



ELI PARKER

President

Director Of Winery & Vineyard Operations

In December 1987, the Fess Parker family purchased a piece of ranch property in Santa Barbara County's Foxen Canyon, already the home of several outstanding wineries. The family's eventual foray into the wine business proved to be an important turning point in the professional life of Eli Parker. What began as a curious infatuation would later become a lifelong vocation as his innate winemaking talent thrived.

In the early days Eli spent most of his time in the vineyard where he began as a student of grapegrowing. Eli also worked in the cellar at Byron Winery during the 1987 harvest, augmenting his practical experience with several extension courses at U.C. Davis. From 1989 through harvest of 1992, Eli continued his hands-on education as assistant winemaker at the winery. 1993 Eli began a three-year apprenticeship with the critically acclaimed winemaker Jed Steele. As Jed's consulting enologist, the senior winemaker was a major influence as Eli's signature style matured. Eli's first harvest at the helm was in 1996 and shortly thereafter he assumed the responsibilities of President of the winery.

Under Eli's leadership the winery has received lavish plaudits. His debut wine, the 1993 Santa Barbara County Syrah, was named by the Boston Globe as "*one of the five best Syrahs in the world.*" At the 2006 San Francisco International Wine Competition, Eli Parker was named as the Winemaker of the Year with multiple awards for his Grenache Blanc and Syrahs. Eli may have a particular affinity for Rhône wines, but his Burgundian varietals fare equally well with the critics.

During recent years, Eli has overseen the rapid expansion of the winery's vineyard holdings. Blair Fox was promoted to Head Winemaker in 2005 and Eli will continue to craft the small production Epiphany wines. Currently the Fess Parker Winery is farming over 380 acres of vineyards on different sites throughout Santa Barbara County. As Director of Winemaking, Eli has led decisions about varietal selection, which will fuel the growth of the winery while maintaining the established distinction of the Fess Parker brand.

Eli and his wife Laureen (married at the winery in 1995) have five daughters and one son between them and together they have two sons. They live just down the road from the winery and needless to say their own lives are thoroughly interwoven with the world of wine.