

KENT RASMUSSEN

Kent Rasmussen, Winemaker

When the history of Napa County's winemaking is rewritten many years from now, Kent Rasmussen will certainly be included. His Carneros Pinot Noirs are some of the best in the state.

In addition to his reputation for making great wine, historians will probably say he was a true visionary, and that his greatest contribution was farming a region once considered too harsh for quality Pinot Noir. Before Kent planted his vineyard in 1979, only a handful of people had successfully grown this temperamental grape in Carneros. Shadowing the success of Kent Rasmussen Winery, Carneros is now considered one of the world's premier growing areas.

Born in San Francisco, Kent Rasmussen spent his early years in Belmont on San Francisco's lower peninsula. He later attended high school in the southern California community of Whittier where a foreign exchange program placed him in a German winemaking family. Bitten by the winemaking bug, he started producing wine at home upon returning to the states. He has never stopped.

Kent's higher education began at the University of California (UC) Santa Cruz and continued at UC Berkeley, where he received a Bachelor of Arts in Pre-Colonial African History. He worked as a librarian for several years, but yearned for a career that was more in touch with nature and the outdoors. In addition, he decided to pursue his longtime grape growing and winemaking hobby on a professional level. He returned to college and earned a Bachelor of Science in Enology at UC Davis in 1983. He gained valuable experience at the Robert Mondavi Winery, Domaine Chandon, Stellenbosch Farmers' Winery in South Africa and Saltram's Wine Estate in Australia's Barossa Valley before starting his own venture in 1986.

Kent is a "natural" for the wine business and truly enjoys all of its facets. As winemaker and company president, he spends time in the cellar and office, but also fulfills his love of nature by overseeing the vineyards. Says Kent, "The wine business provides a wonderful lifestyle ... a life vertically integrated - from working the land, to making the wine, to running the business, to selling the wine." His philosophy about winemaking is a refreshing collage of tradition, spirituality, passion and discipline.

According to Kent, "A once-a-year repetition of each activity is at the perfect pace for the human mind. The synergism of nature and technology - the old and the new - makes for a very centered and peaceful life." His love of the land and the desire to make the very best wines are captured in each and every bottle.