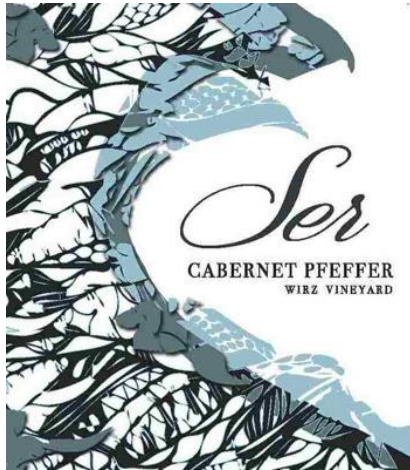


Ser Winery (CA sales only) Santa Cruz Mountains



Nicole Walsh came to the Santa Cruz Mountains by way of Michigan's Leelanau Peninsula, where she worked in the state's wine industry for four years after graduating with a degree in enology and viticulture from Michigan State. Her first job in California landed her with Randall Grahm at Bonny Doon, beginning in 2001, and she is with him still overseeing his newest property—Popelouchum, just outside of San Juan Bautista. She did take a break from Grahm, going to New Zealand for a year with her husband and son to make wine, but then Grahm's vision of a final great undertaking enticed her back to the northern central coast. It's here, due east of Monterey Bay in the foothills of the Gabilan Mountains, that Grahm has embarked on his wildly ambitious 10,000 vines project to discover a true American match of vine and site. Nicole's day job is being the project manager working with engineers, architects, surveyors, contractors, and labor crews to plant and manage orchards, olives, vineyards and gardens on Popelouchum's 400 acres, in addition to attending to the building of irrigation infrastructure and event spaces.

Her nighttime job is making her own wine, which she puts under the Ser label. Ser, essentially *to be* in Spanish, with reference to origins, is her way of showcasing varietals and vineyard sources with which she has an affinity. Each of these vineyards are influence by the Pacific, and Nicole is an avid surfer, hence the unifying image of the wave on her label.

She works with vineyards spread among the Santa Cruz Mountains (Pinot), Gabilan Mountain range, and the Cienega Valley. She is a minimalist in the cellar, working with light extractions, natural ferments, low sulfur additions, little or no fining and filtration. If there's wood involved in the ageing process, it's well considered, be it old, new, standard barrels or large puncheons. She works with Cabernet Franc, Cabernet Pfeffer (she's one of the rare Californians who have access to this grape), Chardonnay, Mourvèdre, Nebbiolo (Barolo may be her most favorite wine), Orange Muscat, Pinot Noir, Riesling, and Syrah. In 2016, she made close to 1,000 cases of small production, single-vineyard wines. Hers are true artisan wines whose strength comes not from high octane or cellar artifice but from clear, clean fruit, and balance.