

A photograph of Janet Trefethen, a woman with short brown hair, smiling and sitting on a wooden bench. She is wearing a dark blazer over a light blue collared shirt and a pearl necklace. A golden retriever dog is sitting next to her, looking towards the camera with its tongue out. The background shows a vineyard with rows of grapevines under a clear sky.

Trefethen

Janet Trefethen

FOUNDER

Janet Trefethen has seen many changes in the Napa Valley since she and her husband, John, began making wine at Trefethen Family Vineyards nearly 50 years ago. There were fewer than 30 operating wineries when they started; now there are over 500. One thing that has not changed, however, is Janet's passion for producing and sharing fine wines from the family's estate vineyard.

Together with husband, John, Janet was a pioneer. As they built their business together, she was the brand's original champion and only salesperson, personally visiting every fine wine shop and restaurant that wanted to add Trefethen to their list. When Trefethen Chardonnay was proclaimed "The Best Chardonnay in the World" in 1979 at the Wine Olympics in Paris and again at the rematch in 1980, she managed the ensuing surge in demand with aplomb, pioneering an allocation model that has been adopted by many of Napa's newer cult wineries.

Janet also advocated for wine's proper place on the table alongside great food. Just a few years after starting the winery, Janet helped launch the Napa Valley Cooking Class. At first a locals-only culinary program, it quickly grew to attract a host of rising food world stars like Jeremiah Tower, Thomas Keller and Cindy Pawlcyn (among others), helping to establish the legendary culinary scene for which Napa is now known. Janet was featured on Good Morning America when she cooked Christmas Dinner for Julia Child.

Growing up on her father's rice farm in Colusa County, California, where she rode and showed horses, Janet developed a love for agriculture. After graduating from the University of Nevada in Reno with a bachelor's degree in journalism, she took a job in the Napa Valley for a statewide association of grape growers where she met her future husband, John Trefethen. Together they have two children, Hailey and Lorenzo, who are both actively involved in the family business.

