

Steven MacRostie
Founder

Since beginning his winemaking career almost 35 years ago, Steve MacRostie has developed a reputation as one of California's most respected veteran winemakers. At the same time he has helped to pioneer the use of fruit from both Carneros and the Sonoma Coast. As the founder and original winemaker for MacRostie Winery and Vineyards, Steve has earned wide acclaim for crafting balanced wines, with an emphasis on Chardonnays and Pinot Noirs.

A native Californian, Steve was born in Pasadena and 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 – and he quickly fell in love with wine, and the idea of winemaking.

Following the adventurous spirit that would inform many future decisions, Steve soon abandoned the idea of a career in medicine, and instead enrolled in the enology program at the University of California, Davis. Upon graduation in 1974, Steve joined Sonoma County's Hacienda Winery as its inaugural winemaker. While at Hacienda, Steve refined his skills, quickly gaining renown as a winemaker capable of crafting benchmark Chardonnays and age-worthy Pinot Noirs. At the same time, he began greatly appreciating the fruit he was working with from a few exceptional small vineyards—all located in an area that would later gain appellation status as Carneros.

After 12 years with Hacienda, Steve felt that he had enough experience to put his own name on a wine. In 1987, with the support of his wife Thale, Steve founded MacRostie Winery and Vineyards. As a winemaker, Steve focused on Carneros grapes to craft fresh and elegant cool-climate wines—at the time, an innovative approach. While pioneering this more sophisticated style, Steve continued building relationships with top growers throughout the region that have lasted for decades.

In 1997, Steve made another pivotal decision with the establishment of his Wildcat Mountain Vineyard on the borderlands of Carneros and the Sonoma Coast. This partnership with ranchers Nancy and Tony Lilly has solidified Steve's reputation as a winemaking and viticultural leader in both Carneros and the Sonoma Coast. While Steve is still active in every facet of MacRostie Winery and Vineyards, including the blending process, he now focuses his considerable energies on the development of Wildcat Mountain Vineyard, while also acting as vineyard liaison with the winery's coveted portfolio of growers. In 2004, Steve handpicked Kevin Holt as MacRostie's winemaker.

A longtime advocate on behalf of Sonoma County, and Carneros (where he lives), Steve has served as president of the Sonoma Valley Vintners and Growers Alliance, the Carneros Wine Alliance and the Carneros Quality Alliance.