

Local couple providing a Safe Haven for wine

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While the tempering of the warm summer months by the nightly coastal winds seems an ideal mix for Paso Robles' acres of wine grapes, the city's variable temperatures can ruin the wine once bottled.

With the opening of Paso Robles' first personal wine storage facility, Safe Haven, Corrine and Daniel Appelbaum are offering wine collectors, wine country travelers and wineries a way to protect their liquid investments and preserve their fine wines for years to come.

Self-described "cork dorks," the pair recognized the need for such a facility after they moved to Paso Robles from the Bay Area and need a safe place to store their collection of wine. Safe Haven opened for business on June 27 and in a few short weeks the facility has generated a lot of positive notice.

"Everybody that we have spoken to in the wine community has been extremely supportive and very excited we are here," Corrine said.

Safe Haven's wine vaults are specifically attuned to conditions that optimize a wine's quality and value while protecting it from spoiling. The vaults are kept at a chilly 57 degrees and maintain a humidity level of between 65 to 70 percent. The steady temperature helps to protect the wine against the city's onslaught of bipolar temperatures, which can soar to over 110 degrees during the day and then plummet below 50 degrees during the night.

"Anytime that you have a huge fluctuation in temperature, that is going to compromise the integrity of the wine," Corrine said.

In addition, exposure to light and frequent movement can also negatively effect a nice bottle. Rooted to a six inch slab, the lockers are geared to stand up to an earthquake and protect from light, temperature and movement.

Each locker holds 12 cases of wine- which can be stored on the rack or in the box- and each locker comes with a personalized four-digit code known only to the client. A computer system monitors access to all of the vaults. Safe Haven currently boasts 292 lockers with room to expand to 500. The vaults begin at \$25 per month with a one-year agreement.

Safe Haven aims at serving three primary categories of customers-local wine enthusiasts and collectors interested in safeguarding their investments, wine country travelers who would like to take advantage of 20 to 30 percent case discounts offered by wineries, and wineries that would benefit from the storage, shipping and/or direct sales fulfillment services.

"We can do just about anything that (the clients) want done with their wine, except make it," Corrine said.

For the ease of the client, the wine storage facility offers a full suite of shipping and

fulfillment services, as well as local wine pickup and delivery. Services like this allow both the local enthusiast and the wine country tourist the opportunity to buy by the case at their favorite wineries and store them at Safe Haven. Whenever the customer feels the need to uncork, they can either pick up their desired vintage from the facility or have it shipped to their home. Safe Haven is also offering their services to restaurants and boutique wineries. For those wineries with wine clubs, Safe Haven can assist in shipping bottles out to members.

Those who prefer to enjoy their wines in luxury can take advantage of Safe Haven's private tasting bar. The sophisticated yet homey room boasts comfortable seating for 20, full wet bar, 50-inch plasma TV, gaming table, and outside patio with barbeque. The Appelbaums hope the inviting room will be a congregation point for their members and wine enthusiasts around the county.

"We are hoping to create a wonderful community setting where people come and gather and share and make new friends," Daniel said.

"And really that is the point of wine," Corrine said.

"There is nothing better than having a bottle of wine with friends, shared over a great meal," she said. "It is a great thing; it is one of the joys in life."

For more information on Safe Haven, visit it's website at: www.safehavenwineservices.com or call 238-7233.