

PRESQU'ILE

ABOUT US

Located in the heart of Santa Barbara County's singular Santa Maria Valley, Presqu'ile (pronounced press-KEEL) is a small, family-run winery dedicated to making exceptional cool-climate Pinot Noir, Chardonnay and Sauvignon Blanc. Designed and planted to create a diverse tapestry of vineyard blocks, the sustainably certified, 73-acre Presqu'ile Vineyard features an array of clones, exposures and elevations. Made using this estate fruit and grapes from a handful of the finest vineyards in the valley, Presqu'ile's wines capture the essence of their vineyards and vintages, and have earned acclaim for their elegance and balance.

Presqu'ile is a multigenerational collaboration between Madison and Suzanne Murphy, their three adult children, Matt, Anna and Jonathan, and their daughters-in-law, Amanda and Lindsey. No strangers to agriculture, four generations of the Murphy family have been farming land in Louisiana going back almost a century. The Murphys are also a family of wine lovers, with a deep appreciation for the world's great Pinot Noirs. This love of the land, combined with their shared reverence for great wine, and a deep desire to create something meaningful and enduring together, led the Murphys to pool their talents and establish Presqu'ile Winery.

Led by the eldest son, Matt Murphy (who fell in love with viticulture and winemaking while working at wineries in both the Napa and Santa Maria valleys), the Murphys undertook an extensive search for ideal Pinot Noir vineyard land that spanned from Oregon to the Russian River Valley to Santa Barbara County. They found what they were looking for in Santa Maria Valley—one of the most distinctive winegrowing appellations in the world. Along with the nearby Sta. Rita Hills AVA, the Santa Maria Valley benefits from the only two transverse mountain ranges on the whole West Coast of North and South America. This rare convergence of geography and geology creates a natural funnel, drawing in cool air off the Pacific Ocean, resulting in an average annual temperature of just 64° F. With one of the longest growing seasons in all of California, the Santa Maria Valley is a true cool-climate winegrowing region, yielding wines of extraordinary elegance and purity—qualities that define the world's best Pinot Noirs and Chardonnays.

In 2007, the Murphys acquired 200-acres of coveted land a mere 16 miles from the Pacific on which to found their winery estate. They called the land Presqu'ile—the Creole word for “almost an island”—both as a tribute to a beloved Gulf Coast family gathering place that was lost in Hurricane Katrina, and because they envisioned Presqu'ile as an island-like haven amid the vines. The Murphys also brought on rising star winemaker Dieter Cronje, who Matt had spent three years working with at Ambullneo Winery, where the two had discovered a shared affinity for a more poised and elegant style of Pinot Noir.

Building on 11 acres of 2001 Pinot Noir plantings, Matt oversaw the planting of an additional 60 acres with the help of Vineyard Manager, and Santa Maria Valley viticultural specialist, Jim Stollberg. To create the most complex wines possible, Matt and the Presqu'ile team designed the vineyard as a mosaic of vineyard blocks, ranging in elevation from 700 to 1,000 feet. Matt and Dieter also handpicked the clones, choosing their favorite selections, and the clones they believed would be the most expressive. As a result, the Presqu'ile Vineyard features 32 acres and five clones of Pinot Noir, 17 acres and six clones of Chardonnay, 16 acres and six clones of Sauvignon Blanc, and small amount of Syrah and Nebbiolo.

To preserve the complexity of these grapes, as well as fruit from a handful of other acclaimed vineyards that Presqu'ile partners with, including Bien Nacido, Rim Rock and Steiner Creek, the Murphys worked with acclaimed San Francisco-based Taylor Lombardo Architects to create a gravity-flow winery designed to Matt and Dieter's specifications. In the winery, Dieter and Enologist Anna Murphy maintain the character of each block and clone by working in very small lots, often doing as many as 25 individual fermentations to make just five Pinot Noirs, and an equal number for Presqu'ile's white wines. To ensure that each wine reflects its vineyard, Dieter practices a naturally minimalist approach to winemaking, with a focus on whole clusters, native yeasts and modest new oak. As a result, Presqu'ile's wines are pure and purposeful, conveying the authentic charm, complexity and signature Santa Maria spice that have made the wines of the Santa Maria Valley famous among enthusiasts of elegant and balanced wines.

Though Presqu'ile's primary focus is to create some of the finest cool-climate wines in California, as evangelists for the Santa Maria Valley, the Murphys have also strived to make Presqu'ile an unforgettable hospitality destination. Situated high atop a hill, with ocean and vineyard views, the Presqu'ile Winery is truly stunning. Beautifully designed, and infused with the gracious southern charm of the Murphy family, Presqu'ile offers one of the most memorable wine tasting experiences on California's Central Coast. With an unparalleled lineup of classes and winery events, including an extensive calendar of concerts in its outdoor amphitheater, Presqu'ile is setting a new standard for Santa Maria Valley wine country.