



### **Talley Vineyards: Pioneering Excellence in the San Luis Obispo Coast**

"Our farming roots are the foundation upon which everything else is built. They remind us of the importance of stewardship, the value of hard work, and the incredible potential of the San Luis Obispo Coast region."

These words, spoken by Brian Talley, third-generation vegetable farmer and guiding force behind Talley Vineyards, encapsulate the very essence of this pioneering family-owned winery nestled in the heart of California's San Luis Obispo Coast AVA. For over three decades, the Talley family has been dedicated to growing elegant and expressive Chardonnays and Pinot Noirs that capture the unique character of their estate vineyards in the Arroyo Grande Valley and Edna Valley. The winery's commitment to these ideals is palpable in every aspect of their operations, from the meticulous vineyard care to the crafting of site-driven wines. At the root lies an unwavering dedication to stewardship and preserving the family's rich legacy for future generations.

Under Brian's leadership, Talley Vineyards has not only set the standard for excellence in the region, but has also become a source of inspiration for wine enthusiasts and industry peers alike. The winery's warm and welcoming spirit invites visitors to immerse themselves in the awe-inspiring beauty of the San Luis Obispo Coast and to discover the passionate individuals behind the wines that have come to define this remarkable region.

With a legacy now spanning three generations and a vision that reaches far into the future, the Talley family continues to pay homage to the great winemaking traditions of Burgundy while fearlessly forging their own path on California's Central Coast. As the next generation begins to take on leadership roles, a sense of excitement and possibility permeates the air, promising to push the boundaries of what is achievable in this special winegrowing region.

"The one underlying word is sustainability," Brian explains. "We've sustained ourselves on this land for four generations, and the decisions we make now are all about continuing this legacy far into the future."

#### **A Family Rooted in the Land**

Talley Vineyards' story is inextricably linked to the land and the Talley family's deep agricultural roots in the San Luis Obispo Coast. The legacy began in 1948 when Oliver Talley, Brian Talley's grandfather, founded Talley Farms, specializing in growing produce. As a teenager, Brian Talley started working on the family farm, fostering a deep appreciation for the land and a strong work ethic that would guide him in his future endeavors.

In 1982, Don and Rosemary Talley, Brian's parents, began planting wine grapes on the hillside parcels of the family ranch, seeing an opportunity to diversify crops. Lacking recognition as a wine region at the time, Don began making his own wines as a proof of

concept, and soon founded Talley Vineyards in 1986. With Brian's help in researching the area's history, Don spearheaded efforts to establish the Arroyo Grande Valley AVA (American Viticultural Area) in 1990, bringing attention to the region.

After graduating from UC Berkeley, Brian returned to Arroyo Grande to work alongside his father, and soon thereafter assumed leadership of Talley Vineyards at the age of 25. Like his father, Brian established himself as a local ambassador, showcasing the region's potential. In 2022, he played an instrumental role in establishing the San Luis Obispo Coast AVA to serve as a unifying force for the wineries and vineyards stretching from San Simeon to Nipomo.

"With the San Luis Obispo Coast AVA, we are leaning into our coastal influence," says Brian. "The 'Coast' is a powerful word which reminds people that we are located in the coolest climate AVA in the entire state of California which allows us to make wines unlike anywhere else."

At the heart of Talley Vineyards' success lies the exceptional climate and soils of the San Luis Obispo Coast, and the seven estate vineyards which Talley farms in the Edna Valley and Arroyo Grande Valley sub-AVAs. The region's proximity to the Pacific Ocean creates a distinctly cool climate, with billowing morning fog that gives way to warm afternoon sunlight and a salty evening breeze that rustles through the vines. This reliable cooling and warming cycle fosters a long growing season, allowing the fruit to achieve rich, full flavors while maintaining its natural acidity, structure, and balance.

Beyond wine grapes, Talley Farms continues to grow and diversify over the years, now cultivating over 30 different vegetable crops across approximately 1,500 acres, showcasing the remarkable versatility of the region and the family's commitment to sustainable, biodiverse farming practices.

### **Meticulous Care from Vine to Glass**

At Talley Vineyards, making delicious wines begins with thoughtful care in all estate vineyards. Director of Viticulture and Winemaking, Eric Johnson, leads a dedicated full-time team committed to cultivating the highest quality grapes through a combination of time-honored, sustainable farming practices that all tie back to careful thought and taste.

"Our approach is grounded in a deep respect for the land and the belief that great wines are born in the vineyard," says Eric. "We rely on our talented farming team to provide us with the best possible fruit, serving as the foundation for the elegance and finesse we strive for in our wines."

