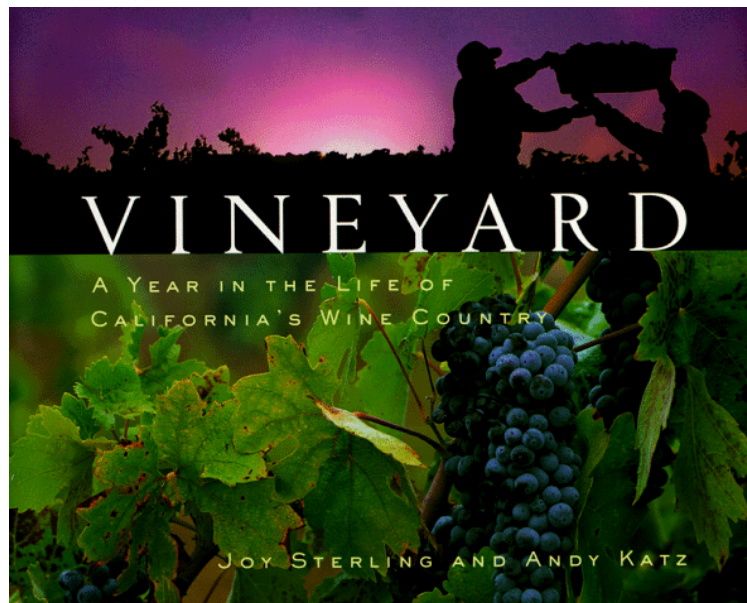


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## Vineyard: A Year In The Life of California's Wine Country

*Joy Sterling*

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**Joy Sterling : Vineyard: A Year In The Life of California's Wine Country** before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Vineyard: A Year In The Life of California's Wine Country:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Joy Sterling writes with authority and feeling of wine and ...By John PosnerJoy Sterling writes with authority and feeling of wine and wine country and I found the combination of her writing and the stellar photography by Andy Katz to be superb.0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Five StarsBy William YarberryVery Nice Book!6 of 6 people found the following review helpful. A Glass of the House White, PleaseBy David EdwardsI admit at the outset that I am not a wine-lover. I drink a glass of wine every evening because it is said to be healthful, and I don't sip wine while chewing gum, but, okay, usually I cannot distinguish one wine from another without reading the label. So I could probably write a more informed review of a book about toilet tissue. Still, I don't believe this book is altogether wasted on ignorant readers like me. Ms. Sterling's prose opens an appealing and beautiful window into the California Wine Country, as seen by someone who lives and works on a vineyard there. The reader comes to appreciate, and sympathize with, the labor-intensive nature of wine-making, and the countless and challenging factors of climate, weather, soil, parasites, barrels, farming decisions, and nearly endless intangibles that determine the volume and the quality of the yearly vintage. Even more important and more visible in this book is the love that accompanies the labor: love of the land and its seasons, love of the process, and especially love of the final product, with all its subtleties and nuances.The text does provide information, but this is by no means a text in oenology. Instead it is a rhapsody on making of fine wines in the singular and fortunate environment of California. The accompanying photographs, which constitute more than half of the book, not only harmonize with the prose but also stand alone as superb examples of photographic art. The photographer (and co-author) is a master of light, skilled at achieving dramatic, evocative, and downright beautiful results even in conditions that are photographically marginal.Quibbles: there were a few terms that my dictionary did not define; perhaps a short glossary would have been useful. And I wish the figure captions had been placed adjacent to the individual photographs rather

than on a list at the back of the book. In summary, this is essentially an art book, a coffee-table book, that can be enjoyed and savored like the wines it describes. It has certainly made me rethink, if not yet revise, my habit of wine-as-medicine.

It may be something about the number of grapes that get crushed, the days on the vine, the sun, or the rain, but there is a certain alchemy that takes place in the production of a bottle of wine, an alchemy that is noticeable in just one sip from any very good bottle. In "Vineyard", Andy Katz and Joy Sterling have captured this alchemy with their own talents in photographs and words. Beginning with a history of wine in California, where the most popular American wines are grown, Joy Sterling describes the precarious nature of life in the vineyard-- concerns about daily variations in weather, maintaining hope through difficult seasons, and the irony in the difficulty of handling a harvest that is larger than expected. Sterling's expressive epigrams of seasons, philosophies, and perspectives of growing wine in California are accompanied by Andy Katz's crystalline photographs of vineyards in sunlight and rain, shadow and fog, abundance and rest. His photos capture the density in the light, the texture in the leaves, and the moisture in the air. Anyone who has ever visited California will be charmed by this stunning year-round representation of the vineyards, and those who haven't will be captivated by the sheer beauty and poetry in its vistas.

.com It's clear from the layout of *Vineyard: A Year in the Life of California's Wine Country* that the narrative is kept purposefully secondary to Andy Katz's lavish photography. Interspersed between predominant spreads of pastoral lanes, "golden-hour" vistas, and fog-drowned hillsides, Joy Sterling's viticultural story winds its crooked way. Since Sterling serves on the business end of Sonoma county's Iron Horse winery (while also, notably, being married to resident winemaker Forrest Tancer), her take on the vintner's cycle is brief, broad, and anecdotal. Yet the sheer prominence and prevalence of Katz's work properly achieves the romanticism Sterling means to convey. *Vineyard* serves best on the coffee table rather than in the wine library--we are reminded primarily that a year in the life of California's wine country is, at the very least, gorgeous. --Todd Gehman  
From Booklist Sterling is an owner of a California vineyard and author of two previous books. Here she guides readers through a tour of wine making in the Sonoma and Napa Valleys. She explains the tedious and exacting tasks of pruning and training 700 vines (it's like sculpting, she says) and describes the beauty of the surrounding countryside in the spring. Sterling talks about the philosophy of growth, the fear of fires and crop failure, and the agonizing decision of just when to start harvesting the grapes and aging the wine. It is an absorbing text, but the heart of the book is Andy Katz's 60 stunning color photographs: vineyards under an overcast sky, the surrounding mountains, a field of yellow flowers, and bins piled high with purple grapes. It's the next best thing to being there. George Cohen