



## Behind the Vine

**BY HANA-LEE SEDGWICK** Hana-Lee Sedgwick is a writer, wine consultant and lover of all things wine and food. As a Certified Specialist of Wine and Sommelier, she loves to explore the world of wine in and around her hometown of Santa Barbara. When not trying new wines or traveling, she can be found practicing yoga, cooking, entertaining and enjoying the outdoors. Visit her popular blog, Wander & Wine, for wine tips, tasting notes and adventures in wine and travel: wanderandwine.com

### FINDING GRACE IN GRENACHE

It seems unlikely that a girl from New Zealand studying filmmaking would end up in Los Alamos making wine, but luckily for us, **Angela Osborne** tasted Grenache and the rest is history. For her label, **A Tribute to Grace**, she's dedicated herself to producing single-vineyard, 100% Grenache wines, and with great success – her wines are certainly some of the best examples of California Grenache around!

Angela was born and raised in Auckland where she later attended film school in hopes of becoming a documentary filmmaker. A few months after graduation, she changed her plans and moved to Sonoma, then London to work in the wine trade. During this time, she became enthralled by Grenache and knew she wanted to make her own wine one day. In 2006, Angela returned to California to follow this



Angela Osborne produces 100% Grenache wines using grapes from the Santa Barbara Highlands



passion and, while working at a wine shop in San Diego, a chance meeting with four winemakers from Santa Barbara County led her to finally take that leap of faith.

In 2007, while working various cellar and winemaking jobs in Santa Barbara and Sonoma, Angela launched A Tribute to Grace. She started with just one wine using grapes from a very remote desert vineyard in the Santa Barbara Highlands, and today Angela makes several Grenache wines from various vineyards throughout California – from Santa Barbara to Amador County and the Santa Cruz Mountains.

As widespread as Grenache is, it's not always the most sought-after grape for winemakers. The grape thrives in hot weather, but it also needs a lot of time to ripen, which can be difficult to manage. If harvested too late, it tends to take on an over-ripe, jammy fruitiness and can be flabby and high in alcohol. That's definitely not how anyone would define Angela's wines, which can be described as, well, graceful. Naming the label after her grandmother Grace as well as her favorite attribute, Angela's goal with A Tribute to Grace is to capture the true grace of Grenache. By

finding interesting sources and staying as close to nature as possible, she's able to let the natural expression of the grape shine.

Her approach to finding great Grenache sites is to look off the beaten path, hence her finding fruit from a vineyard located 33 miles east of Santa Barbara at 3,200 feet elevation. Situated in an arid, hot area with sand, brush, and exposed rock, it seems an unlikely spot for a vineyard. However, the wine she makes from this Santa Barbara Highlands vineyard is a lovely expression of Grenache – fresh and earthy with a silky, elegant texture, accented by notes of red fruit and spice.

In fact, all of her Grenache wines I tasted (and there were a lot) were beautiful examples of Grenache. Some incorporated whole cluster and others were aged in small percentages of new oak, but they all shared a similar fruit character and earth-driven freshness.

As this petite woman effortlessly climbed atop stacks of barrels to give me samples of wine, all while enthusiastically expressing her love of this variety, it was obvious to me that Angela has found her calling. She really is a champion of California Grenache.

#### DID YOU KNOW

**Forty countries in the Western Hemisphere are now experiencing active, mosquito-borne transmission of the Zika virus, assistant secretary of state for scientific affairs, Judith Garber, told media outlets recently.**

**"It is only a matter of time before we experience local transmission in continental USA," she warned.**

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