



Daniel Duckhorn - President/CEO

For over thirty years, Dan Duckhorn has been a leader in the Napa Valley wine community. A native of northern California, Dan earned his Masters in Business Administration in 1962 from the University of California at Berkeley. Over the next decade, Dan held managerial positions with Matson Navigation Company, Adpac Computing Languages Company and Crocker Associates before becoming president of Vineyard Consulting Corporation (VCC) in 1971.

As a major vineyard technical services company, VCC was deeply involved in viticulture consulting, vineyard management and grapevine propagation. It was here that Dan learned about wine growing from the soil up and honed his abilities for assessing vineyard sites and pairing varietals with their most suitable terroir. While at VCC, Dan began to see that a dramatic change was coming to the industry, with a gradual shift away from jug producers toward quality varietal wines, led by the planting of premium varietal grapes.

In 1976, Dan and his wife Margaret co-founded Duckhorn Vineyards with a small group of friends. Influenced by what he had learned on a journey to France, Dan decided that the Napa Valley was ideal for the cultivation of Bordeaux varietals. Going against the grain of what other local producers were doing, Dan decided against producing Chardonnay. Instead, he made the decision to focus his passion and resources on the production of a world-class Napa Valley Merlot. Though many other wineries were using Merlot as a blending grape, Dan pioneered the crafting of a premium stand-alone Napa Valley Merlot.

The first Duckhorn Vineyards harvest in 1978 consisted of 1,600 cases in two bottlings-800 Merlot and 800 Cabernet Sauvignon. Proving Dan's belief that great wines begin in the vineyard, 1978 turned out to be an excellent first vintage partly due to a wonderful growing season. "It was a great year," says Dan. "We could have made wine out of walnuts."

If a certain degree of luck helped out that first year, under Dan's leadership the winery has spent 25 years proving that Duckhorn's commitment to quality and excellence is real. In 1988, Dan began leading Duckhorn through a period of careful growth. With his meticulous selection of vineyard properties, Dan has worked to create an estate program that guarantees Duckhorn a continuous supply of the finest fruit. In addition, Dan has diversified Duckhorn Vineyards' parent company, Duckhorn Wine Company, to include a distinctive Napa Valley Red Wine blend called Paraduxx and an Anderson Valley Pinot Noir called Goldeneye.

Dubbed "Mr. Merlot" by Frank Prial of the New York Times, Dan is a highly respected leader in the wine industry. Active in the wine community, Dan has served on the board of directors of the Wine Institute, the American Vintners Association and Family Winemakers of California. He was president of the Napa Valley Vintners Association and the Wine Service Co-op and is a past chair of the Napa Valley Wine Auction. Dan's vision and guidance were instrumental in founding the Premiere Napa Valley Trade Barrel Auction.

Margaret Duckhorn - E.V.P. of Marketing & Sales

Margaret Duckhorn is co-founder and executive vice president of marketing and sales for Duckhorn Wine Company. Together with Dan Duckhorn, Margaret has spent over 25 years building Duckhorn Vineyards' reputation for quality and excellence. Known for her commitment to the wine industry and her sense of philanthropy, Margaret is a respected member of the Napa Valley wine community.

Born in New York, Margaret was raised in a military family and traveled widely in her youth. Studying at the University of Maryland campus in Munich, Germany, Margaret first became interested in wine after being exposed to the Mosel region's distinctive wines. Returning to the United States, Margaret received her B.S., R.N., and P.H.N. degrees from the University of California at San Francisco in 1963. After graduation she worked as a public health nurse for the city of Berkeley before starting a family in the mid-sixties.

In 1976, Margaret and Dan established Duckhorn Vineyards. From the first vintage, Margaret took an active role in the day-to-day operations of the winery, hand sorting the fruit and working alongside the winemaker during blending. Later, Margaret began specializing in marketing and international public relations, becoming a strong voice for Duckhorn Vineyards and a champion for the Napa Valley winegrowing appellation.

Over the years, Margaret has also helped to define Duckhorn Vineyards' philosophy and core sense of values. "This valley is our home," Margaret says. "We live here. Our children live here. We recognize the importance of taking care of this remarkable place, and of giving back to the community that has given us so much. In addition, we make certain that our practices at the winery and in our vineyards are sustainable."

Margaret has been influenced in her approach to the wine industry by her sense of community and love of cooking. From her early food and wine pairing dinners with neighbors, to her marketing focus on Duckhorn's natural place as a world-class culinary wine, Margaret has championed an ideal. "There's a feeling you get when you prepare a meal with love and serve it to close friends and family," she says. "Everyone is enjoying themselves and you have that wonderful sense of camaraderie. This is what Duckhorn has represented to me over the years."

