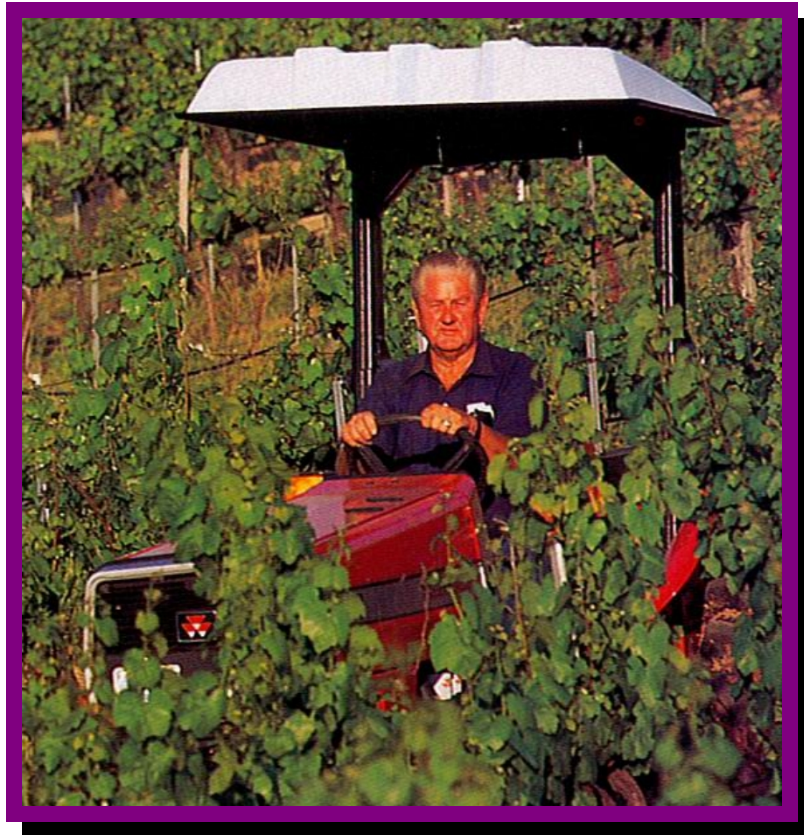


*Legacy of the Van Roekels  
Founders of Maurice Car'rie Winery*

He loved riding his tractor.



That's where you could usually find him if you had happened to stop by his winery--a lone, straw hat-donned figure straddling a giant gurgling D6, meandering stoically from one side of the vineyard to the other. If you perhaps heard a loud "crack, thud and hiss..." followed by several mumbled curses coming from that general direction of the vineyard, it was probably his tractor breaking down once again. He repaired it almost as often as he rode it.

But if he wasn't riding his tractor or repairing it, you could also find him, if you were lucky, in the winery's tasting room, wearing nothing but a white sheet around his burly chest and torso with perhaps a crown of grapevine leaves upon his white-haired head. Wine glass in hand, he'd scurry about from one flabbergasted wine-tasting customer to the next, rosy-cheeked and laughing boisterously; a classic image of the

convivial, jolly old Caesar who, depending on how much wine one had to drink, might have appeared as the mythological god of wine Dionysus himself.

Usually nearby his wife Maurice, her presence sometimes preceded by the wafting, tantalizing scent of fresh-baked, brie cheese-packed sourdough bread (her trademark creation and enduring gift to the winery) could be found engaging guests from behind the tasting bar or assisting employees. She made all of the more “domestic” tasks entailed in owning a winery look so darn easy.

Indeed, it may be a bit nostalgic for the many fans who remember a few years back when the previous owners, Budd and Maurice Car’rie Van Roekel, could still be seen tending to their daily chores here the winery. For most of us, they are still celebrated as kind, hardworking homegrown Americans who brought a bounty of life and passion to their winery and the entire Temecula Valley Wine Country alike.

The legacy left here by Budd and Maurice Car’rie Van Roekel is immense, yet can be summed up rather simply--producing the highest quality wines possible at the most affordable prices possible, a standard that the winery still upholds faithfully to this day.

