



Anaba

JOHN SWEAZEY, FOUNDER AND PROPRIETOR

Some people get into the wine business because they hunger for the perceived “lifestyle” — sleek limos inching up the lanes of elaborate estates surrounded by vineyards, with a cornucopia of gourmet delectables at every meal and a bevy of hot air balloons dancing overhead. Others seek to become rock star winemakers, playing starring roles at winemaker dinners in fancy restaurants as wine “groupies” swoon in adulation at every swirl and sip.

And then there is Anaba’s John Swezey — athletic, gregarious and incredibly down-to-earth. He’s there, quite simply, because he just loves the wine business.

“I never personally wanted to be a winemaker,” John explains. “My desire to get into the business was fueled by my interest in production — making the best possible wine from the finest grapes, then marketing and selling it. To me, that’s the romance of wine.”

A native of Chicago, John headed west to Stanford University for college, where he earned a degree in economics. “I was a failed physics major,” he laughs. “At Stanford, all failed potential scientists go into economics because there is no business major.”

While at Stanford, John and his Kappa Sigma fraternity brothers decided one year to extend the annual “Big Game Weekend” between Stanford and Cal, and headed north to Napa Valley for a fraternity party at the iconic El Bonita Motel in St. Helena. With the sun setting over the Mayacamas Mountains, John offered a toast with a memorable glass of Charles Krug Vin Rosé — and his journey to the world of wine officially began.



“WITH ANABA, WE WANT TO MAKE THE BEST WINE, PRICE IT FAIRLY AND OFFER EACH AND EVERY CUSTOMER A VALUED EXPERIENCE THAT ENCOURAGES THEM TO CONTINUE TO SEEK OUT OUR WINES. THAT’S THE MEASURE OF OUR SUCCESS.”

— JOHN SWEAZEY, PROPRIETOR

After a short but successful career selling computers for IBM, John took a sabbatical, lived in Aspen and traveled Europe for nine months “in search of a French princess who owned a vineyard.” And while he never found The Princess Bride, he did discover the rolling hills in Burgundy and the rugged lands of the Rhône Valley. And he fell in love with the people and their wines.

Returning stateside, John came back to the Bay Area and started a real estate finance company. Over the years, he became enamored with the Sonoma Wine Country because it reminded him of his experiences in France. “The Napa lifestyle and big Cabernets didn’t appeal to me,” he says. “Sonoma is more attuned to my personality — and is the best place to grow the Rhône Blends and Burgundian varietals that I love.”

After selling his business to a bank in 2003, John began to search for premium winegrowing properties in Sonoma, finding a serendipitous spot in Western Carneros, where cool winds temper the summer heat, allowing for a longer growing season for his chosen grape varieties. Inspired by the unique upward anabatic wind patterns that prevail, he decided to name it Anaba.

In shaping Anaba, John relies on his proven track record as a team builder, creating an environment where people are excited about their work and share their passion for wine. He prides himself on working with different personalities to build an esprit de corps — just as a winemaker works with different grapes to craft a harmonious blend.