CURTIS
WINERY

CURTIS QUICK FACTS

INTRODUCTION

Under the guidance of Winemaker Chuck Carlson, Curtis Winery is exclusively committed to the crafting of Rhône-style wines. Curtis Winery is inspired by the extraordinary terrain of Santa Barbara County's Santa Ynez Valley, which is today recognized as one of the world's leading appellations for Rhône varietals. Since 1995, Curtis Winery has built a reputation for dynamic Rhône-style wines that offer an authentic expression of vineyard and vintage.

VINEYARDS

Curtis wines hail primarily from small standout vineyards in the heart of the Santa Ynez Valley. These vineyards are the estate Rock Hollow Vineyard, as well as Crossroads, Ambassador's and Vogelzang vineyards, all of which serve as the foundation of the winery's vineyard-designated Syrah program. Small blocks of Grenache, Mourvèdre and Roussanne are also integral to the Curtis experience.

WINEMAKER

Chuck Carlson has been making Rhône-style wines locally for more than 20 years. His winemaking style requires physiological ripeness in the vineyard, followed by minimal handling in the cellar, to ultimately achieve authentic vineyard and vintage expression. Chuck is passionate about all things "Rhône," and he was recently president of The Rhône Rangers association. Frequently seen in colorful shirts that express his tropical affinities, Chuck has earned the nickname "Calypso" from his friends and colleagues.

OWNER

Curtis Winery is owned by the Firestone family, whose winemaking heritage spans three generations in the Santa Ynez Valley.

WINES

Vineyard Series Syrah
Rock Hollow Vineyard, Crossroads Vineyard, Ambassador's Vineyard and Vogelzang Vineyard

Santa Ynez Valley
Viognier, Roussanne, Mourvèdre and The Crossroad (Grenache-Syrah blend)

Heritage Series
Heritage Cuvée, Heritage Blanc and Heritage Rosé

TASTING

Tasting room open daily from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. (11 a.m. to 6 p.m. in summer)
5249 Foxen Canyon Road
Los Olivos CA 93441
(805) 686-8999
www.CurtisWinery.com

MEDIA

Please direct media-related inquires to:
Christopher Weir
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(805) 239-0020

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CURTIS WINES

Curtis Winery's exclusive focus on Rhône-style wines is expressed in the following three tiers:

Vineyard Series Syrah

Winemaker Chuck Carlson is passionate about Syrah and its ability to express the uniqueness and character of individual vineyards. He selects fruit from the finest blocks of our estate Rock Hollow Vineyard, as well as nearby Crossroads, Ambassador's and Vogelzang vineyards. The resulting wines capture the versatility and excellence of the Santa Ynez Valley as a premier appellation for world-class Syrahs.

Syrah Rock Hollow Vineyard
Syrah Crossroads Vineyard
Syrah Ambassador's Vineyard
Syrah Vogelzang Vineyard

Curtis Estate and Santa Barbara County

Advancing our exclusive focus on Rhône varietals, Winemaker Chuck Carlson crafts Viognier, Roussanne, Grenache and Mourvèdre from select local vineyards. Each of these wines reflects an emphasis on vineyard and vintage expression achieved through a commitment to traditional small-lot winemaking methods.

Viognier
Roussanne
The Crossroad (Grenache-Syrah blend)
Mourvedre

Curtis Heritage Series

Inspired by the pleasurable table wines of the southern Rhône Valley, our Heritage Series offers unique, flavorful cuvées for everyday enjoyment. These wines hail from small vineyards along California's Central Coast, where Rhône varietals excel amid the coastal Mediterranean climate. Our Heritage Series wines are widely acclaimed for offering exceptional value and quality.

Heritage Cuvée
Heritage Blanc
Heritage Rosé

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WINERY AND WINEMAKING

For Winemaker Chuck Carlson, attentiveness is the rule in the cellar as well as the vineyard. The pursuit of maximum quality begins on the vine, but is also nurtured at every step of the winemaking process with superior equipment and hands-on winemaking. The unifying goal is to craft wines that are fully expressive, with ample extraction and intensity, while avoiding harsh or excessive influences from grape skins, seeds or oak. Following is a sampling of winery attributes that shape the Curtis winemaking program.

Basket Press for Small Lots
Carlson presses his smaller red lots in a traditional wooden basket press from Italy. This manually controlled CEP brand electric-hydraulic press ensures broad, gentle and balanced extraction. It also avoids the bitter seed or skin tannins that can be extracted from the multiple rotations and pressure cycles done in a traditional tank press. While labor intensive, the basket press imparts an extra measure of quality to the Curtis winemaking program.

Custom Open-Top Fermenters
Carlson personally designed the fermenter-tank hybrids that are integral to his winemaking program. The hybrids, which were constructed by Santa Rosa Stainless Steel, consist of an open-top fermenter which sits atop a closed-top tank, maximizing winemaking versatility and quality within the confines of the small Curtis facility. Carlson prefers open-top fermentation on small lots of Syrah, Grenache and Mourvedre, as the added aeration enhances the resulting wine's mouthfeel and overall elegance. During fermentation, the free-run juice is fully racked via gravity to the lower tank, then gently pumped back over the cap. This *délestage* method provides a thorough yet gentle extraction of flavor, color and tannin.

