

Entry 11

Subject: Grape Crusher Statue and Park

Some of my favorite childhood memories happened on a grassy hill beside The Grape Crusher. When I was five years old, that hill felt enormous, the sunsets felt endless, and the world felt simple. I didn't realize it at the time, but those small, fleeting moments would become some of the most meaningful memories of my life.

When I was little, my aunt used to take me on drives from her apartment in Vallejo to Napa. Her apartment was in a rougher part of town, but whenever we got in her old car, it felt like stepping into an adventure. The windows didn't work, so they were always down, letting the wind whip through our hair as reggae music played through the speakers. My aunt had this vibrant, carefree energy, and as a five-year-old girl, I thought she was the coolest person in the world.

We would park near the Grape Crusher and climb the hill. Then we would roll down the grass over and over again until we were dizzy, laughing so hard we could barely stand. Afterward, we'd sit together and watch the sun slowly sink behind the hills of Napa Valley. The sky would turn brilliant shades of orange and pink, and everything would feel calm and peaceful. Even at that young age, those moments felt like an escape, like for a little while, the world slowed down, and nothing else mattered.

The Grape Crusher represents something much bigger than my own childhood memories. It honors the vineyard workers and farmers who built Napa Valley's wine industry through years of dedication and hard work. Napa is famous around the world for its vineyards and wine, but behind that beauty are generations of people who shaped the land and helped create the valley's identity.

For the community, the Grape Crusher is more than just a sculpture, it's a bridge between Napa's past and present. It connects the modern valley that visitors admire today with the hardworking agricultural history that built it. Landmarks like this matter because they preserve the identity and stories of a place. Without them, it's easy to forget the history that gives a community its character and soul.

As I've grown older, the place has taken on even deeper meaning for me. My aunt, who once took me on those drives, is now over nine years sober and will celebrate ten years of sobriety on March 28, 2026. She has worked incredibly hard to build a healthy life for herself and her family. Looking back, those memories feel even more powerful. I didn't know it at the time, but life wasn't perfect back then, but looking back at those simple moments like rolling down a hill, feeling the breeze in our hair, laughing without a care, and watching the sunset, it gave me a sense of youth and joy that I still carry with me today.

If I could help preserve the legacy of the Grape Crusher, I would want people to see it not

just as a landmark, but as a living space where stories continue to grow. Landmarks are more than historical markers, they are places where memories are made, families connect, and communities come together.

To me, the Grape Crusher will always be more than a symbol of Napa's past. It is a reminder of resilience, family, and the beauty of simple, fleeting moments that stay with us long after childhood ends.