What might surprise a lot of folks is that Budd and Maurice never had any intention of purchasing a winery when they left Orange County in 1984 and headed out to the then remote Temecula Valley. After having already achieved huge success as the owner and manager of a handful of rollerskating rinks in Orange County, they looked to the old-western, country backdrop of Temecula as a viable retirement location; a quiet, tranquil ranch setting away from the bustling city where they might relax and enjoy their golden years. The thought of being “the gentleman farmer” had always greatly appealed to Budd, and he foresaw himself riding a tractor on a modest-sized farm with his dogs and maybe a few chickens running around.

But as fate should have it, the shrewd entrepreneurs in Budd and Maurice apparently won out that day when they were offered 46 acres of sprawling vineyard-- Temecula Valley’s first vineyard ever planted in 1968 by Vincenzo Cilurzo.

The rest, as they say, is history.

Budd Van Roekel had indeed acquired both his farm and his tractor but, instead of relaxation, had also embraced what was soon to become one of the largest, most flourishing wineries in Temecula. For the valley, although just a whisper in those days, was on the verge of an economical explosion, and Budd and Maurice weren’t about to shy away from it. On the contrary, they worked diligently, extending the growth and success of their own winery while helping Temecula’s wine industry become more accessible, more recognizable and more desirable than ever before.

But this was no simple feat.

As most people who know them can attest, the Van Roekels absolutely despised the idea of renting or borrowing anything, no matter what it might be. It could be a piece of equipment, it could be the tool created to fix that equipment, and it could even have been the chiseling machine designed to inscribe upon that former said tool its name, technical genealogy and purpose, if ever such a thing even existed.

After years of this type of obsessive accumulation, Budd and Maurice (and more than a few of their winery-owning peers), realized that they could operate their business almost entirely in-house. They didn't need to finance anything because they *owned* everything. Consequently, the Van Roekels were able to set themselves apart from their neighboring contemporaries who, like most companies, needed to out-source both labor and supplies.

This instinctive resourcefulness granted Budd and Maurice not only the reputation of being the all-around "go-to" winery for any and all forms of wine-related paraphernalia (a reputation which continues, sometimes exhaustingly, to this day), but also the unique capability to make some lofty, even risky business decisions yet unprecedented in Temecula's wine country.

One of those decisions included their vast contributions to Temecula Valley's wine wholesale market, a standard that many contemporary wineries are still struggling to attain even now. Everyone who enjoyed Maurice Car'rie and Van Roekel wines also knew where to get them and how affordable they were. They understood that the name Maurice Car'rie Winery itself was synonymous with superior-quality wines at an equally great price. When accused by other wineries of unfair competition, Budd's answer was invariably the same. "I'm not competing with you, I'm competing with the wines from Gallo, Kendall Jackson and Fetzer." That was the Van Roekel philosophy. That was the business they were after.

And that's how time passed around here for 20 years--achievement built upon achievement, success upon success. The winery's staff never expected Budd or Maurice not to be here no matter what day of the week it was because they were always around moving forward and making things happen; Budd running the operations, Maurice managing all the media and public relations. They made a wonderful team both in life and in business.

By 2004, Budd and Maurice were ready to hang up the grape-stomping shoes and retire once again...this time for good. They passed down their winery to close friends Buddy and Cheri Linn, whom he and Maurice had known for a number of years. Perhaps they saw in the Linns the same success-driven qualities they saw in themselves; hard-working, daring, passionate and life-loving.

The Van Roekels currently reside in Escondido enjoying the love and comfort of their children and grandchildren. But their contributions to Temecula Valley Wine Country are still very much felt by both those working in the industry and those who just come out to enjoy a good glass of wine. As for their legacy here at the winery, the Van

Roekels' hard-working, pioneering spirit continue to inspire the current owners and staff who, like their predecessors, believe that dedication, love and passion, both at work and play, are the key ingredients to a good life.



