

Sextant Wines/10knots Cellars

San Luis Obispo



Much of winemaking is about getting your bearings straight. Navigating to the right site, of course, will determine your terroir and will ultimately determine the capacity for grape expression. Once there, you explore for perfect lots. The rest is a path of discovery, an epic search for potable treasure. At least this is how the Stollers view the adventure of winemaking. With Sextant Wines, the winemakers have begun a journey that exemplifies the American spirit of determination. “It’s very tough work,” says Craig Stoller, Sextant’s proprietor; “You have to love it to do it.” And by taking their passion a little bit further, the Stollers have managed to invigorate California’s Central Coast with a new winemaking character.

Though first planting Sextant’s vines in 2003, Craig and Nancy Stoller have been rooted in the wine industry for quite a while. The family owns and operates Sunridge Nurseries, an all but ubiquitous player in the region’s vineyards that has dedicated years of perfecting vine growth to earn trust and competence in wine country, guaranteeing that the nursery is truly where the vintage begins. That first planting, in fact, was intended to supply wineries with cuttings; though the typical nursery method is to let the fruit drop while clones are developing, Nancy and Craig decided to utilize the spoils. The couple’s fascination with Bordeaux-style wines led them to plant as many zinfandel clones as they could find, including some new varieties from ENTAV, the French governmental agency that validates the origin and authenticity of wine grape clones. This was Sextant’s Templeton vineyard, and the lot proved unmatched in terroir, a remarkably adept spot for the Old World clones. According to Craig: “I thought it would be great to see what these clones could do. I just didn’t think it would happen so soon.”

Top Left: Clusters of zinfandel ripen in Sextant’s Templeton vineyard.
Photograph by John Hensley, Sextant Wine Club Member

Bottom Left: Through Sextant, Nancy and Craig Stoller celebrate life and live their dream.
Photograph by Amanda Frank, Frankly Yours Photography

Facing Page: San Luis Obispo is home to Sextant Wines/10knots Cellars’ tasting room and hospitality center.
Photograph by Peter Malinowski





Wine

Sextant

Sextant



To really hit at the Bordeaux style, the Stollers, and winemaker Kevin Riley, blend so that layers of complexity become apparent. In that region in France, the climate forces blending because the grapes never fully ripen. However, here, on the Central Coast, they do, giving Sextant the perfect array of rich, full-bodied flavors. Much of this is about timing: You have to know precisely when to harvest grapes and precisely when to blend. For Sextant, a tide of accolades and critical acclaim soon came flooding in, with wine scores in the 90s from the likes of Robert Parker Jr. of *The Wine Advocate*, *Wine Enthusiast* and *Wine Spectator* to name a few. Blending with syrah, petite sirah or mourvèdre, these zinfandels—like the stellar “Night Watch” or the inviting “Wheelhouse”—certainly beg the question, “Did I just kill that whole bottle?”



As Nancy and Craig quickly became renowned for their zinfandels, their travels through Europe revealed a new love for Rhône varietals. The result was a bevy of accolades and awards for these Rhône wines, including double golds at both the Florida State and the San Francisco International Wine competitions. Their fascination with the ocean resurfaced once again with the release of their second label, 10 knots Cellars.



Top Left: A glimpse of Old Edna is enjoyed from the MacGregor vineyard.
Photograph by John Hensley, Sextant Wine Club Member

Middle Left: The perfect scene: a little Sextant, 10 knots and a splash of beach.
Photograph by Amanda Frank, Frankly Yours Photography

Bottom Left: The tasting room and hospitality center welcome visitors from around the world.
Photograph by Peter Malinowski

Facing Page: Kamal and Night Watch are treasured Sextant reserve wines.
Photograph by Peter Malinowski

This is propelled discovery. The Stoller family's wanderlust of the mind and the mouth certainly steers the Sextant ship. Herman Melville once wrote of "that thingumbob sextant perplexing eyes and hands." Well, thanks to these winemakers, we can now add the palate.



WINE & FARE

Sextant "Wheelhouse" Zinfandel

*(81% zinfandel, 16% syrah, 2% petite sirah, 1% mourvèdre)
Pair with lamb sliders with caramelized shallots, gruyère cheese and dijon aioli.*

Sextant "Nightwatch" Proprietary Red

*(45% petite sirah, 32% zinfandel, 19% syrah, 4% Grenache)
Pair with porcini rubbed filet mignon with truffle butter; served over whipped root vegetables.*

10knots "Beachcomber" White Rhone

*(61% viognier, 24% grenache blanc, 12% roussanne, 3% marsanne)
Pair with coconut crusted prawns over baby greens drizzled with warm, citrus-honey vinaigrette.*

Sextant "Santa Lucia Highlands" Chardonnay

*(100% chardonnay)
Pair with seared scallops served over arugula-endive salad with citrus herbs.*

Tastings

Open to the public daily, year-round

