



ANCIENT PEAKS

WINERY

UNMISTAKABLE **SENSE OF PLACE**

Our estate Margarita Vineyard stands alone as the southernmost vineyard in the Paso Robles region, tucked beneath the peaks of the Santa Lucia Mountains just 14 miles from the Pacific Ocean.

Here, the vines unfold along a rare array of soils amid one of the region's coolest growing environments. The resulting wines express an unmistakable sense of place, with vivid structure, varietal authenticity and flavors that are native to Margarita Vineyard.

Ancient Peaks Winery, Margarita Vineyard and the historic Santa Margarita Ranch are owned by three longtime local winegrowing and ranching families. We are proud to steward this land, and honored to share it with you.

ANCIENT PEAKS WINERY

Family Estate Wines Grown at Margarita Vineyard

5 Soil Types ♦ 14 Miles from The Pacific Ocean

Santa Margarita Ranch AVA ♦ Paso Robles Appellation

OWNERSHIP	Filipponi, Rossi and Wittstrom families	
DIRECTOR OF WINEMAKING	Mike Sinor	
WINEMAKER	Stewart Cameron	
CORE WINES	Sauvignon Blanc, Chardonnay, Merlot, Cabernet Sauvignon, Zinfandel and Renegade blend	
RESERVE WINES	Malbec, Petit Verdot, Petite Sirah and Oyster Ridge blend	
LIMITED WINES	Chardonnay, Pinot Noir, Cabernet Franc, Rose, Blanco and others	
DISTRIBUTION	The core wines of Ancient Peaks are distributed in 23 states across the nation.	
REGION	Paso Robles is located halfway between Los Angeles and San Francisco in northern San Luis Obispo County on California's Central Coast. Margarita Vineyard resides just outside the town of Santa Margarita at the top of the Cuesta Grade, approximately 22 miles south of the city of Paso Robles.	
AVA	Margarita Vineyard stands alone as the only vineyard in the Santa Margarita Ranch American Viticultural Area, a sub-AVA of Paso Robles established in 2014.	
TIMELINE	Grapes were first planted at Santa Margarita Ranch in the late 1700s. Commercial winegrowing on the ranch began in 2000 with the planting of Margarita Vineyard. The ranch owners acquired the vineyard lease in 2005 and established Ancient Peaks Winery in 2006.	
TASTING & TOURS	The Ancient Peaks tasting room is open Thursday through Monday from 11 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. at 22720 El Camino Real in Santa Margarita. Tours of nearby Margarita Vineyard are offered every Saturday.	
WINERY	Ancient Peaks Winery is located near Creston in the Paso Robles appellation. The winery is not open to the public.	
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Margarita Vineyard stands alone and apart as the southernmost vineyard in the Paso Robles region. This demarcation was officially recognized in late 2014 with the creation of the Santa Margarita Ranch American Viticultural Area (AVA), a new sub-appellation of the Paso Robles AVA.

Margarita Vineyard now enjoys the rare distinction of being the only vineyard located within its own namesake AVA—a testament to the vineyard’s unique sense of place. In the words of the official AVA petition, the Santa Margarita Ranch viticultural area “is distinctive from that of other areas of the Paso Robles AVA, in terms of topography, geology, geological history, soils, and climate.”

AVA Location

The Santa Margarita Ranch AVA is situated along the foot of the coastal Santa Lucia Mountain Range, roughly 25 miles southeast of the city of Paso Robles and just 14 miles from the Pacific Ocean to the west.

AVA Attributes

- Santa Margarita Ranch is one of the coolest sub-appellations within the Paso Robles AVA. The maritime influence increases to the west towards the Pacific Ocean and below specific topographic gaps in the range, making it “very much a true, cool Region II climate.”
- Santa Margarita Ranch is also marked by an unusual diversity of soils, due largely to an array of active fault lines along the coastal ridge. The churning of the faults has resulted in five distinct soil types that ebb and flow across Margarita Vineyard.
- Of the 11 sub-appellations within the Paso Robles AVA, Santa Margarita Ranch receives among the highest amount of rainfall—29 inches per year on average “as Pacific storms dump their water across the steep, high mountain ridge.”

AVA Qualities

- The AVA’s pronounced soil diversity allows for a range of expressions from a single varietal. The varietal wines of Ancient Peaks are typically blends of multiple estate blocks planted to different soil types, resulting in wines of natural fullness and complexity.
- Santa Margarita Ranch’s persistent marine influence, combined with unusually cold spring temperatures, creates a late and long growing season—enabling the fruit to develop a signature combination of fully developed flavors with fine natural structure.



