

Welcome to SUISUN VALLEY



Talking with Frank Vezer, Vezer Family Vineyards

What attracted you to Suisun Valley?

My first six years of life were in a mining town nestled in the Cassiar Mountain range near the westernmost Yukon border of Canada. At age six my family moved to a ranch in central British Columbia. The little town was called Fraser Lake and it is in the Omineca Valley ... Omineca means "slow moving water." The Omineca Valley is surrounded by the Fraser Mountains. Vezer Family summers were spent traveling to the family's birthplace of Pecs, Hungary located in the Mecsek Mountains. My childhood memories of beautiful sheltered valleys and the scenes from the sun's shadows on the hillsides enveloping the picturesque valleys were re-ignited when I first visited the Suisun Valley some 22 years ago. Cradled on the west by the Vaca Mountains and at the north by the Twin Sisters Summit, Suisun Valley embodied all those memories. There was no doubt that Suisun Valley is where my wife Liz and I should raise our children!

Though not widely known, Suisun Valley (pronounced "Sue-son" and meaning West Wind to the original Wappo Indian settlers) is one of the older American Viticultural Areas (AVAs) in North America and is approaching its 29th birthday. Suisun Valley boasted the largest winery pre-prohibition era in North America. Suisun Valley was also a favorite getaway of General Mariano Vallejo, closest confidants, and especially his daughter and her husband. The Blue Victorian Mansion was part of a land grant gift some 170 years by Spanish King Ferdinand VII for helping him settle the area. The Suisun Valley Village of Mankas Corners, originally Manka's Corner was established by the mining family Manka in 1846. The Mankas Corner had a general store with a Pony Express office and accommodations for weary delivery riders and other travelers.

Today, Mankas Corner still has a "general store," Mankas Café, Barista Café & Deli, Mankas Corner Vezer Family Winery and neighboring an-

tique store, salon and more. Vezer Family and staff are happy to share hospitality, time and local lore with visitors. The winery building is on the National Historic Registry and has a commemorative plaque about the Pony Express as you enter the tasting room. Outside there are beautiful gardens and special event area for concerts or weddings.

What do you love about being in the wine and hospitality industry?

My Hungarian heritage and combined with Liz's Portuguese family culture destined us to naturally follow in our parents footsteps. Both the Duarte and the Vezer regularly opened their home and shared their bounty. Next to soccer, hospitality is the most shared cultural love between the Hungarians and the Portuguese. Liz and I have always thoroughly enjoyed entertaining. Liz is a very talented chef, and it is not unusual for us to gather 20 to 30 around our big dining table at the Ranch. Now that our children are growing up and some have families of their own, we are witnessing with great joy that this strong tradition is continuing to the next generation of the Vezer-Duarte family. In short, it was inevitable that our family move "grapes to table" and invite everyone to share our "joie de vie" in toasting and breaking bread. We so enjoy when our wine club members visit for events. They come from everywhere in the "neighborhood" like Walnut Creek, Blackhawk/Danville, Sacra-

mento and around the United States. We also have club members from international origins like Montreal, Toronto, Vancouver, Budapest, Pecs, Lucerne, Como, Bergamo, Rome and Lisbon to name a few.

The Concert Series is a self-serving event, because Liz and I so enjoy live performance entertainment that we can dance to! People often just "drop by" accidentally because we are so easily accessible from State Highway 80 between San Francisco and Sacramento. We also enjoy being able to work with regional restaurateurs and chefs to bring our wine for pairing dinners at their locations.



Talking with Frank Vezer, continued

Vezer Family Vineyard is the 'family' part real or is that a corporate name?

