

> Wine Career Case Study

Former power company executive: Mac McDonald

Mac McDonald worked for Pacific Gas and Electric for 32 years, starting at the bottom before moving up to be a manager and buyer, but he always had wine on his mind.

His father was a bootlegger in east Texas. When one of his clients gave him a bottle of Burgundy, "his friends called him a Commie for drinking French wine," laughs the affable MacDonald.

Eventually, McDonald relocated to wine country, and he started his winery in 1995, picking up winemaking from Italian buddies and Chuck Wagner of Caymus Cellars, who took McDonald under his wing.

Unlike many winemakers, he relishes the travel that's part of the job. "You need to be close to your customers; they want to know the person behind the wine." An African-American, he especially enjoys pouring wines at country clubs and fancy restaurants throughout the south. "Who could have imagined I'd be the guest of honor at a fancy country club in Alabama," he muses.

