

Stemmler Wines That Would Make their Namesake Proud



Stemmler (Robert Stemmler Winery) is guided by proprietor Anne Moller-Racke, who also directs The Donum Estate. Robert Stemmler is a legendary winemaker in the Dry Creek Valley of Sonoma County. According to Charles Sullivan (*A Companion to California Wine* 1998) and the Stemmler website, Stemmler came to Northern California in 1960 from Germany, where he had made wine for nearly a decade. Stemmler worked at Charles Krug Winery and became winemaker at Simi while consulting for several other notable wineries including Inglenook, St. Clement and Raymond. He founded his own winery in the Dry Creek Valley in 1977 and found early success with Pinot Noir. His first Pinot Noir, sourced from a cool-climate Russian River Valley vineyard, received instant acclaim. One journalist called him the "Unwilling Prince of Pinot." By 1986, his production was 10,000 cases. He mentored young Pinot Noir producers Davis Bynum and Gary Farrell. In 1989, he retired from winemaking after 35 years and the Rackes bought the label, keeping it alive as a tasting room brand within Buena Vista Winery. In 1996, the original Robert Stemmler winery facility was sold to Pezzi King. When Buena Vista was sold to Allied Domecq in 2001, the Racke family kept a vineyard that became The Donum Estate. The Ferguson Block Vineyard adjacent The Donum Estate and Nugent Vineyard in the Russian River Valley were added as estate vineyards and Robert Stemmler became Donum's sister brand.

Kenneth Juhasz crafts the wines for both The Donum Estate and the Robert Stemmler label. There is a firm commitment to sustainable winegrowing for both programs. The wines are available online at www.robertstemmlerwinery.com with some retail distribution.

2008 Stemmler Carneros Chardonnay

14.1% alc., pH 3.28, TA 0.80, 875 cases, \$34. From three sites on the Donum Estate, the oldest of which is the Ferguson Block planted in 1974 to the Wente selection. Also includes Dijon and Wiener selections. Partial MLF. Aged on its lees in 40% new French oak barrels. · Moderate straw color in the glass. Well-raised aromas of pear, white peach, apple, honey and cream soda. Brisk and juicy flavors of Asian pear, melon and baked apple which linger on the dry finish leaving behind a subtle aroma of oak. Solid, but not exceptional. Good (+).

2008 Stemmler Estate Grown Carneros Pinot Noir

14.4% alc., pH 3.66, TA 0.62, 4,409 cases, \$36. From Demeter Certified vineyards. A potpourri of clones and selections including Dijon, Martini, Roederer, Calera, Hanzell and Swan representing every part of the estate. De-stemmed fruit, 4-6 day cold soak, extended maceration. Aged in 40% new French oak barrels. · Aromas of dark red Bing cherries and berries with a subtle hint of oak. A medium-weighted pleasing wine with tasty black cherry and plum flavors lingering on the finish which features some smoky oak in the background.

2008 Stemmler Ferguson Block Carneros Pinot Noir

14.4% alc., pH 3.57, TA 0.63, 159 cases, \$44. Ferguson Block is less than a mile east of The Donum Estate. Planted in 1974 with a Martini selection on St. George rootstock in gravelly, loamy clay soils. Native fermentation, aged 16 months in 40% new French oak barrels. · Subdued, but pleasing aromas of cherries, strawberries and raspberries. Delicious essence of cherries and raspberries that saturate the mid palate and carry over to a Wow! finish that will send cherry lovers into ecstasy. Harmonious with supple tannins and faint oak adding support. Generous and forthcoming, offering immense pleasure now, but will age