



## Urban winery industry growing in the East Bay

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**Teresa Garcia**

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OAKLAND, CA (KGO) -- When most people think of local wine -- they're thoughts instantly turn to Napa and Sonoma, but you may also want to start thinking about Oakland and Alameda.

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"You look east, and you're like 'oh, wow, there's a burgeoning scene out there," said Rock Wall Wine Company Owner Shauna Rosenblum.

Rosenblum is talking about the East Bay, where there's a growing industry of urban wineries – at least 21 are part of the recently formed [East Bay Vintner's Alliance](#).

Shauna's [Rock Wall Wine Company](#) is in Alameda; a winery that boasts spectacular views of the San Francisco skyline. It's housed in a converted 40,000 square-foot airplane hangar at the former naval air base. Going urban is a much cheaper way to break into the wine industry.

"Why own a vineyard if you don't have to? Why spend a million dollars on a plot of land that you're not sure is going to do great," said Rosenblum.

Instead these winemakers research, purchase and truck their grapes in from a variety of California growers.

For Shauna, it's an art and science she learned growing up. Her father Kent Rosenblum is a founding trailblazer of urban winemaking, producing zinfandel in the East Bay since 1978.

And then there are self-taught, successful winemakers, like Bob Lynch. He's been monkeying around with the fruit of the vine since 1996 and now produces nearly 2,000 cases of wine a year at his Oakland-based [Irish Monkey Cellars](#).

"I like the fact that we're connecting to people in our very, very specific community," said Lynch.

Many customers who come to Irish Monkey's tasting room are local. Some like the eco-friendly concept of not spending as much gas and drive time as it would take to visit the traditional Napa/Sonoma wineries further north. As for quality, plenty of awards speak for themselves. And the grapes, well, Bob believes they don't really care where they're crushed, fermented and aged into wine.

"I think it knows who's making it, but it doesn't know where it's being made, so it's perfectly reasonable for there to be wineries in the middle of Oakland, or any place else for that matter," said Lynch.

Turning a profit can take some time, but these urban winemakers are showing they're willing to take the risk and pour in a labor of love.

Want to sample some of these locally-made wines? Next month the East Bay Vintner's Alliance is hosting its biggest event of the year – the [Urban Wine Experience](#), or UWX, will be in Jack London Square, Oakland on Saturday July 31st.