

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions.

DRAFT

1. Name of Property

Historic name: Nichelini Winery (Amendment)
 Other names/site number: Nichelini homestead cabin/Nichelini Vineyards/Nichelini Ranch
 Name of related multiple property listing:
N/A
 (Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

2. Location

Street & number: 2950 Sage Canyon Road (State Hwy 128)
 City or town: St. Helena State: California (CA) County: Napa (055)
 Not For Publication: Vicinity:

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,

I hereby certify that this ___ nomination ___ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

___ national ___ statewide ___ local
 Applicable National Register Criteria:
 ___ A ___ B ___ C ___ D

<p>_____ Signature of certifying official/Title:</p>	<p>_____ Date</p>
<p>_____ State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government</p>	

<p>In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria.</p>	
<p>_____ Signature of commenting official:</p>	<p>_____ Date</p>
<p>_____ Title : State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government</p>	

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4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register
- determined eligible for the National Register
- determined not eligible for the National Register
- removed from the National Register
- other (explain:) _____

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

- Private:
- Public – Local
- Public – State
- Public – Federal

Category of Property

(Check only **one** box.)

- Building(s)
- District
- Site
- Structure
- Object

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Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>1</u>	<u> </u>	buildings
<u> </u>	<u> </u>	sites
<u> </u>	<u> </u>	structures
<u> </u>	<u> </u>	objects
<u> </u>	<u> </u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 1

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

DOMESTIC/homestead

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

OTHER/not in use

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7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

OTHER/early homestead cabin

Materials: (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property: WOOD/board and batten

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity.)

Summary Paragraph

The Nichelini homestead cabin is a single story building constructed in ca. 1890 and located in rural northeast Napa County on an original 160 acre homesteaded tract of land. The cabin is situated below a fairly steep ledge on a flat terrace approximately 80 feet east of Sage Canyon Road (Hwy 128) and 70 feet east-southeast of the Nichelini winery/residence (ca.1895). The cabin measures approximately 12 foot by 14 foot and rests at the edge of a sloped landscape directly on top of the soil with some cobble located under several corners of the building. The south façade of the cabin rests against a slight slopping terraced landscape and there is a large mature Valley Oak tree located along the northeast corner of the building.

The building consists of a simple one-room floor plan with a steep pitched, front-gabled roof with slightly extended rafters. The roof is constructed of a common wooden framing system and is sheathed with wood shingles and patches of corrugated metal. The building is clad with redwood board-and-batten siding and an exterior base board that is present along the front façade. There are only two windows located on the cabin, one located along the front (north/west) façade and the second located along the back (south/west) façade. The front façade window is a single double-hung multi-light sash window that consists of a simple window casing that extends below the window sill. There are no glass window panes present; however several muntins are still present.

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The only door is situated asymmetrically along the front façade. The door is in poor condition with only the frame and lower paneled section intact. The door consists of several metal hinges, and a clay door knob with lock box along the interior that appear to be original to the cabin. The window along the back (south/east) façade is square-shaped with a single muntin that runs vertical and divides the simple window into two sections. There is no glass present within the window sash. The window is cased with rough cut wood that appears to be original to the cabin.

The interior of the cabin consists of an exposed framing system and exposed floor that is currently covered in leaves and soil. The homestead likely included a privy though it has not been located.

Relocation History

The homestead cabin was the first building constructed on the Nichelini homesteaded property and original located approximately 750 feet north of the Nichelini Greek Revival style winery/residence (ca. 1895) and Nichelini Winery building (ca.1890) (NR79000508)¹. The cabin was situated at the top of a hill along a flat area of land next to a spring that is still in use today. Access to the cabin was along a steep hillside just off of a narrow and winding section of Sage Canyon Road. The current location of the cabin is approximately 70 feet east-southeast of the ca.1895 Nichelini Greek Revival style winery/residence. According to Nichelini decedents the building was relocated so that Caterina Nichelini and her children would be close to the new permanent winery/residence that Anton was constructing on the property. The original design is of the cabin is unaltered

