

About Us

Norman

Vineyards was started in 1971 when Art and Lei Norman were looking for a place to realize their dream of growing grapes and making wine. Art recalled what drove him to found Norman – his memories of his father and grandfather making wine in the home when he was a child. Art, an engineer by training and practice, was working in Aerospace in Southern California when his memories of childhood got the best of him, and their search for the proper site began. They spent weekends searching out a site in the cooler, coastal climates of California before settling on their Adelaida site in the Westside appellation of Paso Robles.

Shortly after purchasing the winery's 40 acres, planning for the vineyards commenced. The shallow top soils on the site are underlined by calcareous limestone, providing an environment where grape vines struggle, yet the high water-holding capacity of the soils provides limited moisture to the vines through the long, dry summers. The Normans also chose a very cool site by California viticulture standards, meaning that their grapes would mature more slowly. Chardonnay was chosen for a piece of the vineyard that was perfect for a variety which thrives in such cool climates. However, the majority of the vineyard was reserved for reds – a daring choice that has paid off well. Our Estate Zinfandel, Merlot, Cabernet Sauvignon and Barbera tend to have harvest dates beginning in late October, sometimes stretching into December. As a result, our wines are made from grapes that have an extraordinarily long growing season and time to develop very full flavor profiles. In 2000, due to our success with reds and the availability of very high quality Chardonnay from Edna Valley, our Chardonnay was grafted over to Cabernet Sauvignon and Cabernet Franc to give us more options for our wine blends.

During the 70's and 80's Art and Lei devoted their efforts to their vineyards. They fine-tuned their viticultural skills and continually researched new ways to attain the best quality grapes they could grow. Art and Lei have worked with several wineries over the years supplying what became highly sought after grapes. After twenty years of grape growing, and with the encouragement of various local wineries, they decided to start their own winery. At the time, Paso Robles was a relatively new player in the wine industry; a virtually unknown place on the map, just starting to become the major player that it is today. And so the winery was founded with the help of Robert Nadeau and the first wine was produced from the 1992 vintage.

The Normans had envisioned a small "family run" winery, producing perhaps a few thousand cases of wine per year, and for a couple of years their vision was realized.

However, early on Norman wines received a warm welcome from our loyal customers and the wine press. With demand soaring, the Normans felt obliged to meet it, and production grew every year. By the mid-nineties they were using all of our own fruit, and began sourcing fruit from growers in the region who were selected for their excellent vineyard practices and fruit quality. Today the wines come from our home vineyards plus other growers throughout the Westside of Paso Robles. We also purchase fruit from the Cucamonga Valley and Edna Valley to round out the portfolio.

In 1992 our production consisted of Cabernet Sauvignon, No Nonsense Red, Zinfandel, Barbera and Chardonnay. As the production has grown, several Zinfandel lines have been added and, in 2002, created a new reserve line of wines along with a Syrah program.

There is much in store at Norman as we continue to write our history; we hope it will only become more exciting. We will continue to make limited amounts of varietal wines such as Petite Syrah, Sangiovese, Rhône style rosés, Merlot, Cabernet Franc and vineyard-designated wines as our curiosity and quality warrant.

If you've been following our progress, we hope that you've enjoyed the journey so far and if you're new to our winery, we hope you too will continue to watch us evolve as a producer of world-class wines.

Cheers from the staff at Norman Vineyards.