

QUADY

SWEET & APÉRITIF WINES

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Contact: Chloë Tatro
(559) 673-8068
chloet@quadywinery.com

THE ROAD LESS TRAVELED: RECOGNIZING THE LEGACY AND ENDURING CONTRIBUTIONS OF ANDREW QUADY – INNOVATOR, RISK TAKER, AND PIONEER OF CALIFORNIA SWEET AND APERITIF WINES

MADERA, Calif. – In the late 1960s and early 1970s, a generation of winemakers, mostly in California, transformed the American wine industry, emphasizing quality, terroir, and individual expression. James Conaway in "Napa: The Story of an American Eden," called these men and women the "Second Wave" of American winemaking. Looking back, we can also call them our "greatest generation," in recognition of the risks they took and the accomplishments they made.

Most of the recognition of these winegrowers has centered on Northern California, but the movement existed throughout the entire American wine industry, with important pioneering wineries in Oregon, Washington and throughout the entire state of California. Today, most of these groundbreakers have retired, sold their businesses or have been unable to sustain their wineries through the many difficult cycles of the industry.

Andrew (Andy) Quady is one of the last remaining members of this generation still active in the industry. Graduating from U.C. Davis with a master's in enology in 1973, he became a winemaker that same year, beginning in Lodi and later moving to Madera. However, unlike his fellow graduates who ended up making notable cabernet sauvignon, chardonnay and pinot noir, Andy forged a different path. He took advantage of opportunities as he saw them and focused on wines that would be the very best versions of what he could make in the region where he was, no matter how popular they may have been at the time.

It was at Davis that Andy met Darrell Corti. Darrell, owner of Corti Brothers stores in Sacramento, was a benefactor of many young winemakers in the Second Wave. He encouraged the movement by purchasing their wines and promoting them in his stores. It was Darrell who recognized that despite the great cabernets and chardonnays that were being produced at the time, California had yet to make a great vintage port. In 1975, he encouraged Andy to make one from California's native grape – zinfandel. Andy did so, with the understanding that Darrell would place the wine in his stores. A few years later, after making it on the side at Lodi Vintners and bottling it at a friend's Rutherford winery, Andy had 1,600 cases of California's first premium vintage port for sale. True to his word, Darrell placed an order for 200 of those cases.

Fortunately for Andy, the wine was well received and following the 1976 Paris tasting, Americans were looking for California versions of classic wines, including dessert wines. Andy recognized that he was one of the only winemakers focusing on this overlooked but important wine category, and that it gave him an opportunity to establish a niche in an increasingly competitive market. He would use this strategy time and time again over his career, resulting in a number of firsts, and establishing a legacy of quality and innovation.

¹Andy's classmates included many winemakers who would go on to make outstanding wines, including Merry Edwards, Tim Mondavi, Tom Ferrell, Peter Graff, Stu Smith, Dave Stare and Steve MacRostie.

From a modest beginning of 1,600 cases, with Andy and his wife Laurel (Laurie) making wine on evenings and weekends, Quady Winery now produces 250,000 cases, sells to 48 states, exports to 17 countries, and employs over 30 people. Self-started and financed from the beginning, Quady Winery remains independently owned and managed by the Quady family. Andy credits the winery's success to dedicated growers and the long-term employees who work with him. He empowers employees and encourages independent thinking and action, and in turn, has been rewarded by extensive loyalty and commitment. In unison with their winery's growth, Andy and the family are committed to environmentally and socially sustainable business practices. Sixty percent of the winery's power is provided by solar energy, waste water is recycled and used to irrigate the vineyard, and the facility is recognized as California Certified Sustainable.

2024 will mark Quady Winery's 50th vintage, and in 2025, Andy will turn 80 years old. For the winery, this marks 50 years of consistent growth with an emphasis on quality. For Andy, it will mark 50 years of courage, making successful innovative wines with unique styles, and perceiving and taking advantage of opportunities as they came his way.

Notable firsts and achievements:

- 1975: Andrew Quady produced the first Quady vintage port from Amador zinfandel
- 1977: Quady Winery moved to Madera, first winery building constructed
- 1980: Accompanies Dr. Olmo to Portugal to identify original Portuguese port varieties for later use in port-style wines
- 1980: Andy discovers a rare planting of orange muscat grapes and produces Essensia, America's first premium muscat dessert wine
- 1983: Andy makes Elysium, America's first premium dessert wine from Black Muscat
- 1987: Andy begins making port from Portuguese varieties, renames it as "Starboard" in deference to Portugal's legacy
- 1990: Quady makes America's first premium Moscato-style wine - Electra
- 1999: Andy makes Vya Vermouth, America's first craft vermouth
- 2007: Palomino Fino Sherry is produced - the first California solera sherry made from biodynamic Palomino grapes. Also the first solera established after the demolition of the sherry soleras in the early 1980s.
- 2009: Quady Winery named "Best U.S. Producer" at the International Wine and Spirits Competition
- 2009, 2010: Vya named "Best Vermouth" at the International Wine and Spirits Competition
- 2010: 50,000 cases of production
- 2015: 100,000 cases of production
- 2022: 200,000 cases of production
- 2024: Introduction of Electra Black, red blend: black muscat and rhone varieties
- Numerous golds, Best of Show, Best of Class, Grand Champion awards from top competitions
- 2022, 2023, 2024 San Francisco Chronicle - Best of Class for at least one wine.
- 2024 Houston - Top Dessert Wine & Best of Class for Essensia

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²Only two winemakers, Mike Blaylock (for 30 years) and Darin Peterson (at 20 years) have ever held the reins. Danny Mejia, Operations Manager, began as a cellar worker 40 years ago.

³The first building was a 1600 ft single room stucco building behind the house that featured a crusher from Valley Foundry that was already 30 years old at the time it was purchased.

⁴Essensia has been served at the White House and has graced the wine lists of the world's finest restaurants, including the London Ritz.