

CHATEAU MONTELENA WINERY

ESTABLISHED 1882

Dave Vella - Vineyard Manager

Dave Vella has been the Vineyard Manager at Chateau Montelena since 1985. Dave's ancestors came to California in the late 1800's as grape growers and winemakers, settling in the Central Valley and in Napa Valley. Dave grew up near Modesto farming grapes, almonds and row crops. In 1976 Dave decided to attend Fresno State University and was awarded the prestigious American Society of Enologists scholarship, the first Fresno State student to be awarded this honor. While attending Fresno State, Dave worked for Gallo as a lab technician. He and future Chateau Montelena winemaker Bo Barrett met at Fresno State and quickly became the best of friends, pursuing together their love of outdoors activities.

Upon graduating with a degree in viticulture and enology in 1978, Dave was hired to be the winemaker at a small family owned winery and vineyard in the Napa Valley. As the only full time employee Dave was able to immerse himself in all aspects of the winemaking and winegrowing process.

In 1985, with the impending retirement of John Roller, Chateau Montelena's original vineyard manager, Bo asked Dave if he would be interested in working together as a team at Chateau Montelena. "Bo called, said they wanted an experienced vineyard manager with a winemaker's perspective and I was that person. I told him it sounded great, but could such good friends work together without ruining their friendship?" We decided to give it a shot and it has worked out very well.

Dave's interests include conservation causes such as Ducks Unlimited, skiing, diving, dancing, and especially hunting and fishing with his two sons.