

Concannon Vineyard: Important Contributions to the Wine Industry

By Carol Graham

Concannon Vineyard

TASTING ROOM:

4590 Tesla Rd, Livermore

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www.concannonvineyard.com

DATE ESTABLISHED: 1883

OWNER: The Wine Group

4TH GENERATION VINTNER: John Concannon

VARIETALS: Cabernet Sauvignon, Petite Sirah, Chardonnay, Sauvignon Blanc, Merlot, Pinot Noir, Zinfandel, Syrah, Malbec, Pinot Grigio, Petite Verdot, Viognier, Grenache, Semillon

PRODUCTION: 20,000 of Reserve Wines

OPEN: Daily 11 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.



The arbor at Concannon provides a beautiful setting for special events.



June 17, 2014 was an important day for Concannon.

That day, during the third "International Cabernet Symposium," John Concannon, a keynote speaker, addressed an assembly of the world's top Cabernet producers (Opus One, Krug, Groth, Silver Oak and Chateau Margaux, to name a few) to speak about a little-known, highly significant Concannon contribution.

"The Concannon Cabernet Sauvignon Clones 7, 8 and 11 are responsible for over 80% of all Cab in California," explains the fourth generation vintner. "There are over 80,000 acres of California Cabernet, so over 80% of those came from the mother vine, or source vine, which is right over there." John turns his gaze toward the majestic, impossibly lush vineyards.

For a moment, that's hard to wrap your mind around. Lot 8, Row 34, Vine 2 - the immortal Henrietta Lacks of Cabernet - is right here.

Concannon Vineyard has been a Livermore Valley treasure since 1883, when John's great-grandfather James planted its first vines. During the ensuing 131 years, the winery weathered two world wars, pestilence, the Great Depression, prohibition, and urban development.

Yet today, it stands as the legendary gateway to the Livermore Valley's stunning wine country.

"I like to think that the right person was always in the captain's chair at the right time," says John. "James was visionary, adventurous and entrepreneurial. His son, military Capt. Joe, defended and protected the winery during the very difficult years of the Depression and Prohibition. My dad Jim took over in 1960 and made by far the biggest contribution with the Cabernet Clones and introducing America's first varietally labeled Petite Sirah. On my watch, On my watch, I'm especially proud that Concannon was one of the first to become Certified Sustainable and am delighted that now there is even more life in our soil, resulting in wines with higher fruit intensity, complexity, balance and structure.

John's chief focus has been on revitalizing the winery while preserving its history. A ten-year revitalization project helped Concannon earn the 2013 "Best in East Bay" for Tasting Room and Wine Bar. Outside, revitalization continues as the sprawling grounds are being

transformed into a lovely tasting garden. An outdoor bar is currently open.

As for preserving history, John has spent several years investigating and documenting the stories - including those about the Cabernet Clones - that have contributed to his family's rich background: the larger than life personalities, the tremendous triumphs over terrific odds, the romances and voyages and adventures that all blend together to create the captivating Concannon story.

ACTIVITIES

SUNDAY

Wines available for tasting: Conservancy Cabernet Sauvignon, Conservancy Chardonnay, Conservancy Crimson and Clover

Special/Reserved wine flights: Reserve Wine Flight available in Tasting Room. Special/Reserved wine flights fee: \$10 for guests, Complimentary for members

Discounts on purchased wine: 30% Case Discounts on Conservancy Wines for guests, 40% Case discounts for members

Education/Displays: Livermore's History Mobile
Food: Food Trucks: Grillaz Gone Wild- Cheesesteaks, Sandwiches, and More. Truckin' Sweet- Ice cream & Floats.

Entertainment/music: Meredith & The Mercenaries
Arts/Crafts: Copper Iris Artisan Jewellery, Sugar N Spice, Silpada Designs