



Biographical Statement

BRION WISE

VINTNER, FOUNDER

The beer rooms of Wyoming were just as crazy as you would think; guys would be racing motorcycles through the bar. I was there in the 1960s working as a chemical engineer in the oil fields. I found I liked the grit, and the fact that you had to be on your game. Everyone you worked with had to be on their game. Your word was your bond.

I grew up on a farm in rural Washington where I learned how to work hard. I became interested in engineering, falling in love with chemistry when I was thirteen. In college I got my chemical engineering degree from Washington State University and started with that.

From college I went into the oil business as there was something about it all—prospecting, wildcatting—that pulled me. I founded the oil company, Ecological Engineering Systems (later, Western Gas Resources), in 1971 when I was 26 years old and developed it into an international business.

As part of this work, I traveled the world—Australia, South America, Russia. I dined in some of the finest restaurants with people like Mikhail Gorbachev and had the opportunity to drink some of the best wines. Oil taught me the business skills and I applied it.



The emotional part for me is always development. It was in 1993 that I came out to California looking for vineyard land. I was never interested in buying into something already finished. I wanted to be part of the process from the ground up. I fell in love with the idea of living in a wine area and actually being involved. I wanted that flavor of what goes on in the bigger picture. I wanted to be close to the best of the best but feel a little bit farm-like.

I was originally attracted to the property here in Sonoma because of the reputation of the surrounding area that would eventually become the Moon Mountain District. The property had been a cattle ranch; it had no infrastructure. There was a dirt road with no easements. I drilled a well and ran everything on generators. That's the fun for me. It's an engineering puzzle with a foundation in aesthetics.

From the time I started B. Wise Vineyards in 2002, my ambition was to make something I could hold up to the best wines I have tasted in my travels. The vision is to make a wine of the world, and in my case, it became our flagship wine, BRION.

B. Wise Vineyards is about the enjoyment of life. My wife Ronda and I make our own prosciutto; we brine olives; we grow and make wine. We share all of this with our friends. Through everything I have done, there is this love of farming and a sense of the kind of perfection you can achieve through patience.

b. wise
VINEYARDS

B. WISE VINEYARDS

Perfection through patience: a love of land, a way of wine

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