

Jackass Hill
MUSCAT ALEXANDRIA

In 1895 Giuseppe Martinelli left the Minnesota coal mines, accompanying him were his bride Luisa and their new born son, heading to California in search of a place to plant a vineyard and start a winery. The lush Russian River Valley reminded Giuseppe of his Italian homeland so he stayed and procured a job grafting grapevines for a local farmer. Every Sunday, on his only day off, Giuseppe walked through the back hills along Green Valley Creek, searching for the perfect site to plant a vineyard. He had brought with him from Europe the consummate method of growing grapes; planting a specific grape varietal on a site which is ideal for that particular varietal to flourish. The day he spotted the steep 60-degree slope with its southeastern exposure he knew the beautiful rarity of such an ideal spot for growing Muscat Alexandria and Zinfandel. Giuseppe acquired the grape cuttings from his former employer and grafted them onto the St. George rootstock.

After the untimely death of Giuseppe, his thirteen-year-old son, Leno, was given sole responsibility of farming the incredibly steep vineyard. Leno grew up receiving all of his farming and winemaking knowledge from his parents and from his own lifelong experience. This rugged section of the ranch is referred to by the Martinelli family as "Jackass Hill" because only a jackass would farm a hill that steep. Jackass Hill is the steepest non-terraced hillside vineyard in Sonoma County. At the age of 89 Leno turned over the care taking of the steep hillside vineyard to his son Lee. Lee farms the ancient vineyard much as his grandfather Giuseppe had one-hundred years before; without irrigation, pesticides, or trellising.

The Muscat is fermented with wild yeast and barrel fermented in neutral French oak barrels. The 2002 vintage Jackass Hill Muscat Alexandria has generous honeysuckle and floral aromas with rich flavors of vanilla, spiced apple jelly, honeysuckle, and fresh golden honey.

Winemaker: Helen Turley Asst. Winemaker: Bryan Kvamme