

New Wine, Old Traditions

*Barrington couple brings their
Adruni Vineyards wines to Illinois.*

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Enjoying a glass
of wine at the
Sonoma vineyard.



Nancy and Garo Kholamian clearly remember the first time they saw the property that would become their family's Adruni Vineyards. "It was magical," says Nancy. "The Spanish moss coming off the trees...the way the residential buildings settled on the ridge overlooking Dry Creek Valley...the sweet fragrance of rosemary, lavender and olive trees as we looked out to the vineyards stretched out below. We were just overtaken by the beauty of it all."

Within a week of that memorable 2017 day, the Kholamians made their winning offer on the Sonoma County, California land and set to work towards Adruni Vineyards' official launch. That happened in December 2023, with the unveiling of their 2021 Cabernet Sauvignon, a full-bodied California cabernet made from the grapes of their 30-year-old Dry Creek Valley AVA (American Viticultural Area) vines. The couple are thrilled to be introducing their wine to Barrington and the rest of the fine-wine-appreciating world.

The name Adruni goes back many generations to ancient Armenia, home of Garo's ancestors and considered by many to be the birthplace of wine. Symbolic of this connection, Nancy and Garo, along with their family, selected the Armenian symbol for eternity as their logo. Their three sons collaborated to beautifully communicate its meaning on Adruni's website. James did the design, Michael created the music, and David wrote the poetic text: "The Armenian symbol of eternity on our bottle hints at the cycles of life that bring us together. The roots of our vines mirror the roots we seek to establish in Dry Creek Valley for this new

chapter of life. So, for us, Adruni is about making old traditions new, and lost things becoming found—preferably over a glass of world-class wine."

But how did this all come to be? Nancy and Garo first met while working for Montgomery Ward's corporate store planning division—Garo, an architect, headed plan production, and Nancy, a designer, served as the liaison between designers and vendors. Married in 1987, they moved to Barrington the next year, where Garo eventually established his GK Real Estate property investment firm, and the family raised their boys. Given Nancy's upbringing in Northern California, she and Garo took many trips to California's wine country and soaked in knowledge about grapes, fine wines, and wineries.

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"Nancy really introduced me to the wine country, and I fell in love with it," says Garo. "After decades of visits, I said to Nancy, 'We are always buying and selling something commercial, what if we bought something fun? Like a vineyard.'"

And so, the adventure began. "When the vineyard first became ours, it was under contract to sell all of the fruit and no wine was



Amongst the grape vines, a picnic table Garo built by hand.



Nancy and Garo Kholamian enjoying the fruits of their labor, wearing models' own.

being made,” says Garo. “When the contract expired, that opened the way to start having wine made from our grapes. We shared the first few bottles, and the reception was so positive, we decided to take it further.”

Because Adruni is a boutique vineyard with limited production, the Kholamian’s main intent is to bring the California wine experience to Illinois. They’ve begun doing pop-up wine tastings and collaborations with local businesses in Barrington. They also ship throughout most of the United States to members of their online wine club (which accounts for the largest percentage of sales,) and eventually hope to introduce wines from other small, family-owned vineyards with whom they have strong relationships.

“We’ve become the California boutique wine country ambassadors to Barrington,” Garo smiles.

“Garo and I have always enjoyed creating together,” adds Nancy, “and this venture gives us a new opportunity to do that.”

In fact, whether cooking, entertaining, or gardening the couple has long been open to adventurous ideas. Testimony to that, Garo and Nancy actually planted a mini vineyard in their Barrington backyard as an experiment years ago, using grape vines the University of Minnesota cultivated to grow well in Midwest climes. Despite their care tending those grapes, wine produced from them just couldn’t compare with that grown in Sonoma County. “The backyard wine just wasn’t very good,” laughs Garo. “Nothing like what we are now able to make from Adruni Vineyards grapes.”

Located in Sonoma’s Dry Creek Valley, Adruni Vineyards’ 10 acres of cabernet grape vines benefit from the regions’ warm, dry days, cool mornings and nights, steep grades, and loamy soil—perfect conditions for producing premium wines. Fifth-generation vineyard manager Ryan Peterson carefully tends the vineyard, which is certified sustainable. “Positioning the shoots as they come up... pruning and thinning the vines and fruit...everything is done by hand,” says Garo.

Although Adruni does not have a tasting room, the property was built with entertaining in mind. Including the main residence, communal gathering space with a commercial kitchen, outdoor pizza oven, infinity pool, and three one-bedroom bungalows, “it’s like a mini resort,” says Garo. When they are not at the property, the Kholamians rent it out as an Airbnb, attracting groups who want the perfect spot for celebrations. “Weddings, birthday parties, reunions,” says Nancy, “so many happy occasions! We also look forward to hosting events for our wine club members, who get a special discount.”

Drawing from their architecture and design training, the Kholamians have already begun upgrading the buildings, adding a cantilevered deck to better view the beautiful valley, as well as

Dining on pizzas from the outdoor pizza oven at Adruni Vineyards.



improvements to the bungalows.

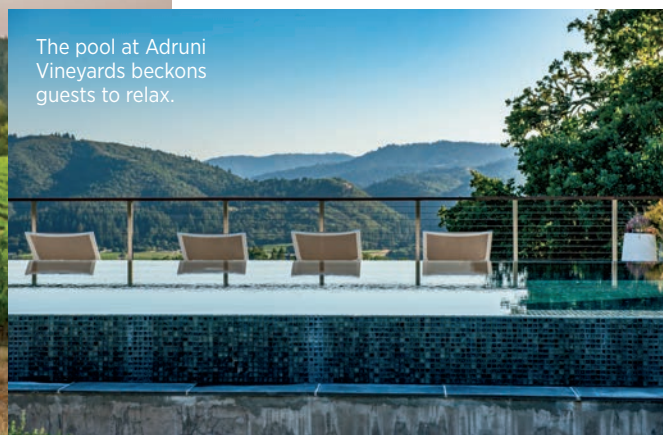
Looking ahead, as Adruni’s cabernet vineyards reach the end of their cycle, “We will begin planting sections with new rootstock,” says Garo, “always focusing on continuing the creation of great wines.”

“This whole thing has been such a walk in faith, steeped in prayer,” sums Nancy. “It has been as miraculous as the eternity symbol that connects us. That’s a symbol of faith, and that’s a part of who we are. We want to be good stewards of what we’ve been given and are just in the beginning stages. We will stay open to where this takes us, that’s part of the journey.”

Adruni Wines are available at adrunivineyards.com and Ambrosia Euro-American Patisserie at 710 W. Northwest Highway, Barrington.



Adruni Vineyard at sunset.



The pool at Adruni Vineyards beckons guests to relax.