CS2 winery is the dream project of two established Napa Valley vintners, Eric Sklar, founding partner at Alpha Omega winery, and Prescott Ashe, founder and proprietor of Prescott Ashe Vineyards. Together, Sklar and Ashe have developed plans for a new winery. The application proposes a new winery with a maximum production of 100,000 gallons per year, with almost the entire wine production facility located underground in two separate caves. Proprietors Sklar and Ashe presently own over forty acres of producing vineyard, and are actively seeking to acquire one hundred or more additional acres. In keeping with the goal of connecting the winery’s customers to the Napa Valley itself, all vineyard providing grapes to the project will be visible from the winery.

The winery layout has been carefully designed to minimize project impacts. The lower cave, dedicated to crushing, pressing, fermentation, bottling and storage, will be approximately 25,000 square feet in area. The upper cave, approximately 10,000 sq. ft. in area, will house the barrel cellar. Visitors will enter a reception center near the upper cave portal, and then experience a guided walk through the cave to an elevator linking the cave with the above-ground tasting room. Once in the tasting room, visitors will experience a panoramic view of the upper valley, and with that view, a unique opportunity to make visual connection with the historic and geographical elements that comprise the legacy of Napa County’s agricultural preserve. The location of multiple historic wineries and vineyards will be identified, and, as they taste CS2 wines, visitors will be able to see the very vineyards from which those wines are made, while learning about the geographical and geological elements that shape the unique characteristics each vineyard imparts to the wines being tasted. In other words, it is both the intent and the purpose of this project to use the property’s views to create a unique visual and sensory experience celebrating the agricultural preserve, while showcasing CS2 wines.

The existing defunct bed & breakfast at the top of the knoll will be demolished, and two new above-ground structures will be constructed: a small reception building at the entrance to the upper cave, and a winery administration and visitor building set into the hill on the site of the existing hill-top inn. The floor plans include space labeled “outdoor tasting” to enable compliance with the ABC regulations implemented pursuant to Assembly Bill 2004. By replacing the existing structure with a new building designed to both comply with County guidelines for ridgeline construction and to enhance the overall appearance of the property, CS2 seeks to improve the public viewshed. All new construction will incorporate greenhouse gas reduction measures.
PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Location:

The project is located in the Agricultural Preserve zoning district on a 10.9 acre property located on the east side of SR 29, approximately ¼ mile south of the Yount Mill Road/SR 29 intersection in unincorporated Napa County. The property fronts on Highway 29, where the highway passes immediately west of the hills that rise up from the valley floor just north of Yountville. The property is comprised of two legal parcels. Upon approval of a winery use permit, but not before, the property owner will apply for voluntary merger of the parcels pursuant to the provisions of County Code §17.51.010 et seq.

Access to the property is via an existing driveway from SR 29 which will be moved to the south of its current location. The project site is bound by vineyard and open space to the north and south, open space and a single-family residence to the east, and SR 29 to the west with Cosentino Winery, Mustard Grill Restaurant, Oleander House Bed & Breakfast, and three residences on the west side of SR 29.

Structures:

The project includes construction of two new winery buildings with approximately 14,000 square feet (sf) of floor area, including a 1,200 sf reception building and a 12,800 sf winery administration and visitor building. In addition, the winery administration and visitor building includes approximately 9,600 sf of unenclosed terraces. Construction of approximately 35,590 sf of cave area with a warming kitchen, 37 on-site parking spaces, installation of a new on-site winery process and domestic wastewater treatment system, installation of a three-sided box drainage culvert to replace an existing culvert, new landscaping, driveway improvements, four 10,500-gallon water storage tanks, and signage are included in the proposed winery. The cave area will be comprised of two caves, connected by an underground elevator: the lower cave, dedicated to crushing, pressing, fermentation, bottling and storage, will be approximately 25,000 square feet in area. The upper cave, approximately 10,000 sq. ft. in area, will house the barrel cellar. There will be no outdoor wine production activities at the entrance to the lower cave.

The project includes an application for an exception by use permit to the conservation regulations to grade and/or construct improvements on slopes exceeding 30 percent; a viewshed application to allow construction on slopes 15 percent or greater and visible from a viewshed-designated roadway (SR 29); and a request for a variance for development that encroaches into the 300-foot setback from a shared driveway. The stairway and retaining walls that encroached into the required sideyard setback in the previous project description have been eliminated.
Marketing Plan:

The applicant proposes tours and tastings by appointment only for a maximum of 420 visitors per week for a minimum of two years after the winery has been granted a certificate of occupancy (Phase I). Thereafter, the applicant proposes that no increase in visitation shall to the Phase II level (described below) shall be allowed until there has been an administrative review of use permit compliance by staff with a report to the Planning Commission certifying that the applicant is in compliance with the terms of this permit (First Compliance Certification).

For a minimum of 12 months after the First Compliance Certification, the applicant proposed that winery visitation shall be limited to a maximum of 700 visitors/week (Phase II). Thereafter, the applicant shall not increase visitation to the Phase III level of 1,000 visitors/week until (a) the winery has produced a minimum of 50,000 gallons of wine and (b) there has been a second administrative review of use permit compliance and a second report to the Planning Commission certifying that the applicant is in compliance with the terms of this permit (Second Compliance Certification). Once the Second Compliance Certification has been approved by the Planning Commission, the applicant proposed that winery visitation be limited to a maximum of 1,000 visitors/week.

The applicant proposes a maximum of 58 marketing events per year. Proposed marketing activities include 48 food and wine parings per year with up to 50 guests at each event, six (6) food and wine parings per year with up to 100 guests at each event, two (2) food and wine parings per year with up to 200 guests at each event, and two (2) wine auction events per year with up to 200 guests at each event. At least 32 of these events would occur after 6:30 PM; 24 of which would occur in months with longer days (generally between March 21 and September 21) when the average sunset is approximately 7:55 PM, with dark skies approximately 30 minutes later. This would result in the lights being on within the winery administration and visitor building for approximately 90 minutes after dark and approximately four hours after dark for the other eight events. Evening marketing events would cease by 10 PM per County requirements, including cleanup. The start and finish time of marketing activities would be scheduled to minimize vehicles arriving or leaving between 4 PM and 5:30 PM. Valet parking will be provided for all of the large events and release events, and for some of the small events. All parking will be on site.

Operations:

The winery would employ up to 19 full-time staff with established hours of operation from 6 AM to 3 PM (production staff), 8 AM to 5 PM (administrative staff) and 9:30 AM to 6:30 PM (hospitality staff) daily. Winery visitation hours (tours and tastings) would vary throughout the year. Between March and October, visitation hours would be between 10 AM and 6 PM daily. Operation hours at the winery administrative and visitor center building would be reduced during November through February. During these four months,
tours and tastings would end at 4 PM with all hospitality staff leaving at 4:30 PM and offices closing at 5 PM. There will be no outdoor wine production activities at the entrance to the lower cave. All crushing, pressing and bottling activities will be conducted inside the cave.

By staggering employee hours, by scheduling more than half of the marketing events for evening hours, and by locating all wine production activities inside the caves, CS2 seeks to minimize noise, nighttime lighting and peak afternoon hour traffic.

CS2 Wines, LLC (Applicant)

By: Eric Sklar

Its: Manager

Signed: Date: 4/22/15