



Santa Rosa Stainless Steel

A shining reputation for wine tanks

By Jim Brumm

A lot can happen in nearly fifty years. Economies change, industries evolve, technology advances. Few businesses can survive a half-century of change intact, especially a family-owned business. But for Mark Ferronato, co-owner of Santa Rosa Stainless Steel, in Santa Rosa, California, it feels as though they're just getting started.

Santa Rosa Stainless Steel was founded in 1968 by Mark's father, Fred, and his partner, Charlie Levell. Fred was working at a metal shop when he was approached by Barney Fetzer, of Fetzer Vineyards, to build a couple of stainless steel tanks for his winery. Fred and Charlie did just that, and Santa Rosa Stainless Steel was born. Their original business was opened in a barn in Santa Rosa. (Those original tanks, built for Barney Fetzer in 1968, are still in use today).

Fred's son, Mark, grew up in the business, sweeping the parking lot and the shop as a child. Today, he and his sister, Michele Cotta, are the proud owners and loyal stewards of the business their father started so long ago.

Rather than succumb to changes in the wine industry and society, Santa Rosa Stainless Steel grew and thrived over the years, and today is one of the world's premier designers and manufacturers of stainless steel tanks.

"When my father and Charlie Levell made those first tanks, most wineries were still using wood," said Mark. "That was essentially the beginning of the wine industry using stainless steel tanks."



Two of Mark's children, one of Michele's children, and their niece and nephews are employed there, making it a third-generation family-owned business.

And business is booming. Though the company started manufacturing tanks for the wine industry, today Santa Rosa Stainless Steel tanks are used at wineries, breweries, water

storage facilities, and distilleries, along with manufacturers of vinegar, soda, and liquid soap.

Since the beginning, Santa Rosa Stainless Steel listened carefully to their customers' suggestions, evolving their design to constantly improve their stainless steel tanks. They are acknowledged as the vanguard of design in the stainless steel tank industry, even helping new wineries lay out their facilities to incorporate their tanks in the most efficient manner.

Not only are their tanks hardy and durable, they are pleasing to the eye.

"Our tanks are prettier than most," said Mark. "When wineries give tours, they want things to look stunning, so we pay extra attention to aesthetics. We do perfect welds, and use brushed steel and different finishes. The end result is not only usable, but beautiful. For us, it's all about adding the personal touch."

Santa Rosa Stainless Steel manufactures four- to five-hundred tanks a year for satisfied customers



Santa Rosa Stainless Steel co-owner Mark Ferronato discusses tank diagrams with long-time employee Ron Evans

across the nation, as well as in Mexico and Canada. Their busy crews are scheduled nearly a year out. Over the years they have created over 20,000



Santa Rosa Stainless Steel: Family owned for three generations

tanks. No company is more experienced or skilled.

Santa Rosa Stainless Steel's nearly three-acre manufacturing facility is a beehive of activity. Nearly 50 employees work year round to fulfill orders, from small, cone tanks, to massive, forty-foot stainless steel monsters. Their largest tank to date was built to hold 375,000 gallons. No job is too big or too small. Each tank they make, regardless of its size, receives the same attention to detail, and with care, each should literally last a lifetime.

"We've built a lot of trust over the years," said Mark. "We guarantee our quality and we guarantee delivery."

In addition to being family owned and operated, Santa Rosa Stainless Steel employees entire *other* families—brothers and

sisters working together, and provides full benefits for their workers. Many of their employees have been there for decades, some over forty years. This

sense of loyalty, family, and pride of quality is what enables Santa Rosa Stainless Steel to remain at the top of their game.

Mark and Michele understand also that their success comes from their community, and that giving back is a way to give thanks for its support over the years. They donate generously to various charities, including children's charities, museums, local hospitals and more.

Quality, attention to detail, giving back to their community, and taking care of their workers: Santa Rosa Stainless Steel had perfected the formula for success and satisfied customers.

Santa Rosa Stainless Steel

1400 Airport Blvd.
Santa Rosa, CA 95403

707-544-SRSS (7777)
www.srss.com