Macari Vineyards
Mattituck, Long Island, New York
Matthew Doutney
Summer 2019

Macari Vineyards is a family owned and operated vineyard and winery on the North Fork of Long Island, New York. The family owns 500 acres total of land, with just over 200 under vine. The remaining land is used for farming of both livestock and agriculture. The Macaris are big believers in a natural approach to growing grapes and have a belief in biodynamics. The winemaker, Kelly Koch, (who is originally from the town of St. Helena in the heart of Napa Valley, California) is an amazingly talented individual whose wines are world class and are consistently rated as 90+ points. Her wines are usually that of a Bordeaux style as many of Long Island’s commonly grown grapes are those of Bordeaux. Joey Macari is the head vineyard manager, he governs and maintains all 200+ acres of vines. Every year he produces the highest possible quality grapes to be used in that year’s vintage.

Vineyard operations:
- Pruning:
  - In early May, we walked through the vines and removed all excess buds on the vine that were not desired.
  - In the following weeks we went back through the vines and removed any of the new growth and early shoots that were undesirable on those vines. We also removed any excess leaves and all of the suckers that were growing.
- First moving of the trellising wire higher to support the vine growth- June
- Opening the canopy:
  - In late June/ early July, we opened the lower canopy of the vines to all more air movement and sunlight to reach the newly forming fruit.
- Final moving of the trellising wire to allow greater support for the taller shoots- mid/late July
- Trimming of the shoots
  - After moving the wire up to its final position, the shoots that are growing too long and tall are trimmed back and effectively shortened to just above the wire.
- Growth around the vines:
  - Macari Vineyards refuses to use any herbicides or other chemicals to control plant growth around the vines. They understand that this is very bad for the environment and effects the ecosystem, instead, the grass and other weeds are either removed by hand or cut short with a weed wacker.

Takeaway from the internship:
After completing my internship at Macari Vineyards, I know I have gained a great deal of both knowledge and experience. I’ve learned an extensive amount about the grapes, the vines and the growth of the plant while talking to and working with my peers in the vineyard. I learned a lot of practical things during my time that would be difficult to teach in a classroom because of the restraint of a classroom lacking a physical example of what is being taught. My hands-on learning helped me to gain an immense amount of experience and a much better understand of the anatomy of the vines, methods and techniques to use and general viticulture. Being in the winery itself was also very useful. I learned a lot about the winemaking process and what it takes to turn high quality fruit into high quality wines. My time in both the vineyard and the winery was very valuable and beneficial. The knowledge and experience I gained will undeniable be a factor that will help propel me in my classes when learning about the things I’ve done and absolutely in my future when I am able to apply what I’ve learned.