



CALIFORNIA WINE FAMILIES – THE NEXT GENERATION

Family-owned businesses account for more than 90 percent of U.S. businesses, responsible for half of the country's gross domestic product and about three-quarters of America's new jobs.¹ Most of California's 2,000 wineries are also owned by families. They are a major economic engine in the state that has an economic impact of \$45.4 billion on California's economy.

A unique feature about California's wine families is that the family name is often on the wine label. This usually means that the family will choose the path to quality in business or production decisions because its family name, and thus its reputation, is at stake. Family members tend to be loyal and dedicated to the family enterprise and the family presence in winery jobs provides continuity in passing institutional knowledge on to others at the winery. Finally, family members will work to keep the business valuable and reputable so it can be passed on to their children.

California's wine families become versed in all aspects of the wine business, learning grapegrowing, winemaking, marketing and hospitality in the tasting room and events. Throughout California, wine lovers can meet the interesting personalities behind their favorite wines. The following is a brief sketch of some of the wine families from Sonoma, Santa Cruz, San Luis Obispo, Paso Robles, Monterey, Lodi and Amador wine regions.

SONOMA COUNTY

Sonoma County has an unparalleled wine history, with the first grapes planted in 1812 at Fort Ross on the Sonoma Coast, and California's oldest premium winery, Buena Vista, founded in 1857. With Sonoma's combination of history, heritage, and new winemakers, the county is home to many dynamic multi-generational family wineries. Included among these are Foppiano Vineyards, founded in 1896. It is still family-owned, with fourth-generation winegrower Louis Foppiano continuing the family tradition of distinctive and robust Petite Sirahs.

Gallo is one of the most recognizable names in the wine world, yet Gallo Family Vineyards is still family-owned and is at the forefront of the sustainable agriculture movement. Under the guidance of third-generation family members Matt Gallo and Gina Gallo, the winery takes pains to plant only half its acreage to grapevines, leaving the other half in its natural state.

Another leader in sustainability is Seghesio Family Vineyards, which under fourth-generation winegrower Ted Seghesio, has shifted to producing almost exclusively estate-grown wines.

In the Sonoma Valley, Mike and Mary Benziger first discovered the 85-acre Glen Ellen property that would give Benziger Family Winery a home in 1980. Today, two generations involving more than two dozen Benzigers are affiliated with the estate winery. The family's passion is to craft wines with a distinct sense of place that reflects Sonoma Mountain winegrowing.

SANTA CRUZ COUNTY

The winemaking heritage at Bargetto's Santa Cruz Winery began with brothers Phillip and John Bargetto who emigrated from Castelnuovo Don Bosco, a small town in the Piedmont region of northern Italy. The Bargetto family winemaking heritage continued with John's son Lawrence during the 1960's and 1970's. He introduced modern technology such as stainless steel fermentation, barrel aging, and added new Santa Cruz Mountains varietals such as Pinot Noir and Chardonnay. The third generation of Bargetto family members now directs the operation of the winery.

Founded by Bill and Brenda Murphy in 1992, Clos LaChance in Saratoga has grown from its backyard "roots" into a 60,000 case per year wine business. As the business has grown over the years, the Murphy's have enlisted the help of their two daughters—Cheryl Murphy Durzy and Kristin Murphy. Cheryl manages sales and marketing for Clos LaChance and its subsidiaries. Kristin manages the events portion of the business as well as the vineyard management company CK Vines.

Founding winemaker George Cooper of Cooper-Garrod Estate Vineyards in Saratoga planted the first Cabernet Sauvignon in 1972 with his nephew Jan Garrod, thinking of it as a retirement hobby when he would retire from test piloting at NASA/Ames. In the ensuing 22 years, Chardonnay and Cabernet Franc were added on lands farmed by the family since 1893. George took courses at UC Davis and learned from fellow winemakers in the Santa Cruz Mountains and on visits to France. Spring of 1994 heralded the first commercial release for Cooper-Garrod, and in 1996, son Bill completed a career in the Foreign Service to return to the ranch where he grew up and joined his father in winemaking. Although the second generation to join the winemaking effort, Bill and his cousin Jan are first generation in the Cooper-Garrod agricultural heritage.

SAN LUIS OBISPO COUNTY

When visiting wineries in San Luis Obispo County, you are bound to meet a family member of the winery who may be harvesting fruit or pouring a glass of wine in the tasting room. The family nature of the business helps create the family feeling throughout the winery.

The Niven family is now into its third generation in the industry, growing winegrapes since the 1960s for their Baileyana Winery and Edna Valley Vineyard in San Luis Obispo. The Niven's third generation is taking the business to the next level with a new brand, tangent, which focuses solely on alternative white wines, one of the first brands to do so.

