



## CHRISTOPHER CARPENTER, *Winemaker*

Christopher Carpenter's winemaking approach is often Socratic, using a question to explore an untapped possibility. A casual question about native yeasts introduces a passionate discourse on the diverse wild species that turns grapes into wine. His is an interest in the details and how they fit, if not transcend, the bigger picture. This inquisitive drive compels Carpenter to craft each wine as an authentic expression of its vineyard site through careful viticulture and gentle winemaking.

Carpenter grew up outside Chicago with an intellect geared for science, a palate ignited by fine fare and wine, and an athletic stature destined to play big-ten football at the University of Illinois, Champaign-Urbana. As a college Biology major and football star, Carpenter earned his way working as a manager at the local campus pub. While an MBA student at the University of Illinois, Chicago, Chris logged long hours as a part-time bar manager in the windy city. A visit to the Napa Valley offered more than vacation. Here, in an enclave sixty miles from San Francisco, Chris discovered a sophisticated, agrarian lifestyle that balanced pursuits of culinary and wine excellence with scientific innovation, all while dipping into the creative process. In short time, Carpenter decided that he would become a winemaker in the Napa Valley. He packed up his life and new bride in Chicago and headed west towards the mecca of California winemaking, UC Davis.



While earning his masters degree in the Viticulture and Enology program at UC Davis, Carpenter paid the bills by clocking time at the award-winning Tra Vigne in St. Helena. He worked as a harvest enologist at Domaine Carneros, as a vineyard intern at Domaine Chandon, and won a research internship at Tenute Antinori, Santa Christina Estate in Italy. Carpenter joined the winemaking team at the Cardinale Estate in 1998 as the enologist, and quickly transitioned to the role of assistant winemaker the following year. In 2001, he stepped into the winemaker position for Cardinale Estate.

For Carpenter, making wine in the Napa Valley places him at the epicenter of cutting edge trends and ultimate quality. On any given day, you'll find him working with estate vineyards on Howell Mountain and Mount Veeder and nurturing the blends in the Oakville winery. *"When you create something that imparts pleasure and enhances diverse experiences, there is nothing you can feel except passion for that creation and the labor involved,"* Chris has explained.

Chris and his wife, Tina, founded the Napa Valley chapter of Slow Food, an organization dedicated to preserving endangered, regional foods and small food purveyors and celebrating local farmers and chefs.