



## **ST. FRANCIS WINERY & VINEYARDS 1971 ~ 2005**

The story of St. Francis Winery & Vineyards begins, quite naturally, with a vineyard. In 1971, Joe Martin, a San Francisco businessman eager for a change, purchased the 100-acre Behler Ranch vineyard in Sonoma County in the historic town of Kenwood and planted grapes.

Joe was joined by his good friend and finance expert, Lloyd Canton, as a partner in 1972. After several years of growing and selling grapes to local wineries, they decided to build their own winery. Together they built and established one of the most respected wineries in Sonoma Valley. St. Francis Winery was established in 1979 and christened after Saint Francis of Assisi, partly as a reference to the Saint's role as a protector of the natural world and as an acknowledgement of the Franciscan order, believed to be the first to bring European grape cultivation to the new world.

The original estate vineyard was planted primarily to Chardonnay and Merlot, but when winemaker Tom Mackey was hired in 1983, Cabernet Sauvignon and Zinfandel were added to the St. Francis portfolio and the Winery soon developed a reputation for intense, boldly structured red wines.

Over the next two decades, St. Francis nurtured long-term relationships with more than 45 Sonoma County grape growers, including descendants of some of Sonoma Valley's early settlers. To this day, these unique relationships provide access to some of the County's most coveted old vines Zinfandel grapes, like those of the famous Pagani Ranch. St. Francis also acquired and developed over 500 acres of prime Sonoma County vineyards, carefully selecting diverse vineyard sites with varying soil compositions of loam, clay, and volcanic soils. Additionally, St. Francis has sought a range of microclimates that vary from direct sunlight of high hillside slopes to the cooler regions of the valley floor. This dedication to fully represent the wide range of Sonoma County site-specific terroir ensures vast resources to continue producing premium wines well into the new century.

The year 2001 was the start of a new and exciting era for St. Francis with the opening of its stunning mission style visitors center, preceded by the completion of the state of the art winery in 1999 and barrel building in 2000, all located at their Wild Oak Vineyard one mile west of the original winery on Highway 12 in Sonoma Valley.

The new winemaking facilities and estate vineyards have dramatically expanded St. Francis' winemaking capabilities as well as ensured its longstanding commitment to, and investment in, Sonoma County land, agricultural heritage, and future. Additionally, the Winery's new home has allowed for a diverse program of culinary education, which integrates the best of Sonoma County's artisanal farmers, bakers and olive oil producers with St. Francis' internationally acclaimed wines.

As founders Joe Martin and Lloyd Canton fondly look back at what they've accomplished since 1971 and anticipate the challenges inherent in the growing wine market, one sentiment stands out. As Martin notes, "St. Francis has just begun to realize its fullest potential. Our commitment to producing premium quality wines from Sonoma County's remarkable, and diverse terroir deepens with each harvest."