Integrity

The Nichelini homestead cabin possesses seven of seven aspects of integrity. Although the building has been moved from its original location, the building was relocated within the historic homestead and within the period of significance, and therefore has integrity of *location*. The building has changed relatively little throughout its history. The historically important elements of the building's construction clearly remain, and therefore the property has integrity of *design*. The physical environment surrounding the property has changed little since the time of the cabin's construction; the setting did and continues to reflect the agricultural nature of Napa County wine country. Therefore, the property has integrity of *setting*. The physical elements of the cabin that convey its significance remain; therefore, the property has integrity of *materials* and *workmanship*. The property has integrity of both *feeling* and *association* because its appearance evokes the aesthetic and historic sense of the period of significance and because there is a direct link between the property as it is today and historically as it is still owned by the Nichelini family and remains a working winery. Since the period of significance, the property associated with the Nichelini homestead cabin continues to operate as a commercial winery. The cabin, although not currently in use, clearly conveys all aspects of its historic significance

¹ National Register of Historic Places, Nichelini Winery, Napa County, California, National Register #79000508.

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8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A. Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B. Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C. Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D. Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

- A. Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes
- B. Removed from its original location
- C. A birthplace or grave
- D. A cemetery
- E. A reconstructed building, object, or structure
- F. A commemorative property
- G. Less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Agriculture
Exploration/Settlement

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Period of Significance

1884 – 1937

Significant Dates

1884
1890
1895
1920

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

N/A

Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.)

The Nichelini Homestead Cabin is eligible for the National Register under Criterion A for its association with early 20th century homesteading, agricultural development, and wine making in Napa Valley (period of significance – 1884 - 1937). The cabin embodies the distinctive characteristics of homestead structures during the late 20th century and epitomizes early homestead life, settlement, and agricultural development in the region. Anton Nichelini, a native of Switzerland/owner and builder of the Winery in 1890, was one of many immigrants who exerted a strong influence upon the wine industry in Napa County and who left their mark throughout the County. Anton Nichelini developed deep roots and many connections in the Napa Valley despite the remoteness of the location. In addition to planting vineyards, Nichelini also developed chromite small mines on the property which is in a region of Napa County known for its chromite mine. The mineral deposits, along with grapes, located on the 160 acres homestead site made the Nichelini Ranch one of the most valuable properties in the county.

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Brief chronological history

Anton Nichelini was born on November 22, 1862 in Verscio, Canton Ticino near the southern Alpine slopes of Switzerland. Anton was not the first Nichelini to find his way to California, but the third. Anton followed his father Francisco [Francesco] Nichelini who in 1880 followed his brother Joseph Secondo Nichelini (a baker) to California (Figure 1). However, it would be Anton Nichelini who would father a winemaking family in the Napa Valley. When Anton arrived in California in 1882 at the age of 20 he first settled in Glen Ellen and became a wine maker and grape grower for pioneer wine maker Joshua Chauvet (owner of a large wine operation south of Glen Ellen in Sonoma County)². Two years later Anton took up a homestead in Chiles Valley and became the first Swiss settler in the area. As required by the Homestead Act of 1862, Anton lived on the land, built a home, made improvements, and farmed for 5 years prior to being eligible to "prove up" and claim the land. During this time, Chiles Valley was a rugged, mountainous area and when Anton arrived at the homestead there were no graded roads or improvements being made to this near impassable terrain. Under the hard labor and skill of Anton Nichelini, there was soon planted vineyards within the 160 acre tract of land and also had plans to develop two mines that included a potential copper mine and a chromite mine³.

On July 7, 1890 Anton married Caterina (Corda) Nichelini and they lived in the homestead cabin in its original location along a steep hillside off Sage Canyon Road for several years. Anton soon had plans to construct a winery and a house for Caterina, so the cabin was moved prior to the building of the stone winery/residence in 1895 in order for Caterina and their children to be closer to Anton during the construction of the new residence. According to the Nichelini family, during this time the growing family consisted of four children who were all born in the homestead cabin (William Anton Nichelini, 5 July 1891, Joseph Francis Nichelini, 12 February 1893, Josephine Delaphine Nichelini, 16 June 1894 and Ema Virginia Nichelini, 22 February 1896). According to a St. Helena Star article published in 1895, the Nichelini's threw a party for 100 people; the Miller and Payne Orchestra played, and served breakfast at 2 a.m. for their guests. Anton and Caterina eventually had twelve children, all of which attend school at the Chiles Valley one-room school house that is still standing although it has been converted into a residence⁴.

