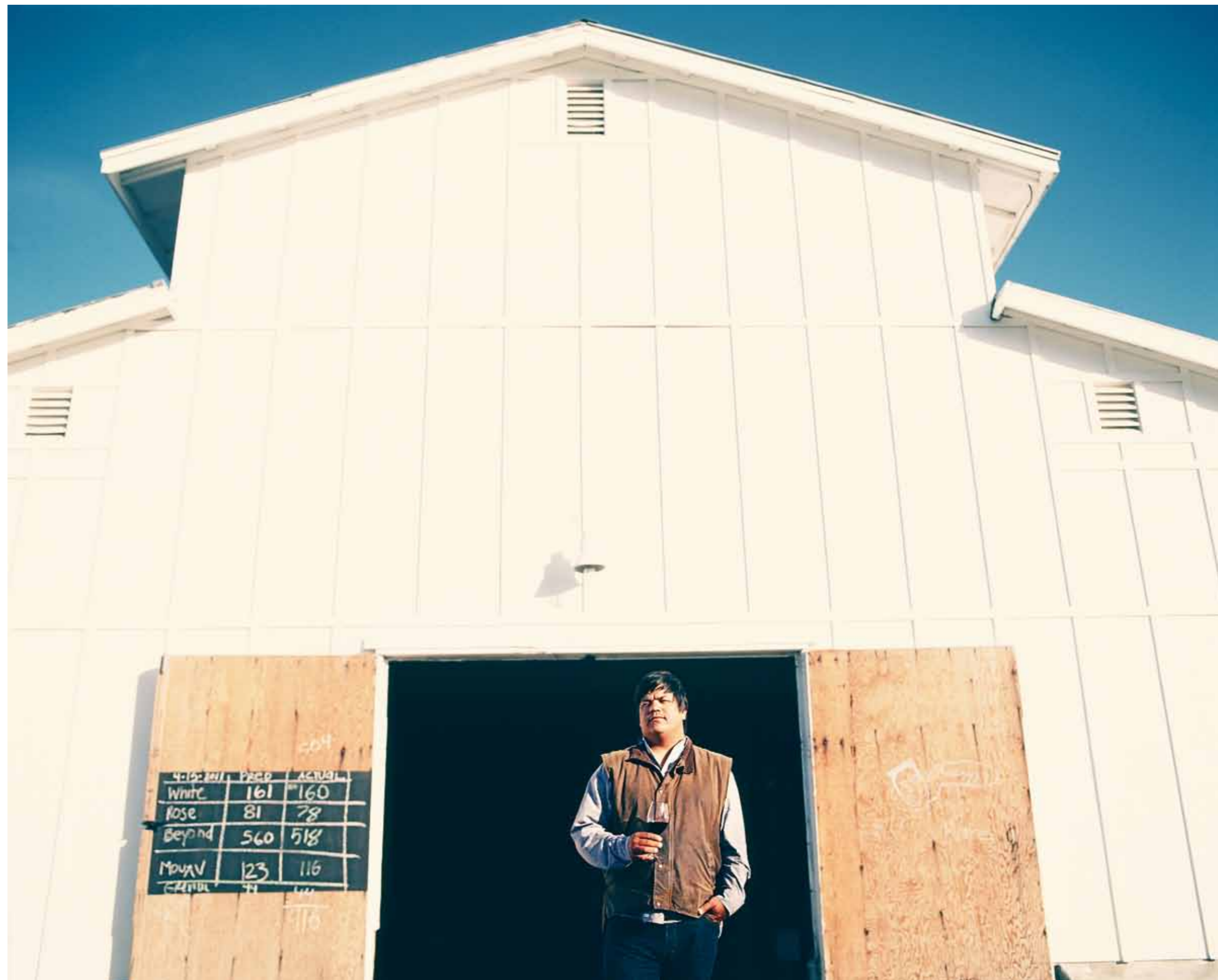


The Art of Wine

On the central coast of California, the scenic drive to the Minassian-Young Vineyards takes you through the Santa Lucia Mountain Range full of vineyards and vast fields of wild grass that make waves with the wind. A winding gravel road leads you to the top of a hill atop which a quaint white house is stationed in the middle of vineyards and walnut groves. The lucky duo that wake up to this scenery in Peachy Canyon are a husband and wife team – the Youngs.

