

Our Story

- Allan Chapman purchased the Priest Ranch in 2004
- The first clients to buy Priest Ranch grapes under the new ownership were David Ramey and Biale
- In 2005 Craig Becker purchased grapes to produce Highflyer Centerline
- In 2005 Craig Becker began making wine for Priest Ranch from grapes that did not sell.
- In 2006 Lynch Vineyard (also known as Elder Valley), was purchased by Allan Chapman forming a continuous 1,615 acre property with the Priest Ranch
- In 2006 Allan and Craig began discussing whether to consolidate each of their wine entities into one company. Later it would become Somerston Wine Company.
- The first vintages of Priest Ranch wines were produced 2006.
- In 2007, a winery development proposal was approved by the Napa County Board of Supervisors for the renovation of the existing barn, a new winery building north of the existing building, and approval for an agriculture building.
- In 2007, the first vintages of Somerston Estate were produced
- On March 3rd 2008, Somerston Wine Co. operating documents and consolidation were complete.
- In 2009, Allan purchased a property in Yountville to build a tasting room for Somerston Wine Co.
- Construction began on the winery, road, and waste water system.
- The Yountville tasting room opened in June 2010.
- The winery was completed for harvest of 2010

A Practical, High-Tech Winery

The estate itself – with its rugged terrain, spectacular vistas and bountiful wildlife – is the star at Somerston, while the winery blends into the landscape. The winery is a renovated 12,000 square-foot barn. It is a practical, efficient, and green facility that contains some of the most cutting-edge, innovative technology in the world. The centerpiece is an integrated, carbon-neutral CO₂ heating and cooling system that operates with zero emissions of hazardous refrigerants while achieving a vastly higher level of performance than traditional propane-based hot water boilers and standard refrigerant heat pumps. The system will allow the winery to produce hot water not from propane, but from electricity generated from the use of solar panels. The next phase of the project is to construct an additional winery building with a solar roof that will make Somerston self-sufficient in energy and capable of operating entirely off the grid. The winery also employs an anaerobic process waste water bio-filter that delivers clean, pH-adjusted water that is combined with irrigation water and returned to the vineyard.

“Our guiding mission at Somerston is to operate systemically as a sustainable, efficient and land-focused project,” Craig Becker says. “Plenty of wineries build efficiently, but don’t operate efficiently. There also are a lot of self-styled ‘sustainable’ wineries and vineyards that actually are not environmentally friendly. Every element of our winery has been designed with a purpose, and that purpose is to be truly sustainable.”