide. This set the foundation for a then-unique approach: exclusively selling to on-premise, white-tablecloth restaurants through strict allocation.
- In 1986, Sonoma-Cutrer launched the Focus on Chardonnay program to promote an exchange of ideas between Burgundian and Californian Chardonnay producers, culminating in symposia where distinguished winemakers shared insights and tasted exceptional Chardonnays. This initiative established a tradition of meetings every four years, culminating in 2017.





Our Homeplace and Vineyards



OUR HOMEPLACE

- Located in the heart of Russian River Valley in Windsor, CA.
- Our state-of-the-art Homeplace was built from 1980-1982 and features two professional croquet lawns, a tasting room, offices, and a winery.
- Our tasting room opened to the public in 2010.
- Each stone on the patio and steps came from the Les Pierres Vineyard.
- The Cutrer Vineyard is located on the estate.



The individuality of each of Sonoma-Cutrer's estate vineyards is what makes its wines so special. Each vineyard lends a different set of characteristics and flavors due to many unique factors, including topography, soil type, and vine age.



6 Unique Vineyards • 2 Appellations

American Viticultural Appellations (AVA)

- Russian River Valley
- Sonoma Coast

Estate Vineyards

- Shiloh
- Kent
- Les Pierres
- The Cutrer
- Vine Hill
- Owsley



OUR VINEYARDS

Shiloh Vineyard

RUSSIAN RIVER VALLEY

The Shiloh Vineyard, located on the valley floor in the foothills of the Mayacamas Mountain Range with a southwest exposure and minimal fog, is planted entirely to Chardonnay. Its warm microclimate and ample sunlight promote early ripening, while large diurnal shifts helps to retain acidity.

PLANTING YEARS: 1973 & 2020

ELEVATION: 135-200 FT

ACRES: 169

SOIL: CLAY & GRAVELLY LOAM

Kent Vineyard

RUSSIAN RIVER VALLEY

Located just south of Shiloh Vineyard, the Kent Vineyard features a flat northern section and a gentle slope owing to an old riverbed in the south. It exhibits classic Russian River Valley characteristics, including significant diurnal temperature shifts and persistent fog, and is exclusively planted to Chardonnay

PLANTING YEARS: 1974 & 2009

ELEVATION: 125 FT

ACRES: 93

SOIL: SILTY CLAY OVER GRAVELLY LOAM

Les Pierres Vineyard

SONOMA COAST

Les Pierres Vineyard, aptly named for the stones in its soil, is located south and east of Sonoma-Cutrer's other vineyards. Planted with Pinot Noir and Chardonnay, the vineyard's ancient riverbed geology allows large white stones to reflect warmth and light. Its unique microclimate provides abundant sunlight and minimal fog, resulting in an early harvest.

PLANTING YEARS: 1989 & 1991-2003

ELEVATION: 100-120 FT

ACRES: 103

SOIL: ROCKY, GRAVELLY CLAY LOAM



OUR VINEYARDS

The Cutrer Vineyard

RUSSIAN RIVER VALLEY

The Cutrer Vineyard, on Sonoma-Cutrer's estate, spans rolling hills and the valley floor in the heart of Russian River Valley. Its varied exposures and soil types create diverse growing conditions, allowing the finest lots to be selected for The Cutrer Chardonnay.

PLANTING YEARS: 1990 & 2007

ELEVATION: 60-120 FT

ACRES: 271

SOIL: CLAY, GRAVELLY & SILT LOAM

Vine Hill Vineyard

RUSSIAN RIVER VALLEY

Located just southwest of The Cutrer, Vine Hill Vineyard features a southwest exposure and notable microclimatic variation, with differences in exposure and fog impact. Planted with Chardonnay and Pinot Noir, this high-vigor site is warm at the top, where the fog burns off quickly, while remaining cool mid-slope and cold in the swales.

PLANTING YEARS: 1996

ELEVATION: 120-380 FT

ACRES: 378

SOIL: GOLDRIDGE SANDY LOAM

Owsley Vineyard

RUSSIAN RIVER VALLEY

Owsley Vineyard is the westernmost and southernmost site within the Russian River Valley, and the foggiest, coldest of Sonoma-Cutrer's six estates due to its proximity to the Petaluma Gap. Its extended growing season makes it especially prized for Pinot Noir, though it also produces Chardonnay.