French Oak Cooperage
Curtis wines are aged almost exclusively in French oak barrels. The program centers around barrels coopered by François Frères, which offer a subtle palate richness with a smooth toast component. Depending on the unique needs and vision for each wine, Carlson complements the aging regimen with barrels from Tonnellerie Remond (creamy caramel and butterscotch), Damy (restrained with seamless texture and mouthfeel), Dargaud & Jaegle (similar to François Frères). Additionally, a Vicard 40-hectaliter oak upright tank was recently added to the Curtis cellar. This tank is employed to mature wines that benefit from less oak contact yet still benefit from the aging process in wood, where subtle interactions of the wine and oxygen enhance the wine's overall flavor and texture.

Specialized Crush Equipment
During harvest, Carlson employs a Delta brand destemmer to separate the grapes from the stems without the added crushing action of rollers. The white must is sent directly to the winery's state-of-the-art Europress slotted tankpress. The red must is sent to the cellar for fermentation prior to pressing in the aforementioned basket press (small lots) or Europress (larger lots).

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WINEMAKER CHUCK CARLSON

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After graduating from California State University at Fresno, where he majored in Agricultural Science and specialized in Enology and Viticulture, Chuck ventured to Santa Barbara County in 1981 and joined Zaca Mesa Winery as a lab technician. He was soon promoted to assistant winemaker and helped shape the winery's groundbreaking Rhône varietal program.

In 1995, Chuck joined Curtis Winery as winemaker, where his passion for Rhône varietals has flourished, from the development of a new winery facility to the planting of estate vineyards.

To maximize vineyard expression, Chuck works intimately with each individual vineyard block, guiding the fruit to peak physiological ripeness through attentive viticulture—an approach that yields intense, fruit-forward flavors and terroir-inspired complexity. This complexity is preserved through traditional hands-on winemaking, including gravity transfer of wine in the cellar and the use of a classic wood basket press for small-lot winemaking.

"I prefer to work with—not against—what Mother Nature gives us," Chuck says. "Ultimately, I want a wine to express the personality of the vineyard and the vintage."

Chuck recently held the position of president of the Rhône Rangers, an organization dedicated to the appreciation, enjoyment and advancement of Rhône-style wines in the United States. He lives in Arroyo Grande, California with his wife and two children.

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VISITOR EXPERIENCE

Curtis Winery welcomes visitors to its tasting room at the corner of Zaca Station and Foxen Canyon roads in the Santa Ynez Valley, just a few miles from the town of Los Olivos.

Winery Facility History
The Curtis Winery facility once housed the vast personal art collection of famed television producer Douglas Cramer. The building was constructed in the early 1980s as an agricultural storage facility, and was soon converted by Cramer into a gallery featuring, in the words of one observer, "some of the finest artists in modern history." Cramer, who produced numerous television hits including Dynasty, Star Trek, The Odd Couple and The Love Boat, is world-renowned for his provocative tastes in modern art and his more than 600 pieces by Matisse, Picasso, Warhol and dozens of other artists. "I used to drive by the gallery on my way to work and think that it was an ideal location for a winery," says Winemaker Chuck Carlson. "The fact that the building was set up in multi-level floors enhanced the idea that it would make a great winery facility." Indeed, the Firestone family later acquired the Cramer property and building, which neighbored their own winery estate, and established Curtis Winery in 1995. The name honors the lineage of Polly Curtis, mother of Brooks Firestone.

Tasting Room
The Curtis Winery tasting room offers a bright and vibrant environment for sampling and purchasing wine, as well as gift and food items from local vendors. A recent expansion of the tasting room extends into the winery cellar, where groups and other visitors enjoy the ambiance of French oak barrels, a Vicard 40-hectaliter oak upright tank and mural-covered walls. The winery, which inhabits a picturesque oak-studded setting in the heart of the rural valley, also offers extensive shaded picnic seating amid colorful landscaping and vines.

Directions
Curtis Winery is located at the southern end of the Foxen Canyon Wine Trail just a few miles east of Highway 101 in Santa Barbara County. From either direction on Highway 101, take the Zaca Station Road/Highway 154 exit. If coming from the north, turn left and over the highway. If coming from the south, turn right. As the road dips and curves southward, take an immediate left onto Zaca Station Road and continue for 2.5 miles. Curtis Winery is located on your left, one-quarter mile past Firestone Vineyard.

Hours and Details
The Curtis Winery tasting room is open daily from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. (11 a.m. to 6 p.m. during the summer months). The tasting fee is $7 per person, which includes a keepsake winery crystal logo glass and a complimentary tasting at neighboring Firestone Vineyard.

The tasting room can be contacted at:

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Tastingroom@CurtisWinery.com