

THE RUDD STORY

Leslie Rudd

Proprietor



Introduction

-Biographies-

Proprietor

Director of Vineyards & Winemaking

Director of Marketing & Sales

Vineyard Manager

Born and raised in Kansas in a time and place not usually associated with fine wine, Leslie Rudd was nonetheless brought up in the wine trade. In 1949, his parents founded what was to become the largest wine and spirits wholesaler in Kansas, Standard Beverage Corporation, based in Wichita. At an early age, Leslie was introduced to some of the greatest vintners from around the world and came to understand and the wine industry from an insider's perspective. After college, he joined the family business and eventually became owner and CEO. Through his guidance, Standard Beverage Corporation grew to its current size and profitability.

Leslie attributes his success to his ability to recognize promising businesses, the right partners and then develop these businesses into industry leaders. In 1980's he acquired a regional restaurant chain called Lonestar Steakhouse, he and his partners built into a prospering national restaurant group before public in 1992. His passion for the business of fine wine and food also led him Dean & DeLuca, the legendary New York epicurean food store, which he acquired from the founders in 1996. The first new Dean & DeLuca to open Leslie's ownership is located in St. Helena, the heart of the Napa Valley. He also opened stores in Charlotte, North Carolina and Kansas City, Kansas, while expanding the catalog business and forging a successful Internet division.

Luxury products that carry impeccable pedigrees of traditional, Old World craftsmanship have always intrigued Leslie. He employs his financial resources bring artists and artisans together, giving them the opportunity to express the

extent of their talents.

During visits to Bordeaux in 1968 and Burgundy in 1974, Leslie was inspired to create his own California wine estate, one that he hoped would become a legacy for his daughter, Samantha, and for future generations to come. After extensive searches in Napa and Sonoma Counties, he purchased 54 acres of land in Oakville - home of some of the world's most sought-after red wines. Following extensive winery and vineyard renovation, the first wines under the Rudd label were released in October 2000. They are a testament to dedication, vision and perseverance.

Leslie hopes to profoundly shift the ways in which food and wine are viewed in America. As a result, he is the primary contributor to the construction of the wine studies facility at the Culinary Institute of America's St. Helena campus. This new facility, which will be housed in a renovated historic building at Greystone will bear the Rudd name. The opportunity for individuals to explore the dynamics of wine and food at the Rudd Center for Professional Wine will allow them to greatly influence an ever-evolving industry.