

Latino Leaders

The National Magazine of the Successful American Latino



NAPA VALLEY MORE LATINO THAN EVER

Unbeknownst to mainstream America, the hands behind many of the best wines produced in the Napa valley belong to Hispanics. Now, a new wave of Latinos are producing their own wine and taking the country by storm.

Next time you open a bottle of wine from California you should remember that it has 99.9% possibilities that the entire grape production to make it was planted, grown, managed, pampered and harvested by Mexican-Americans.

There is probably no other industry in the country with more Latino hands involved in every stage of the process than the California Wine industry, responsible for almost 73% of all the wine consumed in the US.

Some experts say that the fruit (grape) represents between 70% to 90% of the recipe to make good wine (decent bottle: \$30 and up). A winemaker will make important decisions that will account for 5% to 25%, and marketing, labeling and promoting will add the remaining 5% to 10%. If this is true, or even assuming that the grapes aren't that vital but still very much important to the final product, we can say that at least half of the credit for any bottle of wine produced in California goes to Latinos. This means that from the \$8 bottles you find in the supermarket to the \$150 cult wine you get from a catalog of a boutique winery, such wines are made by Latinos.

But what kind of wine are they making? Alex Sotelo, who just introduced his Zinfandel, makes a very interesting point: none of us is doing a poor quality wine; all the Latinos I know are making good quality wines, nothing less than \$18 per bottle, and some are doing extra high-end wines of more than \$90 per bottle.