

Winemaker & Proprietor



Milla Handley has spent many years creating her unique wine brand, true to a place and to a set of values.

After earning her Fermentation Science degree in 1975 from the University of California at Davis, Milla worked for winemakers Richard Arrowood at Chateau St. Jean and Jed Steele at Edmeades. In 1978 she moved to Anderson Valley, which was largely uncharted viticultural territory at the time, and established Handley Cellars in 1982. “I was captivated by the valley’s possibilities,” Milla says. “The people here possess an independent spirit, and I felt I could follow my own path, somewhat removed from the entrenched winemaking culture. I wanted my wines to capture the essence of this extraordinary place.” Thirty-two years later, Handley Cellars’ wines are doing just that.

The Handley Cellars label reflects Milla’s love and respect for nature. Her parents were collectors of tribal art from around the world, and she was raised in a household where she was surrounded by objects representing the beauty of the natural world. When working on the design for the Handley Cellars label, she was inspired by the ancient tribal textiles of the African Kuba tribes. The tasting room décor, too, reflects her love of tribal art.

Milla’s commitment to responsible and organic farming began long before it was popular, and led her to obtain organic certification for the Handley Estate Vineyard in 2005. Every case the winery produces (currently 12,000 per year) is crafted from grapes grown in the Handley family vineyards in Anderson Valley, or by trusted growers in Mendocino County appellations such as Anderson Valley, Mendocino Ridge, and Redwood Valley.

Milla carefully balances the roles of proprietor and winemaker at Handley Cellars. She is involved in every aspect of the winery operation, from vineyards and wines to her unique tasting room. Milla’s down-to-earth nature makes Handley Cellars a welcoming and comfortable place.

HANDLEY CELLARS

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