With just over 18 years at Talley, Eric Johnson meticulously monitors numerous parameters, ranging from pruning weights, irrigation and yields, so that the vineyard team can make informed decisions that optimize quality. "Attention to detail is paramount," Eric notes. "We are ultimately growing wine, not just grapes, so we look to data and use proven techniques tailored to each specific site."

This task of farming the best possible grapes is carried out by a permanent vineyard crew who have been with the winery for years, some even decades. This crew consists of 12 members who work directly with the vines, three tractor drivers, and one irrigator, all overseen by two supervisors. By having a permanent crew, the team is able to gain a deep understanding of the sites, and react quickly to the vines' needs.

"One of the advantages to having your own vineyards, crew and winery is the opportunity to be in constant communication throughout the farming and winemaking process," explains

Eric. "Because we treat each vineyard block individually, we can track its history and evolution, and then work together to make those blocks even better."

Talley Vineyards employs sustainable farming practices and meticulous vineyard management to ensure the health and quality of their vines. These practices include the use of cover crops and other methods to enhance soil health, precision viticulture, the elimination of herbicides and exploration of new clones and rootstocks that can thrive in the face of a changing climate.

"Our family has been given an extraordinary opportunity," says Brian. "For us the heart of the meaning of 'sustainability' reflects the chance to use our time here, invest in the land as much as we can, and then carry it on through future generations to come."

### **Defining the San Luis Obispo Coast - Talley's Estate Vineyards**

Talley farms 129 acres across seven estate vineyards, including Arroyo Grande Valley's East Rincon, West Rincon, Las Ventanas, Monte Sereno, Rosemary's Vineyard, and Edna Valley's Oliver's Vineyard and Stone Corral. Each vineyard brings its own voice to the choir, with variations in soil type, microclimate, and clonal selection adding depth and complexity to the final bottled wines.

In addition being a source for over 21 wineries who value Talley's reputation for farming excellence, Talley Vineyards also releases its own estate bottlings, including single-vineyard wines from Rincon, Rosemary's, Oliver's and Stone Corral.

### **Rincon Vineyard**

Located adjacent to the Talley tasting room and winery, Rincon Vineyard is the home site of Talley Vineyards. Planted in 1982 by Don Talley, the site continues to bear the winery's oldest vines, and was the source of its first bottling from the 1986 vintage. This steep and well drained site is planted to 29 acres of Chardonnay, 38 acres to Pinot Noir, and four acres to other grapes.

Characterized by local and calcareous clay soils and a slightly warmer climate than Talley's other estate vineyards, Eric Johnson refers to Rincon as the most "California" in style. "The site offers the perfect balance between ripeness and acidity," he says. "This is the only site where we use whole-cluster in our Pinot Noirs. The stems add bones that pair well with the fat of the fruit. The Rincon Chardonnay is the only Chardonnay single-vineyard which we chose to make from the lower blocks. The vineyard just speaks California."

### **Rosemary's Vineyard**

Named after Brian Talley's mother, Rosemary's Vineyard is a crown jewel site with views of the Pacific Ocean, and consistently the source of Talley's most acclaimed wines. Located on the hillside in front of the Talley family home, Pinot Noir vines were first planted to the site in 1987, and Chardonnay followed in 1988. The coolest of Talley's estate vineyards, the fruit also take the longest to ripen and ferment, but yield high-energy wines with freshness, vibrancy and acidity given the vineyard's spice rack.

The first bottling of Rosemary's Chardonnay was produced in 1991 by Jim Clendenen of Au Bon Climat Winery. The wine's critical success helped to raise awareness for both the vineyard as well as Au Bon Climat on an international scale. "Our relationship as growers enabled Jim Clendenen to become an incredible ambassador for this region and our vineyards internationally," says Brian. "To this day, the Pinot Noir that we produce from Block 7, a section my father planted in 1987, remains our most sought after."

Today, the vineyard is planted to 29 acres of vines across 14 individual blocks, with 12 acres planted to Chardonnay and 17 acres planted to Pinot Noir. The Chardonnay vines are planted on highly reflective decomposed powdery white shale, and the lack of sunlight absorption creates a cool-climate atmosphere which contributes to the wines' vibrant acidity. Pinot Noir is planted on the bowl-shaped section of the vineyard, overlooking the valley floor, where well-drained chunky Lopez shale loam contributes additional density to the wines.

### **Oliver's Vineyard**

Oliver's Vineyard is named after Brian's grandfather, who originally started the family farming operation in 1948. The original vines, planted in 1991, continue to produce some of Talley's finest single-vineyard Chardonnay wines.

