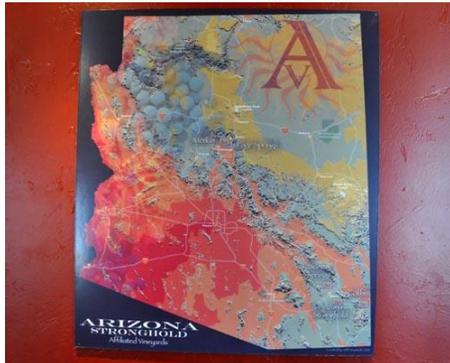


Wine tour Cottonwood: Arizona Stronghold



[Arizona Stronghold](#) is one of the more widely distributed of the S.E. Arizona vintners. Their labels, with the red flaming sun, are familiar to many who shop Whole Foods or AJs. As a bonus to the fine bar, their [Old Town Cottonwood](#) tasting room is full of things to admire. The walls are covered with Arizona art, and of course, the racks are full of great wines to sample.

Because of the wide variety of wines to choose from, be sure to pick a tasting flight that contains both reds and whites. In general, Arizona Stronghold's wines follow the Old World tradition of being more earthy, with less fruitiness in the bouquet, more acid in the body, and lower alcohol, making these vinos a very interesting departure from many other Arizona vintners. So if you are a fan of French or Italian wines, be sure to go through a complete tasting flight with Arizona Stronghold.

Take their Tazi (\$18), it has a very distinctive lemony grapefruit bouquet along with a trace of mineral (AZ mineral of course) and an excellent acid base that is reminiscent of a French [Pouilly Fuissé](#). This is the perfect match for a menu of tossed salad with Italian dressing, mild fish, rice, and peas. This wine can turn a meal that may seem bland at first into a perfect dining experience.

If you like a good dry Rosè, try the Dayden (\$13). With its bouquet of fresh cherries, raspberries, and earthiness combined with a moderate acid base, and light color and body, it would easily pass for a French Rosè. So if you are in the habit of including light red wines as a compliment to informal meals, appetizers, and picnics, this would be the perfect companion.

Now we're off to the local vineyards for some samplings of what the Verde Valley locals are putting together.