



Adam LaZarre  
Head Winemaker Wine Hooligans

Adam LaZarre grew up near the Finger Lakes in upstate New York. His father filled the family wine cellar with Classified Growth Bordeaux like Lynch Bages (which you could buy back then for under \$10 a bottle).

With a stocked wine cellar full of priced-to-drink blockbusters, it's no wonder that he dropped out of college to live in his parents' basement. The U.S. Navy finally rescued him from the basement (and a few passing rock star aspirations), but not from wine.

He spent part of his 7-year Navy tour stationed in Seattle, where the unmatched seafood and Sauvignon Blanc pairings proved a sort of epiphany. Another stint sent him to Diego Garcia Island in the Indian Ocean. For Adam, the biggest perk wasn't the tropical waters, but the bimonthly supply runs to Singapore. His captain bought cheap Guinness and Rolex watches, while Adam stocked up on Bordeaux bargains. His father would be proud.

As soon as he finished his service, he enrolled in California's Fresno State's Department of Viticulture and Enology to become a winemaker. On the first day of school, his professor handed him four tons of French Colom bard grapes with the instruction: "If you have any questions, ask!"

"It was the Wild West of winemaking," says Adam, and he loved it.

By his final year at Fresno State in 1995, he was already holding down a fulltime associate winemaker job at Jekel Vineyards in Monterey. A few years later, Hahn Estates hired him to be their Vice President of winemaking.

First, he ripped out all of their Santa Lucia Highlands Cabernet and Merlot to replant with Pinot Noir, a visionary move for the appellation.

Then, he created the Rex Goliath brand for Hahn, and grew it to half-a-million cases in two years.

Finally, Adam started Cycles Gladiator in 2005. His goal – to use his knowledge of the Central Coast vineyards to produce authentic wines connected to the land, and then to use an iconic image of a naked, curvy blonde siren on a bicycle to attract as many wine lovers as possible to Cycles Gladiator wines.

Adam’s philosophy: “It’s one thing to sell \$300 bottles of wine to a few people. I love to produce really great wines that taste two to three times the price and to know that, on any given night, someone somewhere is enjoying my wine.”

Corporate winemaking philosophy expanded the brand, shrunk the label, and Cycles Gladiator eventually lost her torch-bearing winemaker as Adam moved on to make new wines elsewhere.

When wine industry entrepreneur and Head Hooligan of Wine Hooligans, Dennis Carroll acquired Cycles Gladiator under his Wine Hooligans project, the wine was a shell of its former self. Dennis needed Adam to rescue Cycles Gladiator. She had pedaled off course.

Today, Adam is back at the helm, his Cycles Gladiator beauty is back on the bottle, and the Central Coast’s top Petite Sirah, Chardonnay, Pinot Noir, Merlot, and Cabernet Sauvignon are back in the bottle.

As the case with the parent company Wine Hooligans’ credo, moonlights with fellow winemaker and seafood addict, Christian Tietje, to craft mouthwatering, small-lot Santa Barbara Sauvignon Blanc and Los Alamos Vineyard Chardonnay. Oh, and they also make a killer white blend called Octopussy, perfect for those same oysters that got Adam hooked on to great value and quality in his early Navy days.

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