

[Sign In](#)[Daily Wine News](#)

- [Headlines](#)
- [Wine of the Day](#)
- [Question of the Day](#)
- [Live Stock Quotes](#)

[Weekly Features](#)[Wine Search](#)[Forums](#)[Library](#)[Wineries](#)[Dining](#)[Travel](#)[Wine Auctions](#)[Gift Shop](#)[Subscribe](#)[Weekly Poll](#)

This week's question:
[Where do your wine travels take you?](#)

[Make Wine Spectator
Your Homepage](#)

[Please Sign In](#)

[Your Account Information](#)

Headlines

Gil Nickel's New Napa Winery Focuses on Single-Vineyard Wines

Posted: Thursday, February 17, 2000

By James Laube

Gil Nickel, owner of Far Niente Winery in Napa Valley, will release six new single-vineyard wines from the 1997 vintage this year, and that's only the beginning.

His new winery, Nickel & Nickel in Oakville, will focus on single-vineyard wines and may end up producing as many as 20 different bottlings, including Cabernet Sauvignon, Chardonnay, Merlot, Pinot Noir, Syrah and Zinfandel.

Nickel (who founded Far Niente in 1979 and his second label, Dolce, in 1989) and his staff intend to pursue expressions of different vineyard sites at Nickel & Nickel. "Beyond what we're doing at Far Niente and Dolce, we're interested in single-vineyard wines," said Nickel.

Far Niente specializes in Napa Valley Chardonnay and Cabernet Sauvignon, with a capacity of 50,000 cases per year. Dolce, a separate brand, is a dessert wine made primarily with Sémillon; its annual production is 2,500 cases.

Nickel & Nickel is a partnership between Nickel, 60, and his son Jeremy, 22, a student at Southern Methodist University. Darice Spinelli is the winemaker. The winery will be located on Highway 29, directly east of Robert Mondavi Winery, north of Opus One and south of Turnbull. The property, known as Vyborny Ranch, was owned by French vintner Patrick Ladouette in the 1980s.

It's a prestigious vineyard area, said Nickel, who paid \$100,000 per acre for roughly 42 acres of vineyard in 1999. At the time, the price was a record high for Napa Valley vineyard land. "Sometimes you have to be willing to pay tomorrow's price today," he said.

The new winery facility is still in the planning stages. Nickel said he intends to restore most of the buildings to their original state, including a century-old two-story residence and a barn. A large portion of the 30,000-square-foot winery will be built underground. Nickel also said that he plans to build a winery for Dolce once its production reaches 5,000 cases.

Nickel & Nickel's May releases include a Merlot (\$65) from Suscol Ranch in Jameson Canyon, south of Napa, and a Zinfandel (\$35) from Ponzio Vineyard in Sonoma County's Russian River Valley. In August, four Cabernets will be released: Carpenter Vineyard (\$75), from Coombsville, southeast of Napa; Rock Cairn (\$75), from the Pelissa Ranch in Yountville; Stelling Vineyard (\$95), on the Far Niente estate; and Sullinger Vineyard (\$65), in Oakville. Production volumes range from 500 to 2,000 cases each.



Gil Nickel, who owns Far Niente, is launching the Nickel & Nickel label this spring.