



TRADITION & HERITAGE

Over 50 years ago Charles Bacigalupi, John's father, and Paul Heck, Tyler's grandfather, met and formed a friendship. Moving to Asti in 1951, Paul was hired to manage the Asti Winery. A dentist practicing in Healdsburg, Charles became the dentist for Paul and his family. Thus began a long family friendship.

In the Heck family it all began with great grandpa, Adolf Ludwig Heck Senior, born in Alsace-Lorraine. Born in 1890, Adolf immigrated to America in the early 1900s. Working throughout his life in the wine industry, Adolph Heck Sr. culminated his career at the American Wine Company in St. Louis, Missouri. His extensive traveling led him to California and industry connections with the California Wine Institute.

Purchasing Korbel Champagne Cellars in Guerneville in 1953, Paul and his brother Adolf L. Heck Jr. began the renovation and expansion of the facility. Paul continued his interest in the champagne and brandy enterprises as well as still wines. His fondness for the pinot varietal was well known, as exemplified by the name of his favorite horse, Pinot.



Paul Heck and Pinot, 1960s



Charles, Pam, John & Helen Bacigalupi

In 1956, Charles and Helen Bacigalupi purchased 121 acres on Westside Road, a few miles south of town. In a simple beginning, Charles began to care for the 16 acres of existing vineyards. Envisioning the demand for premium wine grapes, Paul encouraged Charles to plant chardonnay and pinot noir. In 1964, Charles began his plantings with six acres of each varietal. Eventually he obtained pinot noir bud wood from Karl Wentz, the first well documented plantings of pinot noir in the Russian River Valley. Charles remembers Wentz telling him the stock had come from France via the family's old vineyard in Livermore.

The Bacigalupi's really gained recognition during the 1976 Paris tasting when the 1973 Napa Valley Chardonnay from Château Montelena with Bacigalupi fruit triumphed over many acclaimed French wines to be declared the undisputed winner. This event was to be the turning point in America's global wine image. The vineyards now consists of 125 acres of premium grapes, which have been planted and managed for the past 30 years by John and his family.

The John Tyler label is the realization of a dream for a family that has roots in the wine industry stretching over 4 generations. Looking towards the future the family hopes to continue their legacy of premium grape growing and wine making for many years to come.