

Doug Margerum



Doug Margerum has been intimately involved in the Santa Barbara food and wine scene for over 30 years. Doug is regarded as one of the pioneers promoting the uniqueness and quality of Santa Barbara food and wine. His food and wine explorations started at an early age while traveling with his parents in France. In high school and college he worked in restaurants as a cook and server, continuing to follow his passion and learning more about food and wine.

Coinciding with his graduation from UCSB with a degree in Business Economics in 1981, his family purchased Wine Cask - an existing wine store. What began as a retail wine store quickly expanded to include a simple bistro adjacent to the existing space. The restaurant garnered critical success from the outset with praise from *Gourmet*, *Bon Appetit* and the *Los Angeles Times*.

Doug launched the Wine Cask Futures program in 1984 in Santa Barbara, which elevated the exposure of Santa Barbara Wines nationally. Doug owned and founded Vita Nova winery with Bob Lindquist (Qupé) and Jim Clendenen (Au Bon Climat) in 1986 and sold his share in 1998.

In 1991, Wine Cask expanded to the “Gold Room” in Santa Barbara’s legendary El Paseo and the adjacent Intermezzo cafe opened in 1996. The two restaurants and the wine store were the Santa Barbara destination of choice among local and international food & wine cognoscenti.

While running the restaurant, wine store and catering, Doug traveled and discovered wines that had yet to be imported to the United States. Wine Cask was the first to bring in the wines of Didier Dagueneau, a winemaker in the Loire Valley who received a cult following for his Sauvignon Blanc wines from the Pouilly Fumé appellation, along with René Geoffroy Champagne and Dominique Laurent wines from Burgundy.

In 1994, Wine Cask became one of 74 restaurants in the world to earn the Wine Spectator Grand Award. In 2007 Doug sold the restaurant to focus on his nascent eponymous wine production.

In 2001 MARGERUM WINE COMPANY began in a tiny 240 square foot cold room behind Brander Vineyards. At the time, it was the smallest bonded winery in the United States. The philosophy was to return wine making to its previous form of production – handcrafted and personal.

Margerum primarily produces M5 wines (Rhône varietal white and red blends); a co-fermented Syrah called ÜBER; SYBARITE Sauvignon Blanc; and RIVIERA Rosé. Doug works with the top vineyards from the cool, eastern end of the Santa Ynez Valley in Happy Canyon of Santa Barbara to the cold vineyards of Sta. Rita Hills towards the western end of the Valley.

In 2014, Margerum released BARDEN wines – an exploration of cold climate grapes grown in and around the Sta. Rita Hills AVA. BARDEN is Doug’s middle name and its English meaning is “Lives near the boar’s den”... thusly the label is adorned with an image of the wild boar that is pervasive in the area’s vineyards.

Doug’s unique background with retail wine sales, as a sommelier in a Grand Award restaurant and as a wine maker made him sought out by a variety of wineries to assist in the formation of their brands. Doug has worked for Chêne Bleu super Rhône wines in France and continues to consult for Paradise Springs, La Encantada Vineyards, Happy Canyon Vineyards, and Rancho Boa Vista - all in Santa Barbara County.

In 2016 Doug established the Margerum Estate, an 18-acre vineyard on Alamo Pintado Road in the Los Olivos District AVA. The vineyard is planted to ten red and white Rhône varietals, with five clones of Syrah planted on steep hillsides.

As a friend and colleague of Julia Child’s during her time in Santa Barbara County, in 2016 Doug was asked to be on the Smithsonian’s National Museum of American History Kitchen Cabinet, a board made up of leaders in the food and wine industry. Doug is also on the advisory board for the Julia Child Foundation.