

DUCKHORN WINE COMPANY

NEIL BERNARDI

Vice President, Duckhorn Wine Company Winemaking

In recognition of his skill as a winemaker, his inspiring and collaborative leadership style, and his comprehensive understanding of the wine industry, in 2014, Neil Bernardi was named the first vice president of winemaking in the four-decade history of Duckhorn Wine Company. In this pivotal role, Neil guides all aspects of Duckhorn Wine Company's winemaking program. This process begins in the vineyards, where Neil works closely with the director of estate vineyards to oversee almost 700 acres in Napa Valley, Sonoma County, Anderson Valley and Washington State's Red Mountain. Neil also manages the company's grower relations program, guiding vineyard selection and viticultural practices in numerous appellations to ensure that each winery has its own focused winegrowing program. Neil's impact continues in the wineries where he works alongside the company's renowned winemaking team to chart the stylistic course for each winery and to extract a profound sense of place from each wine.



Neil was born and raised in Northern California. After living briefly in Florence, Italy, Neil attended UC Davis to study Italian. At Davis, Neil fell in love with winemaking, and soon expanded his studies to include enology and viticulture, including three years spent in the lab of renowned sensory scientist Dr. Ann Noble.

After earning his B.A. in Italian and B.S. in viticulture and enology, Neil went to New Zealand to deepen his understanding of winemaking and the affects of geography and climate on grape growing. There, he worked as part of the winemaking team for three highly regarded wineries: Saint Clair Estate, Cape Campbell Wines and Kim Crawford. In California, Neil has held positions at Quintessa and at Littorai, where he was the associate winemaker for Ted Lemon.

During his decade at Duckhorn Wine Company, Neil has held numerous key positions, including tenures as the assistant winemaker for both Goldeneye and Migration, winemaker for Migration, and as the general manager for Sonoma County winegrowing. Neil has contributed greatly to Duckhorn Wine Company's success, catapulting Migration into the upper echelons of New World Chardonnay and Pinot Noir producers, and establishing grower programs for Migration and Decoy that have helped to establish these wineries as two of the bright stars in the company's portfolio. As the architect of Duckhorn Wine Company's Sonoma County winegrowing program, Neil played an integral role in establishing a Sonoma County estate presence for the company, with the acquisition of the Ridgeline and Brownell vineyards. In addition, he expanded the Sonoma grower program to almost 2,000 acres in multiple top appellations.

"Neil has always been an incredibly talented winemaker," says CEO and President Alex Ryan. "And as a leader, he has emerged as a tireless, forward-thinking and positive force in the evolution of our company. He has a respect for the legacy and ideals that have guided us for our first four decades, and also the vision necessary to help lead us in the decades to come."