Our wines exhibit a natural complexity that is a direct reflection of Margarita Vineyard's unusual array of soils.

Indeed, Margarita Vineyard spans five separate soil types that ebb, flow and intermingle throughout the vineyard. This soil diversity is rooted in the abundance of local faults found around Santa Margarita Ranch. Over millions of years, the geologic shearing and uplift along these fault lines has created a rare mix of soils.

The five distinct soil types at Margarita Vineyard are:

- **Ancient Sea Bed**

Uplifted ocean floor with large white oyster fossils spilling out of the soil. These ancient mollusks are high in calcium, fostering the type of calcareous soil that is coveted by winemakers worldwide.

- **Shale**

An abundance of flaky shale from the Monterey formation. This rocky soil profile boasts a low water-bearing capacity and a distinct mineral quality that is unique to the formation.

- **Volcanic**

Volcanic deposits, including basalt mixed with serpentine and ferrous oxide. This mélange typically produces lower yields with excellent flavor concentration.

- **Granitic**

Soils formed by the decomposition of bedrock granite over millions of years. These well-drained, stony soils yield fruit with fine balance.

- **Rocky Alluvium**

An amalgam of eroded stone and organic materials. These typically lean soils force intensive root zone development as the vines are forced to struggle, resulting in small clusters with excellent flavor intensity.

Few vineyards boast such a spectrum of geological diversity. The effects of this diversity on our wines are evident in the cellar, with the same grape variety showing a range of expressions from one lot to the next. This enables the winemaking team to build added varietal complexity into a single wine from one estate vineyard.



Our estate Margarita Vineyard stands alone as the southernmost vineyard in the Paso Robles appellation, and as the only vineyard within the Santa Margarita Ranch AVA. Here, we maximize the natural diversity of our soils to craft wines of depth and dimension.

Sauvignon Blanc

Our Sauvignon Blanc hails from one of the coolest parts of Margarita Vineyard, where the fruit achieves vivid varietal character with crisp acidity and appealing mineral accents.

Chardonnay

After producing limited-edition Chardonnays for several years, we were inspired to include Chardonnay in our core family of wines, starting with the 2015 vintage. Our vision is to strike a fine balance between the leaner and richer styles of the variety.

Zinfandel

For more than 100 years, Zinfandel has been a cornerstone varietal of Paso Robles, making it a natural fit for our small family of wines. Over the past several vintages, ours has emerged as one of the region's most highly acclaimed Zinfandels.

Merlot

We proudly include Merlot in our small family of wines as a varietal that excels at Margarita Vineyard. Here, the well-drained soils and reliable coastal breezes yield a wine that truly captures the essence of Merlot, with silky fruit flavors and a luscious texture.

Cabernet Sauvignon

Our Cabernet Sauvignon benefits from Margarita Vineyard's mix of rocky soils and one of the longest growing seasons in the Paso Robles region. The resulting Cabernet Sauvignon fruit achieves full ripeness while maintaining exceptional balance.

Renegade

Renegade is an unconventional red blend from Margarita Vineyard on the historic Santa Margarita Ranch. From missionaries to gunslingers, roughriders to outlaws, a colorful cast of characters has traversed the ranch's rugged terrain since the 18th century. In that spirit, we have made an intensely flavored blend that pushes the envelope and resists conformity.



Our limited-edition White Label wines represent small lots of the highest quality expressed through unconventional blends and alternative varieties.

Oyster Ridge

The crown jewel of our White Label Collection is the Oyster Ridge red blend. This cuvée honors the dramatic soils and distinctive qualities of the Oyster Ridge block at Margarita Vineyard, which is riddled with large white oyster fossils. Oyster Ridge is crafted to exemplify our finest winemaking efforts.

Malbec

Malbec excels at our estate Margarita Vineyard, where it benefits from one of the coolest growing environments in the Paso Robles region. Our vision is to craft a Malbec that captures the varietal's vibrant fruit character while exhibiting natural depth and complexity.

Petit Verdot

At Margarita Vineyard, the Petit Verdot grape achieves true varietal expression, including intense color, racy flavors and fresh natural acidity. Our aim is to craft a Petit Verdot that is inherently dark, complex and thoughtful in scope.

