

Rodney Strong Vineyards



Greg Fulford, Jim Magness, John Leyden & Joe Mironicki

Rodney Strong Vineyards has dramatically changed since it was acquired by the Klein family in 1989. Dedicated to producing quality wines exclusively from Sonoma appellations including Russian River, Chalk Hill, Alexander Valley and Sonoma Coast, they have become one of the most important premium wineries in California.

Under the leadership of Tom Klein, Proprietor, and a dedicated staff, the winery has upgraded its facilities literally from the ground up. From acquisition and development of estate vineyards to grape processing, barrel warehousing, super premium winery within a winery, and most recently a wine bottling plant, every aspect of the Rodney Strong facility has been upgraded.

In 2005, the existing bottling line (installed in 1993 and with some 1985 vintage equipment) was running double shifts to keep up with market demand. Although the maintenance and bottling teams had done an exceptional job, the line required constant maintenance and no longer could meet the desired production needs of the winery.

A bottling line acquisition team was developed to define objectives, evaluate equipment and potential vendors and ultimately make recommendations to the Board. The team leaders were Tobin Ginter, CFO; John Leyden, Senior VP of Packaging and Distribution; and Jim

Magness, Facilities Manager. After several weeks of meetings, vendor presentations, visits to view bottling lines, and audits of prospective suppliers' facilities, the team recommended purchasing the Bertoloso Unibloc 48/54/9, and the Robino & Galandrino Z Astra 18 capsuling machine.

John Leyden expressed a number of reasons why they chose the Bertoloso/ColloPack package:

- Positive previous experience with Bertoloso filling and corking equipment and R&G capsuling machines
- Competitive pricing
- Confidence in the capabilities of ColloPack's after sales parts and service departments
- Technical advantages including closed-loop automatic CIP system; low maintenance, reliable wine filling system; and durable, low maintenance corking jaws.
- Controlled atmosphere chamber above the filler to protect filling environment from contaminants.

The bloc was installed and started up in March of 2006. Jim Magness, Maintenance Manager, appreciates its many benefits including the precise control of the bottle through the rinser/filler/corker bloc. Also because of the modular construction of the bloc, Jim now is syncro-linking (without any modifications to the existing bloc's structure) a new Bertoloso Sigma ROPP Capper.

Rodney Strong Vineyards is dedicated to crafting world-class wines with complexity and varietal expression that capture the essence of Sonoma County. With their new line bottling line, they are confident that they will meet the quality, packaging, and sales demands of their current and future customers.

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