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Seven Stones Is Art and Wine

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Napa Valley winery Seven Stones is in the middle of a mild controversy.

Located above Meadowood Resort, Seven Stones takes its name from a 100,000-pound granite sculpture created by Richard Deutsch that is indeed seven huge blocks of rock, taken from a quarry near Yosemite National Park.



The piece is also in the heart of what might be the property's finest Cabernet turf, only right now, and for the foreseeable future, it's going to remain as is—a lovely grassy knoll with trees and colorful plants and flowers.

Seven Stones' owners, Ronald (shown in this video) and Anita Wornick, are intent on keeping their winery small and keeping a lawn for their grandchildren. Seven Stones only has one bearing acre now and has one more planted; David Abreu did the original vineyard work. A goal of 400 to 500 cases a year is all they want to produce.

But winemaker Aaron Pott would sure like to have the soil around the Seven Stones piece. He's not likely to get it, though, judging from what Ron Wornick told me Friday when I toured the property. The Wornicks love art, music and wine, and the Seven Stone sculpture is set exactly where the artist intended. The vineyards are located in four separate sites on the property, which overlooks the valley floor.

Seven Stones is one exciting project and wine. I tasted all three of its wines with Wornick and Pott, the stunning 2005 and just as sensational 2006 and 2007 vintages, both of which are still in barrel inside the tiny winery's barrel aging room.

All three wines have an amazing purity of fruit flavor. They are all dense, concentrated, very dark and offer deep, rich layers of currant, blackberry, mineral and very light mocha-laced oak. The 2005 was decanted for two hours (what Wornick suggests at this stage) and showed beautifully, even better perhaps than when I reviewed more than a month ago; Wornick will be pouring the 2005 at this year's California Wine Experience on a panel of West Coast rising star wineries.

The 2006 is a shade tighter, as it should be at this point, but a similarly brilliant effort. The 2007 takes a little from both 2006 and 2005, and is a superrich rendition, very intense yet very supple and polished. All three are great wines.



Pott also showed me a clever little vineyard tool they use on grape clusters as harvest approaches. It's a two-ended fork, which he describes in this video. One end removed raisins, the other smaller, immature or green berries.