

PRAXIS *Cellars*

Biography – William L. Arbios

Bill Arbios happened upon his career in winemaking while pursuing his childhood dream of becoming a veterinarian at the University of California, Davis in 1969. At the end of his second year of school, he took a summer job at a veterinarian's office where he realized that being a veterinarian was more emotionally challenging than he had expected. Dismayed by the constant animal neglect, Bill knew that he needed to find a new career or risk caring for a backyard full of unwanted dogs and cats.

While surveying the University of California, Davis catalog, Bill noticed a class called "Introduction to American Wine." Knowing that Davis is one of the best enology schools in the world, he thought that he might as well learn something about wine while trying to figure out what he *really* wanted to do – although he had never had wine before in his life! He fell in love with the creative and complex nature of winemaking; he was thrilled that winemaking encompassed chemistry, biology, physics and bacteriology - all of which were key components of his previous studies. As his understanding of winemaking grew, Bill was seduced by the romance of wine and accordingly, he took his vows of poverty and enthusiastically entered into the brotherhood of winemaking.

Bill graduated from Davis in 1973 with degrees in Fermentation Sciences and Bacteriology and immediately embarked on his career in the wine industry. Prior to launching his Arbios label in 1993, Bill held winemaking and consulting positions for well-known wineries in California's Napa Valley, Sonoma County and Central Coast regions. His earliest experience in winemaking was from 1973 through 1976 at Chateau Souverain, where he was mentored by the dynamic Lee Stewart. In addition to his winemaking and vineyard management skills, Bill has had extensive experience designing wineries from the ground up. Specifically, he designed and supervised the construction of Fieldstone Winery in the 1970s, and was an integral part of the winery design and development of the William Wheeler Winery and Lyeth in 1980.

In 1981 Bill joined Sonoma County's Lyeth winery, first as winemaker and production manager and then in 1988 as winemaker and vice president. While at Lyeth, Bill pioneered Bordeaux-style blended wines in Sonoma County, which eventually set the standards for all subsequent "Meritage" wines in the North Coast wine regions.

In 1992 Bill was appointed winemaker for Napa's Jarvis Vineyards, where he aided in the design and implementation of a state-of-the-art underground winery. Following Jarvis, Bill spent two years as winemaker for Chateau DeBaun in Santa Rosa, where he was responsible for

winemaking, quality control and data tracking for custom winemaking for clients such as Robert Mondavi, Delicato and Sebastiani.

Although Bill enjoyed his successful career making wine for many prominent wineries, he occasionally felt restricted by the bottom line to which large wineries must adhere. In addition, this self-described “vagabond vintner,” was starting to yearn for roots. With the creation of Arbios Cellars in 1993, his dream of expressing his artistry through wine and creating something lasting for himself and his family was realized. After a few years, he longed to experiment and make less “serious” wines as well. In 2000, he launched the Praxis label to practice his craft.

He currently resides in Healdsburg in Sonoma County with his wife of 6 years, Susan and his three teen-age sons. When Bill is not making wine, he enjoys scuba diving, cooking, music and gardening. He also has his pilot’s license and loves to fly when given a chance.