

Wine in the underground: Jarvis Winery



Wine likes to be stored in dark cool places. So why not design a winery to do the whole thing (crush, ferment, age, and bottle) in a cave? If you think that concept's pretty cool, you'll love [Jarvis](#). They're the king of cave.

Sure, most wineries have a big facility with the production operations in an impressive barn-of-a-building filled with fermentation tanks and barrels. But although they are wonderful examples of architecture, big buildings need a

lot of climate control and that tends to run up the electric bill. So Jarvis winery's founder decided to take the whole thing underground. And this was well before "going green" even became even a remote objective for wineries (many now have solar power boosters).

Of course putting all of that equipment in a big man-made cave is not that simple, but with a lot of bucks and sheer determination, Jarvis pulled it off. In fact, the only part of their operation that is "up on the surface" are the many acres of vines basking in the sunlight and waiting for harvest. Once those grapes are gathered, down they go, back in the mountain, never to see the light of day until the finished product is unboxed at its final destination.

As for the wines, they're excellent and old. Because they hold them in the cave for about 3 years after bottling, Jarvis' new release vintages are roughly 3 years behind most of their peers. So if you are planning on having a spot for them on the rack, be advised to keep an older section open in advance.

Right now, Jarvis is pouring 6 wines as part of their "vintage tasting". This includes a Chardonnay (Finch Hollow), 2 Cabs ('05 & '06), a Merlot ('09), a Bordeaux blend, and a Cabernet Franc ('07). Each of these wines has a unique character making for a very interesting flight through all 6 glasses.

The Chardonnay is smooth and nutty with hints of orange and mineral. Their red wines all exhibit the robust dark fruit characteristics of the [Napa Valley](#), but that's where the similarities end. Each has its own very distinctive variety of bouquets, mid-palate, and finish components.

Their tasting leader spends an appropriate amount of time going back a forth to highlight the differences. Snacks are provided. Cost is \$60.

If you've never done a "cave tasting", this is the premier place to give it a go. They are by appointment only at 800-255-5280. Curtis John (Ext. 150) will be glad to answer any questions about their tasting tour.