



Back row: Jarrod, Nicole, Pam, John, Katey, James
Front row: Lucca, Stella, Aiden, Owen
Seated: Helen

Bacigalupi

FALL 2025



Bacigalupi



RUSSIAN RIVER VALLEY

BACIGALUPIVINEYARDS.COM

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*Celebrating Helen's
100th Birthday*



In the heart of the Russian River Valley, stands a woman whose quiet strength shaped the very soil beneath her. Helen Bacigalupi, born in 1925, may not have set out to make history, but her story is now woven into the fabric of California's wine legacy. As she approaches her 100th birthday this December, Helen's life reads like the American dream—resilient, humble, and full of grit.

From Wyoming Winds to California Sun
Helen Kathryn Long was born in Parkton, Wyoming. Her beginnings were humble—her father, an Iowan laborer, and her mother, a Hungarian immigrant. At just three years old, her mother passed away from stomach cancer. The Great Depression only deepened the family's hardship, separating Helen from her sister and forcing her to move often with her grandmother and two brothers as her father chased work across the West.

But Helen found solace in school. "I loved school," she later recalled. "I was always very studious." It was a single comment from an English teacher in high school—"If anyone here wants to go to college, you can"—that ignited her ambition. The path wasn't easy.

A CENTURY OF GRIT AND GRAPES:

The Life and Legacy of Helen Bacigalupi



During World War II, Helen dropped out of high school to work the night shift in a valve factory in Los Angeles, earning enough money—\$1,000—to put herself through college. A Meeting in a Science Lab College brought Helen to Santa Rosa Junior College, where she met a young zoology student named Charles Bacigalupi. Their academic paths led them to UCSF Medical Center—Helen to pharmacy, Charles to dentistry.

Following graduation, Helen and Charles married in 1951. They honeymooned in Bodega Bay and settled in Healdsburg, where Helen worked as a pharmacist and Charles opened a dental practice.



The Goddard Ranch

A Vineyard Dream Begins

In 1956, a chance tip from a patient of Charles led them to the Goddard Ranch on Westside Road. It was 121 acres of mostly prune orchards, some pasture, and a modest 20 acres of grapes. Helen negotiated the price down from \$35,000 to \$30,000, pointing out to the sellers—a group of aging sisters—that \$10,000 each was "cleaner math."

"There were old peaches, apricots, even figs," Helen remembered fondly. While Charles managed the farm, Helen took the reins as bookkeeper and negotiator—a role that would soon grow far beyond the ranch.



Helen pruning peaches

In 1958, Charles and Helen welcomed their son John, who grew up working alongside his father in the vineyards. By learning through observation and hands-on experience, John would eventually take the lead in guiding the vineyards into the next several decades.



Lunch in cherry orchard - Pick 1958

Planting a Future

In 1964, acting on advice from farm advisor Bob Sisson, the Bacigalupi's took a bold step: planting Chardonnay and Pinot Noir in an area better known for prunes. Helen sought help from Karl Wente and Joe Rochioli Jr., who grafted what would become the legendary Paris Block.

Back then, Helen admitted, "Nobody even knew what a clone was." But her instinct for innovation, paired with meticulous attention to detail, laid the groundwork for something monumental.

In the early 1970s, the Bacigalupi's received their first formal grape contract, a rarity in those days—from none other than Rodney Strong. Then, in 1973, fate knocked at their barn door in the form of Mike Grgich, the winemaker at Chateau Montelena. He tasted the fruit and placed an order for 14.5 tons of Chardonnay.

Helen herself delivered the grapes—making six harrowing trips over the Mayacamas Mountains in a VW Vanagon with a trailer hitched behind. "I'd get to the bottom of the hill and just gun it," she joked. "And pray no one got in my way." (Continued on page 5)

Winemaker's Notes



Ashley Herzberg, winemaker

We're thrilled to share that the 2023 vintage was exceptional. Abundant winter rains and a delayed budbreak and bloom set the stage for a remarkable growing season. The summer's warm yet moderate temperatures, without extreme weather events, allowed for extended hang time in all our blocks and a gradual ripening process. This resulted in grapes with beautifully preserved natural acidity, leading to wines that are both lovely to drink now and age-worthy for years to come. This is a truly standout vintage that you'll treasure.