Vineyards, Mines, and Prohibition

During the years of significance the 160 acres Nichelini homestead property consisted of approximately 30 acres of vineyards and two developed mines. Anton originally planted approximately 30 acres of grapes on the property and soon began to make wine. The first Swiss immigrant in Chiles Valley, Anton built the first wine cellar in Sage Canyon and he had become locally known as a skilled wine maker⁵. By ca.1895, almost 10 years from the year that he took up the homestead claim, Nichelini had constructed a Greek Revival style winery/residence.

² St. Helena Star. "Prominent Ranch Passes Away." 12 Nov 1937.

³ Wallace, W.F. *History of Napa County, Illustrated*. Oakland, California: Enquirer Print, 1901.

⁴ St. Helena Star. "Nichelini Celebration." 1895.

⁵ Wallace, W.F. 1901

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The epitome of a hard-working homesteader Anton not only grew grapes and made wine, but he also supplemented his income by working from 1891 until 1900 as an employee of Stanley and Bartlett in the magnesite mines located in Chiles Valley. Anton even further augmented his bottom line by establishing a mobile culinary service (mainly wine and bread) for his own miners, but also for the workers of other Napa County mines to sustain them during their labors. But he did not stop there. Not only did he produce fine wine, but by also drew on a steady mining clientele who worked the mines in Pope and Chiles Valley. Nichelini benefited not only from his homestead property as an agricultural opportunity by growing grapes and producing wine, but also by capitalizing on the convenient and valuable resource held in the mines on the property

By ca. 1900, Anton began to work the two Nichelini mines situated on the homestead property. The Nichelini mines were located in secs. 33 and 34, T8N, R4W and were worked by Anton Nichelini from the early 1900s⁶. "It is said that the quantity of magnesite is practically unlimited"⁷ During early mining on the property, the principal ore body was said to have yielded about 2000 tons until it was mined out.⁸ Although the property was located in a remote area in Chiles Valley, Anton prospered on his homestead by utilizing the full potential of the resources on his land.⁹

Early 20th Century

Winemaking along with mining continued to engage Anton's attention through the early 20th century. Then in 1920, the Nichelini Winery officially closed during the years of Prohibition. However, true to his character, Anton did not miss a beat as bootlegging was big business during prohibition, and Anton Nichelini was well known in the area for providing much more than sacramental wine.¹⁰ Anton and his son William (aka Bill) had an elaborate way of hiding their illicit activity from the law during Prohibition that included crushing grapes in a more remote location away from the winery along a flat where the homestead cabin had originally stood near the original old wooden winery (Figure 3). The wine was stored at this remote location, but it was also then transported down the hill in limited quantities to the stone winery on Sage Canyon Road where it was placed in the underground section of the stone building for access to sell to clientele.¹¹

In 1920, Clifford Clark, a resident of the town of Monticello (now buried beneath Lake Berryessa) wrote a letter to Sheriff Harris complaining about "... several good times..." and the mention of the wine coming from the "Nichelini's"¹² (Figure 4). By 1923, Sheriff Harris was a busy man trying to bust bootlegging rings in Napa County. He also had his eye on Anton Nichelini for many months. Anton was finally arrested on January 8th, 1924 for bootlegging

⁶ Dow, D.H. and T.P. Thayer. Geological Investigations of Chromite in California, U. S. Department of Interior Geological Survey. published in 1946

⁷ St. Helena Star. "Good Old Days." 1995

⁸ Dow, D.H. 1946

⁹ The St. Helena Historical Society. The Electrolier. published January 2014

¹⁰ Clifford Clark Letter to Sheriff Joseph Harris, dated 10 May 1920.

¹¹ Webber, Linn. *Prohibition in the Napa Valley, Castles Under Siege*. The History Press, 2013.

