

Francis Ford Coppola: One from the Heart

Located 70 miles north of San Francisco, the Alexander Valley region is dotted with many wineries, most of them boutique operations with small and unassuming footprints. In marked contrast is Francis Ford Coppola's latest wine-based venture, the Francis Ford Coppola Winery Estate, situated in the gentle oak-studded Geyserville area.



Bigger Than Life

From its mammoth iron entrance gate to the sweeping canopy of its buildings, it telegraphs the notion that this is no ordinary place. And certainly, for followers of this iconic film director, producer and screenwriter, this is just how it should be – bigger than life, like the fantastic career of the auteur who has given the world such groundbreaking cinema as the Godfather trilogy, Apocalypse Now and Dracula.

Visitors to Coppola's newest property can expect to see memorabilia from his moviemaking career (including a display of his Academy Awards) when they stop by his Winery Estate to purchase wine or dine at Rustic, the property's restaurant. It's a concept that has worked well for him at his Napa-based property, Rubicon Estate. While all of his ventures, his Mammarella's café in Napa, the San Francisco-based Café Zoetrope, the Rubicon Estate Winery and his Belize-based resorts, reflect Coppola's unique sensibility, it is this new venture that may come closest to honoring a deeply-held Coppola value, the importance of family enjoying life together.

"I am a very big believer in keeping the family together", says Coppola, "the children who are playing and learning, the father and mother, those of a prime age who are usually in control of things, the wage-earners, and the elders, who are very much part of the family. In modern life they all get separated. It is my desire to bring them all together to enjoy life together."



Kids Are Welcome

Watching kids eager to play in the inviting waters surrounding his Rubicon Estate Winery's fountains triggered Coppola to dream about the Geyserville concept: "I always watched the children, and they just wanted to jump into the fountain" Coppola remembers." It was hot, and they didn't understand why this fountain was off limits. Why should it be off-limits? When I thought of a place that we could have for a winery, I thought, 'Why can't it be kind of like a resort, except without the hotel rooms, but basically a wine wonderland, or a park, a garden, a pleasure-grounds?' It could be a place where people of all ages could spend time together and celebrate the love of life, enjoy all the best things of life – food, wine, music, dancing, games, swimming, and performances."

This fall 2010 Coppola's vision, guided by longtime friend and Academy Award-winning production designer Dean Tavoularis, should become a reality. That's when the lifeguard-supervised pool and bocce ball courts will be ready for the public. Families will be able to rent cabins, poolside private spaces reminiscent of those found in the south of France, where family members can shower, change and store their clothes. There also will be areas where they can play board games, like chess and backgammon.

The Coppola Effect

Currently Francis Ford Coppola Winery Estate visitors can purchase his wine imprints, such as the Francis Coppola Diamond Label Claret or the Director's Cut series, as well as labels that are not sold anywhere else. Diners at the property's Rustic restaurant have panoramic views of the Sonoma country wine region. Coppola's influence is readily felt on the menu that features such specialties as MRS. SCORSESE'S LEMON CHICKEN (Film director Martin Scorsese's mother) and BRACIOLE WITH RIGATONI IN MEAT RAGÙ, a favorite recipe of Coppola's mother, Italia Pennino Coppola.



The Francis Ford Coppola Winery Estate is a member of the Wine Road, an association of more than 150 wineries and 50 lodgings in the Alexander, Dry Creek, and Russian River Valleys of Northern Sonoma County. During the 12th Annual Wine and Food Affair weekend, November 6th and 7th 2010, Wine Affair guests to the Estate can purchase special wine discounts and enjoy complimentary food and wine tastings. The pool amenities are free to the public throughout 2010 with nominal access fees initiating in 2011.

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