Petite Sirah

Petite Sirah is the most naturally hedonistic of our wines, but we nevertheless aim to accentuate it with balance and structure. The result is a wine with a big fruit profile and noticeable oak, but with supple tannins and measured intensity.

Ultra Limiteds

In addition to our core White Label wines, we also craft select ultra-limited wines primarily for tasting room visitors and wine club members, including our “Jackpot” reserve selections. Varieties vary by year, but have included Chardonnay, Pinot Noir, Syrah and Cabernet Franc.



Margarita Vineyard was planted in 1999 as a model of sustainability, and we continue to build upon that legacy today. Our practices have earned SIP (Sustainability in Practice) Certification for Margarita Vineyard, the leading standard for viticultural sustainability.

Our sustainable practices generate results in matters of resource conservation and habitat preservation, all while helping us grow fruit of natural quality. Examples include:

Vermicompost

We maintain raised worm beds to produce vermicompost, a nutrient-rich organic fertilizer and soil conditioner. We brew this compost into a liquid form known as compost tea, which is then delivered to our vines via our irrigation system, enabling us to reduce synthetic fertilizer use by 50 percent.

Pulse Emitters

The progressive pulse emitters installed at Margarita Vineyard are more efficient than traditional overhead sprinklers when used for frost protection. These emitters generate a fine mist targeted directly onto the fruiting zone, resulting in a 30 percent reduction in water use compared to overhead sprinklers.

Multifunction Tractors

We acquired two multi-function tractors to serve multiple vine rows at a time with simultaneous mowing, trimming, pre-pruning and other uses. This has enabled us to reduce tractor passes by 80 percent, which in turn cuts diesel fuel consumption and minimizes soil compaction.

Oak Tree Preservation

Margarita Vineyard was planted to conform to the contours of the land, and no oak trees were removed. Today, rotational grazing and other progressive ranching practices have resulted in the restoration of native grasses and a proliferation of young oak trees.

Natural Pest Management

Vineyard pests are managed naturally by promoting habitats for native predators, a program that includes bat boxes, owl boxes and raptor perches. We employ goat herds to provide a low-impact herbicide alternative for vegetation management.

Wildlife Corridors

We maintain dedicated wildlife corridors that enable animals to pass freely through and around the vineyard. Black bears, wild pigs, turkeys, deer and bald eagles are among the many creatures that inhabit our rugged land.



Ancient Peaks Winery, Margarita Vineyard and Santa Margarita Ranch are owned by three longtime local winegrowing and ranching families: the Filipponis, Rossis and Wittstroms.

Mission Era Heritage

Grapes were first planted at Santa Margarita Ranch by Franciscan missionaries in the late 1700s. Here, the friars raised cattle, grew crops and made sacramental wines.

We replanted a small vineyard in the same location as the original Mission vineyard in honor of the ranch's winegrowing heritage. This vineyard lies next to the "Asistencia" building, a sub-mission of Mission San Luis Obispo whose stone-and-mortar walls still stand today.

Planted by Robert Mondavi

The modern viticultural era at Santa Margarita Ranch began with the planting of Margarita Vineyard by the famed Robert Mondavi family starting in 1999. Despite the fact that there were no existing vineyards in the vicinity, the Mondavis saw immense potential in the land, and accurately predicted that its diverse soils and marine-influenced climate would deliver remarkable wines.

As the vines matured, the special qualities of Margarita Vineyard were immediately apparent in the resulting wines. Nevertheless, in 2005, the new owners of Robert Mondavi Winery began to lose interest in operating Margarita Vineyard, enabling the ranch owners—the Filipponi, Rossi and Wittstrom families—to buy the original lease and to take full ownership and control of the vineyard.

Ancient Peaks Begins

The obvious potential of Margarita Vineyard ultimately inspired the three families to become vintners as well as winegrowers. The name Ancient Peaks was chosen to honor the towering Santa Lucia Mountains that border Margarita Vineyard. These peaks are pivotal to the complex geology and marine climate that distinguish the vineyard's terroir.

The winery's production began in earnest with the 2006 vintage. The 2006 wines made an immediate splash upon release, including a rating of 93 points for the 2006 Zinfandel by *The Wine Spectator*. Since then, Ancient Peaks wines have become known for delivering a unique and vivid sense of place. The wines are today distributed in 23 states as well as in Canada.



