

The Grape Escape

Article by Stick Holmes

Photos by Roger McDonald and
Stick Holmes



Members enjoying the patio outside the Cordiano Winery



Mike and Lyn Smith welcome one and all while Karen Holmes (seated) checked members in.



Tracy and David Turner enjoying the samples and pizza



Shadow and Diane McDonald, Ann Mortland
and Ann Woodard



Jerry Cordiano expertly tosses the pizza dough

We all met for lunch at Cordiano's Winery, a small boutique winery southeast of Escondido on a hillside. The Cordiano Winery family takes pride in the craftsmanship of good wine and in the labor practiced for generations in the old country. It was a beautiful patio setting where we sampled an excellent assortment of Cordiano wines, dined on garlic butter bread rolls (that my wife Karen says "were to die for"), salad and singularly delicious oven-fired pizza hand made on the spot. Jerry and Rosa Cordiano were extremely generous in both the helpings and service. Dan Jensen handed out maps for the rest of the route and we were off in a cloud of dust.



Stu and Barb Baily outside cousin Phil's production facility



Phil Baily talks to Club member about wine making

The first stop was the Baily Winery production facility in Temecula wine country. This facility is not open to the public. Club members Stu and Barb Baily's cousin owns the Baily Vineyard and Winery and were able to arrange a special Jaguar Club tour. Phil, Stu's cousin, personally showed us around and answered our many questions while we sampled wines from the vats as well as the delicious finished product. He was engaging and entertaining as we learned about aging, corking, bottling, and many of the other details involved in wine making. Grant Rummell was disappointed to learn it was not "pressing" day as he showed up shoeless with his pants rolled up. The tour was an extra special treat and the Club heartily thanks Phil, Stu, and Barb Baily for letting us in behind the scenes.



Baily wines aging in oak casks. Yes, the oak makes a difference

Although the temperature in the Temecula wine region hovered somewhere around scalding, the older Jags held up nicely. Not one overheated. We did lose David and Tracy Craig's beautiful 1964 MK 2 to a starter carb fuel leak after the first leg. Kudos go to those brave enough to drive their older cars in the heat. They were David and Tracy, the Woodards who drove their 63 MK 2, and Joe and Deborah Harding. They won the big prize with a 1929 Bentley! Now, most of you know that a Bentley is not a Jaguar, and the Hardings were heavily fined one dollar for not driving a kitty to a cat event, but I will have to admit, they stole the show. Check out the photos to see why. The wineries were air conditioned and we older model humans held out as well as our Jags by adding a little antifreeze (offered in red, white and rose) when necessary.



The belle of the ball, Joe and Deborah Harding's 1929 Bentley



David Turner checks out a small but critical fuel leak in the starting carburator

The next stop on our Grape adventure was another boutique winery called the Doffo Winery. This is a small 15 acre winery that focuses on producing small lot, hand crafted wines. It is family owned and operated much like the Baily's. They play classical music during the day in the vineyard to sooth the vines! Owner Marcelo Doffo was delighted with our Jags and had special parking for the older models. He had Joe park the Bentley smack dab in front of the tasting room entryway for a photo op of which most of us took advantage (including some passers-by). In addition, Mr. Marcello displayed a representative number of antique motorcycles from his vast collection especially for our event. His son poured us delicious wine samples and told us about the family business.



The Woodard's MK 2 and the Smith's XJ6 in the special Jaguar parking area at the Doffo Winery

When we reluctantly departed the Doffo Winery, it was to once again happily reunite with Phil Baily, this time at his wine tasting room. There we were treated gratis to further samplings of his excellent product. Ricardo and the other pourers were very entertaining telling us stories of the history of the Temecula wine region, the Baily winery, and the art of aerating and decanting.



Joe Harding stands by his 1929 Bentley in front of the Doffo wine tasting room. Owner Marcelo Doffo is on the left in the background



The entertaining Ricardo serves Mike and Lyn Smith and Joe Harding at the Baily tasting room

That wrapped up the Grape Escape. I don't want to break my own arm pounding myself on the back or anything, but I believe Dan Jensen and I lined up two of the best wineries in the Temecula wine region. You could say it was due to exhaustive research or you could say it was happy happenstance. Whatever. It was fun. There's a ground swell opinion that we should escape again next year.

