



The World of Wine

Hanzell Vineyards

WHEN AMBASSADOR JAMES D. ZELLERBACH acquired 200 acres in the Mayacamas Mountains in California's Sonoma region in 1948, his goal was to create a small vineyard and winery focused on producing high-quality pinot noir and chardonnay. The Zellerbachs planted six acres in 1953 and created the first vintage in 1957. They named their winery Hanzell (www.hanzell.com), a contraction of the name of the Ambassador's wife, Hana Zellerbach. The Zellerbachs sold the estate to the Day family in 1965, and in 1975, the de Brye family acquired it.

In addition to maintaining the oldest continuously producing chardonnay and pinot noir vines in the New World, Hanzell Vineyards was also the first to: create and use custom-designed stainless steel temperature controlled fermentation tanks; use inert gas (nitrogen) to prevent oxidation; isolate and cultivate the bacterium that causes malolactic fermentation; and to use imported Sirgue French oak barrels exclusively for barrel aging wine. Also, in over 50 years, Hanzell Vineyards has virtually had only three winemakers, each of whom has carefully handed off his knowledge to each other, which explains the remarkable consistency of their style over time.

Today, the original six-acre vineyard has grown to 46 acres, and has allowed Hanzell to produce 6,000 cases annually: three-quarters chardonnay and one-quarter pinot noir.

Among those wines recently recognized are the 2006 Hanzell Vineyards Sonoma Valley Estate Chardonnay, pegged by *Food & Wine* as one of "50 Wine Classics You Must Try"; the 2006 Sonoma Valley Chardonnay and 2006 Sonoma Valley Pinot Noir, which came in at 92 and 93 respectively on *Wine Spectator's* list; and the 2005 Hanzell Ambassador's 1953 Vineyard Chardonnay, recognized with 96 points from Robert Parker's *Wine Advocate*. This wine was made from the fruit of the original Hanzell chardonnay vines, planted in 1953. Four barrels were blended to create this historic, single-vineyard bottling, and the 93 estate-bottled cases are available to Ambassador's Circle collectors only.

Membership in the Ambassador's Circle also provides members access to the Hanzell wine library, which comprises five decades of vintages, as well as allocation and direct

shipment of each of the vineyard's wines upon release; a holiday magnum offering, shipped in a fire-branded wooden box; and complimentary estate visits for themselves and their guests. ●



Hanzell Winery (left); Wine cellar (above); Hanzell Vineyards (below)

