



Medlock Ames

The perfect setting

When Christopher Medlock James and Ames Morison first visited Bell Mountain Ranch in 1997, they realized immediately that they had found what they had spent the previous year looking for: a fabulous site on which to create the progressive and ultra-premium Medlock Ames Winery. Consisting of 320 acres, of which only 50 are planted, Bell Mountain Ranch is located in the southernmost part of the Alexander Valley in Sonoma County, California. Small but perfectly farmed, we only make wine from grapes that we grow.

Fine Wine through fine farming

Motivated by a desire to produce wines of astounding quality, Medlock Ames is a sustainable and organic grape grower inspired by biodynamic methodologies. Quite simply, we believe that a more natural approach to farming produces wines of superior quality. This is not something new - but it is an innovative and progressive stance. We like to take these lofty philosophies as far as we can and consider ourselves increasingly 'holistic' in their implementation.

Sustainably farmed

Sustainable agriculture integrates three main goals--environmental health, economic profitability, and social and economic equity. Sustainability rests on the principle that we must meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. Therefore, stewardship of both natural and human resources is of prime importance. By following a code of sustainable farming we are looking to the future and making a powerful long-term commitment.

Organically grown

We do not use any artificial chemical fertilizers, herbicides or pesticides on our land. Instead, we reject the normal 'boom and bust' style of agriculture for a more balanced and naturally farmed vineyard. It may not be the easiest approach to farming premium grapes, but we believe that it gives us better results today and in the future. The rewards, in the form of quality, justify the additional effort that such farming demands.

Biodynamic inspiration

Our land is our greatest asset. Promoting a healthier living soil that nurtures and feeds our vines at the same time as keeping them strong and healthy is something that biodynamics helps us to achieve. Biodynamics is a complex set of guidelines with the overall focus on nurturing our land as a living organism. We are inspired by this farming philosophy and continue to learn more about how it can improve wine quality every year.

Holistic

We want to take a holistic approach to how we manage our vineyard and winery. By taking such a close look at each and every decision we make as a business we aim to ensure that we follow the sustainable practices in more than just farming. The sustainable approach will therefore influence and benefit all of our decisions at Medlock Ames.

Natural Winemaking

Our attention to detail and commitment to 'green' practices continues in the cellar. We employ gravity-flow techniques to reduce energy consumption at the same time as preserving the often delicate characteristics of our grapes. We also frequently choose to use native or 'wild' yeasts to ferment our wines in an effort to promote the uniqueness of our site and the distinctive flavors it exhibits. These yeasts are unique to Medlock Ames.



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A variety of forward thinking practices are exercised at Medlock Ames. They help illustrate our dedication to doing the best we can for the land, for the future and for fine wine.



Solar and energy – an 85 kWh solar array works tirelessly to provide us with clean, renewable and economically attractive electrical power (free). A fine example of long term sustainable visioning that has a lifespan of 25 years but pays for itself in 9. The power it creates takes care of all our needs at the vineyard and winery – including electric cars. We also use biodiesel whenever possible to power our vineyard equipment and can even imagine creating our own fuel from crops grown at the ranch.



Owls and hawks – gophers and other rodents used to be a problem until we enlisted barn owls to patrol the vineyards. These snowy white predators love the nesting boxes that have been installed throughout the property and quickly made their home at Bell Mountain. Hawks are also encouraged to prey on unsuspecting voles and gophers.



Sheep and geese – our flock of sheep eat unwanted vegetation in the vineyard, turning weeds into natural fertilizer. This smart solution allows us to combine several practices with ease. Geese are similarly employed to patrol the grounds, grazing on things like pond algae that would otherwise suffocate our beautiful waterways.



Horse and plough – tractors guzzle fuel and compact the earth, creating long term problems in the vineyard. A more environmentally friendly way of working the ground can come in the form of, quite literally, horsepower. We are working hard to make cultivation using horses an integral part of our way of farming, while at the same time helping to revive a disappearing art.



Wildlife and farm life – Many vineyards use high fences to keep out wildlife such as wild pigs, deer, bobcats and mountain lions. Instead, we dedicate large parts of our estate to corridors that allow these animals to pass through the property without danger to us, them or the vines. By providing an animal thoroughfare to our local conservation area, we can limit the damage or danger to our vines and livestock that might otherwise come from trapped beasts.



Energy Efficient Winery – our custom-built, modern and progressive winery uses the simplest of concepts to handle wine with care. Wine moves throughout its journey using gravity instead of pumps wherever possible. We believe that this helps preserve more subtle and elegant characteristics at the same time as reducing energy consumption. By locating our cellar underground we also manage to maintain a more consistent environment for our aging wines which reduces the need for artificially controlling the temperature. Our commitment to solar power also ensures that the energy we do need is generated in a safe and clean fashion.