

ROOTDOWN

Year Founded: 2014

Region: Healdsburg, California

Owner: Mike Lucia

Quote: "Rootdown concentrates on what the roots drink rather than what the sun gives you. I want wines with tension and minerality grown in organic vineyards." -Mike Lucia

-Organic-

The Rootdown label refers to the grassroots of winemaking and the downward influence of the soil on wine, particularly in organic winemaking. Rootdown focuses on varietal specific wines from single vineyards that lead with earth and texture, rather than only fruit. Mike Lucia is no newcomer to the Northern California wine scene, as the owner and producer of multiple wine brands including Rootdown, Cole Ranch, and Es Okay.



His winemaking roots go all the way back to the early 90s, where as a teenager he began working in the cellar. Since then, he's been busy: studied in the Fresno State Enology program, made wine for Copain, Goldeneye, and consulted for brands with similar mentalities. In 2016, Mike "hit the gas pedal" on

Rootdown, increasing both the quantity and varieties of wine he made. His newest venture, Cole Ranch Vineyard and AVA is testing all of his knowledge, as he studies a unique terroir (the smallest AVA in the US) and pushes to find the best Alpine varieties that will thrive in the Cole Ranch soil and climate. Currently, Rootdown is making wines from the more obscure varieties. Yet over the next few years, the brand will begin to focus on Jura-inspired varieties with Cole Ranch as its source. Stylistically, the wines will continue to be low alcohol, high acid, and with a decidedly hands-off approach, allowing the grapes and specific sites to speak for themselves. After close to 20 years in the biz, Mike's skill as a winemaker is finely tuned, but he usually prefers to let curiosity inform what happens with his wines. He is constantly having fun making decisions that he "shouldn't" make, and always playing with "What if?"

2022 Rootdown 'Cole Ranch Vineyard' Savagnin, Mendocino



The berries go through a crusher before being bladder pressed for more time in contact with the skins. The wine is then fermented in ½ neutral burgundy barrels and ½ neutral cigar before aging in neutral barrels and then the last 2 months in tank. This wine is in one word: Bangin'. Every year our Savagnin continues to be a major topic of conversation in its structure, aromatics and ability to pair with food. This wine is like indulging in summer melon granite sprinkled with big flakes of Maldon salt. It is everything Anjou Pear, grippiness of its skin and explosion of juiciness, that crunchy texture that counterpoints the juice. The balance of this wine's lean structure but delightful aromatics of daffodil and lemongrass will keep you coming back to more. We promise.



2021 Rootdown 'Cole Ranch Vineyard' Pinot Noir

100% Pinot Noir. 100% de-stemmed and fermented with their wild yeast in an old open top oak tank. To minimize tannin and to boost aromatic extraction, the Pinot Noir will only see one gentle pump over a day until dry. Post press we finish the elevage in 80% neutral barrels and 20% once used French oak. Secondary fermentation is also native.

“An intriguing, earthy, mineraly aroma continues in the flavors of this medium-bodied and attractively taut wine from the tiny American Viticultural Area of Cole Ranch. Snappy red-cherry and cranberry flavors meet a chalky, tangy quality on the palate for a sense of freshness and grip.” -Wine Enthusiast



2022 Rootdown Trousseau St. Amant Vineyard, Amador County

Since 2014, Rootdown has been purchasing this certified organic fruit from St. Amant Vineyard located in Amador County between Jackson and Ione, CA. Originally planted to own rooted zinfandel in 1972, the owner later grafted over a section to five Portuguese varieties. Bastardo (Trousseau) was one of the varieties. In 2004 they replanted the Rootdown section of Trousseau on 1.8 acres. The soil here is the Honcut series which consists of very deep, well drained soils that formed in moderately coarse textured alluvium from basic igneous and granitic rocks.

100% Trousseau Noir.

Fermented in small open top oak fermenters & S48 bins

1/3 destemmed

1/3 Whole cluster

1/3 50/50 destemmed and whole cluster

Mike prefers a gentle mixing of the cap to capture more delicate aromatics and the choice of fermenting styles allow for a semi carbonic style in the finished wine. The wine is aged in neutral barrels for 8 months until bottling.



2020 Rootdown Cole Ranch Merlot, Mendocino County

The Cole Ranch vineyard sits on 180 acres of the Boonville grade, right between the famed Anderson Valley and “Inner Mendo” growing regions. Originally planted to Cabernet Sauvignon, Riesling and Merlot in 1973, the historic vineyard has since expanded its lineup to include Jura and Savoie varieties truly suited to the narrow mountain valley’s long, cool growing season. Dry farmed for most of their existence, these vines send their thick roots down into the valley’s gravelly-clay-loam soil, drawing up the minerals that contribute to our wine’s complexity and age ability.

