

# On Pinot Noir and Chardonnay

## An interview with Jean Arnold-Sessions, President of Hanzell Vineyards in Sonoma Valley

### How long have you been in the wine business?

I started in 1979. I've worked with some greats: Château St. Jean, Château Montelena, Jordan, Chalk Hill, Williams Selyem. Then I started my own consulting company. I went to work for Jess Jackson as CEO of his nine smaller wineries after that. Around 2000, I was diagnosed with breast cancer, which I fought hard, and in 2002 I was recruited to be president of Hanzell Vineyards.



### What's it like being one of the most powerful women in California's wine industry?

[Laughs] Funny, I still think of myself as a little girl from Emporia, Kansas. I'm passionate about working to help small, family-owned wineries get access to the national marketplace, and preventing them from being driven out of business by the giants. It's very rewarding to think about the impact I've been able to make in bringing our industry forward. My non-profit, The Jean Arnold Group Foundation, raises money for

women's health issues and has given away more than \$100,000. I'm very proud of that.

### Hanzell wines are highly coveted by collectors and fine dining restaurants. Why is your winery so important in America's rich wine-making industry?

It's our vineyard site, soil, and micro-climate. Our wines age incredibly well 25 or more years after bottling. This is unique, and very important to collectors.

### Why is aging a wine so important?

Bottle age helps a high-quality wine become more complex. You can't achieve that complexity of flavors any other way. Cellaring wine also allows you to become part of the wine making process. You choose the time when that wine is finally opened.

### How does one go about building a collection if they don't have unlimited funds?

Start collecting the wines you like by purchasing a case of them. Look to your local retailer or restaurant sommelier for advice. Open a bottle a year and take notes. Notice how the flavors develop, how the wine matures. You just need a cool environment with a steady temperature, about 55-59 degrees, to house the wine you collect. Lay the bottles on their side to keep the corks moist.

—Helen Djukic  
[hanzell.com](http://hanzell.com)

We don't decide which grapes to grow.



We let the land guide us.

Finding the best fruit from every acre of vineyard is the ultimate expression of the winemaker's art.

J. Lohr Arroyo Vista Vineyard, Arroyo Seco, Monterey County



The Ultimate Expression of Flavor

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