



FORTUNATI VINEYARDS *Setting the Bar for Napa Valley Rosés*

BY FRANCIE LOW | PHOTO COURTESY OF FORTUNATI VINEYARDS

Spring is the start of rosé season, and finding a Napa Valley Rosé is exciting. Discovering a *great* Napa Valley Rosé is thrilling, if not downright lucky. Fortunati Winery makes an award-winning rosé that is like sipping a glass of good fortune as Fortunati means “to be lucky” or “fortune” in Italian.

Gary and Ellen Luchtel founded Fortunati Vineyards over two decades ago, moving from their city life in San Francisco to their country life in the beautiful Napa Valley. The Oak Knoll property they picked was suited to growing a variety of grapes and accurately reflected their college travel adventures: tasting local wines across Europe and parts of the U.S. west coast. Their experiences inspired the decision to go beyond the traditional Napa Valley varieties of Cabernet Sauvignon and Chardonnay and grow others to include Malbec, Viognier, Cabernet Franc, and Syrah. Today over ten wines are produced, only available directly from the vineyard.

Living on the property allowed each to dedicate attention to their talents. Their

roles at the winery were perfectly in sync. Gary became the grape grower and winemaker, while Ellen became the marketing arm, responsible for sales and tastings. Gary can check on the vineyards daily, and one of his mainstays in making superb wine is spending time with the grapes. Ellen’s down-home charm welcomes patrons as if they were family, stemming from her Italian roots for entertaining. The dynamic duo created delicious, standout wines, from their Cabs to Zins to Syrahs to Malbecs and more, garnering 90-point+ ratings from wine critics such as James Suckling, Robert Parker, and numerous wine competitions and delivering them into the glass of eager wine enthusiasts across the country.

In 2005, the couple traveled to Australia, where they discovered Shiraz (Syrah) and rosés. Ellen fell in love with the pink thirst quencher. Instinctively, she knew this was the next step in their wine-producing adventure. Gary was a tough sell as he didn’t believe this was the best use of Syrah. Ellen, unmoved,

was relentless in her pursuit. Gary finally agreed.

“Rosé is the perfect wine to go with a midday meal any month of the year,” Gary reasoned.

Challenge accepted. If he were going to make a Rosé, it would be the best. “Good enough isn’t good enough; it has to be great,” said Gary.

Gary applies his winemaking mantra to every release. It is one of the secrets to Fortunati’s success. The Rosé was no different. Unlike many wineries, he dedicated rows of Syrah vines specifically for the new wine and nothing else. In 2007, the experimental batch was ready. It was good—very good. From there, triumph ensued. Today, along with their other diverse award-winning varietals, Fortunati produces one the best Rosés in all of Napa Valley, winning gold and double gold status as well as Best In Class. The wine consistently sells out, leaving the husband-and-wife team smiling, especially Ellen and many Fortunati fans who drink it. *Saluté.*

FOR MORE INFORMATION www.fortunativineyards.com // Schedule a tasting: concierge@fortunativineyards.com // 707-255-9300

Fortunati
NAPA VALLEY