100% de-stemmed and used pump overs to mix the tanks. Secondary fermentation finished in the mix of neutral French oak. A bold yet elegant wine. Bergamot, grapefruit peel, black tea, cocoa nib, pencil shavings, firm tannins full body, high acid, black cherry, red mulberry.

ES OKAY

What is it? Es Okay
How is it? Es Okay

Year Founded: 2014

Region: Mendocino, California

Owner: Mike Lucia

Fun Fact: Cole Ranch is among a few vineyards in Mendocino County that are being reimagined as a home for the grape varieties that thrive in Europe's cold mountainous regions, especially the Alps.

-Organic-

Nowhere do the rules say that wine made from serious fruit has to be taken seriously. Wine is just fermented juice, after all! We believe drinking should be pleasurable — whether one is shamelessly crushing rosé at a baby shower, or undermining a co-worker's supposedly fancier bottle selection at the seasonal office party, by showing up with a juicy red that actually begs to be consumed (with that mediocre sushi platter). You could consider the finer points — that this wine includes grapes from some of California's best vineyards (ahem, such as Cole Ranch) or that the wine is minimally sulfured and maximally fresh from the grapes' naturally high acidity.



The bottom line is that you don't need to overthink tasty. You have our permission to crush this wine. Go ahead, es okay!

Es Okay 2021 White Wine



52% Chardonnay – North Coast
 27% Chenin Blanc – Herrerger Vineyard
 17% Pinot Gris – Herrerger Vineyard – Skin Fermented
 4% Riesling Piquette – Cole Ranch – Skin Fermented
 1 % Orange Muscat – Mendocino – Skin Fermented

This is like aromatic target practice if that's a thing. Besides being juicy with good texture at the roof of the mouth, aromatics and flavors are all over the board. Loquat, white peach, apricot and blood orange are a few. But wait. There's more! Lemon grass, d'anjou pear, makrut lime.....like I said, "aromatic target practice."

Every year I like to play around with some odds and ends and thankfully for Es Okay, I can do that. The skin fermented Pinot Gris was the star this year as it went into both the Rosé and white blend this year giving it the structure needed. The Chenin Blanc was foot treaded and left on skins for 6 hours before pressing off. Alone, the wines were pretty clean so the addition of Riesling Piquette and 1% skin fermented orange Muscat really gave this wine the vibe I was looking for. And with the demand of the wines I needed to find some volume so my friend hooked me up with some pretty lean Chardonnay. As my old cellar master would say, "I hope it's Goo Goo."

Es Okay 2022 Rosé



50% Pinot Gris, 50% Grenache

This year we tried something new for the Es Okay Rosé. Our friends at Heringer Vineyards in Clarksburg sold us Pinot Gris that came in with a ton of color, so we went for it and skin fermented for 8 days before pressing. This left us with a powerful Pinot Gris. Our friend, Tom Gore, recently planted a Grenache Vineyard in Mendocino County specifically for Rosé. He crops this site for max tonnage so the wines are leaner with almost no color post press. This year is a 50% blend of each. Super yummy. Pinot Gris was destemmed and fermented on skin and pressed off on the 8th day. Post press we finished the fermentation in stainless steel. This wine was racked once off of its gross lees and returned for aging in tank. For the Grenache, we whole cluster pressed, let settle for 2 days then transferred to 60 gallon barrel and 520 gallon eggs.

This Rosé is all your poolside hopes and dreams. Bright watermelon and strawberry acidity rolls off the palate while tart cranberry crudo pops in the mouth. Some crazy rhubarb savory-ness and iron like minerality join the dance party as well. It's like nibbling on organic fruit leathers and biting into that fleshy part of a pineapple.

Es Okay 2022 Red Wine



Ohhhheee baby, this red blend is just like your first crush. Enticing with its delicate aroma of fresh rhubarb and raspberry pie straight from the oven and baby leaves on a dewy morning. Then, its youthful freshness hits you with a 1,2 punch! Tart cranberries from your nonna's holiday dressing explode in the mouth. Blue fruits and red fruits tickle your tongue and pinch at its sides while the dark plum juice dries and turns sticky all over your hands and face. The only difference is you'll want to relive this youthful wine glass after glass.

30% Mourvèdre – Oakley
 28% Cabernet Sauvignon – Cole Ranch
 28% Portuguese Red blend
 10% Merlot – Cole Ranch
 2% Pinot Noir – Whole Cluster Carbonic – Cole Ranch
 2% Grenache - Whole Cluster Carbonic – Mendocino

Feeling like a throwback to the 2020 blend. After the Portuguese block suffered from a good frost night, we were on the hunt for a new component to fill the loss. Enter Mourvèdre from Oakley. A friend gave me a heads up that they would have some extra tonnage this year and when I got to the pick, I ran into 3 other solid winemakers getting fruit from that block, so I knew it was legit. The whole blend is roughly 40% whole cluster fermented and 4% Carbonic. The remaining was destemmed for fermentation.