

A photograph of a Weimeraner dog named Hiro running through a vineyard. The dog is in the center, facing the camera with its mouth open and ears flapping. The vineyard rows are visible on either side, and the background shows a clear sky and distant hills.

# Dogs & Wine

## The perfect pairing

Weimeraner Hiro romps through the See Ya Later Ranch Vineyard.

Dogs and wine might be the perfect pairing. Just ask these vintners whose dog-inspired wineries have, quite literally, gone to the dogs. They're drawing rave reviews, not only for their award-winning sippers and dogs-welcome wine tours, but for their charitable endeavours, as well—many are committed to not only the perfection of their craft but to giving back to dog-related organizations in a way that is making a real difference.

We'll drink to that.

## See Ya Later Ranch Okanagan Falls, BC

Located in British Columbia's Okanagan Falls, in the heart of the Okanagan Valley region known as wine country, See Ya Later Ranch sits at the highest elevation of any vineyard in the area. Founded by Major Hugh Fraser in 1919, the ranch was named after the three-word parting note left by his wife when her London upbringing disagreed with their rural lifestyle. Despite his wife's departure, Major Fraser, a dog-loving eccentric, was not alone, having many canines to keep him company. He ran the ranch for over forty years, and upon his death was buried at his behest in the dog cemetery he had created for his loyal companions.

In homage to the Major and his love of dogs, a pup with angel wings graces the label of every bottle of See Ya Later Ranch. See Ya Later is now home to three dogs: Hiro, Goku, and Pinot, who can be seen wandering the vineyards, greeting visitors, and playing with empty wine boxes.

Today the ranch produces three award-winning reds, two of which are named after the Major's dogs, as is their rosé, "Nelly." Also in the offering are acclaimed whites ranging from riesling to chardonnay and a delightful sparkling brut.

50 cents from every bottle sold is donated to the BC SPCA and the vineyard participates in the annual local Dog Days of Summer charity pet fashion show. The ranch welcomes dogs at its events as well as tastings and tours, offering watering-stations for canine



Above: The DogRidge team.

## **Frenchie Winery**

Napa, CA

Jean-Charlet Boisset opened Napa Valley's first dog-helmed winery located at Raymond Vineyards in May 2012 with the belief that no four-legged pal should be left to languish in the car while her people sipped good wine.

When Boisset entered the fast-paced wine business and traveling became a frequent part of his job, he got Frenchie, a French Bulldog, to keep his wife company while he was on the road. Who was to foresee that Frenchie would become such a beloved part of the family that he would inspire Boisset to start a winery named for him? With Frenchie as the figurehead of the winery, visitors are encouraged to bring their dogs along. Innovative and extremely dog friendly, the winery provides outdoor dog suites where guests' canines can relax or nod off in their own wine-barrel beds. When the tour heads indoors, guests can watch their companion's outdoor experience by means of the "Frenchie Cam," a camera set up to monitor dogs visiting the winery.

Among Frenchie's current releases are a 2009 Napoleon Red Wine blend and a 2008 Louis XIV Cabernet Sauvignon, each \$30. Labels feature artist Carol Lew's depictions of Frenchie as different historical figures. For every bottle of wine sold, Frenchie Winery donates one dollar to the ASPCA.

In addition to its regular Monday-through-Sunday tastings and tours, Frenchie Winery also hosts dog-friendly events, such as their first annual "Bark-B-Que," which took place this past July and included food, music, wine, and an on-site mobile pet groomer. Sounds like a good time to us.—SI

The winery and vineyard is home to two Curly Coated Retrievers, Nelly and Goose, a mother-daughter team, as well as the occasional kangaroo and rabbit. During vintage season, which runs February to April in South Australia, Nelly and Goose like to nip at the ripe grapes, letting winemaker Fred Howard know it's time to start the harvest.

At wine tastings, available by appointment, Nelly and Goose make an unofficial welcoming party, greeting visitors with wagging tails.

Tours of the property are offered for those who wish to stretch their legs and take in the view, and while canine tourists are uncommon at the vineyard, they're free to join the tour and (paws crossed) even chase a rabbit or 'roo or two, should one happen by. At the end of a tour or tasting, a stop at the on-premises art gallery featuring works by resident vitner/artist Jen Wright is a must.—LE