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LAND,
LEGACY,
AND

LUXURY

TWENTY-FIVE YEARS AFTER ITS FIRST HARVEST, **FOLEY FAMILY WINES** TAKES THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN WINE, LIFESTYLE, AND HOSPITALITY TO A NEW LEVEL

Foley Family Wines
vice president of winemaking
Sarah Quider, Silverado
Vineyards winemaker Alison
Rodriguez, and second-
generation vintner
Courtney Foley.

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{ new releases }



Egging on *the* Chardonnay

JORDAN VINEYARD & WINERY WINEMAKER
MAGGIE KRUSE LAUNCHES A NEW “SUPER BLEND”

In

story by Jonathan Cristaldi
photos by Alexander Rubin

2005, as second-generation vintner John Jordan walked toward his family's winery, his steps brisk along the cobblestone path lined with manicured hedges, he might have stopped for the briefest of moments to inhale the richly scented Alexander Valley air—an ether of pine, live oak, lush green grass, and earth—and take in the grandeur of the estate's mustard-colored stucco walls covered in a blanket of thick ivy. After all, it was a crowning moment: He had just taken over day-to-day operations at the winery from his parents, Tom

and Sally, who founded it in 1972. Walking through the glass-paneled doors that lead to the winery's reception area, he knew he already had a plan for years to come.

Those closest to John describe him as a visionary. One of the first things he did as the estate's new owner was to ask longtime winemaker Rob Davis what could be done to produce an even better Jordan Cabernet. Davis' answer had been simple: focus on improving fruit concentration by working with more growers and move away from American oak in



Maggie Kruse is winemaker at Jordan Vineyard & Winery.



favor of the judicious use of only the best French oak available.

With grapes from the harvest of 2005, Davis went on to produce a new Jordan Cabernet—a trial “super blend,” in the team’s unofficial parlance, sourced from the best blocks both on the estate and in grower vineyards and aged in Colbert barrels from La Tonnellerie Nadalié. It was never released to the public: “We kept some large-format bottles and blended the rest back into the 2006 vintage,” says Maggie Kruse, who, after 13 years at Jor-

dan, inherited the role of winemaker from Davis upon his retirement in 2019. “[But] it set the course for how we put together our red blend today.” By the 2015 vintage, the Cabernet was aged entirely in (40–50% new) French barrels from Saury and Nadalié.

If Kruse was at all anxious on the day that she arrived at the winery bearing her new title, she never showed it. In the past three years, she has demonstrated that she has the tenacity to maintain Jordan’s legacy as a pillar of the Alexander

Valley and to build upon its reputation. So when John Jordan asked her if there was anything they could do to improve their Chardonnay—just as he had asked Davis about their Cabernet—Kruse, like her mentor, knew the answer and got right to work.

Historically, the grapes for Jordan Chardonnay have come from growers in warmer areas of the Russian River Valley, but “I started to look at cooler areas, around the Sebastopol Hills and Vine Hill Road,” says Kruse, “[for] vineyards that



The Jordan cellar houses eight concrete eggs.

would give us grapes full of pretty, bright acids and delicate fruit flavors." Seeing that she would gradually be changing the profile of Jordan Chardonnay for the better, John asked her what else she could do to highlight the quality of their future Chardonnay program.

One word: concrete, which Kruse knew could usher in an era of Chardonnay that was seamless, bright, and mineral-driven, with marvelous tension. In an egg-shaped vessel, the fermentation process sets into motion a kind of churning activity. As the wine circulates, microscopic holes in the concrete permit a tiny amount of oxygenation, which lends a slightly weightier texture to the wine. At the same time, concrete as compared to oak enhances mineral character along with vibrant acidity and pure fruit flavors.

In 2021, Kruse tested out her first egg. Sure enough, she says, "It emphasized the acidity and minerality and didn't take anything away from the fruit." I can report that the result was distinctly

"We are constantly tweaking and trying to improve our wines, and I'm excited about the eggs."

**—Maggie Kruse, winemaker,
Jordan Vineyard & Winery**

Jordan-esque, featuring the winery's signature stone-fruit complexities and ample fruit weight, but it also possessed a creamy texture derived from its activity in the egg as well as electric, zippy acidity and great mineral tension.

It was also a hit with John Jordan, who approved the purchase of eight eggs—all produced by Sonoma Cast Stone, which built a glycol cooling system into

the concrete so that the coils do not come in contact with the fermenting and aging wine. Each egg holds 476 gallons (the equivalent of about eight 60-gallon barrels).

The additional eggs arrived in time for the 2022 crush. As of this vintage, then, Jordan will produce some Chardonnay in concrete eggs, some in stainless-steel tanks, and some in French oak barrels. After aging for six months, the wine will be blended, bottled in June or July 2023, and held until its release in May 2024.

"We are constantly tweaking and trying to improve our wines, and I'm excited about the eggs," says Kruse. That said, she is committed above all else to producing the best wine possible—so she's monitoring the egg-aged wine closely to determine whether she may continue to need the same number of oak barrels.

Meanwhile, Jordan's Chardonnay is still produced entirely from grower-purchased fruit. I asked Kruse if Jordan was on the hunt for a Chardonnay vineyard of its own. She said not to rule it out. **81**