



Speed Bump - Slow Down For Some Automotive Tales

An Occasional Column By Hal Tretbar

Autumn Sage Winery

I was looking forward to joining the Southern Arizona Porsche Club of America on its drive to the Autumn Sage Vineyards near Elgin, Arizona on November 21st. I had paid the \$20 fee and put the date on my calendar. Then I found out that I had already been scheduled to put on a Zoom program for the Arizona Arthritis Center.

So my copilot of the Silver 2019 Boxster, Karma Kientzler, and I did the next best thing. We did our own drive to the Autumn Sage Vineyards the next day, on November 22nd.

As the saying goes, there is more than one way to skin-a-cat. Don't take a direct drive to Elgin. Take a long scenic route. By the way, Google tells us that skin-a-cat originated in an 1840 short story, The Money Diggers by Sheba Smith.

Our Boxster purred east along I10 at an adequate speed then turned south on Highway 90 past Kartchner Caverns State Park. Then we turned right on State 82 towards Sonoita. After 35 miles we headed south on Upper Elgin Road passing through rolling grasslands and ranches. You know you have reached the Elgin crossroads when you pass under the large cottonwood trees with leaves turning yellow.

It was about 11 AM as we motored west on the Elgin Road. Wineries not yet open for wine tasting included Twisted Union, Flying Leap, Callaghan, and Deep Sky. Autumn Sage, the first one east of Highway 83 at 90 Elgin Road, was open with banners flying at the entrance.

Stephen and Nancy Basila of Phoenix have 30 acres of prime grape growing territory. They named

it Autumn Sage after the plants that were growing wild. One year old vines were planted in 2016. The first vintage was 2019 and quickly sold out.

Over the past five years the Basilas have developed an oasis in the rolling grasslands of southern Arizona. Next to the vineyard, Autumn Sage now has a grassy park with shade trees over picnic tables, a lake, a dock and a classic gazebo. It is ideal for weddings and group events. A large, first class, tasting room with patio opened in 2020.

Karma and I decided to do the \$17 tasting of five wines from the ten available. Our wine steward was Taylor Colvin. He had a pleasant and knowledgeable description for each wine.



Autumn Sage Vineyards



\$17.00 for 5 Wine Tastings – Includes Crystal Souvenir Glass

2020 Viognier - \$32.00/Bottle - \$10.00/Glass

A rich white wine aged in French oak. Low in acidity with flavors of tangerine, peach, and honeysuckle. Try it with dishes flavored with almonds, citrus, stewed fruits, and aromatic herbs like basil and tarragon.

2020 Estate Albariño - \$36.00/Bottle - \$11.00/Glass

This Estate Albariño is our Signature white wine. A delightfully crisp refreshing Spanish wine from the Iberian Peninsula, low in sweetness and tannin and high in acidity. Has zesty, apricot and apple flavor/aroma. Pairs exceptionally with fish and light meats. You will love it with fish tacos!

2020 Estate Golden Hummingbird Rosé - \$29.00/Bottle - \$9.00/Glass

The 2020 Estate Golden Hummingbird Rosé is a real showstopper! This blend of Estate Red Wines is crisp, refreshing, and perfect on a warm summer day, or just for the fun of it anytime!

2019 Estate Counoise - \$32.00/Bottle - \$10.00/Glass

If you like Pinot Noir, you will love our Estate Counoise. This elegant red wine is made from a dark-skinned grape grown in the Rhone Valley region of France, and here at Autumn Sage Counoise is a light red wine with good acidity and low in tannin. It is a good match with grilled or roasted meats, fish, and chicken.

2019 Grenache - \$38.00/Bottle - \$12.00/Glass

Medium tannins and acidity with strawberry, black cherry, raspberry, and cinnamon flavors. Grown primarily in Spain, France, and Italy (less than 2% grown in the United States).

2019 Sangiovese - \$38.00/Bottle - \$12.00/Glass

Sangiovese is Tuscany's most planted red grape. The high acidity allows this wine to match well with spicy foods and not get lost when paired with tomato sauce. Has flavors and aromas of cherry, roasted tomato, oregano, and espresso.

2019 Estate Cabernet Franc - \$38.00/Bottle - \$12.00/Glass

This Estate Cabernet Franc is a staple red wine lover's varietal from France. Cabernet Franc is one of the major black grape varieties worldwide. It is low in sweetness with medium acidity. Fantastic with BBQ, tomato-based dishes, grilled steaks, chops, and lamb. See if you can taste a hint of jalapeno!

2016 Equinox Red Blend - \$45.00/Bottle - \$14.00/Glass

Named for the orientation of our vineyard, Equinox is a blend of Graciano and Cabernet Sauvignon. The nose has notes of cedar, tobacco, and black cherry, while the palate delights with blackberry and cinnamon spice.

2019 Cabernet Sauvignon - \$45.00/Bottle - \$14.00/Glass

The world's most popular red wine has a rich savory flavor and pairs perfectly with grilled meats and pepper sauces. Has flavors and aromas of cherry, cedar, and spice.

2019 Estate Sagrantino - OUR STAR OF THE SHOW! - \$48.00/Bottle - \$15.00/Glass

Not widely known outside of Montefalco in the Region of Umbria of Central Italy, Autumn Sage is one of the largest producers of Sagrantino grapes in the USA. A rare, deeply bold wine with some of the highest levels of antioxidants of any red wine. An Autumn Sage specialty made with love from our family to yours!

Our amateur conclusions were:

- Albarino was OK and tolerable on a hot day
- Golden Hummingbird Rose should have been kept in the bird house because it was too sweet
- Grenache was fairly good and you could get to like it
- Sangiovese was pleasant to the taste buds. It would pair well with pizza.
- Cabernet Franc is an old favorite. This vintage would complement any steak.

While Nancy Basila was busy behind the bar, Stephen took time to chat with us. He said they come down from Phoenix every other weekend. Stephen really appreciated the Porsche Club driving in the day before for lunch and a glass or two of the vintner's best. He confided to us, "I like the classic shape of your Boxster. I don't think those SUVs are true Porsches."

Autumn Sage Vineyards is open Wednesday to Sunday 10 AM to 5 PM. There is live music with food trucks every Saturday 1-5 PM.

