

TOM MUDD

Owner

In the fourteenth century, alchemists believed they could miraculously transform ordinary metals into silver and gold with the help of the mineral cinnabar. Consequently, this purple-red derivative of mercury was highly coveted by medieval nobility.

Time has of course proven them wrong, but their conviction endures in the heart of Cinnabar's Tom Mudd. By allowing rainwater to permeate his mountain vineyards and foster extraordinary grapes, Tom captures the magic of alchemy in his handcrafted wines.

Tom Mudd was born during the Second World War and raised in Los Angeles. He was first introduced to agriculture while spending time on his father's 360-acre ranch in the Malibu Mountains. This exposure would influence his decision to grow grapes later in life.

After high school, Tom moved north to study engineering and premed at Stanford University where he earned an undergraduate degree in 1964. In the years to follow, he traveled extensively and worked with the Sierra Club between 1969 and 1973 on water issues in the west. Tom returned to Stanford and received a master's degree in environmental engineering in 1977 and a Ph.D. in civil engineering in 1980. From 1977–82 he was a research engineer at SRI International (Stanford Research Institute) specializing in laser spectroscopy of aerosols.

In the early 1970s, Tom picked grapes while attending harvest parties at Woodside Vineyards. A victim of the "wine bug," he planted a one-acre mountain vineyard in 1974, and took viticulture and enology courses at the University of California Davis while attending graduate school at Stanford.

Tom made wine under a home label until he founded Cinnabar in 1983. "As a hobby, I made wine at my home in Woodside," he recalls. "When interesting research projects dried up at SRI in the early '80s, I decided it was time for a career change. I became a full-time winemaker — a modern-day alchemist — blending science with a touch of nature's magic." In a span of 10 years, his one-time hobby had evolved into a commercial winery.

A scientist by trade, Tom's quest for vineyard property mirrored the scientific methodology he employed at SRI — he conducted a thorough search of parcels suitable to growing high

quality wine grapes. "I always felt some of California's finest wines came from the Santa Cruz Mountains. I spent a year looking for the perfect site to plant a vineyard. Finally, I spotted our ridge top from a helicopter. It has great climate, mineral-rich soil and the right elevation."

Situated on the eastern rim of the Santa Cruz Mountains above the town of Saratoga, the site enjoys a long growing season, often extending through mid-November. Vines are farmed in well-drained red clay-loam soils with an assortment of exposures and elevations.

When it was time to plant the Cinnabar vineyards, Tom sought cuttings with a proven record of yielding exceptional grapes under local growing conditions. "In addition to their 100-year history of producing great wine in the Santa Cruz Mountains," says Tom, "our first planting had bloodlines traceable to France's elite classified growths. The cabernet sauvignon was derived from cuttings made at Chateau Margaux while the chardonnay descended from Burgundy's Corton-Charlemagne."

Twenty-two acres of estate vineyards were planted in the summers of '84 and '85. The winery building and three caves were completed in 1987, the latter providing year-round temperature-controlled environments (58° F.) for aging Cinnabar wines. Eight acres of estate vines were added in 1991.

In the late 1990s, however, most of the pedigree vines were replaced with certified clones and rootstock that better

suit the cool bayside climate.

Quite active away from Cinnabar, Tom is a board member of the Woodside Elementary School District. He also provides science enrichment activities for local youth including a "Walk-through Solar System" that features an eight-foot model of the sun. His hobbies include astronomy, fly fishing and the restoration of old cars. He enjoys raising his daughter Karina Bell Mudd and son Jack Mudd. They have three dogs, one cat and a few fish.

Looking ahead, Tom would like Cinnabar to be well established in all major U.S. markets.

He welcomes the challenges of the wine industry with a philosophical approach: "Making the perfect wine is impossible, but we will continue to make the maximum effort to achieve that goal."

