



Office of Public Affairs
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News Release

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Cal Poly Pomona Harvests First Batch of Zinfandel for Private Label

Grapes grown from prize-winning Zinfandel cuttings from historic De Ambrogio Ranch

POMONA, Calif. — August 28, 2008 — After seven years of nurturing historic Zinfandel cuttings into a vineyard, Cal Poly Pomona has harvested its first Zinfandel grapes to make a private label wine.

Six students and staff spent eight long hours on Thursday, Aug. 28, harvesting 4.34 tons of Zinfandel wine grapes from two campus vineyards. The grapes were immediately trucked to South Coast Winery in Temecula, where they will be crushed, fermented and bottled as white Zinfandel.

"This is historic," said College of Agriculture Dean Les Young. "We're not winemakers, so this is all new to us. It took 7 years of trial and tribulation, but now we're truly enjoying the fruits of our labor."

The trial Young refers to is the long process of acquiring the prize-winning Zinfandel cuttings and nurturing the grapes to have the right levels of sugar and acid for wine.

The Zinfandel cuttings were from Don Galleano, who combed the fields in Rancho Cucamonga and selected 400 grapevine cuttings, some of them nearly 100 years old, from the De Ambrogio Ranch vineyard just before it was razed for development. These Zinfandels were then potted in Cal Poly Pomona's nursery with the hope of maintaining a small piece of the Cucamonga Valley's rich wine-producing history.

"We wanted to take these prized cuttings from the De Ambrogio Ranch, which represents a lot of the history of the Cucamonga Valley, and preserve them for future generations," says Galleano, a third-generation vintner who operates the Galleano Winery in Mira Loma and Galleano Enterprises, the largest shipper of grapes in Southern California.

Today, the old-line Zinfandel cuttings from De Ambrogio Ranch, which have won multiple gold

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medals in international wine competitions, are part of the university's new viticulture program.

"Grapes are the second-largest agricultural commodity in the state, and we didn't have a single grapevine on this campus," said Dan Hostetler, a professor and chair of the Plant Sciences department. "A lot of our students are getting jobs in viticulture or consulting to vineyards, and we wanted to create a hands-on lab in that area."

The cuttings were grafted to three acres of root stock planted on campus.

Each step of the way, students have done the bulk of the work, plowing the field, tending the cuttings in the nursery and grafting them to the roots.

Junior horticulture major Tim Crane was harvesting Zinfandel alongside graduate plant sciences student Paul Nurre on Aug. 28.

"I wanted to do it so I could learn about the grapes up close," said Crane. "I'm really interested in viticulture so I've been nagging Paul with questions all day. It's just so effective to learn this way because you get your hands right in there. I was learning about Pierce's disease and then saw it up close."

Two California Lottery grants totaling \$50,000 and the generosity of the community have contributed to the project. Alumnus Don Hendrickson of Hendrickson Brothers Irrigation designed the watering system; California Grapevine Nursery contributed the root stocks; and Galleano, who managed the Di Ambrogio Ranch, donated the historic cuttings. Geysler Peak Winery, which has used De Ambrogio grapes in their own wines, helped get the project going with financial backing. The winery has offered to help bottle the university's wine when it's ready.

In the future, the department of Plant Sciences and the College of Agriculture hope to partner with the Collins College of Hospitality Management to provide new coursework and programs on winemaking, grape production and wine marketing.

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ABOUT CAL POLY POMONA — Striking a balance between urban excitement and rural charm, Cal Poly Pomona is nestled in 1,438 rolling acres in the heart of sunny Southern California. With 3,000 faculty and staff to serve 21,500 students, Cal Poly Pomona's mission is to advance knowledge by linking theory and practice while preparing students for leadership and careers in a multicultural world. The university seeks to place learning at the center of every program, course, and activity on campus. Students can apply their knowledge through hands-on projects, collaborate with faculty members on research, and participate in valuable internships and service learning programs. Eight colleges (agriculture; business administration; education; engineering;

environmental design; hospitality management letters, arts and social sciences; and science) offer 56 undergraduate and 23 graduate degrees, as well as 8 credential programs.