

Jordan®

ROB DAVIS
Winemaker



Rob Davis holds the rare distinction in California of serving as winemaker at a singular winery for 35 years. He arrived in the Alexander Valley in 1976 to oversee production of Jordan's inaugural vintage: a Cabernet Sauvignon made in the Bordeaux style. By 1979, Davis introduced a Chardonnay with the hope of someday discovering in Sonoma County a distinct minerality similar to the great white wines of Burgundy. His tremendous technical background, empirical wisdom, desire for discovery, and meticulous quality standards remain a guiding force in the vineyards and cellars at Jordan.

Immediately after receiving a bachelor's degree in fermentation science from the University of California-Davis, Davis accepted the winemaker position at Jordan, excited about the opportunity to apprentice under a man considered America's most influential post-Prohibition winemaker, André Tchelistcheff, who had been hired by the Jordan family as consulting enologist. "I went to two schools to learn about winemaking," Davis says. "The school at Davis and the school of André Tchelistcheff."

From 1980 until Tchelistcheff's retirement in 1992, the two winemakers took trips to countless chateaux, domaines and caves in France that influenced all aspects of winemaking at Jordan. The two became close friends and found that they shared a common philosophy of balanced winemaking, and an appreciation for the relationship between food and wine in everyday life in Europe.

When second-generation vintner John Jordan took the reins in 2005, Davis was thrilled to accept Jordan's challenge to elevate quality even higher. Fruit sourcing became Davis's first objective, identifying top growers whose exceptional fruit could complement the best blocks of Bordeaux varieties planted on the Jordan Estate. Davis and the winemaking team also extended bottle age of Jordan Cabernet Sauvignon to two full years beginning with the 2006 vintage, launched an extensive soil mapping study, and decreased the malolactic fermentation on Jordan Chardonnay to retain even more minerality and acidity. His inner scientist keeps experiments constantly in progress in the vineyards, laboratory and cellars.

Davis's commitment to the timeless qualities of balance, elegance and finesse has never wavered. While many winemakers have followed the trend of making overripe, heavily oaked, high-alcohol wines to wow critics in blind tastings, Davis continues to pick his Cabernet Sauvignon grapes at optimal sugar levels that preserve acid and keep alcohols near 13.7 percent. His philosophy of aging in a combination of new and used barrels helps create a wine that is complex but not over extracted. Thanks to Davis's tenure, the consistent characters delivered in every vintage of Cabernet Sauvignon and Chardonnay—beautiful fruit, silky tannins and a lingering memory—have made Jordan an icon and one of the most popular wines on restaurant wine lists for two decades.

Born and raised in Sacramento, Davis remains active in cooperative research at UC-Davis, the American Society of Enology and Viticulture and the Sonoma County Technical Tasting Group. He is an avid swimmer, cyclist and runner, competing in several triathlons each year. Similar to his mentor, André, he continues to travel throughout the world in an effort to learn more about the miracle of wine.

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