



CHAPPELLET

*Donn Chappellet*  
*Founder*

For almost 50 years, Donn Chappellet guided Chappellet, establishing its reputation as one of the world's great family-owned-and-operated wineries. In addition to founding the second post-Prohibition winery in the Napa Valley, Donn was also one of the early pioneers of high-elevation hillside planting, earning acclaim for Chappellet's benchmark mountain-grown wines, and influencing generations of vintners to come.

The seed for Donn's lifelong love affair with wine was planted during an early road trip to Napa Valley with his wife, Molly. Los Angeles natives, Donn and Molly loved both the wines and the relaxed nature of the valley, and a shared passion for fine wine soon became an important part of their lives.

In 1954, Donn co-founded Interstate United Corporation, a food service business that distributed the first vending machines to make fresh coffee from grounds. Under Donn's leadership, the company grew to 8,000 employees and earned a listing on the New York Stock Exchange. After 14 years of successfully running Interstate United, Donn was eager to find a quieter life for his family outside the hustle and bustle of Los Angeles. Ready for a change of pace, and a change of venue, he sold his shares and turned toward his passion for wine.

When searching for the ideal vineyard property, Donn was inspired by the ancient Roman saying, "Bacchus loves the hills," a belief that was echoed by legendary winemaker André Tchelistcheff, who counseled Donn to seek out a hillside site. In 1967, Donn and Molly founded Chappellet on the rocky slopes of Pritchard Hill. There, he dedicated himself to creating world-class wines equal in stature to the great First Growths. To achieve this goal, Donn applied a hands-on approach, driving tractors in the vineyard, helping to build Chappellet's iconic winery, and contributing to the blending process.

Over the years, Donn's belief in Pritchard Hill was proven correct, and the site emerged as the source for many of North America's most extraordinary wines. At the same time, Chappellet established a legacy for excellence that has endured for more than five decades, and has been embraced by the passionate second generation of the family.

Donn Chappellet passed away in 2016, and is recognized as one of the pioneers and icons who helped to shape the Napa Valley wine industry. Donn was one of the founding members of the Wine Services Co-op in 1972. Chappellet was also the 18<sup>th</sup> member of the Napa Valley Vintners Association. Today, the organization numbers over 550 members.