

Chumash!

LIVE IT UP AT THE CHUMASH CASINO RESORT FALL 2012



TRIBAL LAND, TRIBAL STORY

Newest Slots are
Big Crowd Pleasers

Poker Chip Shuffle

A Collection of
Chumash Treasures

Your BACKSTAGE PASS

Samala Showroom
Commands the Spotlight

AVANT TAPAS & WINE

A Savory Take on Wine Tasting

Avant Tapas and Wine in Buellton is anything but your typical wine tasting room and restaurant. Located at the end of an industrial park, it's common for first time visitors to be pleasantly surprised. "It's kind of fun because they go to the back side of a building that's overlooking a retention pond, then they come in here and go 'Wow, this is nice!'" said proprietor Joe Padilla.

WALL OF WINE

Guests are "wowed" by Avant's modern take on the wine tasting experience. They can enjoy tours of its sister winemaking facility and next-door neighbor, Terravant Wine Company. There's also a retail shop. But what sets Avant apart from other tasting rooms is a full restaurant that serves lunch and dinner, along with a contemporary "wine wall." The wall is made up of machines that dispense wine in three different servings: sample, half a glass, and a full glass.

"We think that having the wines in the wine machines offers more variety for our guests," said Padilla. "It also preserves all the wines so they can be there for up to 90 days and not have any damage. The average wine is up for three days based on volume and if it doesn't go that fast, we replace it."



PHOTOS BY MIHA MATEI

The wines include varietals from several local wineries, along with wines made at the Terravant Wine Company. Avant's setting, said Padilla, makes those wines uniquely accessible to both novices and experienced tasters.

"The knowledgeable wine taster doesn't need me to guide them," explained Padilla. "We have tasting notes over all the wines. So they're able to just get a sample, try it, if they don't like it, they can go to the next one and go from a taste to a half glass to a full glass."

"The novice wine taster can read the notes and only get a small sample, and doesn't have to spend a whole lot of money getting a half glass or a full glass," said Padilla. "It allows them to experience it at their level. Plus we have a wine host every day that can walk them through the wines."

WINE AND DINE

Where there's good wine, Avant makes sure there's good food. Recently, hot and cold tapas items included duck confit crostini and "yuppie crack" – a combination of applewood smoked bacon, goat cheese, and dates. Dinner appetites can be sated by one of Avant's wood-fired pizzas, or larger entrees like a trio of local grass-fed beef sliders, or *camarones diablo*. Padilla notes that 85% of what the restaurant serves is grown in the valley.

"I'd like people to think that after coming on site," said Padilla, "eating food grown within a 20-mile radius of the restaurant, paired with any of the local wines we serve here, they have an experience that's authentically 'Santa Ynez Valley.'"

– Nerissa Sugars

Avant Tapas and Wine, 35 Industrial Way, Buellton. 805-686-4742. www.avantwines.com.

