Farella
Braun + Martel

**Bella Oaks Estate Winery**
**Use Permit Minor Modification and Administrative Winery Use Permit**
**Project Statement (Revised on May 28, 2026)**
**APN 027-260-001 and 027-250-069**

The proposed project consists of the renovation of an existing winery (formerly the Swanson Winery) located at 1271 Manley Lane in Rutherford; the renovated winery ("Winery") will become the home for the Bella Oaks Estate brand. This project proposes to renovate and remodel the Winery facility, construct a small annex addition connected to the existing building, increase the number of employees, establish a marketing program, and clarify the existing hospitality numbers for this pre-WDO winery. Applications for a Minor Modification to a Winery Use Permit and an Administrative Permit for Winery Uses have been filed authorizing the proposed improvements.

The Bella Oaks Estate brand is the creation of Suzanne Deal Booth and her family, who also own the famous Bella Oaks vineyard nearby; the eastern portion of the Bella Oaks vineyard is one parcel away from the Winery property and spans the area between Bella Oaks Lane and Manley Lane. This vineyard, formerly owned by Bella and Barney Rhodes, is one of the great historic vineyards of the Napa Valley. Ms. Booth and her family acquired the vineyard in 2010, and she began making her own wines at nearby Wheeler Farms in 2017. Then in 2021, Ms. Booth had the opportunity to acquire the Winery property as a home for the Bella Oaks Estate wines. Ms. Booth has been actively involved in neighborhood affairs and was reluctant to build a new winery on the Bella Oaks vineyard land. Therefore, the chance to acquire the former Swanson Winery facility afforded her the perfect opportunity to provide a home for the Bella Oaks Estate wines without disturbing any of the historic Bella Oaks vineyard and without constructing an additional winery in the existing landscape.

The Winery property has an original use permit that dates back to 1977 (#U-167677), with a subsequent permit approved on December 12, 1989 (#U-288788). The existing permit allows for 42,500 gallons per year of wine production, which will remain unchanged. The existing Winery building has ~8,128 sq. ft. of production and hospitality uses. The Project Revision Statement for the 1989 use permit limits visitation to 25 vehicles per day, with no more than 5 "bus" visits in any 30-day period, with no more than 1 bus per day. The Winery is limited to 4 full-time employees. No AB 2004 on-site consumption is proposed at this time.

The current application seeks to renovate and modernize the Winery property and to update its use as follows:

**Minor Modification to Winery Use Permit**

1. Amend the permit condition to allow visitation to remain unchanged at 25 vehicles per day, but for purposes of clarity use 60/day as the average number of visitors, with 75/day as the maximum number. This is consistent with past practice at the Winery;

2. Amend the permit condition that the limitation of 1 "bus" per day and 5 per month be clarified to state that in the 1989 permit a "bus" meant a full-size tour bus, and that no full-size

tour buses be allowed at the Winery; in other words, we would forego the entitlement to have 5 tour buses per month at the Winery. We would ask instead that the conditions of approval make it clear that Sprinter-van style vehicles (with a maximum of 15 passengers) are still allowed but shall remain within the 25 vehicle/day cap;

3. Add a marketing program in accordance with the minor modification guidelines of the Permit Streamline Ordinance (18.124.130(C)(4)) to add 11 marketing events: 10 events with attendees not exceeding 24 average daily trips ("ADT") and 1 event with attendees not exceeding 40 ADT, with all marketing events ceasing operations by 10 p.m. The large event will be limited to 80 people maximum (adhering to the 40 ADT) with shuttle service provided for the event. The small events will be limited to 40 people maximum (adhering to the 24 ADT) also with shuttle service provided for the event. For all events, the Winery will be closed to visitation on that day. No more than one marketing event will occur in a given month. All events are proposed to be located within the winery building and covered crush pad area;

4. Add 6 full-time employees for a total of 10 full-time employees;

5. Change of the aggregate building footprint in accordance with Section 18.124.130(C)(5). The existing building footprint is 7,925 sq. ft. in size and the proposed footprint will be 12,168 sq. ft. in size, including the 2,750 sq. ft. covered crush pad. The net increase in building coverage is therefore less than 25%, and the total net coverage is less than the 35.9% established by the prior use permit modification in 1990; there will a net decrease in Winery coverage.

**Administrative Permit for Winery Uses**

1. Amend the parking to include 9 standard spaces for visitors in the East lot and 6 standard spaces for employees in the West lot. An additional accessible space will be located in each lot, for a total of 17 parking spaces. This change in the number of parking spaces will not result in a cumulative increase in paved or impervious ground surface area beyond twenty-five percent of the subject parcel;

2. Add a roof cover over the 2,750 sq. ft. Winery crush pad;

3. Modify the landscaping to include no increase net in groundwater use;

4. Modify the existing hours of operation. The existing hours (7 days per week) are 8 a.m. - 6 p.m. for the Winery and 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. for visitors. The visitor hours will be modified to 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. to attenuate peak afternoon traffic.

5. Add an electric vehicle charging station and bike racks (the number and location of which shall be required by code);

6. Change the storm water control design to include pervious pavement and surface runoff and roofs to drain into a storage tank for reuse for irrigation of vineyards and landscaping (see Stormwater Control Plan submitted with the application);

7. Install water system improvements resulting in no increase in water use or groundwater demand (see Water System Feasibility Report submitted with this application);

8. Install new sanitary sewage treatment and a disposal system to be constructed for projected flows from the Winery. The project also proposes to use hold-and-haul for process wastewater (see Wastewater Feasibility submitted with the application).

**Waste Water/Water Facilities Design**

A new sanitary sewage treatment and disposal system will be constructed for projected flows from the Winery. The project also proposes to use hold-and-haul for process wastewater. However, as an alternative to this the project proposes pre-treatment of process wastewater and application of treated water to a vineyard on Manley Lane under the same beneficial ownership as the Winery parcel. Additionally, the project also locates the septic system reserve disposal area on such parcel (APN 027-250-069).

Note that in our discussions with County staff, Environmental Health Manager Stacey Harrington confirmed on May 15, 2024 that the septic code does not prohibit the use of a non-adjacent parcel for a code compliant septic system (or reserve area) as long an applicant is able to obtain any necessary encroachment permits and/or easements and comply with other applicable regulations; we understand these permits and easement will be a condition of approval for the project. A copy of the Wastewater Feasibility Study is included with this application.

The water supply for the expanded Winery will come from the existing well on the property. The water consumption falls well below County limits. Water storage for emergency and fire-protection usage will continue to be provided by on-site storage tank(s).

A copy of the Water System Feasibility Report and the Wastewater Feasibility Study are included with this application.

**Consistency with Adopted Local Plans and Policies**

The General Plan land-use designation for the property is Agricultural, and the property is zoned AP, a zoning district intended for the Valley floor. Wineries are a conditional use in this district, subject to the provisions of the Winery Definition Ordinance. The proposed expansion of the existing Winery is consistent with both the General Plan land-use designation and with applicable zoning provisions.

**Summary**

As a longstanding member of the Napa Valley winery community, Ms. Booth looks forward to the opportunity to create a home for her wine brand and to renovate and modernize the existing Winery. We appreciate the opportunity to apply for this use permit and looks forward to working with the County on the processing of its application.