

HISTORY of WINEMAKER WINEMAKER DEBORAH HANSEN

Deborah Hansen became a winemaker through a gradual and occasionally rocky process. Initially Deborah earned a degree in pharmacy from Washington State University. Her initial training in chemistry, biology, and bacteriology would prove useful down the road when she began making wine.

Upon relocating to the San Francisco Bay Area in the late 1970's, the Hansen's developed a keen interest in wine production and grape growing. While traveling to Napa, Sonoma, Mendocino, and the coastal regions of California they learned to appreciate different styles of winemaking and the effects of terroir on wine taste and quality.

While working and raising children in California, David and Deborah knew that they wanted to return to the Northwest. To make their dream a reality, they purchased several small farms in the Walla Walla Valley and decided to plant apple orchards. In 1996 the family moved to the Walla Walla Valley to begin a new life on the farms.

Raising children on the farms in a small community seemed idyllic until the apple markets plummeted, resulting in a difficult choice. The love of wine led to the decision to remove the apple trees and plant wine grapes. After a couple years of homemade wine the Hansen's started a commercial estate winery.

Deborah decided to fill the role of winemaker and went back to school at the University of California, Davis to specialize in enology. Her education there awakened a new passion for learning and a desire to excel at the ancient art of winemaking. It is the challenges of new vintages that excite Deborah in her new career as winemaker at Cougar Crest Estate Winery.