



Charlie Hoppes Winemaking Biography

Charlie Hoppes first became interested in winemaking shortly after he married in the summer of 1982, while he was currently working for Boeing as an Industrial Engineer. Charlie had purchased a home winemaking kit and began his ongoing curiosity to experiment with different varieties of vinifera.

In 1983, while White Riesling was abundant and very popular, Charlie purchased some grapes to start his next winemaking venture at his father-in-law's house. His father-in-law, Dan Fidelis O'Neill, was the second generation to use the name *Fidelis* - which later became the origin of Charlie's family winery name: Fidelitas.

Charlie's interest in grape growing and winemaking continued to grow, and with positive encouragement from his wife and from others in the wine industry, he decided to apply to the renowned Viticulture and Enology program at University of California-Davis. Charlie graduated from UC Davis in 1988.

Upon graduation, Charlie received job offers from several Washington winery groups. This provided hands-on learning experiences and a wealth of knowledge that propelled him forward in his winemaking career. In 1990 he accepted the Assistant Winemaker position at Chateau Ste. Michelle in Woodinville where he worked with Head Winemaker Mike Januik. Charlie moved his family to Woodinville and began his winemaking endeavors.

In 1993 Charlie took the position as Head Red Winemaker at Chateau Ste. Michelle's newest facility, Canoe Ridge near Paterson, WA. At that time, the Canoe Ridge facility was producing 300,000 cases. His work with reserve wine production at Canoe Ridge gave Charlie the opportunity to assist with the first two vintages of Col Solare in 1995 and 1996. He continued as Head Red Winemaker for Chateau Ste. Michelle through the 1998 vintage.

In the winter of 1999, Charlie decided to move on with the hope of eventually creating his own brand. He was asked to help start Three Rivers Winery in Walla Walla where he stayed through the summer of 2002. In 2000 Charlie decided to get started his own label, Fidelitas. The first vintage of Fidelitas was a Cabernet Sauvignon based blend that led to the start of his award winning product line. The Fidelitas product line now has expanded to include Semillon, a Bordeaux white blend, varietal Merlot, Malbec and Cabernet Franc, along with vineyard designated blends and Cabernet Sauvignons.

Charlie Hoppes now produces nearly 7,000 cases under his own label, Fidelitas, and consults for a number of other wineries in the region, including Goose Ridge and Gamache Vintners.