



BACKGROUNDER: GRAPE GROWING IN THE ARIZONA DESERT

Estate Vineyards:

40 acres of Estate Vineyard, 10250 East Turkey Creek Road in Pearce, 45 miles from Willcox, in southeastern Arizona

Appellation:

It currently falls under the Willcox Appellation. Aridus and other Vineyards have proposed a new AVA: **Chiricahua Foothills**, taking its name from the nearby 11,985-acre **Chiricahua National Monument**.

The Chiricahua name:

Pronounced **CHIRR-i-KAH-wə**, the name comes from a band of Apache Native Americans who were based in this area in the Southwest. The most well-known names of Apaches in American history are Cochise and Geronimo. The Chiricahua tribal territory encompassed today's southeastern Arizona, southwestern New Mexico and in northern Mexico, the mountain sanctuaries of the Sierra Madre. The name Chiricahua is most likely the Spanish rendering of the Opata word Chihuicahui or Chiguicagui ('mountain of the wild turkey'), referring to the Chiricahua Mountains.

History of the property:

The land had been used as grazing land for livestock

Farming:

Primarily sustainable, using organic alternatives whenever possible as well as drip irrigation

Notable harvest:

The 2017 harvest is the first for whites from the estate vineyard---Sauvignon Blanc, Viognier and Malvasia Bianca.

Grape most likely to succeed on the estate vineyard:

Malvasia Bianca, Petite Sirah, Malbec

Elevation:

5,200 feet, higher than the town of Willcox

Weather:

The estate vineyard sees extremes of weather, from as hot as 100 degrees in the summer to wind, rain, hail (in July) and snow. During harvest season (July – September), the weather is initially hot (an average of 95 degrees) and dry; in July, August and September there are monsoon rains, which lower the temperature and raise the humidity. Temperatures range from the 70s to the 100s. Nights get down to an average of 45-55 degrees in the summers/during harvest.

Vineyard layout:

The 40 acres are divided by Turkey Creek, which is the largest water flow coming down from the Chiricahua Foothills. The “North Side” is planted to white varietals on a 20-22 degree angle and north-south configuration. The “South Side” is planted in an east-west configuration, which was an intentional design to allow the strong winds to blow through the vines but not damage them.

Local landmarks:

Nearby is a ranch, which raises wild turkeys and then releases them into the wild. Nearby the Vineyards, Johnny Ringo’s gravesite is located. The Cochise Stronghold B&B (Chief Cochise and his Apache Warriors history) along with beautiful hiking.

Soil:

North Side: color changes from dark grey to reddish brown. 1,500 Cabernet Sauvignon vines were planted here in May 2017. The soil has so many river rocks that the rocks had to be jackhammered and then augured for holes large enough to insert the grapevines.

On the South Side the soil is dramatically different; it’s rich, red loamy sand, and river rock.

Wildlife:

From fish in the creek, frogs on the banks, turtles, lizards and rattlesnakes, to white-tail deer, mountain lions, black bears, fox and javalina, this area has a wide variety of roaming reptiles, birds, insects and large and small predators and prey.

Irrigation:

This is primarily an agricultural growing region, so the property is designed with irrigation in mind. The property---uniquely---is divided in half by Turkey Creek. We may one day be able to use water from the creek but currently we have two wells.

Vine spacing:

The North Side vineyard (whites) is planted at 8' x 4 Bi-lateral. The South Side vineyard (reds) is 10' x 5'. The spacing differs to accommodate irrigation and accessibility.

The blocks:

There are signs distinguishing the different varietals in the vineyard.

History of planting:

The North Side was planted in 2015. Cabernet was planted in The South Side in 2017.

Specialized for this terroir:

The vines planted on the North Side came from Nova Vine and Herrick Vines (in California). The rootstock is drought tolerant. We decided on particular varietals and clones after talking to other Arizona grape growers and considering our unique weather, soil, sun and water conditions. Southside rootstock was purchased from New Mexico.

Harvesting:

Grapes are harvested beginning at midnight on so that they can arrive at the winery in the early morning. The trip from the vineyard in Pearce to the winery in Willcox takes about 45 minutes.

