

# Taste of Luxury

## Commitment to Quality

An Interview with Anne Therese Moses,  
Founding Partner, Patz & Hall



**EDITORS' NOTE** Anne Moses, co-founder of Patz & Hall, was the winery's President from its inception in 1990 to 2005. Prior to founding Patz & Hall, Moses was an enologist at several vineyards, including Cain Vineyard & Winery, Marimar Torres Estate, and Far Niente Winery. Moses studied enology and viticulture at the University of California, Davis, and graduated from the University of California, Santa Cruz, with a biology degree.



Anne Therese Moses

**COMPANY BRIEF** Established in 1988, Patz & Hall ([www.patzball.com](http://www.patzball.com)) was founded by Donald Patz, James Hall, Anne Moses, and Heather Patz and focuses on single-vineyard chardonnay and pinot noir production. The winery applies traditional wine-making techniques to fruit from elite, small vineyards in Napa Valley, Russian River Valley, Mendocino County, Sonoma Coast, and Santa Lucia Highlands. The winery opened its Tasting Salon in 2005. In 2007, Patz & Hall opened a state-of-the-art winery in Sonoma.

### How broad is your chardonnay line and do you anticipate bringing in new product?

Our focus is on pinot noir and chardonnay only. We have two appellation wines: our Napa Valley Chardonnay and Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir. We also have smaller allocated wines that are single vineyard. We're always on the search for great grapes; in particular we're looking at the Sonoma Coast, the Russian River, and Carneros.

### Talk about the development of your chardonnay and pinot noir.

We started with our Napa Valley Chardonnay in 1988. In 1994, we added our Carr Vineyard Chardonnay, which was our first single-vineyard wine. And in 1995, we made our first pinot noir. At the time, there was a growing interest in pinot noir, which we certainly shared. People started developing pinot noir vineyards in the right places, cultivating the right clones and selections, and making pinot noir in a more Burgundian fashion. All of this dovetailed with our approach to chardonnay and made pinot noir a natural extension for us. We started with the appellation of the Russian River and moved toward the Sonoma Coast, where there are cooler sites, lower yields, and some incredible small vineyards.

### Is it challenging to differentiate, especially in the pinot noir area, and is it difficult to make a brand unique?

The track has gotten faster, and a lot of new brands are developing the new hot thing. What differentiates us is we're consistent at crafting wines of very high quality. People have confidence in our ability to deliver an exquisite bottle of wine, vintage after vintage.

### Can a new release be enjoyed right away, or do you recommend waiting a certain period of time?

Our wine-making philosophy is that wine should be delicious. Our wines are wonderful upon release, but they also evolve over time. I just had a 1994 chardonnay and a 1998 pinot noir, and they were remarkable.

### Are you happy with the distribution channels and do you see any changes in the future?

I don't see significant changes in how we're distributing. We sell nationally and internationally, work with several brokers in California, and sell directly to consumers. In 2005, we focused on developing a direct relationship with customers by building the tasting salon where we have a sit-down wine experience with three chardonnays, three pinot noirs, and a plate of seasonal complements.

### Has technology impacted wine making and how are you applying technology?

Technology is a wonderful tool, and refinement in wine making yields better wine. Last year, we established a purpose-built winery for chardonnay and pinot noir production in Sonoma that we control and staff. We had our first vintage in our own winery, and that was gratifying.

### Did you know early on this brand would work and could you have imagined producing this many cases?

We're all surprised, but we were all very hopeful. We grew slowly for a decade, building on our success. Our focus has always been the quality of fruit and our long-term relationships with growers, distributors, restaurants, and retail shops. Our patience and discipline really paid off.

### Is there overlap among the partners or do you each focus on specific areas?

We focus on specific areas. We also have a GM and board of directors helping us make important decisions, set up accountability, and take our goals from abstract to operational. It's

great to have trusted advisors to shed light and perspective on issues you're thinking about.

### You have a high-quality, consistent product with reasonable price points. How do you balance the two?

We have great long-term relationships with our growers, and much of wine pricing is driven by grape pricing. But because of the demand for pinot noir and chardonnay, there will likely be pressure on pricing to change in the future.

### Is single-vineyard wine a growing area for you and are there certain advantages that offers?

We're always on the hunt for great grapes and spectacular sites that showcase distinct flavors. It's surprising how distinctive each of our single-vineyard wines is – in terms of flavors, aromatics, and textures – especially when you taste them all in a line.

### You talk about great grapes. How hard is that to find?

Because of the competition and demand, it's hard for some, but because we've made wines for 20 years, we're often the first people growers call if they're considering a relationship with a winery – that's a great position to be in.

### Your Web site shows product and tells brand history. Is the site strictly an informational tool or does it drive sales?

It drives sales, but we know many collectors are wine geeks, so we like to use the site as an educator for our partners, restaurateurs, retailers, consumers, distributors, and brokers. It's an marvelous means to connect with customers.

### Do you enjoy a glass of wine every night, and is it important for you to try other brands?

I have wine every night, and I enjoy wine from all over the world. We have Burgundies, Bordeaux, cabernets, pinot noirs – I'll taste anything.

### Are there certain areas of focus to make sure the success continues?

All of our decision making is based on preserving our commitment to quality. In the next couple of years we're looking at finding additional sources of exceptional chardonnay and pinot noir. We want to expand our direct customer experience on-site with events at our tasting salon and off-site at wine dinners throughout the country. We want to develop a personal relationship with our fans from all over the world. ●

*The Patz & Hall wine tasting salon in Napa*