



## Steve MacRostie Founder - MacRostie Winery and Vineyards



Steve MacRostie - Thale's Vineyard, Block A2

In 1974, Steve MacRostie made his first Chardonnay and Pinot Noir using grapes from areas that would today include the Sonoma Coast. Back then, there were only about 40 small wineries in Sonoma County. Now there are hundreds. Where Steve helped lead, both geographically and stylistically, others have followed, making the Sonoma Coast one of the world's great regions for making Chardonnay and Pinot Noir. With his relaxed charm, philosophical mind, adventurous spirit and encyclopedic knowledge of Sonoma County viticulture and winemaking, Steve is recognized as one of the region's great pioneers, strongest advocates and most respected winemakers.

A native Californian, Steve was raised in Sacramento. In the process of preparing for medical school, he earned a degree in biology from Washington's Whitman College in 1968. Following his time at Whitman, Steve served in the U.S. Army, which trained him as a cryptographer and deployed him to Vicenza in the Veneto region of Italy. While in Europe, Steve took advantage of the opportunity to travel to France, Germany and Spain. European wines were an epiphany for him, far surpassing the few American wines he had tasted. He quickly fell in love with wine, and the idea of winemaking. After the army, Steve abandoned the safe path of a career in medicine, and instead enrolled in the enology program at the UC Davis.

When most young winemakers were focusing on working with Bordeaux varieties and establishing careers in Napa Valley, Steve once again took the road less travelled, and in 1974, he became the inaugural winemaker for Sonoma County's Hacienda Winery. During his 12 years at Hacienda, Steve honed his craft and earned renown as a gifted winemaker capable of making benchmark Chardonnays and age-worthy Pinot Noirs. In 1987, with the support of his wife Thale, Steve founded MacRostie Winery and Vineyards. At MacRostie, Steve began to pioneer a fresh, elegant style that showed its roots in the cool vineyards of Sonoma County. To achieve this, Steve continued building relationships with the best growers throughout the region—relationships that have lasted for decades.

In 1997, Steve made another bold decision when he established his own Wildcat Mountain Vineyard in the Petaluma Gap region on the borderlands between Carneros and the Sonoma Coast. Though Wildcat exists on the extreme edge of cool-climate viticulture, it has proven ideal for growing grapes that produce profound, complex and elegant wines. With Wildcat as one of its cornerstones, in recent years Steve has focused much of his efforts on further enhancing the MacRostie vineyard program. Because of the relationships he's developed over his 40-year career, and the universal respect he has from his peers, Steve is able to source the most sought-after fruit for MacRostie, including grapes from legendary winegrowing families like the Duttons, Sangiacomos, Ritchies, Martinellis and Bacigalupis,

Steve is still in the winery almost daily, where he works alongside MacRostie's talented winemaker, Heidi Bridenhagen. Because of their inquisitive natures, Steve and Heidi are constantly trying to improve and grow as winemakers. Together, they challenge and inspire each other, and as a result, Steve and Heidi are making the best wines in MacRostie's history, while also staying at the forefront of Chardonnay and Pinot Noir viticulture and winemaking.

In recent years, Steve has stepped back from the administrative and business side of the winery, allowing him to focus even more on what he loves—working in the vineyard, working with growers and making wine. As a result, he's having the most fun he's had in years.

As a director of the California Wine Institute, Steve continues to be a respected advocate for Sonoma County and the entire wine industry. Steve has served as president of the Sonoma Valley Vintners and Growers Alliance, the Carneros Wine Alliance and the Carneros Quality Alliance. Steve and Thale live in Sonoma Valley.