Located in Edna Valley, Oliver's Vineyard is a 36-acre site dedicated entirely to white varieties. Chardonnay comprises the largest overall footprint, but the site is also home to Sauvignon Blanc and Grüner Veltliner. The sandy loam contains heavy magnesium content, making the soils nearly black in color, and its close proximity to the Pacific Ocean contributes a distinctive saline minerality, bright acidity and citrus-driven flavors.

"Oliver's Vineyard demonstrates the importance of site," says Eric. "The temperatures get colder at Oliver's, but it also can get comparatively warmer. This produces Chardonnay wines that fall in between Rosemary's and Rincon, exhibiting apple-like texture and notes of noble reduction similar to White Burgundy."

### **Stone Corral Vineyard**

Planted in 2001, Stone Corral is the most youthful site in the Talley portfolio, and was created as a collaboration project between Talley Vineyards and two other local wineries: Stephen Ross Wine Cellars and Kynsi Winery.

"Wineries are always looking for more control and input into farming decisions, and Stone Corral gives them that opportunity at a smaller scale," says Brian. "Our family handles all of the farming, but Kynsi and Stephen Ross have the opportunity to have more of a say in the stylistic choices."

Comprising five distinct vineyard blocks, the site is planted to four separate clones of Pinot Noir, including a selection massale from Rosemary's Vineyard. The vineyard's sandy soils contribute to wines with plush, dark fruit character and silky tannins.

"Stone Corral is like a sandbox," says Eric. "The vines' rooting system is huge, extending down six to seven feet, producing more powerful Pinot Noirs with darker fruit."

### **In the Winery: Wines of Purpose and Place**

The Talley Vineyards winemaking philosophy is guided by a commitment to showcasing varietal character and the essence of each estate vineyard. Drawing inspiration from the traditions of Burgundy, the team also embraces a sense of innovation and experimentation to create wines that are distinctly Californian in spirit.

"We have stuck to a classical Burgundian framework here, but we are also incorporating newer techniques out of an ongoing pursuit of having the most authentic approach to winemaking," says Brian. "Our goal is to constantly refine our craft and push the boundaries of what is possible on the San Luis Obispo Coast. By combining time-honored traditions with a deep understanding of our vineyards, we aim to create wines that not only capture the

essence of this incredible region but also stand alongside the finest examples from around the world."

In the cellar, Eric and the winemaking team employ a gentle, minimalist approach that allows the natural beauty of the fruit to shine through. "There's a certain energy and elegance provided by our vineyard sites and farming," he says. "We get natural balance in our wines without needing to tinker."

When the grapes arrive in the cellar, white varieties go straight into the press after which the juice is allowed to settle overnight before being transferred to the appropriate vessel for fermentation. Pinot Noir grapes are generally destemmed and undergo fermentation for up to three weeks, with a focus on minimal extraction, after which they are pressed and barreled down for aging. All fruit is left uninoculated in the cool cellar until native yeasts naturally start the fermentation process. As Eric explains, "By relying on the indigenous yeasts from our vineyards and winery, we allow the true character of each site to express itself in the finished wines. We're not bringing anything foreign, each vineyard has its own different yeast strains, and you can tell the difference by the way they ferment."

Upon completion of primary fermentation, the wines undergo extended aging on the lees, which contributes to their complexity and depth. The winery employs barrel aging in French oak, using a mix of new and neutral barrels to strike a balance between showcasing the fruit and adding subtle oak nuances, while preserving elegance and balance.

Each vineyard block is individually fermented and aged, for a total of over 100 unique wine lots every vintage. Throughout the year, the winemaking team engages in rigorous blind tastings, meticulously evaluating each vineyard block. This process ensures that only the most exceptional lots make their way into Talley's single-vineyard and estate bottlings, and that the final blends fully capture the uniqueness of the vintage and the vineyard.

"We taste each lot blind and grade them, then create theoretical blends, continuously refining until we arrive at a composition that we are truly proud of bottling," Eric explains.

Experimentation is a crucial tool for unlocking the full potential of each vineyard and pushing the boundaries of what's possible in the cellar. Eric and his team constantly seek out new ways to enhance the quality and character of the wines, from exploring new clones and rootstocks to trialing different fermentation techniques and aging regimens.

### **An Inspiring Portfolio of Place-Driven Wines**

Talley Vineyards' offerings are thoughtfully structured into three distinct tiers, each designed to showcase the individual characteristics of the estate vineyards while appealing to a diverse range of wine enthusiasts.

