

Orinda's Crane Terrace Winery joins bonded ranks of AVA

By Vera Kochan



Photos Vera Kochan

Crane Terrace vines planted on the cave exterior

Nestled on a private estate in Orinda's Sleepy Hollow neighborhood, Crane Terrace Winery, a 2-year Lamorinda Wine Growers Association member, had once produced their wines exclusively for personal enjoyment or sharing with friends. Having gone through the rigors of becoming bonded this past July, the winery is now entitled to sell to the public.

Crane Terrace's General Manager Leanne Pilot was more than knowledgeable about every aspect of the business and its history since starting with the winery in 2016 as a property manager. Coming from Chicago and working in the IT industry, Pilot's move to California exposed her to a lot of great wines, and a new passion was born.

Initially, the winery's approximately 4,500 grape vines were planted in 2004, along hillsides that could easily resemble Italy's Tuscany region. This extensive number of vines makes Crane Terrace the largest winery in the Lamorinda American Viticultural Area (AVA). The entire property encompasses 8 acres, but only 3-4 acres are devoted to the vines which grow along steep slopes producing Syrah, Grenache, Chardonnay, and Roussanne. Crane Terrace's first vintage was bottled in 2006, and in 2010 a lengthy cave was dug through one of the hillsides and now serves as a cool storage area furnished with chandeliers, soft lights, a polished banquet-style table and chairs for either tast-

ings or meetings.

"The wines kept getting better and better," said Pilot. "We needed to go beyond just making wine for friends and family."

Crane Terrace's 2017 Chardonnay back label states, "Grown in the East Bay hills on our family's private estate vineyard, our Chardonnay grapes are biodynamically farmed and tended by hand using 'old world' care and techniques that produce low yielding high quality fruit. This wine was produced in temperature controlled stainless steel and aged in the finest French cooperage producing a wine that's rich in character."

"We are completely hand-farmed and don't use any pesticides or toxins," explained Pilot, adding that they use a vineyard management company that comes to prune the vines and do the picking at harvest-time.

Crane Terrace bottles, on average, 50 cases of Grenache, 50 cases of Chardonnay and 300 cases of Syrah. "We've blended the Roussanne with the Grenache in the past, or our winemaker will use it for some other purpose of his own," Pilot explained.

The winemaker's tasting notes for their 2021 Chardonnay are: "Nose - Very 'Chablis-like' with notes of citrus and hints of vanilla. On the palate, this wine is structured with solid acid, lemon, mineral, and green apple." The recommended pairing is to serve it with seafood.

With their 2021 Grenache:

"Nose - Restrained notes of strawberry, flint, and cedar. On the palate this wine is suitably structured with solid acidity, meaty with notes of strawberry, and violets, and of light body." The recommended pairing is savory, grilled meats with smoky barbecue sauces and grilled vegetables such as zucchini or eggplant.

The 2021 Syrah: "Nose - filled with leather, tobacco, and hints of olallieberry. On the palate, you'll find notes of raspberry, blackberry, black pepper, with structured acidity and medium to light body for a Syrah." Suggested pairing with duck, grilled chicken and an assortment of hard artisanal cheeses.

Crane Terraces poured at Moraga's 2022 Pear and Wine Festival and more recently at last month's Lafayette Art and Wine Festival.

Pilot is on the cusp of completing a new website. In the meantime, anyone wishing to contact the winery can email Pilot at Leannepilot@craneterracewinery. Local deliveries will be available.



Inside Crane Terrace Winery cave



Vines planted along the hillside at Crane Terrace Winery

Lafayette Housing Element

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Mayor Carl Anduri said the process is "inherently difficult" and the changes made represented everyone doing their best within an admittedly frustrating situation. "Yes, there have been changes. Yes, it's frustrating," he said, while expressing appreciation for the staff's hard work and efforts to maintain transparency.

The council asked City Attorney Mala Subramanian to clarify the 3675 Mt. Diablo Blvd. lease details and how any residential development could happen within the housing element's eight-year term. She said the parking lot was determined as the only possibility for development, not the entire building, which reduced the total acreage available but was more realistic due to constraints of the lease agreement for the building. Subramanian also answered a question about up-zoning properties and if such a choice could be reversed at a later date. The city attorney

said SB 330 made that not a viable option because any property later "downzoned" would require an offset and another property of equal size to be upzoned for residential development.

The council agreed unanimously on a number of items: to allow staff to share the appendices with an HCD reviewer for an informal review, to remain with the ADUs as part of the package, and to hold the realistic capacity at 88%. Specific to the opportunity site list, members supported the Desco properties as amended and centered the final discussion on Revised Workbook C, which included the FBOs.

Kwok and others emphasized the community aspect of FBOs and said people in Lafayette were interested in working cooperatively to provide affordable housing that meets HCD requirements. The item was continued with unanimous support to Oct. 10, which happened after press time.

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Lafayette Seeks Applicants

For Seat on the Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC)

Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) to the Contra Costa Transit Authority (CCTA)
The Contra Costa Transportation Authority maintains a standing Citizens Advisory Committee to provide citizen perspective, participation, and involvement in the CCTA's policies. The Authority manages the County's transportation sales tax program and county-wide transportation planning. The CAC meets on the fourth Wednesday of the month at 6:30pm in Walnut Creek. To learn more about the CCTA visit the Authority's website: <https://ccta.net/about-us/>

For Seat on the Contra Costa County Advisory Council on Aging

Contra Costa Advisory Council on Aging (ACOA) is appointed by the Board of Supervisors to advise them on all matters associated with the planning, development and administration of programs relating to older adults in accordance with the Older Americans Act. The Advisory Council meets on the third Wednesday of each month, 9:30am to 11:30am in Pleasant Hill. To learn more about ACOA: <https://ehsd.org/elderly-disabled/advisory-council-on-aging/>

For Seat on the Contra Costa Mosquito & Vector Control District

The Contra Costa Mosquito & Vector Control District is a public health agency dedicated to protecting the community from mosquitoes and other vectors of disease. The District is governed by a Board of Trustees, each representing one of the incorporated cities in Contra Costa County and appointed by their respective city councils. The District meets on the second Monday of every other month at 7pm in Concord. To learn more about the District visit their webpage: www.contracostamosquito.com/

POSITIONS OPEN UNTIL FILLED

Lafayette volunteer application: www.lovelafayette.org/volunteerapplication
Submit the completed application to Cityhall@lovelafayette.org

Applicants should be aware that upon appointment, an additional application and financial disclosure documents may be required.