Margaret continues to be an advocate for the Napa Valley wine industry, working both locally and globally to protect and promote the region. She was one of the original members of Women for WineSense, is a past Board Member of the American Institute of Wine & Food, and is a past President of the Napa Valley Vintners Association. She currently serves on the Board of Directors of the Wine Institute, is a Trustee for the Queen of the Valley Hospital, and is a member of the Oversight Committee for Farmworker Housing.

Alex Ryan - General Manager/Chief Operating Officer

As general manager and chief operating officer of Duckhorn Wine Company, Alex Ryan's vision and passion help define the future of the company, while ensuring the continuation of its commitment to quality and excellence.

The son of a wine executive, Alex moved to St. Helena in 1976 after his father was hired at Beringer Vineyards. Growing up in the close-knit Napa Valley community, Alex was exposed to the wine industry from an early age. In high school, he began working part time for his best friend's father, Dan Duckhorn. After Alex graduated from California State University at Fresno with a degree in viticulture in 1988, he returned to Duckhorn to begin work in vineyard operations. One of the first full-time employees at Duckhorn, Alex functioned as a jack-of-all-trades, quickly making himself indispensable in the day-to-day operations of the winery.

Alex's first year proved to be a pivotal one for Duckhorn as the winery began building its estate vineyard program. As Duckhorn Vineyards grew to include six of Napa's finest properties, Alex was promoted to vineyard manager. His viticulture and production background made him the ideal person to direct the meticulous cultivation of the vineyards, and in 1997, Alex became vice president of vineyard and winery operations.

As Duckhorn Wine Company has expanded to include Decoy, Paraduxx, Goldeneye and Migration into its family of wines, Alex has worked to maintain the distinction and integrity of each individual label. "My belief," he says, "is that you can refine quality by focusing on smaller areas of specialization. By being site specific, vineyard specific, varietal specific, and by empowering winemakers to craft and define each label individually, you create excellence."

In 2000, Alex was made general manager and chief operating officer of Duckhorn Wine Company. His duties touch on every aspect of the company, from vineyard operations and production, to marketing and sales. Alex approaches every new challenge from a basic premise. "There are no small decisions. Every choice in the wine business is a long-term decision. From barrel selection to vineyard planting, you need to be thinking in terms of five, ten, even fifteen years. It's my job to find a way to execute the big ideas while maintaining our commitment to the smallest details."

Bill Nancarrow – Executive Winemaker, Napa Valley

Handpicked by the Duckhorn family to be the executive winemaker for Duckhorn Wine Company's Napa Valley properties, Bill Nancarrow brings a global understanding of viticulture and enology to his role as executive winemaker for Duckhorn Vineyards and Paraduxx. Combining a respect for tradition with a talent for innovation, Bill applies his expansive knowledge of winemaking to the task of continuing Duckhorn Wine Company's legacy of quality.

Raised in Hawkes Bay, the oldest winegrowing region in New Zealand, Bill developed an early passion for the wine industry. Formally trained in hospitality management with a focus on wine appreciation, he spent several years after graduation traveling and working throughout Africa and Europe before ending up in England, where he took a position as the harvest manager for Thorncroft Vineyards.

In 1995, Bill returned to Hawkes Bay and joined the team at Huthlee Vineyards. Quickly making himself indispensable, Bill was soon promoted to winemaker. Bill's talent and ambition were noticed by New Zealand's acclaimed Bordeaux varietal pioneer Chris Pask, and in 1998 he was offered the position of assistant winemaker at C.J. Pask Winery in Hawkes Bay. There, he refined his skills, working side-by-side with Kate Radburn, one of New Zealand's most respected winemakers. Recognized for his leadership abilities, and his talent working with a range of varietals – including the winery's renowned Merlot – Bill was named winemaker for C.J. Pask when Radburn was promoted to managing director.

Intent on expanding his knowledge by working a northern hemisphere vintage with one of California's top Merlot producers, Bill traveled to the Napa Valley in 2001 to work the harvest at Duckhorn Vineyards. When the assistant winemaker position at Duckhorn Vineyards became available prior to harvest, Bill's extensive experience made him the ideal person to round out the winemaking team. As a result, he was put in charge of running the crews and winery operations during this exceptional vintage. Bill permanently joined Duckhorn Wine Company in February of 2003 as the winemaker for Paraduxx and the interim assistant winemaker for Duckhorn Vineyards. Balancing a comprehensive understanding of the science and chemistry of winemaking, with a natural instinct for creating boldly elegant wines, Bill helped to define the Paraduxx style – further establishing its core fusion of Cabernet Sauvignon and Zinfandel as one of California's most innovative varietal pairings. In addition, Bill became actively involved in every facet of the winemaking process, from the planning and design of the Paraduxx winery to the meticulous cultivation of Duckhorn Wine Company's Napa Valley estate vineyards.

