

Why Our wine Was Named Chanticleer

In the early 1970's George and Caddy Grodahl lived in southern England in Westerham, Kent. Their home was named "Morningside" and it was perched on an east facing hill. The Pilgrims Way, made famous in Chaucer's Canterbury Tales, ran right past their property a few hundred yards below.

When they planted their vineyard in Napa they named it Morningside after their English home and named the wine Chanticleer based on the Canterbury tale of Reynard the Fox.

Chanticleer

This word was used by Chaucer in his Canterbury Tales, Nun's Priest's Tale, as Middle English Chantecler, which means rooster, and is derived from Old French Chantecler, where it was used in the [Roman de Renart](#), or in English in Reynard the Fox. It is a compound word from chanter (to sing) and cler (clear), and thus literally means clear singer.

The Canterbury Tales

The Canterbury Tales is a series of stories told by the pilgrims to one another while they are making their way to Canterbury. There is no real plot, Instead, the journey simply serves as an excuse for them to tell stories to one another. Yet while Chaucer does not develop the plot of the pilgrimage, he does describe the characters of the pilgrims in detail. These medieval pilgrimages were a combination of religious devotion and a bit of tourism.

The Tale of Chanticleer the Rooster

The vain and beautifully feathered Chanticleer, possessing a wonderful voice, struts about all day as King of the barnyard. One day a fox bursts into his domain and dupes him into singing by saying " I knew your father and he had a beautiful voice – and, I'm sure you do too. Won't you sing for me?" So Chanticleer, full of pride, closes his eyes and throws his head back and starts to crow. The fox then grabs him by the neck in a viselike grip and hauls him into the woods. Chanticleer thought quickly and said to the fox: "You're so fast and strong they can never catch you. Why don't you tell them to give up?" When the fox turns to tell them to give up and opens his mouth, Chanticleer flies into an apple tree to safety. The fox tries unsuccessfully to flatter him into coming down, to no avail.

There are 3 morals to the story: 1. Always be watchful when danger lurks; 2. Never trust flattery ; 3. Know when to keep your mouth closed!