



NAPA VALLEY WINERY STEPS FORWARD INTO THE PAST OF ARCHITECTURE AND DESIGN

Oakville, CA -- Nickel & Nickel, a Napa Valley winery devoted exclusively to producing 100 percent varietal, single-vineyard wines, is housed in the magnificently restored, 19th century John C. Sullenger farmstead, where the lifestyle of antiquity is joined seamlessly with the technology of the future.

Founded in 1997 by the partners of Far Niente, Nickel & Nickel is located in Oakville, along Highway 29 on 42 acres that were originally settled as a farmstead in the 1880s. The winery's collection of classic barns along with the site's original farmhouse featuring charming Queen Anne-style details, brings the historic farmstead back to life, while housing a cutting-edge winery capable of individually handcrafting Nickel & Nickel's single-vineyard wines.

The land was first developed by John C. Sullenger, a successful prospector and owner of gold, silver and quicksilver mines, who acquired the Oakville parcel in 1865. Nickel & Nickel purchased the property in 1998. The plan was three-fold: to restore the Sullenger farmstead, construct new buildings that are architecturally compatible to the historic structures, and house an ultra-modern winery uniquely suited to producing single-vineyard wines.

“Our goal was to develop a modern winery, specially outfitted to meet the needs of single-vineyard winemaking, while respecting the history of the location,” says Nickel & Nickel director of winemaking and chairman, Dirk Hampson. He adds, “Anyone driving past on Highway 29 will see a restored farmstead that appears to have been there for generations, without realizing the classic barns house an extremely sophisticated winery.”

In September 2003, Nickel & Nickel was honored with an Award of Merit from the Napa County Landmarks Commission, for its preservation efforts of the circa-1884 John C. Sullenger home.

The Sullenger home and farmstead buildings are arranged around three sides of a barnyard and surrounded by 80-year-old Sevillano olive trees and a white, three-rail fence. The following pages detail the history as well as the architectural and design details specific to each building.

The Sullenger House

Named for John C. Sullenger, who purchased the land in 1865 and established the farmstead in the 1880s, the 2,800 square-foot Sullenger House is a handsome farmhouse with charming Queen Anne details, built around 1884. Abandoned and neglected for more than two decades, Nickel & Nickel began restoration of the home in 2002. The Sullenger House serves as guest reception and hospitality. Highlights of the home's features include:

- restored and remodeled original clapboard wood siding
- original exterior detailing, including fish scale, sunburst and rosette elements
- original central hall staircase; restored original newel post and balusters
- original fir wood floors
- new brick chimneys constructed of brick that's authentic to 1880s architecture
- newly excavated, arched-ceiling cellar, finished in plaster and antique terra cotta tile
- traditional, hand-cut limestone foundation blocks
- recreated porch and second story balcony with authentic Chippendale railing
- new cedar shingle roof, typical of 1880s home construction

The interior design of the Sullenger House evokes a romantic version of the early farmstead, but with a panache appropriate for a world-class winery. Provincial in style, the interior combines a light, airy and earth-toned palette of painted woodwork, wallpaper and textiles, with an eclectic blend of distinctive antiques appropriate to the home of a prosperous, 19th century farmer, including:

- French mantles with mirrored trumeau
- early Swedish trestle tables from the 1750s
- art nouveau bisque-ware vases from eastern France
- one-of-a-kind antique crystal and beaded chandeliers

The Gleason Barn

Originally built circa 1770 in Meriden, New Hampshire by the Gleason family, the 3,000 square-foot pre-Revolutionary War-era hay barn was spared demolition by its purchase in 2001. After two years spent dismantling the barn, designing blueprints, restoring and saving the wood beams, the barn was shipped in pieces to Nickel & Nickel and was reconstructed at the winery in 2003 to house offices and a laboratory for the winemaking staff. The elements include:

- original hand-hewn, white pine and hemlock beams, fashioned in post-and-beam, wood-pegged construction; the beautifully rough beams show centuries of wear
- century-old, barn-red exterior siding, weathered to a lovely, aged patina
- the barn's interior is re-adapted to winery use, without compromising its architectural integrity
- the haylofts and animal stalls have been turned into glass-walled offices and lab space, retaining the floor-to-ceiling open feeling of the barn
- new, double-folding, divided light doors recreate the barn's original breezeway
- creative engineering enabled this 250-year-old barn to meet seismic building codes, while preserving its original interior and exterior elevations

North Fermentation Barn

The fermentation barns are the only new-construction buildings at the site. The 5,800 square-foot north fermentation barn is built with reclaimed, century-old fir beams and features traditional American barn-building methods. The wood-frame barn has been assembled using age-old techniques of hand-joinery for post and beam construction that were common in antiquity. Yet, the barn houses a modern winery equipped to handcraft the wine from each individual vineyard. Features include:

