



FIERI ON FIRE, SONOMA STYLE

Guy Fieri, chef, restaurateur, TV star and Northern California native, has made Sonoma County home for more than 20 years. It's also where he found a vineyard in the Russian River Valley, and a path into wine. His release of Hunt & Ryde wines last year, made with Davis Family Vineyards, represents a small-production, organically farmed operation. —*Virginia Boone*

You've lived in Sonoma for some time. Why did you choose here?

It's an enormous melting pot with so many influences, so many different cultures of food, from cheesemaking and organic farming to the Italian influence to Bodega Bay to its connection to San Francisco to the Gravenstein Apple Fair. It has it all.

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Were you trying to avoid the celebrity wine route by naming the wine for your sons?

I wanted the wine to stand on its own without my name. I wanted quality, organic, and a price that's approachable. If you can

give something like that to your kids—God's not making any more land in the Russian River—it's a legacy they can have.

You did a high-school year abroad in France. How crucial was that to your career path?

My parents exposed me to so much culture, but [when] I went to France I saw food from a 180-degree-different mindset...what the cheese tastes like, what the bread tastes like. It was like going from a black-and-white movie to IMAX. It taught me there are no boundaries.

Do you consider yourself a populist when it comes to food and wine?

I'm not always a triple-burger guy. I'm slowly educating people to go to mom-and-pop places, try new stuff, order something they've never had before, gain a perspective. I'm just happy to be one of the soldiers in the food revolution that we're in the middle of.

Do you think wine remains out of touch for a lot of your fans and customers?

Availability has more to do with people's understanding than anything socioeconomic. As people get closer to it, the more they understand it, the more they'll consider it. I've got a lot of everyday, blue-collar, all-American folk who are fans of mine, opening their mind[s] to wine.

Do you think we, as diet- and nutrition-obsessed Americans, tend to deny ourselves pleasures of the table and glass? That we're afraid to just enjoy?

I hear people say 'I don't eat carbs anymore,' and I wonder, if they get hit by a truck tomorrow, was it worth it? Don't give anything up, just do it in moderation. It doesn't have to be all or nothing. To savor the moment more, to cook with your family and engage with your family, to not always eat on the run, that's what it's about.