

Laurie Jervis: Winemaker Dana Volk Launches Second Label Called Happy Mommy Wines

Her debut vintages total 600 cases, including two whites, a red and rosé



by Laurie Jervis, Noozhawk Columnist

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Dana Volk of Dana V. Wines has launched a second label called Happy Mommy Wines.
(Laurie Jervis / Noozhawk photo)

Longtime Santa Barbara County winemaker Dana Volk of Dana V Wines has a second, newer label with a name well suited to Mother’s Day — Happy Mommy Wines.

Volk launched Happy Mommy earlier this year with two whites, a red and rosé. Her debut vintages total 600 cases but she’ll increase that number to 4,000 with the 2023 harvest.

The wines, she said, are “easy and approachable” and will appeal to “both novices and experienced wine drinkers.”

Each label includes the brand’s tagline — “It’s Me Time,” with individual monikers, among them the 2021 “Kids in Bed Red,” the 2022 “Girls Night White,” the 2021 “Date Night White” and the 2022 “Take Me Away, Rosé.”

The red is a blend of syrah, grenache and counoise, “Girls Night White” a sauvignon blanc, “Date Night White” a chardonnay and the rosé a grenache. Their prices range from \$15 to \$24 per bottle.

“I wanted to create a brand for other women like me, who enjoy a fine glass of wine and a little “me time” now and again. Happy Mommy is dedicated to them.”



Happy Mommy Wines currently includes four wines — two whites, one red and a rosé. The wines are priced from \$15 to \$24 per bottle. (Courtesy photo)

Five years ago, Volk opened a tasting room on Mission Drive in Solvang for her Dana V. label, but she's directing her Happy Mommy Wines toward California's wholesale market. Currently the label is available at Parkway Market in Buellton and New Frontiers in Solvang.

Volk's Dana V. Wines showcase vineyard-designated wines, including a pinot noir from Duvarita Vineyard just west of the Sta. Rita Hills AVA. Happy Mommy Wines are sourced from various vineyards throughout Santa Barbara County and the larger Central Coast region. Case production is currently 2,000 per year, Volk said.

A native of the Santa Ynez Valley, Volk graduated from Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo. The current and renowned Viticulture and Enology Department had yet to be established, she said. Volk studied nutrition, setting her sights on becoming a dietician, and minored in food science, an excellent step toward winemaking.

"I started waiting tables at age 14, and put myself through high school and college," she recalled. That experience provided her with "an early appreciation for food and wine."

After graduating in 1996, Volk took a harvest lab internship at Edna Valley Vineyards, where she fell in love in the science of making wine.

The next year, she accepted a job at Kendall Jackson (now Jackson Family Wines), where over several years' time she held various positions, analyzing production methods for seven wineries on the Central Coast, and later, in Chile and Argentina, she said. She also completed an MBA.

After she married and her spouse relocated for work to New York City, Volk continued working harvests in Santa Barbara County before spending the remainder of each year on the East Coast, she said.

She is a mother to two teen daughters, one a student at Santa Ynez Valley Union High School and the other a resident of Santa Rosa facility for students with special needs.

"As a single mom of two autistic children, I know how much energy, effort, patience, time, empathy and humor it takes to sustain this kind of hectic life. Time that I can carve out for myself, or to visit with friends, renews and grounds me," Volk said.

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