112 cases

2024 SAUVIGNON BLANC

Vineyard: Bloom Ranch

This wine was hand-harvested on a cool September night, destemmed, and cold-soaked on skins with dry ice for 72 hours. After pressing, it was barrel-fermented with native yeast and completed malolactic fermentation. Aged 10 months on primary lees in 25% new and 75% used French oak, it was bottled unfiltered and unfiltered.

Aromas: Tropical passion fruit and pineapple, layered with lemon curd, pink grapefruit zest, and a hint of gooseberry.

Palate: Bright yet rich, with tropical and lemon-lime flavors and a smooth, rounded mouthfeel.



153 cases

2023 GODDARD RANCH PINOT NOIR

Vineyard: Goddard Ranch

Harvested in the cool of night in early September, the Pinot Noir grapes were hand-sorted, destemmed, and kept whole berry. After a five-day cold soak with daily hand punch-downs, native fermentation began, with up to three punch-downs daily. After 14 days, the wine was drained to 50% new French oak barrels.

Aromas: Christmas spices, roasted plum, cassis, and sandalwood create a complex, intense bouquet.

Palate: Roasted plum and strawberry, with subtle cherry tones.

About these Varietals

ALL SOURCED FROM FROST RANCH

Frost Ranch spans 60 acres planted to Chardonnay, four Pinot Noir clones, Zinfandel, and Petite Sirah. Just steps from the Russian River, the vineyard benefits from cool morning fog and warm afternoon sun. Its diverse soils, ranging from rocky red clay to volcanic loam, lend richness, spice, and complexity to the wines



329 cases

2023 ZINFANDEL

Hand-picked from a stunning block on Frost Ranch, our Zinfandel is fermented and then aged for 21 months in a mix of once-used French oak barrels—previously home to Pinot Noir and Chardonnay—and older neutral barrels before bottling.

Aromas: Bright raspberry, red cherry, and fresh strawberry, with floral red blooms, a hint of honeysuckle, touches of sandalwood and warm spice.

Palate: Juicy brambly red berries with a creamy texture, finishing with light tannins.



168 cases

2023 FONDARE (50% Zinfandel | 50% Petite Sirah)

Italian for Founder, this wine blends the late Charles Bacigalupi's favorite varietals, Zinfandel and Petite Sirah. Each varietal is fermented and aged separately for 19 months. We select our favorite barrels for this very special blend.

Aromas: Black cherry, cassis, raspberry cordial, briar patch, and a hint of spice.

Palate: Juicy red berries upfront, with Petite Sirah adding a robust mouthfeel, depth, and well-integrated tannins.



259 cases

2023 PETITE SIRAH

This standout wine was hand-sorted and destemmed, with whole berries left intact for a four-day soak to maximize color and flavor extraction. The must fermented over 14 days before being drained and aged for 21 months in a mix of new and used French oak barrels.

Aromas: Dusty black plum, black cherry, clove, allspice, sandalwood, blackberry fruit leather, black tea, and a hint of dried orange rind.

Palate: Fresh dark berries, black plum, and spice, with a silky texture and lingering dusty tannins.



