

Best Cabernet Sauvignon

Jordan Vineyard and Winery

By Virginia Boone

Tom Jordan founded Jordan Vineyard and Winery in Alexander Valley in the early 1970s, inspired by the great chateaux of France, and the Cabernet Sauvignons of Bordeaux—elegant, approachable, the perfect companion at the dinner table. Son John Jordan, CEO of his family's winery since 2005, is committed to honoring the original vision of his parents while continuing to elevate quality. This consistent vision is the reason Jordan Cabernet is so loved by so many.

"We've always made our wine in a traditional, Bordeaux-inspired, food-friendly fashion," the younger Jordan says. "We've resisted the trend over the years toward bigger, more extracted wines. My parents fell in love with food first and felt wine should be a supporting factor, not be a food item itself."

The 2006 Cabernet Sauvignon is a testament to this philosophy. Its estate- and grower-sourced grapes spent 12 to 21 days in-tank with malolactic fermentation occurring before the top lots were picked for a final blend—Jordan sells off juice that doesn't make its grade in the final tasting before

the barrel blend is made. The wine was then aged 12 months in French and American oak barrels, only one-third of which were new. Cabernet Sauvignon dominates, but there are smatterings of Merlot (20 percent), Petit Verdot and Malbec. The alcohol level is steady and refreshing at 13.5 percent.

Winemaker Rob Davis, who's been at Jordan for 33 years (since the 1976 inaugural vintage), is happy with the results, describing 2006 as "a classic vintage" with concentrated flavors and aromas of blackberry, blueberry and cassis. The soft, round tannins are also characteristic of the finest from Jordan, with plenty of enviable acidity and bright fruit, which lets the wine be a crowd pleaser upon release but also be able to age.

When Davis first met the Jordans, he worked alongside consulting enologist André Tchelistcheff, a legend in the wine world and Davis' longtime mentor. It was another of Davis' mentors, wine professor Jacques Poussais, who further led Davis' thinking on what it takes to make an exceptional wine. "Great wines are due to four things," Davis says of what he'd been taught. "The correct pairing of cultivar [varietal], climate and soil, and the proper husbandry of those three aspects."



Jordan Vineyard and Winery in Alexander Valley

Davis feels that, with John Jordan's support, all four elements have been stepped up a notch over the last several years. That includes extending the release date of Jordan Cabernet Sauvignon, letting the wine age five more months in the barrel (for a total of 12) before bottle aging for 24 months. It's another testament to the winery's commitment to quality improvement.

"The demand for Jordan wines exceeds our annual production, but we have no plans to grow," Jordan says. "I don't answer to Wall Street. Being a family business, I think about what's in the best interest of this brand and always take a long-term view on our business." That consistency continues to go a long way with consumers.

"Jordan has been insulated from the recession," Jordan continues. "People are still going to spend \$100 on a bottle of Cabernet when they go out, but they're risk-averse—they're only going to spend that on something they know and trust. We have credibility with consumers all over the country."



CEO John Jordan

www.jordanwinery.com