¹² Clifford Clark.1920

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(along with many other well know winemakers in the area as part of a major bust) and taken to the St. Helena jail.

Despite the arrest the Anton Nichelini and his family continued to supply wine to thirsty miners and residents in the area. Anton's eldest son Bill even had a distribution company and drove shipments of sacramental wine for Beaulieu and Beringer of which many bottles of Nichelini wine found their way off the trucks before their final delivery¹³.

Nichelini Winery officially reopened after repeal of the Volstead Act by Nichelini's son, Bill Nichelini as Anton could no longer operate the winery due to his arrest. Prohibition along with the Great Depression took its toll on the wineries that re-opened and by 1962 only 26 wineries were still open in Napa County. Nichelini Winery was one of them.

Today the Nichelini Winery, "the only surviving privately run winery in Napa County to have remained in business before, during, and after Prohibition¹⁴", is still a small, family-run winery with the original homestead cabin still located on the property just behind the residence where it has stood for over 120 years.

Narrative Statement of Significance (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)

During the 1884-1937 period of Significance, the Anton Nichelini was the first homesteader and Swiss immigrant to settle in the remote Chiles Valley

The homestead cabin is significant under National Register Criterion A for its association with early 20th century homesteading, agricultural development, and wine making in Napa Valley (period of significance – 1884 - 1937). The Nichelini homestead cabin is one of few original cabins remaining in the region. The cabin embodies the distinctive characteristics of homestead structures during the late 20th century and epitomizes early homestead life, settlement, and agricultural development in the region. The cabin still stands today where it has stood for over 120 years as a testament to the Nichelini family owned winery and the important role that homesteading played in Napa County. *Therefore, the Nichelini homestead cabin is significant under Criterion A of the National Register.*

¹³ Webber, Linn. 2013

¹⁴ Ibid.

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9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form.)

Dow, D.H. and T.P. Thayer. Geological Investigations of Chromite in California, *U. S. Department of Interior Geological Survey*. published in 1946.

Letter from Clifford Clark to Sheriff Joseph Harris, dated 10 May 1920

National Register of Historic Places, Nichelini Winery, Napa County, California, National Register #79000508

The St. Helena Historical Society. *The Electrolier*. published January 2014

St. Helena Star. "Good Old Days." 2 Feb 1995

St. Helena Star. "Nichelini Celebration." published in 1895.

St. Helena Star. "Prominent Ranch Passes Away." 12 Nov 1937

Wallace, W.F. *History of Napa County, Illustrated*. Oakland, California: Enquirer Print, 1901.

Webber, Linn. *Prohibition in the Napa Valley, Castles Under Seige*. The History Press, 2013.

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____
- recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government

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____ University

____ Other

Name of repository: _____

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of Property 160

Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

Datum if other than WGS84: _____

(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

1. Latitude: _____ Longitude: _____

2. Latitude: _____ Longitude: _____

3. Latitude: _____ Longitude: _____

4. Latitude: _____ Longitude: _____

Or

UTM References

Datum (indicated on USGS map):

NAD 1927 or NAD 1983

1. Zone: 10 Easting: 561606 Northing: 4261394

2. Zone: _____ Easting: _____ Northing: _____

3. Zone: _____ Easting: _____ Northing: _____

4. Zone: _____ Easting: _____ Northing: _____

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Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

Sections 33, T9N/R4W, and Sections 34 and 35, T8N/R5W

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The boundary of the homestead cabin encompass the entire historical 160 homestead acreage associated with the cabin. Additional listings associated with the property are included in NR79000508.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Stacey De Shazo, M.A. Director of Historic Preservation
organization: Napa County Landmarks, Inc.
street & number: 1219 First Street
city or town: Napa state: CA zip code: 94559
e-mail: stacey@napacountylandmarks.org
telephone: 707-255-4836
date: June 15, 2014

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO, TPO, or FPO for any additional items.)

Photographs

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), 3000x2000 preferred, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer,

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photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

Photo Log

Included on Continuation Sheet 10-900a, per OHP's instruction.

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 100 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.