Text Ani Garibyan | Photo Armen Poghosyan



Walking into the tasting room at the Minassian-Young Vineyards, I expected to see someone who looked Armenian. First to greet me was David, whose family holds both the Minassian and Young surnames. David grew up in Southern California and had not met an Armenian outside of his family – aside from the occasional visits to the Armenian church in Los Angeles – until he went to college. The Minassian part of the of his company’s name goes back to Julfa and New Julfa, Iran. Yet, what is more interesting is that David’ great-great-grandfather immigrated to Burma to become the priest of the newly built Armenian church. His grandfather Noel married a Burmese-British woman, Nancy; from their union, David’s mother, Christine, was born. Amparo, David’s wife, has no Armenian blood-line. But her facial features were quite Armenian – especially her eyes.

The duo had always been interested in plants and agriculture. David has a degree from California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo in Fruit Science, and Amparo holds a doctorate degree in Plant Biology from the University of California, Berkeley. They met through mutual friends and the joining of the two has created a unique winery that results in a variety of tastes from year to year. “Wine-making is, I think, more towards the art rather than the science, but science is slowly catching up,” said Amparo. David elaborated further, noting that “as old as wine-making is, modern science has

only entered wine-making in the last 40 years. There is still a lot of mysteries to be solved in wine-making.” Most wines taste the same from one year to the next because the vineyards are strategically irrigated. David and Amparo take a different approach to wine-making. Their vineyards are dry-farmed. Their grapes are grown solely with natural sunlight and rainfall – the way it has been done for thousands of years. They do not irrigate their vineyards. Due to dry-farming, their wines taste different every year; this is because of the amount of sunshine and rain Mother Nature allots on a given year. Once the grapes are picked, the Young’s make wine in a consistent manner, without manipulating the process. “It’s a lot of fun making wine that way,” said Amparo. The vineyard next to that of Minassian-Young, which is less than half a mile away, is also dry-farmed and yet there are great differences between their wines. The Minassian-Young vineyards attain more sun during the day compared to their neighbor, which changes the taste significantly. The Minassian-Young wines are more fruit-based because of the amount of sun they receive. Wine and food go hand in hand. “Wine has an intrinsic value. The acid in wine cleanses your palate. Any tannins in wine will bind with rich elements in the meal so that when you take the next bite, it not only tastes fresh, but also enhances the dish,” said David. It is much easier to change the food to fit the wine. A specific bottle can be the inspiration of what the meal should be.

“They are calling it the golden age of wine. People are drinking less hard liquors and are coming back to wine and are a lot more interested now in the pairing of wine and food.”



Grape 411

It is best to start picking the grapes when the weather is cold. The cold not only protects the grapes but also reduces the amount of damaged grapes in the de-stemming process. After their wines are bottled, they rest for at least a couple of months before they are served or sold.

Wine 411

Wine is no longer required to age for it to be a better quality or more expensive. The equipment that wine makers have today is a lot gentler and reduces the harsh taste from green tannins. As wine ages, the tannins becomes softer, making the drink taste smoother and better. The same effect of aging the wine for five years can be achieved by aging the wine for three months.

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“They are calling it the golden age of wine. People are drinking less hard liquors and are coming back to wine and are a lot more interested now in the pairing of wine and food,” elaborated David. The Minassian-Young wines are sold exclusively in restaurants, specifically in San Diego, as well as through their

Web site and through their wine club. Their wine club comprises wine aficionados who are open different tastes every year and understand the uniqueness. The winery always welcomes wine lovers to taste its yearly vine variety when they visit the Minassian-Young Vineyards. ■