The crown jewels of the portfolio are the "Single-Vineyard Selections" tier wines: Rosemary's Chardonnay and Pinot Noir, Rincon Chardonnay and Pinot Noir, Oliver's Chardonnay and Stone Corral Pinot Noir. These wines, produced in limited quantities from the finest blocks of the Rosemary's Vineyard, represent the pinnacle of Talley's winemaking artistry.

The "San Luis Obispo Coast" tier comprises Talley's most widely distributed wines, including the Estate Chardonnay and Pinot Noir. These wines serve as the perfect introduction to the Talley style, showcasing the elegance, finesse, and sense of place that define the winery's approach.

"Our Estate Chardonnay and Pinot Noir represent a collage of our single vineyard sites," says Eric Johnson. "Each site offers something special which you can taste in the blends. With the Estate Chardonnay, you can pick out the apple texture from Oliver's, the bright acidity and energy from Rosemary's, and the citrus notes from Rincon. The bottling brings all of this together to make a better wine."

For those seeking a more immersive exploration of the Talley estate vineyards, the "Estate Exclusives" range offers limited-production bottlings of other varieties including Sauvignon Blanc, Grüner Veltliner, Grenache, Syrah, and The Adobe, an ultra-premium blend of the best Pinot Noir from the estate. These wines, available exclusively through the winery's tasting room, website, and wine club, provide a fascinating glimpse into the diverse terroir of the San Luis Obispo Coast, with each vineyard imparting its own distinctive character.

In recent years, Talley has also embraced experimentation with small-lot wines that push the boundaries of traditional styles. From pét-nats to skin-contact white wines, these offerings showcase the winery's innovative spirit and willingness to adapt to the evolving preferences of wine enthusiasts.

### **Discovering the Essence of Talley Vineyards**

Tucked away in the heart of the San Luis Obispo Coast, Talley Vineyards' newly renovated tasting room is a welcome place for everyone looking to experience the beauty of the region. Should visitors be new to wine or exceptionally knowledgeable, Talley's tasting room serves as the perfect starting point for a journey of discovery, captivating both novices and oenophiles alike.

Whether opting for a casual drop-in tasting or a more elevated seated experience, visitors are treated to a personalized and engaging introduction to the wines and the rich history behind them. The tasting room staff is passionate about creating a welcoming and inclusive environment for all guests, regardless of their level of wine knowledge. They happily guide newcomers through the key concepts of wine in a friendly manner, pointing out the surrounding vineyards, rolling hills and picturesque beauty of the valleys from the expansive overlooking windows, while also incorporating educational props such as soil samples from each site to showcase the variations in color, texture and composition.

For those seeking a deeper understanding of Talley's estate vineyards and winemaking process, the winery offers a range of immersive experiences, including educational vineyard tours that provide a glimpse into the practices that define Talley's approach to viticulture and the influence of the region's diverse microclimates on the character of the wines.

Further exemplifying the Talley family's commitment to community and long term relationships, both Brian Talley and his daughter, Elizabeth Talley, may often be found mingling with guests and sharing special stories behind the wines and the brand in the tasting room. "Our goal is to create experiences that not only showcase our wines but also foster a genuine connection to the land and the people behind them," Brian Talley explains. "We want our guests to leave with a deeper appreciation for the art and science of winegrowing and a sense of place that stays with them long after they've left the winery."

Talley Vineyards offers a variety of memorable experiences, each designed to cater to different interests and levels of wine knowledge:

- Talley Estate Wine Tasting: A curated flight of current releases, served in the tasting room or on the picturesque outdoor patio (\$30).

- A Taste of Terroir: A comparative tasting of single-vineyard Chardonnay and Pinot Noir, highlighting the unique characteristics of each estate vineyard (\$75).
- The Rincon Adventure: A guided tour of the historic Rincon Vineyard, followed by a wine tasting overlooking the vines (\$100).
- Wine Club Members' Lounge: An exclusive space for wine club members to relax and enjoy special library releases and small-lot wines.
- Seasonal Wine Tasting Experiences: Themed tastings and events that celebrate the flavors and traditions of each season.

To complement the wine tasting experience, Talley Vineyards offers carefully curated culinary pairings, featuring local artisan cheeses and charcuterie that showcase the bounty of the San Luis Obispo Coast. For those seeking a more intimate and personalized experience, the winery also offers private tastings and events by reservation, allowing visitors to delve deeper into the Talley story and wines while enjoying the undivided attention of the knowledgeable and friendly staff.

Visit [TalleyVineyards.com/Visit](https://TalleyVineyards.com/Visit) to explore the full range of experiences and make reservations, or call 805-489-0446.