

Dashe Cellars
Anne Dashe—Co-founder

When speaking of her upbringing in Brittany and her love of wine, Anne Dashe says simply, “In France, you don’t come to wine, wine comes to you. It is always a part of life.” As a child, Anne followed her nose, intrigued by different smells. From the mustiness of old books, to the leather and blackberry of classic Rhône red wines, Anne discovered that she connected emotions to different aromas.

Fascinated by nature and plant physiology, in 1987, Anne traveled to Bordeaux to study biochemistry and science. There, she found herself torn between her desire to make wine, and her interest in becoming a perfumer. After two years of rigorous scientific studies, Anne took an internship at Château La Dominique in Saint-Emilion, and quickly fell in love with the workings of the small winery.

“I was inspired by all the layers of the process,” she says. “It appealed to my desire to make things. From the chemistry of the wine, to the selection of the corks and the design of the label, it required such a diversity of skills. But most of all, I discovered how passionate I was about blending wines. It was a revelation. It was then that I knew I wanted to study enology.”

Anne received her national diploma of enology from the University of Bordeaux in 1991. Eager to pursue opportunities outside the French system that often favored the children of winemaking families for hands-on winemaking positions, she moved to California and took a job at Chappellet Winery in St. Helena. Working with winemaker Philip Titus, Anne gained experience in almost every aspect of production, from the crush, to the cellar and the lab. After Chappellet, Anne focused on chardonnay and cabernet sauvignon at Seavey Vineyards in the Napa Valley, before taking a position as a brandymaker and research enologist at RMS Brandy Distillery in Carneros in 1992.

Anne found the art of making brandy a very sensory experience, combining her classically trained palate and olfactory talents, with her love of chemistry and blending. In her five years at RMS, she learned the science of distillation, and the complex process of extracting key aromas and essences, while helping to develop new products including a pear liqueur and several brandies.

In 1994, her Bordeaux classmate and fellow winemaker, Philippe Melka (together with his wife Cherie), introduced Anne to Michael Dashe. Two years later, Anne and Michael were married. In 1996, Anne left RMS to co-found Dashe Cellars alongside Michael. Combining a passion for fine wines, with a natural aptitude for the day-to-day business operations of a winery, Anne acts as GM, while lending the expertise and refinement of her French trained palate to the blending of every Dashe Cellars wine.