To experience another family run and operated winery, stop by Kynsi Winery in Arroyo Grande where Don and Gwen Othman have had their hands in the wine industry for over 25 years. Two daughters run the tasting room which is located in a renovated 1940's dairy.

At Ortman Family Vineyards, Dad Chuck Ortman has been making wine for over 20 years in San Luis Obispo County and has recently started winemaking with his son Matt Ortman. They specialize in limited production Pinot Noir, Chardonnay, Syrah and Sangiovese.

PASO ROBLES

The entrepreneurial spirit is alive and well in Paso Robles Wine Country as many family-owned and operated businesses prepare for the next generation to lead the business and move the industry forward. From viticulture to winemaking to sales and marketing to operations, the second generation is stepping up in all aspects of the business. Working hand-in-hand with their families, the next generation is already making an impression on the growing Paso Robles wine industry. At J. Lohr Vineyards and Winery, the second generation— Steve, Cynthia and Lawrence – work in vineyard development, sales and marketing. Steve Lohr is spearheading winery expansion both in Paso Robles and in Monterey. At Peachy Canyon, both sons, Josh and Jake are active in winemaking and sales roles. At Steinbeck Vineyards, three generations actively work with the vineyard— father Howie, daughter Cynthia and grandson Ryan. Austin Hope is another example of the second generation leading the winemaking and overseeing all aspects of the business at Treana and Austin Hope wineries. Jason Hass at Tablas Creek serves as General Manager, learning from his father. In all cases the second generation is taking a leadership role in helping Paso Robles achieve its full potential on the national and global front.

MONTEREY

In Monterey County, the next generations of Wentz, Scheid, and Smith families are all carrying on the traditions of their pioneer parents.

Wentz Vineyards is California's oldest continuously family owned and operated winery. Established in 1883 by C.H. Wentz, the fourth and fifth generations of the Wentz family are actively involved in vineyard and winery operations. Karl Wentz, great-great-grandson of the founder, is the winemaker, and his sister, Christine Wentz, is in charge of marketing.

Al Scheid had a wonderful vision for the Monterey wine industry when he co-founded Scheid Vineyards in 1972. Today, his children are carrying through on that vision to be one of the largest independent growers of premium wine grapes. Scott Scheid serves as President and CEO and Heidi Scheid is the Senior Vice president. One of their most recent accomplishments is the opening of the new Scheid Vineyards Winery with their father in August 2005.

At Paraiso Vineyards, the founding vineyard in the Santa Lucia Highlands appellation, winegrower Rich Smith is working side-by-side with son Jason. "After 40 years of living and working on this 'heavenly' spot, it's gratifying to see my children taking over – Jason is a very talented vineyard manager, committed to the high quality, 'sustainable' Paraiso ideal."

LODI

Many of Lodi's winegrowing families have been in the area for over 100 years. These families are genuinely rooted in the soil, and have worked to build Lodi's reputation as a premium winegrowing region. Over the last decade these dedicated winegrowers have

sparked a remarkable transition, one that has catapulted Lodi into the vinous spotlight. Fifth and sixth generation winegrowers like the Phillips family, the Mettler family and the Lange family are vertically integrating creating their own wine brands and building recognition for Lodi Wine Country as a producer of fine wines.

A recent trend in Lodi Wine Country is the returning of the children after college to the family business. A number of families are integrating the next generation into the family business in viticulture, enology and business management positions enhancing the expertise and knowledge of the business and the region. The next generation is a driving force behind a number of local wineries, driven by the desire to highlight the quality wine produced and the culture in the region.

AMADOR COUNTY

Prospering for 30 years in the California wine business is no small feat for a family winery crafting organically grown wines in an off-the-beaten-path wine region.

In 1977, Leon and Shirley Sobon brought their six children from the San Francisco Bay Area to Amador County's Shenandoah Valley to establish Shenandoah Vineyards. Twelve years later, the family acquired the historic D'Agostini Winery and renamed it Sobon Estate. Today, the Sobons are widely respected throughout California wine circles for their innovative grape-growing, winemaking and marketing practices. In 1989, they were among the first in California to embrace organic grape growing, and their 160 acres of estate vines are now certified organic. The family also pioneered Rhône grape varieties in the Sierra Foothills, conducted important trials with rootstocks, clones, trellising systems and yeast strains, and were among the first to commission original artwork for their wine labels.

Today, Leon and Shirley's children carry on the family tradition. Son Paul is winemaker for both Shenandoah Vineyards and Sobon Estate while his brother Robert oversees customer relations. The Sobon family is intent on making wine in Amador County for many years to come.

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¹San Francisco State University Business and International Education (BIE) Grant "Family Wineries" Project, <http://bie.sfsu.edu/family>