



Brooke Hazen, Gold Ridge Organic Farms

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Perched on the rolling hills of Sebastopol, Gold Ridge Organic Farms has become both a culinary and agricultural destination. Founder-Farmer Brooke Hazen settled here in 2000, knowing that sandy loam soils and coastal breezes would offer ideal conditions for farming. He planted 70 acres of olives, 16 acres of heirloom apples, a variety of citrus fruits, and English lavender. Today, the property evokes a Tuscan villa, with the knowledgeable farmers and staff offering tastings, events, and award-winning artisanal estate products in its charming courtyard and farm shop.

We visited with Brooke one day in late April, as the orchards were in full bloom with bees buzzing happily, backdropped by incredible views of the surrounding environs. One of Brooke's aims with the farm is to bridge culture and agriculture, and after one visit to Gold Ridge Organic Farms, you'll discover that he has achieved that goal.

Gold Ridge Organic Farms, 3387 Canfield Road, Sebastopol | goldridgeorganicfarms.com

Farm Trails Member since 2022

How did you get interested in farming/start your business?

I always had a deep connection with nature, which only became more impassioned as I grew up. Farming offered a functional and practical way to balance being in nature with seeing the fruits of my work right in front of me, rather than theoretically distanced or managed. I was not raised at all in farming. This was all new for me, starting in college.

What do you find most rewarding about your work?

The most rewarding part of farming is the connection you forge with nature and our food supply. It is the front lines of the food we eat, which makes for an emotionally-charged experience. Working together each year as a team to bring the bountiful harvest to people's tables is the most rewarding aspect of farming. It feels like a major positive success and priceless experience after each harvest season.

What do you value about being a member of Farm Trails?

The connection it offers with the consumers. After decades of being detached from the people who enjoy the food we produce, it feels so satisfying to meet those people and see first hand what it brings to their lives. Also, Farm Trails provides an invaluable opportunity for people to see and learn about what growing food really looks and feels like.

What are your hopes for the future of your business and/or Sonoma County ag?

I hope to continue to build the direct to customer market, in order to maximize our return for our hard work, as well as maximize the connection between the consumer and the grower.

What advice would you give a new farmer/someone starting out in your line of business?

Most farmers have another job or stream of income to support their farm. You must offer something creative, unique, and exceptional, whether it is organic, early or late season, unique varieties, value added products, unparalleled quality, as well as presentation. It is not easy, but it brings you the most amazing feeling of your life if you can strike a balance, and make it sustainable long term.

Photos by Lisa Rose









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