

Artiste

wine for art lovers

art for wine lovers

Colorful, original, comfortable, Artiste Winery and Tasting Studio in downtown Santa Ynez transports visitors to a working art studio reminiscent of 19th Century France, complete with easels, canvases and paints on hand for the secret artiste in us all.

And yes, their delicious wines work their magic in unleashing that creative side.

On a recent Saturday afternoon, sampling Artiste's tasty reds and whites in rooms filled with original local artwork, one imagines that

Claude Monet himself might appear to take in this 21st Century salute to the Impressionist art movement he inspired.

"I'm not an artist, but after a glass of wine you feel like you could be," said Mallory Miner, sipping wine between brush strokes as the outline of an oak tree emerged. "Some wineries are stuffy. This place is so incredibly unique, so creative, and has such a nice atmosphere."

Wine As Art

Comparable to an impressionist painter mixing colors on a palette, second-

generation winemaker and Artiste owner, Bion Rice, artfully canvases a selection of vintages and varietals from California's best grape growers and winemakers to produce his wines.

Labeled with beautiful works of impressionist art, Artiste's limited productions are less than 300 cases each. A few bottles of each wine are kept in the Artiste archive, also exhibited in a colorful display.

In 2008, fans can look forward to eight new Artiste Wines. Artiste recently released two new wines that pay homage to Spain, one of the most exalted viticultural and culinary re-



A collection of Artiste wine bottles features the works of local artists.

gions in the world. The first, Rojo Nuevo, is rustic yet sophisticated, velvety in the mouth with a wonderful smokiness woven throughout. Rojo Nuevo pairs ideally with grilled ribeye topped with blue cheese butter.

The second new wine, Buena Vida, features on its label a painting of

Ochsner), and the local chef who created the meal around them for the exhibit opening dinner, which took place March 28.

Interactive Art

Along with great wine and artwork, Artiste offers all kinds of interactive

Artiste resident artist Christina Lo-Cascio literally paints with wine on paper. Her artwork is to be featured in an exhibit this summer, a veritable fusion of her two greatest passions, wine and art. The exhibit is a must-see, and takes place June 7 through June 30. Other artists to be featured this summer are Daniel Bay-

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Bion Rice, owner. Above: The busy tasting room of Artiste.

local Ballard Inn Restaurant Chef Budi Kazali, who actually had a hand in blending the wine with Rice. Buena Vida is silky, floral, and full of spice-fruit aromatics. Sweet vanilla and hints of toffee abound.

In addition to working with Tempranillo, Syrah and Merlot varietals for these new releases, Rice also had the pleasure of creating the wines in collaboration with both the local artist who painted the labels (Rise Delmar

experiences for visitors, including the opportunity to attend wine making sessions and the chance to paint and create your very own wine label, an ideal gift idea. Private painting parties and private blending workshops are also offered. Art journals inviting the patron to express themselves are scattered about the place.

less and Aldo Luongo.

For further information about wine sales and art exhibits, check their website, www.artiste.com or call (805) 686-2626. Artiste is open daily from 11:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. and is located at 3569 Sagunto Street #102 in Santa Ynez.

– Camilla Barnwell

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