

Comment concerning Silver Rose Resort Project by Bill Dyer, 1501 Diamond
Mountain Road, Calistoga
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I have lived in and around Calistoga since 1974. I appreciate the way Calistoga has maintained its small town character over the years. One has only to visit Yountville to appreciate that Calistoga has held on to a unique character that our business community promotes with a billboard outside St. Helena that says "Up the road. Down to earth." Over the next few months the Planning Commission will be presented several potential projects that will challenge our unique character.

As a forty-year member of the winemaking community, I appreciate that our industry has prospered by carefully protecting its identity with the Ag Preserve and Winery Definition Ordinances. These are self-imposed restraints, and along with voluntary self assessments for farmworker housing, and for campaigns to fight various grapevine pests, we have achieved success such that we can be generous in supporting education, health care for our workers, and so on. I mention this because it is important to note that restraint and mindfulness as to one's roots and identity are not incompatible with success.

Also, I have learned in our industry the importance of planning. In fact it would not be an exaggeration to say that winemaking is all about planning. So when I consider the appeal of living in and around Calistoga, I am aware that our General Plan has a lot to do with our unique character.

In the immediate future we are going to have to make decisions on several projects that if approved as proposed could radically alter the character of Calistoga. Mostly these are proposed by outsiders, who would like to exploit the rural quality of life we have here, and do not seem mindful that we would no longer be so "down home" if all the projects are completed as they envision them. I am so glad we have a General Plan in place to deal with these proposals.

Concerning the Silver Rose Project, I note that in the Calistoga Municipal Code (17.24.180 B-3) it is stated that among the uses possible for this site are "Wineries, provided that the use is combined with, and subordinate to, an agricultural use on the lands covered by PD 2007-1. I would like to point out that the 6-acre vineyard on this site would produce (assuming a generous 5 tons/acre) something on the order of 30 tons of grapes, which would be just under 2,000 cases. The current capacity of the winery on the site is 5,000 cases. Increasing this to 10,000 cases does not strike me as being "subordinate to an agricultural use."

Finally, I would like to thank those serving on the Planning Commission for serving the community in this important role as protectors of our community.


Bill Dyer