

CARLSON

I began my winemaking career in 1981. After graduating from CSU Fresno with a winemaking degree, I was eager to relocate from the San Joaquin Valley to somewhere else. I had spent my youth growing up in an agricultural family growing citrus and avocados near the town of Reedley. During my last year in college, I had taken several trips to the various wine producing regions of California. Naturally I was doing a bit of job prospecting along the way. Several weeks after my return from a spring trip over to the Santa Barbara area, I received a call from Zaca Mesa winery. To make a long story short, I became the new lab tech for Zaca Mesa, just in time for the harvest of 1981.

Santa Barbara County, at that time, consisted of a handful of small wineries. It was a new, up and coming wine growing area which everyone felt had great potential. At that point in time, it was hard to see just how new an area this really was. It had a pioneering feel. You pretty much knew most everyone in the industry and there was great camaraderie amongst the winemakers and wine growers. Fast forward 34 years and it is easy to say if I'd only known then what I know now.....

The industry has changed immensely. We are now operating in a global wine world which is serving up truly great wines from all reaches. That being said, I feel that our local area is truly producing world class wines on every level. Our wine growing efforts have become very specific, finding the proper locations to plant and grow the right varietals, a sense of place if you will. It's a great feeling to be a part of this ongoing revolution.

Throughout my career, I have had the opportunity work with many different varieties grown on the Central Coast. This was done in part because during the early years many of the wineries grew a wide selection of varietals. This was the trial and error method of determining what grew well in our vineyards. As we have become more knowledgeable about wine growing we have also become more selective of where we grow specific varieties. Many wineries have streamlined their portfolio of wines concentrating on growing quality fruit in vineyards or purchasing from vineyards that are somewhat more specialized in what they grow. Much of my career was

spent working with Rhone Varietals. We were the first to introduce Syrah into Santa Barbara County while I was at Zaca Mesa. My time at Curtis was spent redeveloping our estate vineyard and building the Curtis program. Here we specialized in Rhone varietals along with a series of Rhone focused blends as well.

In 2000, I was given the opportunity to make wine under my own label and this has led me to where I am today. I initially only produced Pinot Noir from three different local AVA's. Initially these wines were only produced in very small quantities and sold in our local area. Today, I have narrowed my Pinot Noir program down to the Santa Rita Hills AVA. I have also expanded my portfolio to also include Cabernet Franc, Chardonnay and a white blend called Trios Fleurs, "Three Flowers".

New for me in 2014 was the production of a red Rhone blend consisting of Syrah, Grenache and Mourvedre. I felt that a big part of my career had been spent around Rhone Varietals and I wanted to have one in my portfolio.

My goal with Carlson Wines is to produce exceptional wines from our region's best vineyards. My style is one of expressive restraint. I like to make wines that are expressive of the varietals that I work with but still have vibrant fresh fruit flavors and aromas. I am a big proponent of wines having balanced flavor and texture along with the bright fruit. I hope to get my production up to 2,500 cases over the next several years.