

Wine by Design

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Artesa

Domingo Triay Darder, Naxal Arquitectura, S L

Country: Napa, California, USA
Completion Year: 2007

The Napa Valley is home to roughly 200 wineries including some that are owned by the world's most important winemaking families. Among these is the Spanish Codorniu family, winemakers since the mid-16th century. Landing in Napa in the early 1990s, its lineage would give birth to a romantic winery marrying Mediterranean cave and culture, and set amid a backdrop of still water, bubbling fountains and soft tones of light and shadow.

The history of the Codorniu family is interesting in itself. The earliest historical record is a will, written by Jaume Codorniu in 1551, bequeathing wine cellars, presses, vats and barrels to his heirs. Over 200 years later, Josep Raventos would use the winery to produce the world's first méthode champenoise sparkling-wines outside of Champagne, a move that would revolutionise Spain's wine industry. In keeping with this lineage, Codorniu Napa opened in 1991 and was devoted entirely to méthode champenoise sparkling wine production. With yet another name change, to Artesa in 1999, the winery would release its first still wines to critical acclaim: two Chardonnays, three Pinot Noirs, and a Sauvignon Blanc. Under the direction of winemaker Dan Van Staaveren, Artesa is today dedicated to handcrafting small lots of ultra-premium still wines including Merlot, late-harvest Gewürztraminer and Tempranillo.

Art and architecture have long been a part of Artesa's heritage, the winery could easily be mistaken for an art museum. Pronounced art-tesa-uh, the name literally means 'craftsmen' and implies 'handcrafted' in Catalan, the language of Barcelona. In the late 19th century, Codorniu sponsored a poster competition for the foremost Spanish artists of the era and art continues to play an important part in the Artesa experience; artist-in-residence Gordon Huether has been exhibiting glass and canvas installations since the early 1980s. Set atop the winery like a sentinel keeping watch over the approaching city of San Francisco, an abstract form by Marcel Math resembles a pagan deity, while a peaceful neo-Modernist Virgin by Jiu sits in wait within the still waters of the inner patio.

It is important to keep in mind that wine does not seem to hold the same cultural tradition and provenance in North America as it does in Europe, rather, its popularity is advanced largely by the evolution of wine tourism. With more than 100,000 visitors expected per year, this was a perfect venue for Triay to create a cultural benchmark for North American wineries. As a progeny of its Spanish lineage, Artesa is rich in strongly emotive events that intentionally celebrate Mediterranean culture and life style. Outdoor



Artesa, Artesa.
An icon of long tradition in vintage heritage, the name had long been pronounced in Catalan, the language of Barcelona. Just atop the winery lies a winery known to watch over the approaching city of San Francisco, an abstract form by Marcel Math resembles a pagan deity, while a peaceful neo-Modernist Virgin by Jiu sits in wait within the still waters of the inner patio.

Artesa, Artesa.
The winery's neo-Modernist Virgin by Jiu sits in wait within the still waters of the inner patio. At right, developing on the form of the winery's circular culture, artists Gordon Huether and Marcel Math create a sculpture that is an icon of long tradition in vintage heritage, and an emblem of the winery's neo-Modernist style.



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The winery's central tower opens 100ft (30m) high. Kyle Mc Donnell creates views of the hills with wine, but also showcases wine to some of the nation's top food writers and critics. Winery tours are available free of charge daily from 10am. 2pm. Reservations a must. Call 707 244 1985 for more information.

Artesa is a fully-appealing, practical, but also produces four main vintage wines - Chardonnay, Pinot Noir, Merlot and Cabernet Sauvignon - and a variety of Gewürztraminer, plus some special, smaller lots. 2002 Pinot Blanc, Gewürztraminer, Red Blend, a so-called 'experimental' wine including Archaic, Tempranillo and Syrah, a Cabernet and Merlot blend.

Tasting for 1000 (from 20 to 100 bottles for 8 and tasting options are available for a minimum of 10 people. Don Van Staaveren, winemaker, Dan D'Amico, viticulturist operations & food service relations.

Art and architecture are the soul of Artesa's heritage, winery artist Gordon Huether has been exhibiting his work since 1982. Curators Center and Gordon Huether feature a history of wine and winemaking and how it centers on the spirit of the winery. Sparkling wine, a wine press and more for the tour. Artesa also has a wine cellar and a gift shop. Call 707 244 1985 for more information.

Spain: Artesa

A series of terraces built through landscaped slopes in the valley entrance to create the entrance to the winery in a rugged setting in the traditional Spanish style. The stone walls and terraces feature the traditional Spanish style of using rubble masonry and a central archway that leads to the winery that leads

Spain: Artesa

In contrast to the classic approach, the building uses a modern, minimalist and open facade that features full-height, stone terraces and a central archway that leads to the winery that leads to the winery and San Francisco on the horizon.



courtyards, water flowing along narrow channels, and the dance of light and shade through grilles are all inspired by the Plaza del Sol and the Plaza de los Reyes in the heart of the city. The building is a far cry from the blue French chateaux and elaborate villas typical of the region.

With the skyscrapers of San Francisco visible on the horizon, the winery is not so much underground as it is undetectable against the surrounding mountains. It's a clever but simple trick: by fitting its walls the terrain is free to continue its rising course up and over the building, and as the landscape changes hues with the seasons, so too does the winery. Yet for all its discreet subtlety and the fact that it never really dominates the landscape, there is a real sense of grandeur about. A formal pathway leads through manicured lawns to the winery entrance. The multi-level staircase is bordered by cascading waterfalls, and at its feet is a circular fountain with six formal statues by Gordon Huetter. The stair ascends atop the building terrace where the panoramic vistas of the valley are reflected on the surface of a still-water pond. Sunset tastings on the outdoor terrace are a delightful reprieve, but be wary of the impulsive Carneros wind, known to steal the glass from your table.

By contrast, the visitors' center offers a peaceful atmosphere and is where Tilly's vision reaches its full effect. The central courtyard – a typical Spanish device – is lined with a forest of polished concrete columns and is the main gathering spot. Here, light and wind penetrate the red terraces to dance above the braided statue of the Madonna, while at night spot lighting shifts the focus to the art on the adjacent walls. Nearby, the sound of water echoes as it trickles gently from a large stone column. At any time of day, this is a perfect spot to refresh both the palate and the spirit. The tasting room has a more modern, minimalist feel with hardwood floors, rich woods, stone furnishings and a prism-cut swath of corner glass that frames San Francisco on the horizon. Also worth visiting is the Cooper Museum, which features a history of Spanish wine and winemaking, and stacks of century-old equipment for disgorging sparkling wine, and a wine press and huge oak cask dating from the mid-19th century.



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