

Keeping the Vision

A passion for wine and aviation takes vintner John Jordan to new heights

He was one of those kids you couldn't keep away from the airport. At just 17, John Jordan was a student pilot in Santa Rosa, Calif., and now, he flies his own Gulfstream – that is, when he's not flying his new Bonanza.

Jordan says, "The Bonanza really fits my short-run trips a lot. I have friends in Merced. I have friends in San Jose, and my mom is in Santa Barbara, Calif. It just makes a lot of sense."

But when you ask the CEO to one of the world's most notable wineries, Jordan Vineyard & Winery (800.654.1213, JordanWinery.com), about his favorite flying adventure, he answers without hesitation. "Flying to Hawaii is probably my favorite trip. That is my favorite thing to do in an airplane. Going over the ocean, there's something about that which just appeals to me," he says.

It doesn't take a long conversation with John Jordan to learn that, aside from winemaking, he has two great loves – flying and fishing. "Disposable income not spent on fishing or flying is money wasted," says Jordan with a smile. "I have three magazines I wait for each month – Destination Fish, Bassmaster and Flying Adventures."

Even when he is scheduled to fly for business, with little time for fishing, Jordan can be spotted at the banks of a pond on the Jordan Winery. It's stocked with a professionally managed population of largemouth bass.

But don't get the wrong idea about John Jordan. He's all business. Jordan earned a law degree and an MBA – at the same time – attending

two different postgraduate schools simultaneously. When his father Tom asked for his son's help to continue the family tradition of great winemaking, John didn't hesitate. Although he is still a partner in the Santa Rosa-based law firm of Smith Dollar, John Jordan is the keeper of nothing less than the tradition of one of the world's great wineries.

That's because tradition is a big thing at Jordan. When Tom Jordan first toyed with the idea of growing grapes in the Healdsburg, Calif., region, he imagined integrating new-world technology with old-world winemaking artistry. Incorporating the legendary talents of winemaker André Tchelistcheff, the two created the first vintage of Cabernet Sauvignon and immediately caught the world's attention. The tradition of their almost unimaginable care in producing fine wines has become the Jordan family heirloom. Meanwhile, the original estate vines planted by Tom Jordan are still cared for by many of the same vineyard workers who planted them more than 30 years ago. The tradition continues.

Visiting the winery is a highlight for many. The original 1,500-acre family estate meanders over a verdant tapestry of rolling hills, oak trees and, of course, neatly planted rows of grape vines. The wine making facilities are open to the public, although an advanced reservation is required. For \$30, guests not only get to see the complete processing of Jordan winemaking, but also get to sample the family's current Chardonnay, an aged Cabernet Sauvignon and the current-release Cab. A chef prepares memorable tastes of foods that are perfectly paired

with great Jordan wines. Also, expect a chance to sample some of the extra-virgin olive oil Jordan makes from a blend of olives grown on the winery grounds. Visitors may also, of course, buy wine, including older vintages and larger bottles available only through the winery.

John Jordan welcomes the public to his family's winery. You can find him talking with visitors, asking them for their thoughts about the latest release or discussing new ideas he's considering.

"I have this idea that hasn't fully formulated in my mind yet," admits John. "I dream about building a hotel on our 1,500 acres, a really high-end experience.... You get to work with the chef on your meals...some sort of really high-end experience."

In John Jordan's eye, creating an idyllic blend of food and wine goes hand in hand with the Jordan family vision, as well as being in step with the evolution of Healdsburg, where the winery is located.

"Healdsburg has really changed," says Jordan. "Not only are there lots of wineries within a short drive, but Healdsburg has also become a culinary destination in its own right. It's a lot more upscale in some ways than Napa, Calif. The restaurants in Healdsburg are so good that a bad restaurant won't make it."

He encourages friends and guests to fly right into Healdsburg Municipal Airport (O31) and suggests that they stay at either the Hotel Healdsburg or the Les Mars hotel. Both are a short cab ride away, or you can rent a car – unless, of course, you're there to talk about flying and fishing. Then, maybe, John Jordan will pick you up. EA



John Jordan stands along side of his Gulfstream (left) and in front of his new Bonanza. Jordan says his G-1000-equipped A36 (below) is the perfect compliment to his long ranged jet.

