

From the Vineyard



SCRIBE WINERY:
Farming...
with the **Wild**

BY: KATHERINE PEACH





PHOTO BY SHELLY AVELLAR



THIS LAND HAS SEEN IT ALL: THE FERVOR OF NINETEENTH CENTURY WINE-MAKERS, THE IRREVERENCE OF PROHIBITION, AND THE INDUSTRIAL FARMING OF THANKSGIVING TURKEYS. THE NEWEST OWNER AND CO-FOUNDER OF SCRIBE WINERY, ANDREW MARIANI EMBRACES THIS COLORFUL 150-YEAR LINEAGE THROUGH A REVIVAL OF THOUGHTFUL AGRARIAN WINE-MAKING THAT HAS ENTHUSIASTS TAKING NOTE.

Opened in 2007 with his brother Adam, Scribe's holistic approach to vinification is both a return to wine as an expression of the earth, and a modern collaboration of creative energies. The goal is to create wine that unabashedly speaks of California.

Twenty-eight-year-old Mariani calls Northern California his home, where his 35-acre vineyard "lies at an intersection between earth and sky" in Sonoma, CA. Scribe winery uses natural remediation to reduce the need to use pesticides and fertilizers. The valley's backdrop of the protected indigenous forest on Arrowhead Mountain and Rogue Ridge are reminders that the vineyard is

managed with the greater ecosystem in mind.

The Scribe Estate is nestled in an historic block that borders the Sonoma and Napa County lines. This block is where Emil and Julius Dresel brought the first Riesling and Sylvaner grapes to California in 1858. Growing site-specific grapes without chemicals allows the "rough, wild, pure version" of the wine to express itself, according to Mariani. Scribe's Pinot Noir, Syrah, Chardonnay and Cabernet are strains that have developed over thousands of years. Volcanic ash and mineral-rich soils allow Pinot Noir and Chardonnay to thrive in this region.

Wine is a direct result of man and land, a fact that is not lost on this winemaker. Scribe aims for



bright, fresh and vivid chardonnays or pinots without overriding what nature has to offer. "The delicate nuances involved are immeasurable - there are millions of ways to do it - but here we like to create space so the vines have room to breathe."

Raised on a walnut orchard, Mariani learned early that agriculture serves an important cultural purpose at the dinner table. He escaped his first job doing international trade research in Washington, D.C. for something "more tangible" at a winery in Greece. There, at the self-sustaining family farm, he encountered a constant flux of intellectuals who influenced him to weave tradition and modern innovation into his own endeavor. Back in California, he found a "nasty old farm" that had neglected soil and was littered with debris. Mariani, however, saw an opportunity to revive the plot to its former pre-prohibition glory days.

Scribe winery is part wild farm and part modern-day homestead. Insectary plants, which attract beneficial insects that eat pests, protect the heirloom orchard and vegetable garden. Guinea fowls, the wild ancestors of today's market poul-

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try, graze on insects before gracing the tables of bay area restaurants. A 100-year old hacienda, once a place for bootleggers to traffic moonshine, is now a tasting room and event space. The

grounds will further evolve with construction of a new winery and tasting room, which protect wine with geothermal cooling and native grasses planted on the roof. Visitors will still gather around a communal table to swap stories and share bottles.

At Scribe, guests frequent intimate dinner parties where seasonal dishes and small-batch vintages are enjoyed by candlelight. Anyone who takes the initiative to wander off the beaten path to find the cellar is welcomed as a friend. And Mariani takes special care of friends. "It's a different way to engage with our land, and expand what a traditional winery can be," he explained.

Mariani wants to change what it means to be a farmer in Northern California. "In this era of technological innovation, there is something primal and rewarding about getting your hands dirty and living in the moment." When asked why, in this age of prepackaged and fast foods, it is important for people to reconnect food to its origins, Mariani hardly missed a beat. "It's why I do what I do," he said. "It's about finding something that's real about being alive."

SCRIBE WINERY
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