

## ***The Savories of St Francis***

I visited St. Francis with my husband as we were heading back home after visiting Ledson Winery, both located on the Hwy 12 corridor between Santa Rosa and Sonoma. St. Francis at one time was one of my favorites back in the day when I enjoyed Merlot wines. At some point, I lost the taste of Merlot and for some reason didn't go back to this winery. Well, I'm really glad we decided to visit again on this day!! It was such a lovely visit and now I'll remember to go back!! The day we visited was a warm late summer / early autumn day, vines still green and not yet showing the fall colors. Since I already had a few tastings at Ledson, I was quite relaxed and ready to 'chill' and enjoy the moment.

The winery is a little off the beaten path barely seen from the highway, but only by a few yards. My first impression was the warm yellow and beige muted colors of the stone walls which matched elegantly with the Mission style building, brick entryway, and crushed gravel paths. The entry is as warm and inviting as the colors themselves. Above the main door hangs a boldly handsome 1,000 pound brass bell, which later I learned rings hourly and can be heard throughout the valley. Take a little stroll outside and you're greeted with a stately statue of St. Francis with his sheepdog companion by his side, surrounded by mature verdant olive trees providing cool and inviting shade.

When we entered through the doors, I was pleasantly surprised at how crowded it was. Yes, when it's crowded it's hard to find elbow room, but at the same time it's very inviting. The atmosphere was relaxed and lighthearted, and the guests were most definitely enjoying themselves. The tasting room is not very large and as such provides a cozy and comfortable experience, yet enough room to mingle around.

In my painting, I wanted to capture the warmth of the people's environment, embrace St Francis himself, and capture the ambience of the mission style and the bell.

I hope you enjoy my painting, and that you may find time in your life to visit this wonderful place!

***Cheers!***