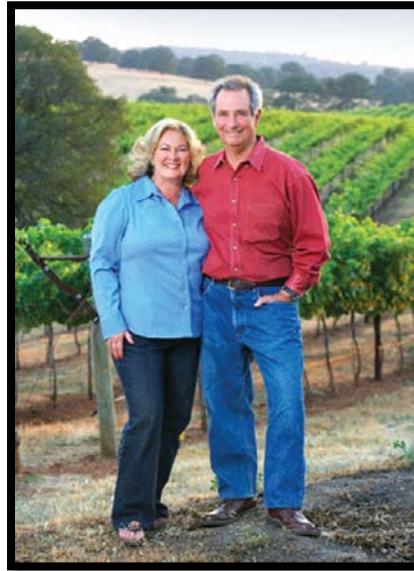


Grower Profile – Mike Naggiar



Vineyard: Naggiar Vineyards

Owners: Mike and Diane Naggiar

AVA: Grass Valley (Sierra Foothills)

Varietals we use: Grenache, Mourvèdre, Cinsault, Counoise, Viognier, Roussanne, Marsanne, Grenache Blanc

Back Story: After 32 years in marketing and sales with Hewlett Packard, Mike Naggiar decided to take an early retirement. But he didn't want to stop working, he just wanted a new challenge. He and his wife, Diane, were living in the San Francisco Bay Area where they had a small hobby vineyard. Interested in wine grape growing, they began to consider pursuing it full time as their next adventure. They spent three years searching all over Northern California before settling on 160 acres of land in the Sierra Foothills.

The climate and soil conditions in that area are perfect for growing Mediterranean varietals and the Naggiars planted 50 acres worth under the guidance of their viticulturist, Larry Bradley. Larry is also responsible for connecting Ray and Nancy Coursen with the Naggiars. Mike said he sells grapes to many premium Napa and Sonoma wineries but Elyse Winery is special because it was his second customer and Ray has since become a friend.

Why It's Unique: The Naggiars took great care in assessing and developing their vineyard land, which sits on a large knoll at an elevation of 1300 feet with sloping hillsides undulating around it. Before planting they researched historical weather data and took numerous soil samples to analyze the chemistry and physical factors to gauge the suitability of cultivating grape vines. Once they determined the soil was favorable, they deep ripped and deep slip plowed the site to get a top down and bottom up

*Elyse
Winery*

mixing of compacted soil layers for planting. The gravelly soil provides ample drainage beneath the vines, which are sparsely irrigated to create low yields of tighter, more intense berries.

The owners have also taken great care to be as environmentally friendly as possible along the way. They planted their vine rows across the hillsides and added cover crops to keep erosion at bay. They have also kept the property's old oak trees to maintain natural wildlife, and added owl boxes to help with gopher and rodent control. They have adopted state of the art growing practices including the use of weather stations and soil moisture sensors to monitor the conditions in the vineyard at all times.

When it comes to handling the actual vines themselves, the Naggiars are very particular. They put an emphasis on canopy management throughout the growing season to keep vertical, clean vines. They focus on providing vines a good balance of shoots and grape clusters and fruit that is partially exposed to the sun. The area's hot days, cool afternoon breezes and cold nights produce an ideal balance that contributes to highest quality grapes, which are eventually picked by hand in the cool of night.

Deepening Roots: Since Mike and Diane planted their first vines on the property in 1998, Naggiar Vineyards has expanded to become a true family business. What started as a steady stream of family and friends gathering for holidays and visits, quickly morphed into new employees relocating their families to be nearby. The first to join the fun was their nephew, Tony, and his wife and kids who moved down from Montreal. A year later, Mike and Diane's son, Shawn, and his family also made the move, leaving their San Jose, CA home behind.

Fun Fact: 17 different varieties are grown in Naggiar Vineyards! They produce predominately Rhone grapes, but also some Italian and Bordeaux varieties. Mike likes to give his winery partners many options with which to work when they are blending.

Ray Says: Mike Naggiar came to the vineyard business via the hi-tech business. Mike designed and created his vineyard and has become one of the top growers in the grass valley area.

