

WINE COUNTRY *This Week*

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Local Estate Extra Virgin Olive Oil

Rancho Olivos is one of the Santa Ynez Valley's first local olive oil producers, having planted their Tuscan and Spanish varietals in 2000. These trees are producing bountiful harvests now and are the source of Rancho Olivos Estate Olive Oil. Additional acreage has been planted with Italian and California olive trees.

Proprietors Shannon Casey and John Copeland began selling their artisan Extra Virgin Olive Oil in 2005. Having attended “olive school” in northern California in 1999, Casey knew which varietals she wanted to plant after tasting several different olive oils during the UC Davis sponsored course.

While not originally from a farming background, Casey is a food obsessed cook with a specific interest in locally grown products.

Knowing she wanted to grow something, Casey chose olive trees as they are a complimentary crop to wine grapes and well suited to Mediterranean climate of the Santa Ynez Valley.

The year round beauty of the olive trees contributes to their charm. Casey is very happy to see their trees thrive in this region. “Olive trees require very little water,” says Casey. “They also tolerate our summer heat very well.”

“We are fortunate that we live in a climate that allows for such diverse farming. Olives do not like humidity, so they can’t be grown in the south. And they can’t grow where the ground freezes,” she adds.

At harvest fruit is milled locally into oil. Rancho Olivos’ Olive Oil has won past awards at the Los Angeles County fair. Currently Rancho Olivos is offering their 2013 Italian, Arbequina, Garlic and Meyer lemon oils.

Rancho Olivos olive oils have a flavor totally different from store bought olive oil. “Much of the mass imported European olive oil is not 100% olive oil. It is diluted with seed or hazelnut oils,” states Casey, “or it is made with refined olive oil, which is why it has very little flavor. Fresh olive oil has a unique taste and people wanting fresh olive oil should expect it to have flavor.” Extra virgin olive oil is a mono unsaturated fat, and a healthy fat option for your diet. It lowers cholesterol and even reduces the potential for a stroke.

Visitors to Rancho Olivos farm enjoy sampling the unique taste of fresh estate olive oil amidst the olive trees. In addition to olive oil, Rancho Olivos is able to sell seasonal fruits and vegetables at their farm.

Customers return to Rancho Olivos again and again for that unique flavor of fresh olive oil. Rancho Olivos is located at 2490 N. Refugio Road, Santa Ynez. They are open to the public

daily from 12:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.

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