

A Deep Connection To The Land

An Interview with Ben Mayo, Winemaker, Le Vigne Winery



Ben Mayo

creating something lasting from the ground up. By the early 1980s, the first vines were planted—Cabernet Sauvignon and Chardonnay. Soon, the soil that once grew feed for livestock began shaping wines worth slowing down for. Le Vigne remains family-run, estate-grown, and grounded in the same values: heritage, hard work, and hospitality.

Will you discuss your career journey?

I began my wine industry career nearly 35 years ago on the Central Coast, working harvest at Creston Manor under the mentorship of Vic Roberts, whose expertise inspired me to pursue winemaking. After studying science in college and earning a degree in wine marketing from Cal Poly, I worked in Napa at an older vineyard, an experience that reignited my passion for the craft. Over the years, I have been fortunate to work with some of Paso Robles' most respected wineries, including JUSTIN, Meridian, Riboli, Eberle, Rotta, and San Antonio Winery, gaining hands-on experience and guidance from generous mentors. I am now in the position to pay back the favor to the next generation of wine professionals.

Will you highlight the history of Le Vigne Winery?

Le Vigne Winery was founded in the early 1980s on land that had previously been a cattle ranch before being planted to vines. Initially the grapes were sold to large valley producers, as was common in the region at the time. In 1990, Sylvester Winery was launched, and the estate's own wines began to be produced. The current tasting room opened in 1995, quickly establishing Le Vigne as both a destination and a local favorite. In 2013, the winery adopted the name Le Vigne (Italian for "The Vineyards"), reflecting its Italian heritage and deep connection to the land.

Will you provide an overview of Le Vigne Winery's offerings?

Because of the Mediterranean climate in Paso Robles, Le Vigne has the advantage of growing a wide variety of grapes, including Bordeaux, Rhône, Italian, and Spanish varieties, with standouts such as Cabernet Sauvignon, Syrah, Sauvignon Blanc, and Sangiovese. The winery also produces sparkling wine from Sangiovese as well as Rosé. Le Vigne crafts two distinct ranges of wines: the Estate Vineyard Series, which showcases premium, single-vineyard

EDITORS' NOTE Ben Mayo is a respected Paso Robles vintner with decades of experience shaping the region's reputation for bold yet balanced wines. Mayo is recognized for his hands-on, vineyard-first philosophy, focusing on expressing site specificity through meticulous farming practices and minimal intervention in the cellar. His work emphasizes balance, structure, and longevity, resulting in wines that are both expressive and refined. Under his leadership, Le Vigne has continued to elevate its portfolio while staying true to its Mediterranean roots.

WINERY BRIEF In Paso Robles, where the land runs deep with character and stories age as gracefully as the wines, you will find Walter and Sylvia Filippini, and Le Vigne Winery (levignewinery.com). What started as a working ranch quietly became one of Paso's oldest estate wineries, recently honored as 2025 Winery of the Year by the Central Coast Wine Competition and the 2025 Paso Robles Winery of the Year from the New York International Wine Competition. The story began in the early 1960s, when Sylvia Filippini's family built a ranch, raising cattle, growing hay, and



Le Vigne Winery



Le Vigne 2021 Paso Series Cabernet Sauvignon



Le Vigne 2021 Estate Nikiara

expressions, and the Paso Robles Vineyard Series, offering versatile, approachable selections that deliver quality and value at an accessible price point. These multiple tiers allow customers to explore and enjoy a broad portfolio of exceptional wines.

What can guests expect when visiting the winery?

Le Vigne is a family-owned business that puts a premium on hospitality. The tasting room is warm and inviting, and because the owners are real animal lovers who rescue all sorts of “beasts,”

the entire estate is dog friendly. The staff is warm and knowledgeable, guiding guests through tastings and artisan cheese pairings offered daily. Whether you are visiting the Paso Robles Tasting Room & Patio or the Los Angeles Tasting Room & Market in Vernon, you’ll find a curated selection of cheeses and accompaniments.

For those visiting Paso on the weekend, the experience expands with lunch on Saturdays and Sundays, featuring oven-fired pizzas and Italian-inspired pastas. If you are at the Los Angeles location,

you can also explore their curated Italian market, stocked with estate olive oils, pastas, and specialty sauces to take a piece of the experience home.

How does Le Vigne Winery approach its sustainability efforts?

Le Vigne Winery practices sustainable and regenerative farming methods, with Certified California Sustainable Winegrowing certification currently in progress. We enhance soil health and biodiversity by planting nitrogen-rich cover crops and practicing no-till farming. Our on-site composting initiative recycles winery, restaurant, and animal waste into custom mixes tailored to each vineyard’s soil profile, allowing us to avoid all synthetic chemical sprays or foliar. Additionally, we integrate animals for natural fertilization and utilize water-saving drip irrigation to minimize our environmental impact on the land and the surrounding community.

What has made the wine industry so special for you?

The people. My fellow winemakers and other wine professionals are curious and humble individuals. Farming is risky and sometimes you just have to “roll with the punches.” What keeps me interested in winemaking is that every year is different. I am constantly learning. It is not work; it’s a passion.

What are our priorities for Le Vigne Winery as you look to the future?

Le Vigne Winery is actively investing in its future. New planting is occurring as we pull out old vines. New methods of winemaking are being tried to ensure that the quality of the wine continues to improve. Experiments with yeast strains and bacteria occur every harvest. In addition, management encourages continuing education in Viticulture and Enology for all employees. Something new is always happening. ●



Le Vigne Paso Robles 2024 harvest