



**THOMAS MACKEY**  
**Winemaster & Director of Winemaking**  
**1983 ~ Present**

Thomas J. Mackey is the first and only winemaker ever employed by St. Francis Winery & Vineyards. He has held that position since 1983, but has always been an enthusiastic wine lover and even as a young man intended to make it the focus of his professional life.

Tom, a third generation San Franciscan, recalls that when he was a child, his father enjoyed wine at the dinner table every night, so the younger Mackey grew up thinking of it as an approachable, accessible part of daily life. His interest in the subject was nurtured as he grew up and began drinking it himself, and matured even further when a college friend introduced him to a range of European vintages. But it was the pilgrimage he made to the wine country of Sonoma and Napa that really opened his eyes. "At the time, Burgundy was going through a low period. All of my friends were looking at Cabernet, Zinfandel and Chardonnay, and a lot of great wines were being produced right here in California. I had never been to Europe and seeing local wineries was inspiring.

Tom earned his first college degree in English at the University of San Francisco in 1973. After studying to be a secondary school teacher, he reevaluated his future. Having reached an age when it is time to settle on a career, he changed direction toward the wine industry. After briefly exploring the arena of wholesale and retail wine selling Tom decided to shift gears into winemaking itself. He went on to earn a bachelor of Science in Enology in 1980 and a Master of Science in Agri-Science in 1982, both from California State University, Fresno. While working toward these degrees, Tom supplemented his education with practical experience, working at Hanns Kornell in Napa as a cellarman, as a laboratory technician at United Vitners in Madera, and at Rutherford Hill Winery as an enology intern. After assuming a winemaking position at Gold Seal in New York, he returned home to work at Round Hill in Napa.

Tom developed personal preferences and opinions that, coupled with talent, led to the production of original, memorable wines. For example, he preferred to use a blend of American oak and French oak to age some wines rather than confining himself to French barrels, and believed in limiting wine filtration to when it was absolutely necessary. His masters thesis concerned color and phenolic extraction in red wine methods. He put all of these viewpoints to work when he began making wine at St. Francis.

Among the major changes Tom has overseen at the winery in the last decade and a half, one of the most significant is a shift from white to red wine. With sensitivity to the fluctuating market, he guided the winery's output from 80% white wines in 1983 to 60% red wine today. When he began at St. Francis, there was already a lot of variety to the vineyard's output, with grapes such as Riesling, Gewurztraminer, Muscat, and White Pinot Noir. The first wines he added were Cabernet Sauvignon and Zinfandel, which is now among the winery's most popular. He also initiated the Reserve program with the introduction of the Reserve Chardonnay, Reserve Merlot, Reserve Cabernet Sauvignon and Reserve Zinfandel, which are considered among some of the finest California wines.

Tom has helped envision the winery's new state-of-the-art production facility by researching equipment in the U.S. and in Europe. Among the features of the new plant in which he takes most pride are the eight rotary fermenters used to extract extraordinary color and flavor from a large volume of grapes with the finesse and gentleness of a small winery. Even the small challenges of the winemaking process excite him and that excitement is definitely reflected in each and every wine created at St. Francis.