

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Richard Grant Peterson, PhD

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Dr. Peterson began his career as a home winemaker in 1948 in Iowa. After receiving his B.S. degree in Chemical Technology from Iowa State University in 1952, M.S. in Food Technology (1956) from the University of California, Berkeley, and PhD in Agricultural Chemistry from the University of California, he joined the E. & J. Gallo Winery in New Product Development and Research in 1958. During his ten years at Gallo his major jobs included Research Director and Assistant Production Manager in charge of winemaking.

From April 1968 until October 1973 he was Winemaster at Beaulieu Vineyard at Rutherford in Napa Valley. From November 1973 until 1986 he was Winemaster and President of The Monterey Vineyard, producing unique wines such as California's first Botrytis Sauvignon Blanc, Botrytis Pinot Noir, January Harvest Gamay Beaujolais and December Harvest Zinfandel. From April 1986 until April 1990, he was Winemaster and President of Atlas Peak Vineyards (Chairman from April 1989).



At Atlas Peak, Dr. Peterson developed 450 acres of vineyard from virgin, volcanic soil, pioneering California's largest Sangiovese planting to date. He designed and supervised excavation of California's most extensive winery storage caves (40,000 sq. ft.), oversaw construction of a 960 acre-foot reservoir and produced the first three vintages of Atlas Peak wines. He led a group of investors in purchasing the Folie a Deux Winery in St Helena, Napa Valley, California in March 1995 and remained Chairman there until the winery was sold in 2004. He continues today as viticulture and enology consultant, often serving as an expert witness in legal cases involving Viticulture, Enology, Wine Chemistry/Biochemistry and winery operations.

In 1977-1978, Dr. Peterson was President of the then 2000-member professional group of winemakers and grape growers (The American Society for Enology and Viticulture), having been a professional member since 1959 and a Director (1973-1975). He was a long time director of Wine Institute, past Chairman of WITS, a Supreme Knight in the Universal Order of Knights of the Vine and a member of most professional wine societies. He is a founding member of the American Institute of Wine and Food, AWARE, Society of Wine Educators, and the International Wine Academy.

He taught “Appreciation of Wine in Moderation” courses for twelve years at Hartnell College in Salinas, CA and has been guest lecturer on wine subjects at Univ. of California, Davis, CA. He lectured on Viticulture and Enology at The International Wine Academy, the Hotel School at the University of Houston, TX and elsewhere. He has judged wines professionally in Australia, Portugal, France, Argentina and the U.K. as well as continuing to judge at most major American competitions.

Dr. Peterson is the original designer of the steel barrel pallet which is now used by most American wineries and many around the world. He published the design (WITS Proceedings, 1974), giving it formally to the industry rather than patenting it. He has authored numerous publications, including winery newsletters, research articles in technical journals and was a Wine Host for America Online for sixteen years. He holds patents on improved wine production processes and invented methodology for treating plant diseases, notably Pierce’s Disease of grapevines. His approach uses a novel method of forcing a diseased vine to accept the injection of antibiotics or other active agents, which could not otherwise be injected into the vine or other plant. As is the case of the barrel pallet, many of his inventions were not patented but given to the industry.

As a consultant in past years, he created many new wines, including Lancers Vinho Branco in Portugal, the J. Wile line of Varietal wines, Seagram’s first wine cooler and all the original Taylor California Cellars wines. In his spare time, Dr. Peterson was a military pilot for eleven years, flying both US Army fixed wing and rotary wing aircraft in the 49th Aviation Battalion of the California National Guard. Flying has been a lifelong hobby. Two of his daughters are graduate Enologists, with degrees from U.C. Davis, working in the wine and food industry. One of them, Heidi Barrett, is a licensed helicopter pilot in addition to her primary profession as one of California’s best known winemakers.

Dr. Peterson is currently Vice President of the Monterey Wine Scholarship Auction, which develops funds to support outstanding, and often needy, students in the wine, food and hospitality industries. He was chairman of the Andre Tchelistcheff Scholarship Committee from its origin in 1986 until turning it over to the American Vineyard Foundation in 2007. The Monterey wine auctions have awarded more than \$2,000,000 in scholarship funds to college students – all generated from the auction events and personal donations.