

BACIO DIVINO

Claus Janzen's wines are unadulterated Claus Janzen. Iconoclastic, eclectic, diverse, they stand well apart from the vinous mainstream. Delivering extraordinary intensity and character, Claus' wines have been universally praised by the critics since their debut back in the mid-1990s. (Robert Parker, one of the first reviewers to tout Bacio Divino, has consistently scored all of Claus' wines above 90 points.)

Claus Janzen was born in Berlin in 1949. (Yes, he speaks German fluently.) At an early age he moved with his family to Canada, living there until the late 1980s. Following college he headed back to Europe, working for two years in the Swiss hotel industry. While in Switzerland Claus fell in love with Burgundy. The wine was a Chorey-les-Beaune (isn't it always a Burgundy?) and it had a profound effect on the rest of his life.

After extensive international travels, Claus moved back to Canada, got his MBA and went into commercial real estate investment. He began as a broker and eventually formed his own development company. He never lost his passion for wine, having become a wine fanatic and expert taster, winning a Canadian national championship in the mid 1980s. His wine passion led Claus and his family to France where he spent a year and a half living the good life and visiting the top properties in the Rhone, Provence and Burgundy.

In the late '80s, Claus flew to Napa and met Charlie Wagner. He became friends with Charlie's son Chuck and soon found himself working harvest in the Valley. After harvest Claus did what most of us only dream about. He quit his job, moved his family to Napa and became export manager for Caymus. In 1993, with Chuck's encouragement, and the unexpected access to a few tons of Sangiovese from an Oakville hillside near Maya, Claus launched Bacio Divino. The wine was a roaring success from day one.

Bacio Divino Italian for "divine kiss" – is built on a base of Cabernet Sauvignon supported by Sangiovese, Petite Sirah, Syrah and Merlot, depending on the year. It was inspired back by the wines of Eloi Durrbach at

Domaine de Trevallon in Provence. In the mid-70s Durrbach raised eyebrows, garnered international kudos and helped modernize winemaking in Southern France with his innovative blend of Cab and Syrah, varieties not traditionally found in Les Baux.

Pazzo, "crazy" a wine that took two years of trials to perfect, highlights Sangiovese laced with Cabernet Sauvignon, Petite Sirah and Viogner. While Pazzo's composition suggests super-Tuscan, its flavors and texture are rooted firmly in the Napa Valley.

Vagabond, the latest edition to Claus' portfolio, is a direct descendent of Trevallon. A mix of Syrah and Cabernet Sauvignon, it is an uncompromising mélange of power and agility.

The grape sourcing for Claus' wines reads like a who's who of Napa Valley vineyards including: To Kalon, Georges Latour III and the 'Cloudy's' Vineyard in Dutch Henry Canyon near Howell Mountain. Well-known consultants Nils and Kirk Venge advise Claus on winemaking and viticulture decisions.

Claus is also making a limited production line of single-vineyard Cabernets featuring fruit from his 62-acre estate vineyard (eight currently planted) and a handful of Napa's finest sites. Stay tuned for more info.



WINES

Bacio Divino
Pazzo
Vagabond

Janzen Cabernet Sauvignon Napa Valley
Janzen Cabernet Sauvignon Cloudy's Vineyard
Janzen Cabernet Sauvignon Beckstoffer ToKolon Vineyard