PLANTING YEARS: 2000

ELEVATION: 195-330 FT

ACRES: 86

SOIL: DEEP SANDY LOAM



Our Winemakers



The mission of Sonoma-Cutrer's winemakers is to produce terroir-reflective wines—wines imprinted with all the elements of their place of origin and crafted with remarkable consistency.



Cara Morrison Director of Winemaking


- A native of San Jose, Cara earned her Bachelor of Science degree in Fermentation Science from the University of California at Davis. After college Cara spent a year traveling and working the other winemaking regions of the world.
- Cara joined the Jekel Vineyard winemaking team in 1998. In 2000, she was selected as the Winemaker/White Wines at Fetzer Vineyards.
- Cara joined Sonoma-Cutrer in 2005 and immersed herself in crafting Chardonnay in the classic, Burgundian style.
- Today, Cara loves that her role allows her to experiment with barrel maturation and the blending process of both of Sonoma-Cutrer's Burgundian grape varieties - Chardonnay and Pinot Noir.



Zidanelia Arcidiácono Senior Winemaker

- Born in Texas, Zidanelia and her family moved to Mendoza, Argentina when she was three years old. Zidanelia - her friends often call her Z - began her career working in the lab at Bodega Cruz de Piedra while attending university in Mendoza.
- After receiving her bachelor's degree in winemaking, she traveled to the south of France to the Cave cooperative Les Vignerons du Pays d'Enserune, working in the cellar for a harvest.
- Zidanelia arrived in the US in 2007 and started at Sonoma-Cutrer, as an Enologist for that season's harvest. She then moved to the same position at Fetzer winery, moving quickly through the ranks becoming the Winemaker for Fetzer Reserve Wines and Little Black Dress.
- Returning to Sonoma-Cutrer in 2015, her experience working on reserve wines made her the perfect fit for the role of crafting Sonoma-Cutrer's outstanding Pinot Noirs.





Our Process and Winemaking



1.
Hand Harvest



2.
Chill



3.
Hand Sort



4.
Age



5.
Ferment



6.
Press



OUR PROCESS



Chardonnay Winemaking

The goal of Sonoma-Cutrer's Chardonnay winemaking has always been to marry Burgundian traditions with California ingenuity and a deep appreciation for Sonoma's remarkable terroir. Sonoma-Cutrer takes many artisanal steps when handcrafting Chardonnay, including:

- Dedicated Chardonnay winemaking facility and barrel room
- Hand harvesting and sorting
- Whole cluster pressing
- Barrel fermentation and maturation
- Frequent sur-lies stirring to add a creamy mouthfeel to the wine and help mitigate buttery aromas
- Aging in a portion of new, one-year-old, and two-year-old French Oak barrels



Pinot Noir Winemaking

Pinot Noir grapes are delicate, and their thin skins require rigor and attention in the winemaking process. Sonoma-Cutrer takes many artisanal steps when handcrafting Pinot Noir, including:

- Separate, dedicated Pinot Noir winery
- Early morning hand harvesting
- Hand sorting
- 4-day cold soaking
- Hand punch-down in open top fermenters, twice a day
- Gentle grape pressing with basket presses
- Small batch gravity racking to French Oak barrels
- Aged for 12 months in a portion of new, one-year-old, and two-year-old barrels



Grand Cru Barrel Program

- Majority of Sonoma-Cutrer's Chardonnay and Pinot Noir is fermented and aged in French oak barrels.
- Our barrel program utilizes merrandiers to select trees from the forests in the heart of France.
- After two to three years of natural, air-dried seasoning, the wood is sent to two small family-owned French and American tonnelleries (cooperages).
- "Old world" craftsmen are entrusted to cooper the handcrafted barrels.
- Our Chardonnay barrel room is a 20,000sq. ft facility dug into a hillside and is designed to replicate a French cave - complete with a bare earth floor.
- Temperature-controlled water flows through 24 miles of piping to create the consistent temperature and humidity needed for a slow, controlled maturation process, reminiscent of the Old-World philosophy.



Sustainability



Sonoma-Cutrer believes in the more balanced, all-encompassing idea of sustainability which encapsulates not only environmental impact, but that of its community, employees, and neighbors.





