



## Fine Wine... It All Starts With the Vines ©

It's impossible to have good, much less great wine without having high quality grapes, and that requires high standards in vineyard management coupled with a great growing area (soil and climate). At Bel Vino we are blessed with some of the best soil and climate characteristics in the world for grape growing, the Temecula Valley Wine Country of Southern California.

Temecula Valley is a beautiful wine region of large rolling hills and scenic valleys, with mountains reaching as high as 11,500 feet forming a picturesque backdrop (Mt. Palomar). The warm daytime temperatures are modified by cooling, moist ocean breezes flowing from the nearby Pacific coast. So this wine region has the optimum weather during the growing season, long and warm summer days and cool, moist nights. This climate allows the grapes the best conditions to ripen fully and to develop the best balance between acid and sugar.



Equally important is how Bel Vino manages its vineyards for best grape quality and award-winning wines. During the growing season the grapevines have a large growth of leaves on their upper portions. This is known as the "leaf canopy". Bel Vino plants the vines in rows that run north and south, so that as the sun moves from east to west both sides of the leaf canopy and the grape clusters receive equal amounts of sunlight and shade. We do much trimming and pruning of the vines at various times to maintain the most efficient vine structure and grape growth. We dress and train the leaves to grow upright between guide wires so as to minimize the outward spread of the leaf canopy. This upward growth allows maximum airflow through the leaves, along with a controlled amount of shading of the grapes, so that we eliminate many common problems with less well-maintained canopies. The problems that we avoid include various grape and leaf diseases, uneven grape ripening, poor yields, etc.

Bel Vino uses drip irrigation which not only supplies the precise amount of water at the right time and place, but through this system we also feed precise amounts of liquid fertilizer and other vine-supporting essentials.

Bel Vino performs a "green harvest" each year, which is the removal of a selected amount of immature grape clusters before fall harvest. The removal of the clusters while they are still green induces the vines and leaf canopy to put all their energy into developing the remaining grapes. This avoids the production of low-quality grapes and results in better ripening and the development of sweeter and more flavorful and aromatic grapes; that is, development of grapes that will make the best wine.

A critical element in good vineyard management is that our vines are managed by our own in-house employees, with the vineyard manager having twenty-plus years' experience supporting our vineyards. Using in-house employees means that the Winery has direct and comprehensive control over the management and direction of vineyard growth, irrigation, grooming, pruning, and harvesting. The



Bel Vino crew enjoys the luxury of spending the time and attention necessary to produce the best grapes. This attention to detail and quality could be compromised if we used a contract management crew.



To address another significant wine quality issue, Bel Vino hand picks its entire harvest so as to avoid grape damage that can result from mechanized picking. Further, with hand picking we selectively harvest only good quality grape clusters. That is, we simply skip and avoid grape clusters that are sub-par in some way, where with mechanized picking everything gets picked and mixed together, good and bad.

All picking is done late afternoon and into the night, with the harvested grapes arriving at our chilled wine making facility the following morning before daylight. This avoids exposing the freshly picked grapes to the very high daytime temperatures that

time of year (typically 90° F to 110° F). If freshly picked grapes get too warm they will oxidize and that results in bad tasting and badly colored wine. Through proper scheduling Bel Vino is always able to avoid this problem.

Cutting corners on any one of Bel Vino's vineyard management practices can save lots of money, and other vineyards may choose to do some of that. But Bel Vino's interests and business model are devoted to producing the finest wines, award winning wines. That cannot be done without the finest grapes and that is what the Bel Vino's vineyards give us year in and year out.



**Bel Vino Winery, 33515 Rancho California Road, Temecula, CA 92591 -- [BelVinoWinery.com](http://BelVinoWinery.com)**