

SPECTACULAR WINERIES

of Napa Valley

Foreword by MARGRIT MONDAVI

A CAPTIVATING TOUR OF ESTABLISHED, ESTATE AND BOUTIQUE WINERIES

Tudal Family Winery

St. Helena



Tudal Family Winery lies on the northern edge of St. Helena, along the Napa River within the shadow of the eastern mountains. The rustic allure of the property immediately radiates a warm, inviting ambiance. Visitors of any age can find something to explore, whether it is the array of Napa Valley wines, the enticing flower and vegetable gardens or the collection of historic farm tractors, tools and bygone novelties that make up a fascinating agricultural retrospective. “It’s all real,” said owner John Tudal, the son of winery founders Arnold and Alma Tudal. The agricultural artifacts gracing the grounds preserve memories of the Tudals’ 75-year background as vegetable farmers in Alameda. A wall of photos in the winery lab where Arnold held court lovingly portrays the many winery visitors and friends (including Joltin’ Joe DiMaggio) he charmed over the years.

Founded on ten acres of land, with advice from Louis P. Martini to plant Cabernet Sauvignon, Tudal Winery was born in 1974. The first vines Arnold planted by hand were in the rocky soil of the ancient riverbed. Now more than 30 years old, these gnarled vines are called the “Old Block.” Later, the River Vineyard was planted in the gravelly soil that lies between the winery and the Napa River. In 1978, after years of producing home wine for family and friends, there were enough grapes to make commercial wine on a small scale. “We never intended to go into the wine business,” said John, who took over the estate when his parents retired in 2001.

Top Left: Alma Tudal and her son, John, are carrying on the work begun by Arnold Tudal in 1974.

Bottom Left: Tudal is best known for its Bordeaux-style Estate Cabernet Sauvignon and innovative red blends.

Facing Page: Once sold at local produce markets, today the farmed Tudal organic vegetables are served to winery family and guests while the flowers add beauty to the winery house.





Raised on his family's winery property in Oregon, Ron Vuylsteke has been making wine at Tudal for 10 years. Ron learned the Tudal style from Arnold and is carrying on the tradition after his death in 2006. The Tudal Estate Cabernet Sauvignon is made from the home vineyard where grapes grown on three different soil types create a Bordeaux-style wine with notes of violets, blackberries, blueberries and currants.

With the tree-lined Napa River in the background, the eye-catching flower and vegetable gardens are all organically farmed. Lush and overflowing from their raised planters, roses bloom and trumpet vines climb numerous trellises as well as creep over the blue tractor that rests permanently in the flower-filled earth. It is one of the family's old metal plow-horses, saved from rusting in the river. "It was down by the river under the trees," said John. "I got another tractor and pulled it up into the garden."

Parked here and there, are other vintage tractors symbolizing both the family's hard work and the playfulness so evident in the atmosphere at Tudal. The faded red Massey-Harris tractor was bought by John's grandfather, George "Baci" Cerruti, in 1947 and used on the family farms until 1972. "I'm a third generation vegetable farmer," he said. "I was driving tractors on the family farm when I was 10, and then at 16, commercially licensed to drive produce to the San Francisco and Oakland markets." Initially, John parked the tractor as a conversation piece for visitors—at first, to his dad's chagrin. "Then I had an idea," he said, "Tractor. Tractor Red. Tractor Shed Red! I'm going to make Tractor Shed Red! My dad and I laughed together, and now we have a great wine with a distinctive label."

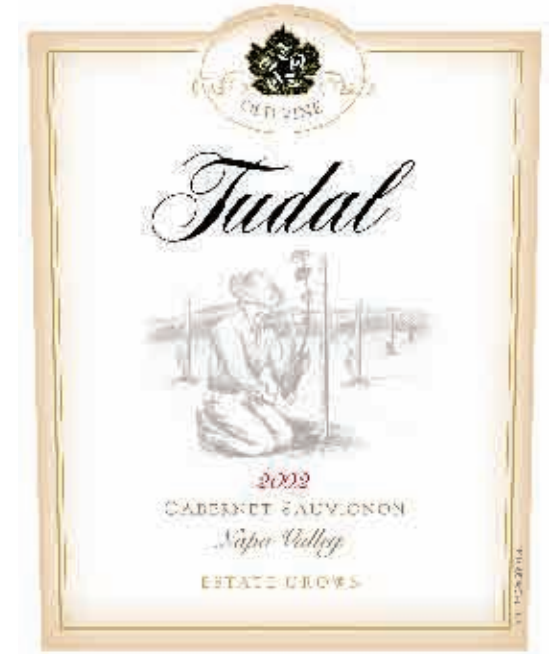
Above: A red Massey-Harris tractor that belonged to John Tudal's grandfather inspired the wine called Tractor Shed Red.

Facing Page: The gray tractor is one of Tudal's old metal plow-horses; now it's a fixture on the grounds.



The tractors and the antique basket press are just a few of the wonderful old-time items that enhance the property, each a center of many stories shared with visitors who are searching for history, connection and down-home friendliness, as well as hand-crafted, limited-production Napa Valley wines sold at reasonable prices. “The legacy of my dad, Arnold Tudal, and the crew here at the winery, continues to bring

people from across the country looking for the essence of what the Napa Valley wine experience used to be,” said John. “We have never changed our feel in all these years. Our hearts are here.”



Top Left: The backbone of Tudal Winery it's people: Ron Vuylsteke, Alma, John, Cherly Stotler and Pablo Ortega.

Bottom Left: Many visitors return to Tudal once they discover the old potting shed serves as the perfect spot for a picnic or barbeque.

Facing Page: In the rocky soil of the ancient riverbed, the Tudals have grown Cabernet grapes for more than 30 years.

