

A photograph of a modern, single-story house with a large covered patio. The house features a gabled roof with wood slat siding and large glass windows. The patio is supported by dark columns and has a matching wood slat ceiling. The house is surrounded by trees and a clear blue sky.

The House that Costco Built

By Jeffrey Gomez

There comes a time in one's life when you want to branch out. Sure the staid and daily routine of normalcy is comforting. And the thought that there needn't be any interruptions to your plans has its charms. But that is fallacy. Times won't always be great and tumult is just an accident away. Once we realize how fragile it all is, then we become more alive to the world around us. And we soon crave a bit of adventure and a change of venue.

Having worked for Costco for 21 years, David Sinegal knows a thing or two about efficiency and hard work. Following in the footsteps of his dad (James Sinegal, the co-founder and one time CEO of Costco), David learned business on a dynamic and large scale. He, over his lengthy tenure at the shopping giant, oversaw the purchasing and the need for structure and discipline to maintain not only a competitive advantage, but a sane life as well. However, like most people in the midst of their success, he yearned for something more, something different.

Based in the cool and oft showery climate of Seattle, Costco is not ideally located for



someone who yearns to be out of doors and amongst the soil of the Earth. And so it was that David wanted for something he could not quite put his hand on. It would not be for some time when he realized where his life needed to be. On a fortuitous trip to Napa Valley, he fell in love with a stately grand Victorian house built in 1881 with accompanying vineyards. And in an instant, that quiet voice that echoed in his mind all those years, finally had its effect. Closing shortly on the purchase, David was now a Napa Valley resident. But what about those vines?

Knowing full well that a winemaker he was not, David enlisted the help of several people to go over and create a game plan for what could be done with his sacred lot. Harnessing all that he learned at Costco, David had a comprehensive strategy for what is now Sinegal Estate Winery. First off, renowned winemaker Anthony “Tony” Biagi, formerly of the Plumpjack Group, took the helm as winemaker for Sinegal. He, along with Ryan Knoth, Trevor Antognini, Matt Hardin and Eddie Trask all shape the future of Sinegal and their wines.

The next step in conquering



Napa and making his life more complete, David had to actually produce a wine. So the first harvest was set, refined, fermented and bottled. And that is exactly where I found myself a few weeks ago for this story. Sitting in the still to be completed tasting room of Sinegal, tasting their first dance into the wide world of wine. With three glasses before me, I sat there wondering to myself if David was truly in it for the sanctity or just the glory.

As a sommelier and one highly educated on the nuances of wine, I sat there with a chagrin that I'd find fault with the wines. It was not that I wanted to, but there is something to be said for someone who comes into Napa Valley and thinks they can deliver on their first try. I, at the time, was unaware of David and the journey it took him to get to that point. And so down the wine went.

On the nose, each wine was expressive and brilliant. Notes of terror were perfectly balanced with varietal characteristics showing nicely. I was flummoxed. Surely my nose is missing some downer of a note. So I moved to tasting. Swirling the wines around on my palate, I looked around the room and noted its beautiful decor. Surely this was conspiring to make me lose focus of the wines. What I found was great body with notes of fruits, soil and miner-

ality. Each wine was focused in their approach and had a structure to hold them up. It was pure heaven!

“We are focused on providing visitors a comprehensive tour and tasting, where all property attributes are explored – from 1881 onward, we aim to connect the old and new; the established and forthcoming, through a series of awe-inspiring venues and wines,” said David Sinegal. After having tasted his wines, I can assure you that there is nary a thing out of joint at Sinegal Estate Winery. When the property is up to full capacity, it will delight visitors and quiet naysayers who think David is just another minted outsider looking to make a vanity wine. I implore you to make an appointment to stop by Sinegal on your next visit to Napa Valley. There is surely a thing or two to enjoy and more than enough wine to make your palate dance. I left with David saying, “With heritage that dates back to 1881, Sinegal Estate is layered with diversity. From the botanical gardens to the private lake; from the newly completed wine caves and lounges to the magnificent front lawn and the storied Cabernet Franc parcel, Sinegal offers highly unique and sought-after experiences, as well as world-class wine”. Indeed David, indeed.

www.sinegalestate.com