



STAG'S LEAP WINE CELLARS

KIRK GRACE

*Director of
Vineyard Operations*



Kirk Grace knew from an early age that he wanted to be a farmer. But it wasn't until he graduated from Cal Poly with a B.S. degree in Crop Science that he decided to work in viticulture. Of course working in wine country wasn't exactly foreign to Kirk. His family moved to Napa Valley in 1976, starting the winery that would ultimately become the highly-regarded Grace Family Vineyards.

"I definitely learned from the ground up, and I got to work with a lot of the old-timers," says Kirk, who counts legendary grape growers Laurie Wood, Charlie Wagner and Bob Craig among his greatest influences. "All my friends were from farming families and, back then, most vineyard owners farmed their own grapes. Vineyard management companies didn't really exist."

After college Kirk worked at St. Supery Vineyards and then Bettinelli Vineyard Management. In 1997, he joined Robert Sinskey Vineyards as Vineyard Manager. In his nine years there, Kirk designed and implemented a plan to manage all of Sinskey's vineyard operations in-house. He also successfully completed a transition of the winery's 160-acre estate to certified organic farming and worked with proprietor Robert Sinskey to bring biodynamic methods of farming to the estate.

Kirk was awarded the 2004 Integrated Pest Management Innovator from the California Department of Pesticide Regulation for progressive approaches to pest management. His vineyard management philosophy, and

*"MANAGING VINEYARDS INVOLVES BOTH
THE TECHNOLOGY OF AGRICULTURE
AND THE CRAFTSMANSHIP OF FARMING.
WHEN THE SOILS ARE BALANCED, THE
WINES TASTE BETTER."*

A handwritten signature in dark ink that reads "Kirk Grace". The signature is fluid and cursive.

leadership in sustainable winegrowing and agricultural conservation, caught the attention of the founder of Stag's Leap Wine Cellars. He was hired in 2006 as the winery's Vineyard Manager and was promoted in 2014 to Director of California Vineyard Operations. Kirk oversees all of Stag's Leap Wine Cellars' estate vineyards as well as manages the relationships and vineyards of our local growers. Under his leadership, the estate vineyards—FAY, S.L.V. and Danika Ranch—became Fish Friendly Farming (FFF) and California Sustainable Winegrowing Alliance (CSWA) certified. Kirk is currently leading efforts to make the estate vineyards Certified Organic by 2024.

"At Stag's Leap Wine Cellars, we take a qualitative vs. a quantitative approach," says Kirk. "Numbers are an indicator, but growing premium grapes and making fine wine is really about being in tune and in touch with the plant. You've got to be on the ground."

Kirk is involved with several sustainable viticulture groups and community programs including the Napa Valley Grapegrowers, the Saint Helena High School Ag Boosters and the Napa County Sheriff's Search & Rescue team.