

Walk in the Vineyards

Description

How often do you walk or run?

I walk quite a lot. There are days together when me and my wife go for the evening stroll. Often there are gaps in this walking routine too, but we try our best to be regular.

But today I will talk of a different kind of walk â?? one that I always look forward to. And thatâ??s my walks in a vineyard, whenever I visit one. Here are my three such experiences.

Grover Zampa Vineyards

This was my very first visit to a vineyard where I was like the proverbial **Child in a Candy Store** (Collins describes this as: *enjoying yourself far too much and not controlling your behaviour in any way*). Here are the things which I noticed during my short walk here:

Apiary Just on entrance of the vineyard is an Apiary â?? which is a colony of artificial beehives. Bee culture is part of the bigger scheme to promote diversity in the vineyards. And Mr Manjunath, the viticulturist told me â??**Happy bees means happy vines**â?•.



Bee culture in the vineyard

Rain Water Harvesting Again near the entrance itself during a side I found a huge artificial pond which stores rain water for recharging the ground water.



Rain water harvesting pond

Sloping Vineyard While walking through the vineyard I also noticed a gentle slope. This ensures proper air flow through the vine canopy, helps in soil drainage and provides an ease of working in amongst the vines.



Sloping vineyard

Big Banyan Vineyards

Vineyard Soil During the walk in this vineyard, it was for the first time that I actually picked up the soil in my hands to have a feel of it. Soil, as we know is one of main components of terroir.



Red soil of the vineyard

Shape of Leaves I also took this opportunity to have a close up look at the leaves of the vines. The one in picture is a leaf of Shiraz Grape. It has medium size 3 to 5 lobed leaves with short, sharp teeth. Resembles angle wings.



A healthy Shiraz vine leaf

Domaine Sula

Windmills The first thing I noticed on entering this vineyard were multiple medium size windmills. I couldn't understand the exact utility of these except maybe to indicate wind direction. Notwithstanding they add a lot of beauty to the scenic vineyard.



Windmills

Leaf Disease Diseases of various kinds are not new to vines and their leaves. On a closer look I noticed some diseased spots on some leaves.



Disease spots on vine leaf

KRSMA Vineyards

Roses at Edge of Vine Rows Roses were planted at the end of rows in this vineyard. These act as an early warning system against vineyard diseases. For example such rose attract insects like aphids before the vines. They also get fungal disease like black rot and mildew before the vines do thereby alerting the winegrowers about any impending onset of disease in their vineyards.



Roses at edge of rows of vines

Drip Irrigation Controlled Drip irrigation provides water to the vines at the right time when they feel the maximum water stress. I saw that black flexible pipe running all along the bottom of the vines for this purpose.



Drip irrigation is done by means of horizontal flexible water pipes running along the bottom of the vines

Cover Crops Cover crops are planted between the rows of vines. They represent an alternative to chemical weeding and tillage. This technique is not new though, as the Romans were already using it 2000 years ago. It is considered a good viticultural practice with positive effects on soil.



Cover crops between rows of vines

For all other wine enthusiasts I have this advice. Before going for a vineyard visit make a list of things you would be looking for and then make a deliberate attempt to actually see and observe all of these. It would add immensely to your knowledge of viticulture.