555 XXXXX Grape Stakes From Eureka Hill, Pt. Aca

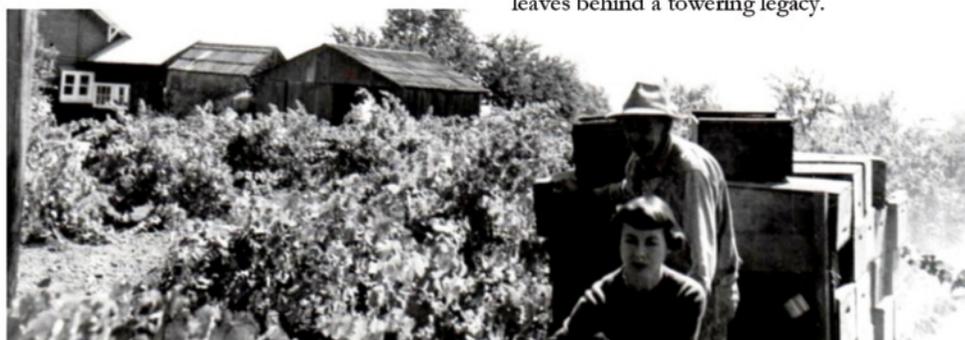
The Judgement Heard Around the World

On May 24, 1976, Chateau Montelena made history with its 1973 Chardonnay—crafted with more than 80% Sonoma fruit, including the Bacigalupi's Paris Block—won the now-iconic Judgment of Paris tasting, defeating the best French whites in a blind tasting and shaking the wine world to its roots.

Helen learned the news while baking herself a cake to celebrate America's bicentennial. Charles was sailing in Canada, so she was home alone when the phone rang. It was Mike Grgich. "Have you heard about the award?" he asked. She hadn't. He sent her the *Time* magazine article that captured the moment California wine earned its global respect. When he called back a year later to purchase more Chardonnay, Helen simply said, "I'm sorry, Mike. I've already sold it all."

Building a Family Legacy

In the '80s and '90s, Bacigalupi grapes became Sonoma's crown jewels—winning top honors, poured at the White House, and coveted by top winemakers.



Helen kept the business fiercely independent, relying on handshake trust and smart contracts that ensured the family's freedom. She earned a reputation for being as tough as she was fair.

When son John took over farming, the family launched their wine label in 2009. Helen passed the reins of sales and marketing to her twin granddaughters, Nicole and Katey. "It makes me feel wonderful," she said, "Fabulous, really, to see my granddaughters running the winery."