Sustainably Farmed Vineyards

- 100% of our winery and estate vineyards are Certified Sustainable and Fish Friendly
- Sonoma County is the first wine region in the world to be 99% sustainable
- Focus on efficient use of our natural resources
- 99% of production waste is reused or recycled
- 100% of our treated process water is reused for vineyard and landscape irrigation
- Increased undervine cultivation
- Increased use of biodiversity for pest management



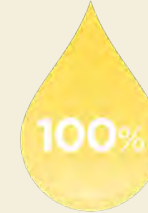
Sonoma County is the first wine region in the world to be

99% SUSTAINABLE



SOIL HEALTH

Instead of applying a fixed amount of macronutrients across our 148 unique sites, each site is individually analyzed and replenished for optimum growth in the upcoming season.



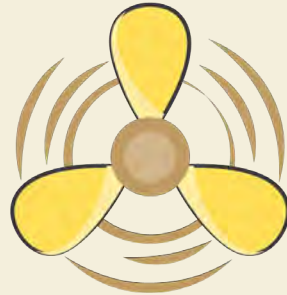
WATER CONSERVATION

percent of our treated process water is reused for vineyard and landscape irrigation.



BIODIVERSITY

Owl boxes are placed strategically throughout the vineyards to attract owls who become partners in controlling pests naturally.



FROST PROTECTION

Frost fans have become a central element in most frost protection strategies. We have replaced

80% of our protection system for frost fans on **405 ACRES.**



NIGHT HARVESTING

Our harvesting method keeps the grapes cooler, avoiding the need for refrigeration and also protects workers from heat and sun exposure.



ZERO WASTE GOAL

The winery sends off **99%** of materials from production to be reused or recycled, eliminating about **50 tons** a year from the waste stream.



CERTIFICATION

100% of our Winery and Estate Vineyards are Certified Sustainable and Fish Friendly.



SOIL MANAGEMENT

We are continuously converting acreage to undervine cultivation. This eliminates use of herbicides, improves soil health, and reduces the leaching of nutrients.



ENERGY

Our solar panels in our barrel and tank room generate **150,000 kwh** of power a year.



PRODUCTION SCHEDULE

Our production schedule is 4x 10 hour days which benefits our sustainability efforts through energy savings, reduction in vehicle travel, and less gas emissions.

ENERGY EFFICIENT

We have replaced incandescent light bulbs with fluorescent light bulbs. The purchase of office equipment, appliances and electronics are Energy Star certified.



Our Wines



Sonoma-Cutrer's unwavering commitment to consistency and dedication to showcasing Sonoma County's unique terroir are evident in each wine, highlighting the region's distinct foggy, coastal, and cool climate.



Chardonnay

- Sonoma-Cutrer's Chardonnays are crafted to be balanced and consistent with each vintage.
- They exhibit a bright acidity and minimal buttery compounds.
- Most Chardonnays are fermented in barrels to add depth of flavor and texture.
- Oak aging lends a creaminess, without overpowering buttery flavors.
- The balance of acidity and depth makes Sonoma-Cutrer Chardonnays an ideal pairing for fine foods of all types.



Pinot Noir

- Sonoma-Cutrer's Pinot Noirs are crafted to balance elegance and power.
- Unique terroir produces fruit with concentrated, complex flavors.
- All Pinot Noirs are crafted exclusively at The Pinot Barn, which has been the dedicated production site since Sonoma-Cutrer's inaugural Pinot Noir vintage in 2002.
- Oak aging adds key spice while balancing fine grained tannins.
- The juicy, dark fruit flavors of Sonoma-Cutrer's Pinot Noirs make it a worthy companion to its Chardonnays.



Rosé

- In 2016, Sonoma-Cutrer set out to create a French-inspired but distinctly Californian Rosé.
- The style is loosely based off the famous Rosés of Côte de Provence — Light, elegant, and delicate.
- Sonoma-Cutrer's Rosé is crafted from 100% Pinot Noir from the Russian River Valley AVA.
- Fruit is specifically grown and harvested for our Rosé.
- Unlike its other wines, Sonoma-Cutrer's Rosé is not aged in oak barrels after fermentation. Tank fermentation preserves the wine's freshness and vibrant aromas.





SONOMA-CUTRER

Thank You!

For videos of Sonoma-Cutrer's vineyards and wines,
[visit our YouTube channel.](#)

