

About Bokisch Vineyards

Why Spanish Varietals?

What does the name “Bokisch” have to do with Spain? Markus Bokisch has a love for Spanish wines because of his family heritage. His mother is from Spain and his father was from Germany. They met in Paris and fell in love...learning French very rapidly! Although Markus was raised in California, he and his brother spent every childhood summer in Spain with their relatives. In the Spanish tradition they were given wine with water at meals. As they grew older each year the wine & water started turning from a light pink to a deep purple as they reached adulthood. Little did Markus know, his tastebuds from then on were programmed towards Spanish wines.

Meanwhile, Liz, who grew up in Lincoln on land passed down through many generations from her pioneering relatives, spent her childhood accompanying her parents to remote vineyards in Sonoma County to pick grapes and make wine with her father and friends. Home Winemaking was a hobby she and Markus shared together after meeting in college at UC Davis.

After graduating, Markus and Liz moved to the Napa Valley where Liz was a foreign language teacher and Markus worked at Joseph Phelps Vineyards and became their viticulturist. In 1992 they moved to Spain and worked in the Spanish wine industry in Raimat and the Penedes. Upon their return, they purchased their property in the Lodi area and planted their first vineyard. Thus began Bokisch Vineyards.

The Secret of Lodi

When Markus and Liz moved from the quaint haven of Yountville in the heart of the Napa Valley to start their dream in Lodi many asked “Why”? It’s a question they get asked often from many people, except anyone from Lodi who already knows the secret! First of all, Markus has a soft spot for places that remind him of Spain. His many drives through the Delta to Lodi reminded him of the Delta del Ebro in Spain where his family lives. When he found the property in the Clements Hills east of Lodi and showed it to Liz, she also loved it because it reminded her of her family land in Placer County with rolling hills and oak trees.

Lodi also has the small town feeling that reminds both of them of their hometowns ... “Where everybody knows your name.” Besides being an excellent climate for grape growing (due to the cooling delta breezes in the summer afternoons), it’s a wonderful community to raise a family. Thus decided, they moved to Lodi with their two sons and planted their first Syrah vineyard in 1995. Soon after they began with their original “motherblock” of Tempranillo, Albariño and Graciano. They produced their first vintage of Iberian wines under the Bokisch label in 2001. Now they specialize in 10 different award winning wines which also include Garnacha, Garnacha Blanca, Monastrell and Verdelho, Verdejo and Rosado.

In 2012, they embarked on a new project called Tizona by Bokisch which specializes in small lots and unique vineyards. The same sense of adventure, just in a whole new direction! They now produce an Old Vine Zin, Malbec, Red Blend and a late harvest Graciano....perhaps a sherry or even a cava at some point in the future!

The Vineyards and Winegrapes

When Markus and Liz wanted to start making Spanish varieties in the late 1990's they ran into a stumbling block. There were no grapes to buy! They realized that they had to start from scratch and purchase land to plant Spanish varieties. Markus contacted his colleagues in Spain and imported budwood. This is how their vineyard management company began. Bokisch Vineyard Management is farming approximately 2,800 acres of winegrapes in San Joaquin, Sacramento, Solano and Yolo counties. They sell grapes to over 40 wineries from ultra-premium, organic and production. They are the largest growers of Spanish varieties in California and farm the most amount of CCOF certified organic acres in San Joaquin County. The majority of their vineyards are also certified Green under the Lodi Rules of Sustainable Winegrape Growing. Markus has played a major role in promoting sustainable farming practices. He was also the head of the steering committee for developing the 7 AVA's of the Lodi Appellation. Bokisch Vineyard produces wines from 5 of the 7 AVA's: Clements, Mokelumne River, Jahant, Borden Ranch and Sloughouse.

The Winery and Tasting Room

In 2014 Markus and Liz built their winery and tasting room on the site of their Terra Alta Vineyard in Clements, CA. This allowed them the opportunity to hire a full-time winemaker, Elyse Perry who also shares their love and passion for Iberian varieties. Elyse's philosophy is to let the grapes speak for themselves. Markus's vineyards are farmed to perfection and due to the quality of the fruit, minimal intervention is needed. They pick at lower brix to maintain natural acidity in the wines. The oak regime is a blend of American and French oak with medium toast at 20-40% new depending on the variety. Markus and Elyse work closely together to strive to create the most Spanish style wine from our vineyards in California. Many times you cannot taste the difference between whether it is domestic or imported!

They have also begun a custom crush business and house several well-known and respected wineries who also purchase many of their grapes from the vineyards farmed by Bokisch Vineyard Management. Having a tasting room on site at the winery has been a game changer. Their wine club is growing tremendously and they are known for the best wine club events and parties in Lodi as Liz is an avid foodie and prepares homemade tapas and Spanish foods for their members.