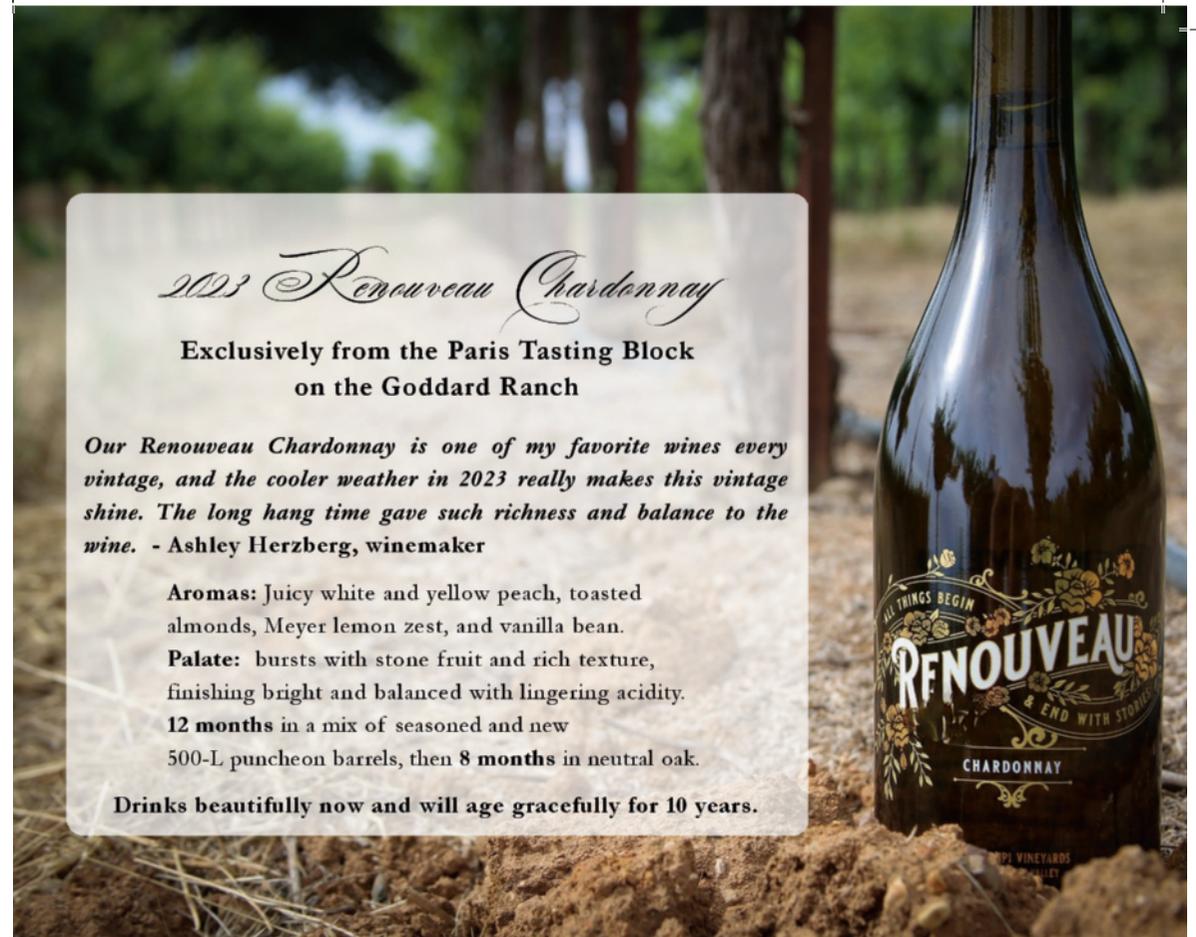
Still Rooted at 100

When Charles passed away in 2013, Helen was heartbroken, but grateful he lived to see the winery come to life. In 2021, she celebrated the vineyard's 65th anniversary surrounded by four generations of Bacigalupi's.

Now, as she approaches her 100th birthday on December 31, 2025, the celebration will carry even more meaning: it marks not only a century of Helen's life, but also the 70th harvest at Bacigalupi Vineyards—and the 50th anniversary of the Judgment of Paris.

It's hard to imagine what Helen thought all those years ago when she was delivering grapes in a VW Vanagon or negotiating land deals with a calculator in hand. What's easy to see now is the magnitude of her legacy.

Some doubted their sanity when she and Charles bought that ranch in 1956. But this December, her family, friends, and admirers will raise a glass in joyful gratitude—to a woman who stands barely five feet tall yet leaves behind a towering legacy.



2023 Renouveau Chardonnay

Exclusively from the Paris Tasting Block
on the Goddard Ranch

Our Renouveau Chardonnay is one of my favorite wines every vintage, and the cooler weather in 2023 really makes this vintage shine. The long hang time gave such richness and balance to the wine. - Ashley Herzberg, winemaker

Aromas: Juicy white and yellow peach, toasted almonds, Meyer lemon zest, and vanilla bean.

Palate: bursts with stone fruit and rich texture, finishing bright and balanced with lingering acidity.

12 months in a mix of seasoned and new 500-L puncheon barrels, then **8 months** in neutral oak.

Drinks beautifully now and will age gracefully for 10 years.



Fall Release Event

Join us for a classic pizza party
in the Russian River Valley.

11 am – 2 pm

Saturday, October 25th, 2025
Bacigalupi Vineyards and Estate

WINES

- 2023 Renouveau Chardonnay
- 2023 Goddard Ranch Pinot Noir
- 2023 Zinfandel
- 2023 Fondare
- 2023 Petite Sirah
- "Stellina" late harvest Muscat

Wood-fired Pizza & Salad by
Napa Valley Crust

Members \$45 (2 per membership)
Guests \$75