

THE V FILES

August 2017 Edition



WINERY: Laird Family Estate

5055 Solano Avenue
Napa, CA 94558

DTC Best Practices Rating:



ABOUT:

THE V FILES™ is a monthly publication which offers an assessment and rating of wineries DTC performance in relation to overall guest experience and staff proficiency. Wineries are chosen at random by Mystery Shoppers and are evaluated using a scorecard approach leveraging DTC best practices. The ratings are based on how well each winery delivers a memorable guest experience and staff's ability to inspire, connect, sell the story and the products, and build loyalty among customers.

The Rating System is based on performance in the following categories:



Inspirational Story



Connection w/ Host



Sales Acumen



Wine Club Conversion



Collecting Customer Info

o receive monthly updates of **THE V FILES™** subscribe to our newsletter.

SUBSCRIBE

Virtual Vines DTC Sales and Marketing Consulting Services help integrate DTC best practices to help wineries build brand awareness, increase sales and grow customer loyalty.

For more information please contact us:

www.virtual-vines.com
707-927-3574

Laird Family Estate is located on the south end of Rt. 29 in Napa Valley. The property, which houses a visitor center and crush production facility, has been a familiar staple along Solano Avenue since it was built in 1999. The Laird Family heritage began when Ken Laird became a grower after Robert Mondavi agreed to invest in exchange for a commitment to plant Gamay. After 30 years of producing grapes that have gone into some of the best wines in Napa Valley, Ken Laird was convinced to start leveraging his bounty and producing his own label. With Paul Hobbs at the helm of the winemaking efforts, Laird Family Estate is known for producing single varietal wines from eight vineyards spanning several prestigious AVA's. It is truly a family story from start to finish, with the Laird children on board managing the vineyards and the winery business.

The visitor center is located amongst the Oak Knoll vines and their grape crush facility where they produce wines for over 60 boutique brands. The Estate has recently undergone a facelift to expand the space with a fantastic outdoor deck comfortably appointed with conversation pits and background music. Every vantage point offers a view with a story- whether it be watching the crush pad in action or overlooking the expansive vineyards. While Laird recommends reservations to taste wine, they welcome walk in visitors and invite them to sit wherever they find comfort, whether it be on the patio or inside, at a 4 top table or on a barstool chatting with the bartender at the bar which overlooks the patio with floor to ceiling glass walls.

For all the visits our shoppers were greeted with smiles from hosts who introduced themselves by name. The tasting room staff were all very warm and engaging, explained the tasting selections and any specials they had available (including subtle references to the wine club vis a vis the options which were present on the menu.) On each visit, our guests were told the story about the Lairds, their legacy in the Valley, and the significance of that history as they evolved into producing their own wines. The staff as a whole were familiar with the wines and offered vineyard origin, tasting notes and explanations for the names and designations calling out unique qualities or name originations. When they discovered a guest's partiality for a specific varietal, they made sure to offer that "extra pour" which was personalized to their preferences. Each wine was pointed out on the price list upon serving and the wine club was strategically mentioned several times during the presentation by calling out a fabulous wine club event or allocated wine. Upon request to close out, our tasters were told about next releases of their favorites and prompted to assess the benefits of the wine club. Needless to say, purchases were made and contact cards were exchanged.

Laird Family Winery struck a home run on all aspects of The V Files DTC assessment criteria. The only wrinkle occurred when a host transfer was made after the first pour without notice or introduction. While this was definitely a DTC faux pas, our team only deducted a half point from an overall perfect score because host #2 was instantly engaging and very entertaining. By the end of the second pour, they had forgotten about host #1.

The V Files™ rated Laird Family Estate with 4.5 stars for providing outstanding engaging experiences on behalf of the winery history, their products, connecting with the host, and sales acumen utilizing discovery learned through unique dialog. Bravo Laird Family Estate!

WHAT THEY DID WELL:

Varied/expansive options for tasting areas, welcome greeting, engaging staff throughout the entire experience, ability to position wine sales based on customer preference, ability to tell the story of the family and winery to differentiate the offerings.

AREAS WHICH NEED IMPROVEMENT:

Connection with the host. Transition of hosts without notice or introduction.

DTC BEST PRACTICES RECOMMENDATIONS:

Focus on maintaining contact/connection from inception to close