

Eric Laumann
Winemaker/Proprietor Cambiata Winery

There are three themes that run through Eric Laumann's life: beach, wine and music. He grew up in Agoura Hills, CA, not far from Zuma Beach. He graduated from the University of California at Davis in 1984 with a degree in winemaking. While at school he took a number of music classes and has continued to play piano throughout his life.

Eric's first harvest was in 1983 at Hacienda Wine Cellars in Sonoma. His first job as an enologist was at Zaca Mesa Winery in 1984 where he worked alongside Bob Lindquist, Ken Brown and Jim Clendenen. In 1986, Eric returned to Hacienda and served as winemaker for the next seven years. His focus was on small lot, high-quality Carneros Pinot Noir and Chardonnay. Since Hacienda was such a small winery, Eric performed all tasks from vineyard management to cleaning and repairing the crusher – experiences that would prove useful later in his winemaking career.

After Hacienda, Eric made wine at three of California's larger producers: Kendall Jackson, Bronco and Edna Valley Vineyard. In 2000 he moved to Santa Cruz to join Randall Grahm at Bonny Doon. "Going from a corporate environment to the Doonisphere was both a shock to the system and an invaluable learning experience. It was just what I needed." In 2002, inspired by the creative environment of Bonny Doon, Eric started his own venture and planted two varieties rarely seen in California - Albariño and Tannat – followed a few years later by a third obscure grape - Dornfelder. Those three wines, along with Chardonnay and Pinot Noir, are the cornerstones of his Cambiata brand.

Eric cites Dick Graff, the late founder of Chalone Vineyard, as one of his main winemaking influences. "Dick was one of the first Americans who emphasized the integration of wine with the culinary arts. He felt it was important to create a beautiful and gracious food and wine experience. One of my goals at Cambiata is to produce food-worthy, vineyard-honest wines."

Eric and his wife live at La Selva Beach in Santa Cruz, CA. His pastimes include surfing, woodworking, playing piano and listening to Bach and Biber (not Bieber).

Quotes

"Great wine needs to taste good, go with great food and provide a significant physical, emotional and philosophical impact to the imbiber."

"My winemaking philosophy? Don't force the wine, let the vineyard do the talking, and intervene when only necessary so that each wine is the best interpretation it can be."

"For me to work with a vineyard there has to be something unique about the site. It must make a special wine with a distinctive personality and singular character."