

# VARA

## A Legacy of Sparkling Excellence

**Year Founded:** 2013

**Region:** Albuquerque, New Mexico

**Founder(s):** Xavier Zamarripa,  
Doug Diefenthaler

**Winemaker:** Laurent Gruet

**Known For:** VARA is redefining how Americans enjoy sparkling wine, making it approachable, vibrant and perfect for everyday occasions. Led by Laurent Gruet and Sofian Himeur, a third-generation New Mexico winemaker, VARA draws on Spanish varietals and local pride.

Nestled in the heart of New Mexico, VARA Winery's story is as effervescent as its acclaimed sparkling wines. Few realize that New Mexico holds a distinguished place in American wine history. "New Mexico is the birthplace of American wine," Doug Diefenthaler shares with a proud

smile. "Monks planted *Vitis vinifera* here in 1629, long before California's famous vineyards took root." This fact, often overshadowed by California's wine prestige, inspired Doug's mission to honor and revive this rich legacy.

We are proud to be the only combined winery and distillery in New Mexico and to craft all our products here. Despite being the birthplace of the North American wine experience, New Mexico's contributions are often overlooked. VARA seeks to reclaim this legacy, placing our state firmly back on the map. We build intentional partnerships with growers, producers, and local businesses, fostering collaboration that enriches our communities. Through these alliances, we curate high-quality, approachable wines that evoke pride in New Mexico, strengthening our bonds and celebrating our heritage.



At VARA Winery and Distillery, we bring together time-honored traditions and bold innovations to craft seriously great wines and spirits that embody passion and creativity. Each bottle is a testament to our dedication to quality, community, and artistry. Our winemakers are a passionate circle of professionals who use innovative techniques to craft wines that express a uniquely New Mexican point of view. They are master blenders with a deep understanding of each grape variety's nuances and experts at selecting and combining the finest ingredients. They ensure that only the highest-quality grapes are selected for blending and use the best of every vintage or batch to craft exceptional wines that are a testament to their expertise. They are committed to constantly experimenting with new grape varieties, winemaking techniques, and blending methods to push the boundaries of what is possible in winemaking.



## Brut

---

41% Chardonnay - Monterrey AVA, CA, USA  
 34% Chardonnay - Lodi-Woodbridge AVA, CA, USA  
 24% Pinot Noir - Lodi-Woodbridge AVA, CA, USA  
 1% Listan Prieto - Mission Hills Vineyard, Mesilla, NM, USA

Our Brut is crafted in the traditional Méthode Champenoise from classic Champagne grapes—Pinot Noir and Chardonnay—blended with a touch of Listán Prieto, the original vinifera grape of North America. This thoughtful addition connects old-world tradition with new-world heritage. The wine rests a minimum of 18 months on the lees, developing fine, persistent bubbles and layered complexity. Bright citrus and green apple notes mingle with hints of pear and white flowers, while the extended aging adds depth, a delicate creaminess, and subtle toasty undertones. The result is a crisp, elegant Brut that honors tradition while offering a distinctly fresh character.

Pairs very well with seafood or fried food because of its bright notes:  
 Lobster mac and cheese. Fried oyster po'boy with gremolata. Panzanella salad.



## Brut Rosé

---

90% Pinot Noir - Lodi - Woodbridge AVA, CA USA  
 10% Pinot Noir - Central Valley AVA, NM USA

VARA's Silverhead Brut Rosé is crafted by master sparkling winemaker Laurent Gruet in the classical Méthode Champenoise. The 2023 harvest was great. Grapes were harvested in October and the whole clusters were gently pressed. The pale pink juice was fermented at 70 degrees in temperature controlled stainless steel tanks. Fermentation took 15 days. The cuvée was placed into its final bottle with 3%/L live yeasts +24 g/L sugar. The wine matured in VARA's cellar to fully integrate the complex flavors and to create the tiny, persistent bubbles that are a hallmark of the highest quality sparkling wines. The wine was disgorged, and the balancing dosage was added. The finished wine was corked, caged, and labeled in the flash of an eye to preserve the naturally achieved effervesce.

This wine has the structure to be enjoyed alone as well as to enhance richer foods such as: roasted dinner of whole duck, figs, fennel, and sourdough croutons; red beet risotto with crispy Spanish jamón; wild mushroom pate with blackberry glaze; or strawberry and balsamic shortbread with clotted cream.