Ancient Peaks Tasting Room

The Ancient Peaks tasting room resides in the quaint historic town of Santa Margarita. Here, guests may sample all current releases, including the limited-edition White Label reserve wines. The tasting room was renovated and expanded in 2015 to include a new café and a private tasting space called The Cinnamon Room, named in honor of a beloved and departed cow at Santa Margarita Ranch. The tasting room features a wide bar, bistro style seating, lounge seating and an outdoor patio, as well as a display featuring the five soil types found at Margarita Vineyard.

Ancient Peaks Café

The Ancient Peaks Café specializes in local ranch-to-table fare crafted in collaboration with The Range Restaurant. Located at the tasting room in Santa Margarita, the café offers an artful blend of quick nibbles, light bites, fresh salads and fine sandwiches—all available to be paired with our selection of estate-grown wines. Many of our ingredients are sourced from local purveyors, including our own Santa Margarita Ranch. The menu reflects guiding input from chefs Jeff and Cheyne Jackson of The Range, who graciously helped steer the culinary vision.

Margarita Vineyard Tours

Tours are offered on weekend mornings with a reservation (\$40). Guests are personally guided out to our estate Margarita Vineyard for an intimate hands-on look at growing wine from ground to glass. Afterward, guests enjoy a private tasting with a cheese & charcuterie board from the Ancient Peaks Café.



Ancient Peaks Winery is a partnership between three longtime local winegrowing families who were inspired to craft remarkable wines from their jointly owned Margarita Vineyard. Following are the owners and individuals who lead the winery's daily operations:

Karl Wittstrom / Co-Owner

Karl Wittstrom oversees the daily management and operations of Ancient Peaks Winery. Karl is an entrepreneur, winegrower, rancher and longtime Paso Robles area resident who was raised amid his

family's ranching and farming business. Karl is a director of the California Mid State Fair in Paso Robles, and he is a member of the California Cattlemen's Association, California Farm Bureau and a past director of the Paso Robles Wine Country Alliance.

Doug Filipponi / Co-Owner

Doug Filipponi is a longtime local winegrower and Paso Robles native who oversees all vineyard operations for Ancient Peaks Winery. Doug was named "Wine Industry Person of The Year" by his wine industry peers at the 2006 California Mid State Fair in Paso Robles. He is also the president of Filipponi & Thompson Drilling, a past president of the Paso Robles Wine Country Alliance, and a past chairman of the Paso Robles Wine Festival.

Rob Rossi / Co-Owner

Rob Rossi oversees strategic planning and development for Ancient Peaks Winery. Rob is a local entrepreneur and businessman with varied interests throughout the Central Coast. Rob is a newcomer to the wine industry, having introduced Robert Mondavi to Santa Margarita Ranch in 1999. Rob's interests emphasize historic renovations and reuse projects, which have included the Fremont Theater in San Luis Obispo and Granada Theater in Santa Barbara.

Amanda Wittstrom-Higgins / VP of Operations

As the Vice President of Operations for Ancient Peaks Winery, Amanda Wittstrom-Higgins oversees sales and marketing, companywide budgeting, long-range planning, human resources and special projects. She grew up in a ranching and farming family in Paso Robles. Amanda attended Cal Poly University, working in vineyards and tasting rooms while in school. Amanda joined the Ancient Peaks team in 2006 when the company began. Amanda is on the board of directors for the Paso Robles Wine Country Alliance. She is a past board member of San Luis Obispo Wine Country and Visit San Luis Obispo County.

Mike Sinor / Director of Winemaking

Mike Sinor is recognized as one of the Central Coast's highest-rated winemakers. Raised in Visalia, California, Mike attended college at Cal Poly in San Luis Obispo, where he financed his education by working at several local wineries—an experience that ignited his interest in the craft of winemaking. In 1994, he took a harvest job for Robert Mondavi-owned Byron Winery in the Santa Maria Valley, launching a career path that ultimately led him to becoming the winemaker for Domaine Alfred in 2000. He joined Ancient Peaks in 2006. Here, he directs the quality and style of Ancient Peaks wines.

Stewart Cameron / Winemaker

Stewart Cameron oversees our daily winery operations and is involved in all facets of winemaking at Ancient Peaks along with Director of Winemaking Mike Sinor. After studying cellular and molecular biology in college, Stewart moved to San Luis Obispo. He caught the winemaking bug while working in a winery lab in Paso Robles, and he later joined Ancient Peaks in 2006. He worked his way up to the position of assistant winemaker and was promoted to winemaker in 2013, demonstrating an innate talent for winemaking along the way.