



Renteria

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### Kirk Venge, Winemaker

As the primary winemaker at Venge Vineyards, Kirk Venge's solid foundation and passion for winemaking began at a very young age. He grew up in Rutherford, in the heart of the Napa Valley surrounded by some of the best wines and appellations in the world. His childhood memories are steeped in vineyard farming, winemaking and the fragrance of a wine cellar. Some of Kirk's earliest memories of the winery were when he was four years old helping his father Nils with basket-pressing Cabernet from the family's Saddleback Vineyard and manning the pump switch on late night barrel racking projects. A game the two of them would play was for Kirk to smell and guess the varietal of wine in a glass when Nils would pal around amongst his peers.

After graduating from St. Helena High School, Kirk ventured off to University of California, Davis to pursue a degree in viticulture and oenology, the study of vineyard management and winemaking. While at Davis, he developed his craft interning with Mumm Napa Valley as experimental winemaker for 5 harvest seasons under the guidance of legendary sparkling winemaker, Gregory Fowler. The experience not only included yeast, malolactic and scion and rootstock trials but the making of premium Carneros Appellation Chardonnay and Pinot Noir table wines as well.

After college and his fourth season at Mumm, Kirk spent the 1999 harvest working with Rapaura Vintners in Marlborough, New Zealand on the South Island. He went back to work for one last harvest at Mumm. That November of the same year he left Mumm and decided to work alongside his father in developing a winery for the Venge Family Reserve wines. Two years later, Kirk shared his winemaking hat with a hard hat to supervise the entire restoration and building of Venge Vineyards at the historic Rossini Ranch property. Nine years later in May of 2008, the Venge family sold the winery and property which allowed Kirk to take the label and branch out on his own. Today he is pursuing the development of a winery situated on 12.5 acres of Cabernet Sauvignon at the base of the Palisade Mountains in Calistoga.

Kirk's talent and skill as a winemaker is reflected in the well-balanced wines of Venge Vineyards. His philosophy of "making wine in the vineyard" is found in every bottle. *"Understanding the terroir of a specific vineyard and the hidden potential of that site is imperative to the quality of wine that can be made."* He strives to share ideas with the winery's growers and work with them to attentively develop the highest quality of fruit that each vineyard can produce. Kirk knows there is no substitute to absolute quality and that the best wines can only come from the best grapes. In addition to his duties as the winemaker for Venge Vineyards, Kirk is the consulting winemaker for: Beau Vigne, Hunnicutt, Macauley Vineyard, Bacio Divino, JAX, B Cellars, Trespass, 11:11 Wines, Entrepreneur Wines and Renteria Wines.

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