

## **Flying Goat Cellars Background**

In many ways, Flying Goat Cellars is a study in contrasts. A humorous name and a serious lineup of wines. A startup “garagista” mode and 25 years of winemaking experience. A caricature of a leaping goat on a heavy and premium wine bottle. A mission of merriment and a dedicated commitment to professionalism. The result is exactly what owner/winemaker Norman Yost set out to do when he established Flying Goat Cellars in 1999.

A graduate of UC Davis’ Enology and Viticulture program, Norm first worked in the famed Napa Valley where he was one harvest exposed to the seductive Pinot Noir grape, and immediately set on a new winemaking path. Positions in wineries in Oregon and Australia only confirmed his passion for crafting Pinot Noir, and finally led him to the cool climate vineyards of Santa Barbara County.

Grapes were first crushed for the yet unnamed winery in 2000, and with a year of barrel aging planned, there was plenty of time to arrive at a name. Norm wanted the winery to reflect a sense of fun in conjunction with making and selling a premium wine. “The way that our industry talks about wine is intimidating to many people” he states. “I think that people should simply enjoy the deliciousness that a wine can bring to the table and just have a good time”. With this mission of merriment in mind, pondering a name for the winery, and with tongue firmly planted in cheek, he decided to take the path of many vintners and name the winery after his “kids”. The kids, in this case were two pygmy goat pets, who had always inspired him with “their unrestrained spiral loops, flipper turns and straight- legged leaps”. The winery was launched with this same spirit of enthusiasm, and Flying Goat Cellars was born.

Starting out tiny and working his way up to small, Yost has been an early pioneer with some of the newer and extremely planted vineyards of the coastal areas of Santa Barbara and San Luis Obispo counties. The single vineyard bottlings from the Santa Maria Valley in 2000 and 2001 grew to a “tale of two appellations” with the addition of a wine from Sta. Rita Hills in 2002. 2003 saw a new vineyard from each appellation added to the lineup and 2005 found not only fruit from San Luis Obispo being added to the mix, but also a Pinot Gris and “Goat Bubbles”, a sparkling Rosé of Pinot Noir. “The idea for adding a crisp Pinot Gris came from my days in Oregon. And the sparkling? Well, I like to celebrate the big and little things in life, and for that you need bubbles!”

Yost currently sources Pinot Noir from Rio Vista and Rancho Santa Rosa vineyards in the Sta. Rita Hills, Dierberg and Solomon Hills in the Santa Maria Valley and the Salisbury vineyard in San Luis Obispo county. The Santa Maria Valley also contributes Pinot Gris from the Nielson vineyard, and clone 23 Pinot Noir from Solomon Hills for Goat Bubbles.

Flying Goat Cellars focus on producing premium Pinot Noir, handcrafted in small quantities that reflect the unique variations of the individual vineyard. As a result, production is extremely limited. The wine is sold directly from the winery to consumers, specialty wine shops and restaurants.

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