- a structure comprised of 450 century-old fir beams reclaimed from sites throughout North America, fashioned in post-and-beam, mortise-and-tenon construction
- the structure is held together by 400 wooden pegs known as "trunnels," which were driven by hand

using wooden mallets known as “beetles”

- creative engineering enabled this barn to meet seismic building codes, while preserving its 19th century style
- night-flow air regulates the barn’s temperature; louvers automatically open or close throughout the day and night, to maintain the proper temperature
- Western Red cedar board and batten siding
- exterior stone wainscot, fashioned from hand cut and chiseled limestone and volcanic tuff
- traditional galvanized tin corrugated roof
- the 19th century-style building houses 21st century equipment uniquely suited to custom making small-lot, single-vineyard wines, including 26 computer and temperature-controlled stainless steel tanks in three sizes; floating aluminum catwalks; utilities; night flow air ventilation; state-of-the-art work and aesthetic lighting

Barrel Cellar

Accessed by descending a stairway housed in a traditional stone outbuilding, and walking through a pair of hand-oiled, rail-and-stile pocket doors, the 30,000 square-foot subterranean barrel cellar appears as a beautifully dramatic and unexpected room, located beneath the fermentation barn. The cellar excavation began in June 2001 and required digging 12 feet down, below the water table, and one acre in area. Highlights include:

- 10-foot vaulted ceilings, groin arches and illuminated column capitols, inspired by old European wine cellars, provide aesthetic detail in the cellar, which is large enough to hold 3200 French oak barrels
- 25 thirteen-ton cement beams and 330 four-ton planks, each measuring 26 feet long, were craned in to create the ceiling, which is at ground level; 36 four-ton cement columns support the ceiling; these modern, pre-cast concrete structural pieces are concealed by plaster architectural detailing
- each column custom-formed to conceal hose and electrical stations, combining wine lines from the fermentation tanks above, hot water, cold water, inert gas and compressed air; the stations ease the rigors of cellar work and minimize clutter
- radiant cooling in the floor and ceiling to maintain perfect temperature control in an area of warm underground temperatures

Landscaping

The landscape design preserves centuries-old Valley Oak trees that surround the house, while adding elements of color, charm and texture common to a successful 19th century farmstead. Significant plantings include:

- a single European Horn Beam tree stands in an island of Dragon Wing Begonias at the winery entrance
- 80-year-old Sevillano Olive trees surround the estate
- a forest of River Birch, Weeping Willow, Arbutis, Crimson Queen Japanese Maple and Green Lace Japanese Maple trees stands to the right of the farmhouse, and is traversed by undulating, natural bark pathways
- a white picket fence with red climbing roses surrounds the house and a basket weave brick entry walk; the walk is lined with Iceberg Tree Roses and red rose arbors adorn the entrances; a collection of antique and heirloom roses compliment the rose gardens
- 32-foot Canary Palm trees stand at the front and rear of the house

- Crape Myrtle, Yellow Iris, Nikko Blue Hydrangea, assorted Lilacs, Viburnum, Rhododendron, Wisteria, Mexican Primrose, Ferns and Azaleas add color
- Golden Aurora Fescue dotted with California Red Poppies and Royal Carpet Alyssum grow in two large paddocks that front the property and are surrounded by a white, three-rail fence

Architects & Designers

A number of companies and artisans from the Bay Area and beyond contributed their talents to Nickel & Nickel. They include:

- General Contractor: James Nolan Construction (St. Helena, CA)
- Architects: Brandenburger, Taylor, Lombardo (San Francisco, CA) – architectural services for Gleason Barn and Fermentation Barn; Architectural Resources Group (San Francisco, CA) – historic preservation architecture for Sullenger House
- Barn Acquisition and Design: The Barn People (Windsor, VT) – sourced, restored and reconstructed the Gleason Barn; Timber Creations (Santa Rosa, CA) – sourced timber, designed and built frame of Fermentation Barn
- Interior Design: Candra, Scott & Anderson (San Francisco, CA)
- Landscaping: Townsend Garden Design (Napa Valley, CA)
- Nickel & Nickel Project Managers: Dirk Hampson, president and director of winemaking; and Erik Nickel, partner

Nickel & Nickel will open its doors to the public, by appointment, in July 2003. Upon opening, visitors will be offered tours of the winery's historic farmstead buildings as well as tastings of Nickel & Nickel's collection of single-vineyard Cabernet Sauvignon and other vineyard-designated varietal wines.

Nickel & Nickel is located at 8164 St. Helena Highway, Oakville, Napa Valley. For more information on wine tastings and tours, call (707) 967-9600, or visit the winery's website at www.nickelandnickel.com.