Elevated to executive winemaker of Duckhorn Wine Company's Napa Valley properties in January of 2007, Bill currently oversees the production of Duckhorn Vineyards and Paraduxx, guiding each winery's dedicated winemaking teams. On a broader level, Bill works in concert with Zach Rasmuson, the vice president, general manager and winemaker of Goldeneye, to ensure the overall commitment to excellence that has come to define the Duckhorn Wine Company portfolio.

Company founder, CEO and chairman Dan Duckhorn asserts, "Not only is Bill a gifted and passionate winemaker, with experience on three continents, he has the ability to inspire others. As our executive winemaker, Bill's leadership will help to build upon our rich history and traditions here in the Napa Valley."

Zach Rasmuson - Winemaker, Goldeneye

After a decade learning from some of the most respected wine producers in the industry, Zach Rasmuson brings his passion for Anderson Valley Pinot Noir to his role as winemaker at Goldeneye.

Raised in rural Massachusetts, Zach studied the history of science and philosophy at St. John's College in Annapolis, MD. During college he had the opportunity to meet and learn about wine from Warren Winiarski, founder of Stag's Leap Wine Cellars. When Warren personally offered him a job at Stag's Leap, Zach accepted.

While working in the cellar at Stag's Leap, Zach began training under winemaker Michael Salacci. From Michael, Zach learned that quality is determined in the vineyard, not the winery. He also taught Zach to maintain the integrity of vineyard lots, keeping them separate until blending; a practice Zach continues at Goldeneye.

Despite his joy making world-class Bordeaux varietal wines, Zach found himself fascinated by the challenge of producing Pinot Noir. In 1998, he left Stag's Leap to pursue this goal as assistant winemaker at Robert Sinskey Vineyards, where he worked side-by-side with winemaker Jeff Virnig. In May of 2000, Zach was hired as the winemaker of Husch Vineyards in the Anderson Valley. There, he was able to further refine his own distinctive Pinot Noir philosophy.

Zach grew to believe that the Anderson Valley was perfectly suited for growing world-class California Pinot Noirs. With clay-based soils and coastal ocean fog, the Anderson Valley offered rich conditions and unique microclimates within the appellation. In August of 2003, Zach joined the Goldeneye team as winemaker.

Since his arrival, Zach has focused on the cultivation of Goldeneye's five Anderson Valley estate vineyards, while working to define the evolving style of the wine. "Pinot Noir is an amazing, malleable grape. You need to be gentle shaping the wine. It's a process of minimal intervention, of finesse not muscle. We're not trying to replicate the wines of Burgundy at Goldeneye, nor are we trying to make a lighter style California Pinot Noir. Pinot Noir reflects its terroir with remarkable clarity. Using fruit from our estate vineyards we have an extensive palette of flavors from which to create our Pinot Noir. The result is an extracted, elegant wine."

Jeff Roberts – Director of Vineyard Operations

Director of vineyard operations Jeff Roberts oversees our in-house farming crew, which is comprised of seven full-time and three part-time employees. Today, this skilled team farms three of our Estates: Marlee's, Candlestick, and Patzimaró vineyards.

Since 1997, Jeff has been most at home among the vines at Duckhorn Vineyards. Originally from the Blue Ridge Mountains of Western North Carolina, Jeff's introduction to farming came at an early age as he helped out on a family Christmas tree farm. Later, while working in the restaurant business, Jeff was exposed to fine food, which soon led to his discovery and appreciation of fine wine. After a number of trips to Napa Valley, including four weeks working a harvest at a local winery, Jeff moved here in 1994 to forge a career in the vineyard business.

When describing his philosophy on cultivating grapes, Jeff explains that the most important aspect for him is his knowledgeable team. "Sustainable farming begins with the people who tend the vines. Every vineyard has its own personality and its own potential. You don't just farm a vineyard, you pay attention, you learn. It's a relationship. As we become familiar with each site's distinctive charm and character, we have a better opportunity to improve grape quality with each vintage."

Jeff thinks of himself as a winegrower rather than a grape grower. "If you invest your time and effort in the vineyard, you will consistently make the best possible wines—classic wines that capture the essence of a unique site." In keeping with this philosophy, Jeff follows the mission statement of the Napa Sustainable Winegrowing Group, which is to identify and promote winegrowing practices that are socially responsible, economically viable and environmentally sound.

Each member of the Duckhorn Vineyards farming team has a specific ranch responsibility in addition to regular everyday duties. With this close-knit team in place, Jeff is free to focus on the many other aspects of his winegrowing philosophy that emphasizes ideally matching varietal to site, while always maintaining harmony and balance in the vineyard.

In addition to our Estate Vineyards, we have over 40 independent growers throughout the Napa Valley who sell grapes to us under both long- and short-term contracts. Jeff works closely with each of our winemaking partners to ensure that the fruit they produce meets the demanding quality standards we require for our wines. This exposure to a wide range of viticulture techniques allows Jeff the opportunity to exchange new farming ideas with our growers, which he can then apply to our Estate properties.