



# Trefethen

## John Trefethen

### FOUNDER

John is the co-founder of Trefethen Family Vineyards who, along with his wife Janet, was one of the pioneers that put Napa Valley on the world stage. When his parents, Gene and Katie Trefethen, were looking for a rural retreat, John saw potential for something greater. Having completed a business school project on starting a “family winery,” he went to work with his dad replanting the vineyards on their newly purchased estate. Within a few years time, John and his new wife Janet began to restore the dilapidated 1886 winery on the property. They produced their first commercial vintage in 1973—featuring a Chardonnay and a Pinot Noir—with John as winemaker.

To help cover costs, John hammered out partnerships with a variety of people and companies. He negotiated with Moët, the famous Champagne producer, to come in and share the historic winery building, learning from Moët’s cellar master how to operate a cellar and from their chef de cave, Edmund Maudiere, how to make wines that paired well with food.

After John’s 1976 Chardonnay was proclaimed “The Best Chardonnay in the World” at the Wine Olympics in Paris in 1979, John joined his wife out in the market. He occasionally served as the pilot for “the flying circus,” a collection of Napa vintners that toured the US together, building the Napa Valley brand.

John continued to manage the day-to-day operations at the winery until Jon Ruel, now CEO, began to assume these duties over the past decade. These days, John serves as an important mentor for Jon Ruel and a fantastic ambassador for the brand.

John Trefethen grew up in Oakland and Claremont, California. He attended college at the University of North Carolina, served in the U.S. Navy as a Lieutenant, and holds an MBA from Stanford University. John served as Founding President of the Napa Valley Grapegrowers and President of both the Napa Valley Vintners and the Napa Wine Services Co-Op as well as a board member of the California Wine Institute.

John has been an active pilot since 1960, has had a love affair with motorcycles since the 1980s and has been an avid car racer for most of his slightly juvenile adult years. He has most recently been competing in Porsche’s factory race car known as a Cup car.

John and his wife Janet are extremely proud of their children, Hailey and Lorenzo, who, sharing their parents’ passion for estate grown wines, are actively involved in the family business.

