

Lance Silver – Owner/Winemaker

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Lance Silver's love for wine began very early. At age 17, he started collecting wine with his lawn mowing money. His parents could not understand his obsession, as they did not drink any form of alcohol. When Lance reached age 21, he took courses in sensory evaluations of wine, as well as wine tasting classes and wine education at the University of Las Vegas, Nevada, where he eventually graduated with a B.S. Degree in Hotel and Business Administration. He joined wine tasting clubs and as a young adult was able to taste many wines through both the clubs and his job at The Sands Hotel.

Directly after graduating, he started a garment business which grew very large over the next ten years. This afforded Lance an income that allowed him to continue collecting wine at a very high level. His cellar grew to over 5,000 bottles of mostly first growth Bordeaux, top Burgundies, old vintage Ports, and a few top growth California wines. If friends visited Lance and Claire's house, they knew they would end up in the wine cellar tasting and talking about wine. He read wine making textbooks for fun, and most people thought he was certifiable.

In 1995, with his garment business sold, Lance and his wife Claire decided to leave Southern California and buy or start a winery in one of California's wine regions. They naturally started looking in Napa and almost purchased there, but after visiting almost every wine region, they fell in love with Paso Robles. They were presented with the opportunity to purchase half of Tobin James Cellars and they accepted. After three years of hands on winemaking experience, Lance took the reins as full time winemaker. The winery grew at such a rapid pace that four years later, Lance had to relinquish day-to-day winemaking tasks to a full time winemaker, so he could devote more time to running the winery.

Lance still maintains control of Tobin James Cellars' wines. He spends most mornings barrel sampling, leads all blending sessions, chooses all oak and oak profiles, and still does a bit of vineyard work. Not much else has changed, though-- if a friend comes to visit everyone ends up tasting and talking about wine.

Always a tireless supporter of San Luis Obispo County and Paso Robles wines, Lance has served on the Inaugural Marketing Committee for the Paso Robles Wine Country Alliance (then the PRVGA), for 4 years. The Marketing Committee took the bold step to put Paso Robles wines on the world's stage and proclaim that Paso Robles wines can compete with any icon wine in the world.

The winery is involved in services to the community in many different ways. Tobin James Cellars believes in giving back and promoting various causes. Annually, since 2003, the winery has generously hosted the Endeavour Institute's Balloon Festival Event, benefitting the advancement of STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) for all science/math students throughout the Central Coast. They also support the noble works of The Wounded Heroes Fund of Kern County through their wine sponsorships for their events and donating matching funds from customers. Tobin James Cellars supports MUST Charities, a non-profit local charity, by donating winemaking, bottling and storage for this important organization which benefits so many local needs.

Lance's proudest accomplishment at Tobin James Cellars is that the winery has grown over twenty times the size from when Lance and Claire arrived, and they truly believe their wines are now even better than ever.