

Winery of the Week: Baldacci Family Vineyards

Written by Alison Ballin Batz - Published on January 30, 2023 - in Food & Drink, Restaurant of the Week



It took one special family and a big leap of faith to take [Baldacci Family Vineyards](#) from dream to world-class destination in the heart of Napa.

The story starts in 1998 when Thomas and Brenda Baldacci made the decision to invest in a piece of land that would connect their family for generations to come. Less than a year later, the property and its surrounding area would be officially designated the Stags Leap District American Viticultural Area (AVA). The heaven-on-earth property is located about five miles north of the town of Napa, and east of the Napa River, along the Silverado Trail. The unique makeup of the land – thanks to erosion, volcanic soil and the nearby Vaca Mountain Range – quickly earned the region acclaim as one of the best places to grow Cabernet Sauvignon grapes in the world. As such, the Baldacci family is now among the top growers of the varietal in the past 25 years.



Today, while Thomas and Brenda are still active on property, their son Michael crafts sought-after, limited-production Cabernets that best reflect the Stags Leap District, as well as select other varietals thanks to plantings across two additional estate-grown vineyards in [Calistoga](#) and [Los Carneros](#). The family recently completed a full remodel in Summer 2021 that includes a wholly new tasting estate, hospitality center and extensive wine cave.

The cave is an awe-inspiring 19,210 square feet and features production and winemaking space, as well as plenty of room for guests. The best way to experience the cave is by booking the All Cabernet Tasting with Cave Tour, which is \$125 per person and approximately 90 minutes long. During the experience, guests will enjoy a splash of Baldacci Pops, the sparkling wine named in honor of Thomas, while exploring the cave with a host. This behind-the-scenes experience comes with tasting directly from a wine barrel. Once the tour is complete, guests are seated at a private table inside the Estate House or outside on the expansive patio for a deep dive into the brand's top Cabernets, including the chance to sample member-only exclusives. There is a seasonal charcuterie plate included as well.



Should guests want to try the full diversity of varietals beyond Cabernet, there is also a Perfect Pairings experience for \$150 per person. During this 90-minute tasting, a member of the hospitality staff will guide guests through the art and science of wine and food pairing. The tasting will feature bubbles and three wines paired to small bites to illustrate how certain aspects of food are altered, enhanced or changed by the wines.

Perhaps the most enticing onsite experience is Taste Like a Somm. This 90-minute experience, also \$150 per person, stars Certified Sommelier Diana Bender and her turn-key method for learning how to taste wine like a sommelier. By the end of the tasting, guests will have more knowledge to determine a Pinot Noir from a Cabernet and will have a leg up at blind tastings with friends and family. The tasting also teaches guests to understand components of a wine and how to describe them. Taste Like a Somm is the perfect way to understand palate preference and how each person tastes wine in their own unique way.



While tasting at Baldacci Family Vineyards in person is best, for those ready to buy a bottle or two now, here are some musts:

2019 Baldacci Black Label Estate Grown Cabernet Sauvignon: Each vintage of Black Label is a love letter to Stags Leap District and its exquisite terroir. It's full of dark berry flavors and silky tannins, and the finish lingers. **\$110**

2019 Baldacci Fraternity Napa Valley Red Wine Blend: Despite its playful name, this wine means business. This is Michael Baldacci's take on a Bordeaux-style blend. It's equal parts luscious and savory, and each sip offers complexity. **\$70**

2019 Baldacci Cameros Pinot Noir: This one will surprise those who choose to swirl and sip, as it's fuller-bodied than a traditional Pinot Noir, and by design. There is still that juicy cherry and fig flavor with hints of baking spice, with a kiss of acidity, but it looks, smells and tastes richer with a more decadent mouthfeel than other Pinots. **\$65**

For more information on Baldacci Family Vineyards, visit www.baldaccivineyards.com.