

HALLMARK WINES

Hall winery brings together its owners' varied passions—family, Austria, and überdelicious wines

Kathryn Hall believes winemaking is a passion that captures the soul and never lets go. Her parents were grape growers and, although she and husband Craig would travel the world building their careers—she as an attorney and diplomat, he as a financier and investor—she always yearned for the vineyards. “I love being on the land, and I love the grapes,” she says. “I knew we’d come back to this someday.”

Someday arrived in 1995, when Kathryn and Craig purchased prime vineyards in Napa Valley. They enlisted winemaker Mike Reynolds—formerly of Stonestreet, Vérité, and Schramsberg—and in 1999 unveiled the critically acclaimed Kathryn Hall Vineyards Cabernet Sauvignon, made from grapes grown at their small-production winery in Rutherford. Other Bordeaux-style reds—Merlot, Cabernet Franc, and Sauvignon Blanc—soon followed.

The Hall family’s love of winemaking is equaled by their love of Austria, where they lived while Kathryn was a U.S. ambassador under President Clinton, and the couple has infused a taste of Austria into their Rutherford winery. The caves were built by Austrian master craftsman Friedrich Gruber (along with St. Helena’s Alf Burtleson Construction), and the tasting room features a jaw-dropping Swarovski Austrian crystal chandelier. “Learning about Austria’s history and traditions affected us profoundly,” Kathryn says. “Walking through the caves takes us back to an important time in our lives.”

For their new flagship location, just south of St. Helena, the Halls have enticed none other than architect Frank Gehry to design their winery. Although Gehry is often associated with far-out designs, neighbors can rest assured the winery will be suited to a rural setting. “The materials will blend into the environment,” Kathryn says, “but in a creative way, with the dramatic shapes and spaces that you associate with a Gehry building.” — Kim Olson



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