

WINEMAKER BIOGRAPHY



ONDINE
CHATTAN

Growing up close to wine country in Marin County, California, Ondine Chattan was enthralled with art, science and nature from an early age. From exploring marshlands near her home to studying insects and flowering plants, Ondine's interest in science grew over time into a love of biology and chemistry. The daughter of an artist and theatre set designer, Ondine was drawn also to fine art and spent considerable time visiting museum exhibits in nearby San Francisco. She wrestled with conflicting desires to pursue either scientific or creative disciplines; however, it took only a single introductory lecture on viticulture, at California Polytechnic State University (Cal Poly) in San Luis Obispo, for Ondine to realize that she'd found a pursuit which combined her interests in hard science and subjective aesthetics.

After her first job at Sonoma's Cline Cellars, well-known producers of old-vine Zinfandels and other unique varieties, Ondine went back to school for a Master's in Enology from Fresno State University. After graduation, she went to work at Ridge Vineyards – another winery, like Cline, known for being unflinchingly idiosyncratic, and for using traditional, time-honored winemaking techniques.

It's this merger of the established techniques of winemaking with California's native and relentless pursuit of the new which drives Ondine today. As Ondine comments, "Winemaking is a wonderful mix of extreme fields. For instance, we use chemistry everyday, but we also use intuition." To this end, Ondine's interests in sustainable viticulture, vineyard and soil expression and such 'risky' techniques as native yeast fermentations are perfectly intertwined.

Ondine is delighted by the opportunity XYZin affords her to explore the history and culture of Zinfandel while crafting distinctive wines. "For me, winemaking is inextricably linked to the vineyard, and the critical elements of fruit character and vineyard expression are in turn inseparable from the history and culture of those who planted the vines. XYZin celebrates the Zinfandel lover's appreciation for tradition, distinction, and innovation," she says. The foundation of the XYZin Vine Age Series draws equally on these three disciplines to combine the best of the old with the most alluring of the new, in pursuit of the divine.

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