



## winemaker of the month

### Blair Guthrie, winemaker and vineyard manager, Stewart Cellars, Yountville, CA



ALYSON WILEY

I really enjoy getting my issue of *Wine Business Monthly*. It keeps me up to date on new and innovative techniques and technology. In a recent issue, I read that a winery is conducting a study to replace the addition of SO<sub>2</sub> during the winemaking process to the use of Ozone gas. By using Ozone gas, they have found that there are more free radicals and antioxidants in the finished product. The results show great improvement in the quality of the wines, so naturally, this has caught my attention and I'll definitely be researching this method more. There is always something new to learn in winemaking, and *Wine Business Monthly* is a great source for that.

#### WINERY NAME AND LOCATION: Stewart Cellars

We make our wines at Paul Hobbs' custom crush facility called Crossbarn located in Sebastopol; however, we call Yountville our home. Our new tasting room that just opened in September, 2016, is located at 6752 Washington Street in Yountville, CA. Our new "home" in Yountville offers three carefully designed spaces for relaxing and enjoying Napa Valley wines in comfort. Stewart Cellars was designed by Arcanum Architecture, an award-winning firm that specializes in both hospitality and residential projects, and the interior was designed by Ken Fulk, one of the Bay Area's most sought after interior designers. The graceful indoor-outdoor property features three stone buildings oriented around an existing heritage oak tree creating a seamless union where guests can flow indoors and outdoors easily.

#### ANNUAL CASE PRODUCTION: 5,000 cases

**PLANTED ACRES:** We have 90 acres planted at two different sites in Napa Valley: Juliana Vineyards and Yountville Crossroads Vineyard. A portion of the fruit is used for the Stewart Cellars brand and the balance is sold to two other high-end Napa Valley wineries.

**CAREER BACKGROUND:** Born and raised in Christchurch, New Zealand, I originally pursued a career in graphic design only to find myself getting itchy feet for a new adventure. After studying for a couple years at an enology and viticulture school in Gisbourne, I landed my first official job in the wine world in 2009 as a cellar hand for a South Australian winery called BK Wines. There I learned a great deal about making fine wine. It wasn't long until I found myself moving to California to intern for Paul Hobbs at his Crossbarn winery. I now manage all winemaking and Viticulture for Stewart Cellars and other various projects.

**WHAT HAS BEEN YOUR BIGGEST PROFESSIONAL CHALLENGE:** Learning not to micromanage. If I had it my way, I would fill every barrel and pick every grape, but there is just too much work and detail involved to make a great bottle of wine. Ultimately, it takes a team to make a single bottle of fine wine, and everyone on that team has to trust that each person is doing their part.

**VARIETALS THAT YOUR WINERY IS KNOWN FOR:** We are known for our Napa Valley Cabernet Sauvignon, but we also produce Sauvignon Blanc, Chardonnay, Pinot Noir, and Merlot. I recently bottled our first red blend which will be released over the holidays. I'm also looking forward to making the very first Stewart Cellars Rosé.