Why farm grapes in Arizona:

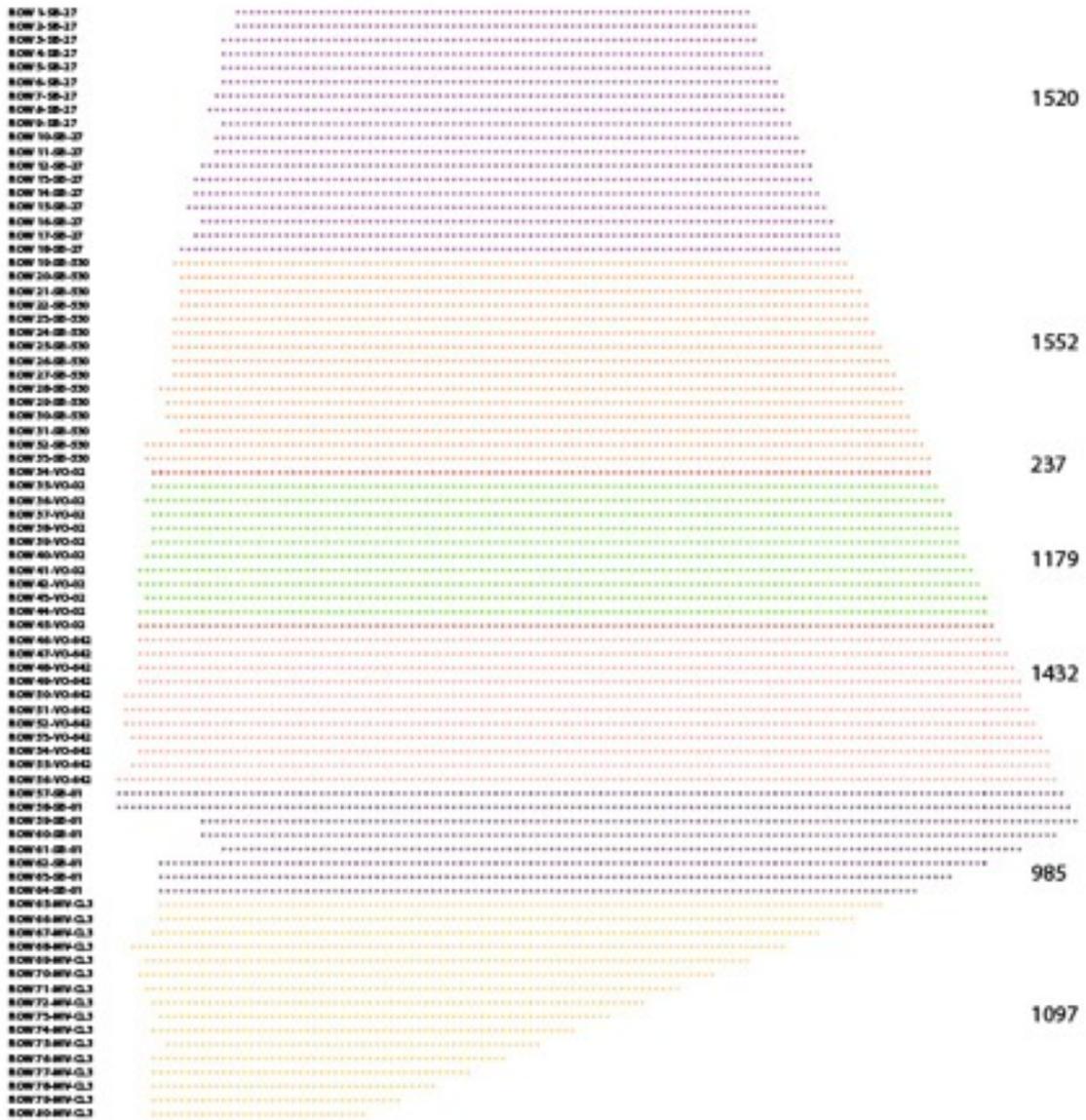
Proprietor Scott Dahmer explains, "Hot days, cool nights, minerality of the soil. Our state's motto has five Cs----Climate, Cattle, Cotton, Citrus and Copper. Why not add a 6th? Cabernet? That said, southeastern Arizona has been compared to the same climate as Argentina with semi-arid desert-like climates, less than 13 inches of rain annually, an average temperature of 90-100 degree days with cool nights in the mid 40's and 50's. Malbec grows extremely well here, as do all Spanish varieties. I believe Arizona is the next up and coming grape growing region which will produce unique, world-class delicious wines."

History of viticulture in Arizona:

Proprietor Scott Dahmer answers, “It’s what people might assume; ‘it is cowboy country and the pioneers who planted vineyards in Arizona just decided to plant whatever they wanted.’ They planted....and we learned what not to do. We are still learning what works and what doesn’t.”



Backgrounder: Grape Growing In The Arizona Desert





Geronimo Goyaałé (Geronimo)



Cochise
Apache 1812-1874