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# WOODBIDGE

BY ROBERT MONDAVI

## WOODBIDGE BY ROBERT MONDAVI A HISTORY OF INNOVATION, A STORY OF EXCELLENCE

Woodbridge Winery leads the popular-premium wine category with innovation in all aspects of the wine business—from vineyard practices to winemaking techniques to creative product marketing. The quarter-century history of Woodbridge is rooted both in the unique characteristics of the Lodi region of California, and in the leadership of founder Robert Mondavi.

### **The Story Begins with the Land**

The Woodbridge story begins more than 150 years ago. Settlers to the Lodi region during the California gold rush of the mid-1800s discovered this area in the northern San Joaquin Valley offered not just gold, but prime farming conditions. Lodi is blessed with warm, dry days and cool night breezes from the Pacific. Two nearby rivers carry rich mineral deposits from the Sierra Nevadas to the sandy loam soils. Grapes were one of many crops that flourished.

Having grown up in Lodi, Robert Mondavi knew the region was ideal for growing wine grapes of ripe fruit flavor balanced by natural acidity from which he could produce quality wines at affordable prices. Here, he could pursue his dream of making delicious, affordable wines that families could share each night around the dinner table. In 1979, Mondavi acquired the Cherokee Wine Association, a cooperative of Lodi grape growers that was formed in the 1930s after the repeal of Prohibition, and renamed the cooperative after the town. Woodbridge Winery was born.

### **Leadership in the Vineyard and the Winery**

Mondavi had developed successful agricultural practices and fine winemaking techniques at his Napa Valley winery. He applied these practices at Woodbridge, creating many “firsts”:

- Woodbridge became the first in the region to convert to single-label wine production with 200,000 cases.
- In 1985, Woodbridge pioneered the gentle, direct-to-press operation for white wines that is now practiced industry-wide.
- In 1986, Woodbridge became the first winery in the popular premium category to produce and vintage-date labeled varietals.

### **A Leader in Sustainable Farming**

Woodbridge leadership extends to promoting sustainable agricultural practices. Its Quality Enhancement Team (QET) -- a community of winegrowers, consultants, and state representatives -- is dedicated to researching and promoting viticultural methods that sustain and benefit the environment while improving the quality of wine grapes.

The QET, formed in 1991, grew from Woodbridge winemakers’ practice of tasting individual lots with grape growers, involving the growers in the evaluation of how viticultural methods affect wine quality. Now managed by grape growers and advised by Woodbridge’s grower relations director and

winemaker, the QET provides an open forum for the exchange of information, offering seminars, field trips and much more.

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### **Looking to the Future**

Woodbridge is committed to maintaining these practices for all its wines, sustaining and building its leadership by combining traditional wine-making craft with leading-edge innovation and an appreciation for the unique characteristics of the land and climate.

Woodbridge developed a Select Vineyard Series (SVS) line, highlighting the diverse soils and meso-climates of the Lodi winegrowing region. The four varieties of SVS wines—Ghost Oak Chardonnay, Clay Hollow Merlot, Fish Net Creek Old Vine Zinfandel and Red Dirt Ridge Cabernet Sauvignon—are sourced from six of the seven proposed sub-appellations of the Lodi AVA (American Viticultural Area).

Other unique Woodbridge offerings include the limited-production PortaCinco, made from five traditional Port grape varieties grown in vineyards adjacent to the winery, and Woodbridge Winemaker's Selection, special wines available for purchase only in the winery's retail room and through the Woodbridge wine club.

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