

NICOLETTE CHRISTOPHER

CABERNET SAUVIGNON

PURE NAPA

NICOLETTE PRUSS WINEMAKER

Nicolette (Nicki) Pruss, Winemaker of Nicolette Christopher Cabernet Sauvignon, was born and raised on the coast of southern California spending her early days playing in the waves of the Pacific Ocean, bicycling along the coast or riding horses in the hills and on the beaches of Malibu. Along the way she developed a keen interest in biology.

This curiosity led her to the University of California at Santa Barbara where she earned her B.A. in Biological Sciences and, as fate would have it, met & fell in love with Chris Demetre. After graduation, they went to Europe for Nicki's first epic bike tour spending months cycling and camping in Belgium, France, Italy and Greece. It was here that Nicki gained an appreciation for the art and culture surrounding food, wine and beer. While that trip planted the seed for the future, she returned home and was off on her next adventure to Chicago for graduate school at the William M. Scholl College of Podiatric Medicine and a residency in foot and ankle surgery at Columbus Hospital.

The road diverges: left, right, stay-the-course?

Nicki was on a different career path as a foot doctor when she was finally sidetracked by her fascination with winegrowing and fermentation science. In 1995, on epic bike tour #2, Nicki & Chris spent five months cycling through the wine regions of France and Germany. It was there Nicki had her Eureka moment: recognizing she felt completely at home in vineyards and wine cellars. She now knew what she really wanted to do in life. As a result, Nicki took a "detour" from a career in podiatric medicine to winemaking and has never looked back.

Inspired, Nicki returned home to California and studied Viticulture and Winery Technology at Napa Valley College and UC Davis Extension. Her "incredible ride" into the world of wine started in 1998 as an intern at Stag's Leap Wine Cellars, winner of the "1976 Paris Tasting". Nicki rose through the winemaking ranks at Stag's Leap Wine Cellars where she oversaw the Production team from 2001 - 2013. In 2005, Founding Winemaker, Warren Winiarski, officially named her as Winemaker. Nicki is the first woman to have earned the Winemaker position at Stag's Leap Wine Cellars.

For more than a decade Nicki was responsible for crafting the three iconic Cabernet Sauvignon-based Estate wines: CASK 23, S.L.V., FAY, the Napa Valley-based ARTEMIS Cabernet Sauvignon, the Hands of Time red blend and Wine Club-only red wines such as the Golden Rectangle, Chase Creek, FAY Hillside, FAY Apologue and the entire SLWC white wine portfolio. Nicki has worked alongside and learned from many noted industry professionals including Michael Silacci, Jim Lincoln, Danny Schuster, Steve Matthiasson, Piero Antinori, and Renzo Cotarella.

Nicki has served on the Executive Committee of the Napa Valley Wine Technical Group, the Member Services Committee of the Napa Grapegrowers, the Winemakers Round Table Planning Committee - Women for Winesense and is a charter member of Wine Women- Winemakers Forum.

In 2013, after fifteen harvests at SLWC, Nicki left the "nest" to nurture her own Napa Valley brand, Nicolette Christopher. With her partner, Christopher Demetre, they continue on in the classic tradition to meticulously craft wines with the objective of balance, elegance and restraint.

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