I am a romantic at heart, sometimes at the expense of embarrassing my wife and daughters. My dream was born after watching the movie "Walk in the Clouds," where the whole entire family was involved in every aspect of the farming and producing of the wine. Now my dream is a reality! My son-in-law Jake is about 85% involved in the winemaking as our Cellar Master, my daughter Gabby – Jake's wife – works on various aspects of our marketing efforts, my daughter Cassie takes care of the special events, private parties and weddings. Cassie's fiancé, Marco has the dual responsibilities of assisting Jake and working in the tasting room for special events. My second youngest daughter, Sophie, operates the floral services for weddings or events and for the Suisun Valley locals. All the flowers come directly from the gardens of the Vezer Family Estate. Last but not least ... my "baby daughter" Frankie at nine years old is the "roving ambassador" and "bus girl" at many of the wine club parties and some of the special concert events we have regularly. Aunt Tommie runs the Barista Café & Deli packing visitors off with great lunches to enjoy at our garden patios at the Mankas Corner or Blue Victorian wineries. Aunt Maggie takes care of the lodging needs of our VIPs at our B & B guest house. My wonderful wife,

Liz is the most amazing "Master Blender" and regularly holds cooking classes that help make everyone who attends experts in pairing and preparation. My best friend, Sam Mizirawi is involved in the management of quality control, compliance and inventory. His son, Justin is our webmaster. Then there is "Uncle Gary," Gary Galleron our winemaker ... he has been made an "official" member of the family by our daughters. To them, everyone is family! Another dear friend has become like my "younger brother" is Chris Livadas, our General Manager. Chris is somewhat of a "family manager" brings in staff that is compatible with the passionate fervor the Vezer-Duarte clan has for greeting, sharing and taking care of guests. Chris is also likely to be your personal guide on the private ATV Vineyard tours we offer!

What do you think about Suisun in comparison to other California wine regions, including your Napa neighbors?

Suisun Valley ranks as one of the most unique and strategic position of any wine region in California today. The climate is ideal, with warm sunny days and cool moist nights from ocean-influenced fog blanketing the evenings and leaving the vineyards glistening in the morning. Suisun Valley soils benefits from some of the same volcanic ash that once spewed from Mt. St. Helena five million years ago, similar to the neighboring Napa Valley and its close proximity of 44 miles from San Francisco and its Bay. The 12-mile difference west of Napa Valley and warmer climate makes for heartier fruit. Many of our visitors are sent from the Napa wineries which have been buying some of our fruit for years and are only a 15-25 minute car trip away. In fact, Napa Valley has been the single largest purchaser of Suisun Valley grapes for almost 50 years. Spending millions of dollars Napa Valley vintners value Suisun Valley both for its quality and due to the fact that there is no vineyard growth in their valley.

Where do you see the future of Vezer Family Vineyard and Suisun Valley?

The geographic proximity and the agricultural value Suisun Valley shares with Napa Valley will continue to bring recognition that Suisun Valley AVA as a premium grape-growing and wine producing destination worth cultivating for the wine and tourism industries. Suisun Valley is affectionately referred to as "Napa's little sister Sue" and the familial relationship is an honor and supports the great visionary efforts begun in both Napa and Sonoma Valleys being continued in Suisun Valley.

So, we "Sue-s" appreciate and thank Napa for their continued support and sharing their great success!



BLUE VICTORIAN
5071 Suisun Valley Road
Fairfield
Tasting Daily 10am-5pm
707-422-8025
www.BlueVictorian.com
Bring in this ad for a complimentary tasting!



VEZÉR
FAMILY VINEYARD

*Visit Beautiful Suisun Valley –
the Napa Back Road
Taste Vezer's Award-Winning Wines*

COMPLIMENTARY TASTING
*Present this ad or mention: Wine Country This Week
Valid for daily tastings at Mankas Corner or Blue Victorian*



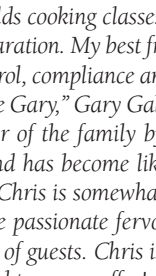
TASTING ROOM & BARISTA CAFÉ
2522 Mankas Corner Road, Fairfield
Sun-Thu 10am-5pm • Fri-Sat 10am-6pm



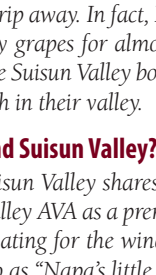
VEZÉR FAMILY PRIVATE RANCH
Appointment only
Call 707-422-8025



Weddings & Private Parties









Barrell Tasting



Wine Tours

888-823-VINE (8463) • www.VezerFamilyVineyard.com