



DONALD HESS, Founder, The Hess Collection, Bodega Colomé

Born in the heart of Europe, in Bern, Switzerland and surrounded by the finest vineyards of France, Italy, Spain and Germany, Donald Hess developed an appreciation for wines that speak of their specific place.

With a passion for premium winegrowing regions world wide, Donald sought after and personally developed The Hess Collection Winery in the Mayacamas Mountain Range on the slopes of Mount Veeder, Napa Valley and Bodega Colomé Winery in Salta Province, Argentina. To further complement his vision of diversity and excellence in fine wines, the Hess Group has grown to include Peter Lehmann Wines of The Barossa, Australia, and Glen Carlou Winery in Paarl, South Africa, both second generation family-run wineries.

Trained as a ninth-generation brew master, Donald Hess assumed responsibility for the family's brewery and hotel businesses in his early twenties. From the beginning, Hess' philosophical concept for new business development was to deal only in natural products. The cornerstone business was Valser mineral water, one of the most successful brands in Switzerland.

Hess became interested in mountain winegrowing during a business trip to the Napa Valley in the mid- 1970's. His research took him to Mount Veeder, where he found mountain vineyards with an ideal combination of soils and microclimates that yielded wine grapes of distinctive character.

In 1978, Hess purchased 900 acres of established vines, and to ensure consistent high quality, did not release any wines until 1987. This venture was the beginning of what would become his hallmark as a vintner: the twin passions for unique vineyards and wine, and appreciation of fine modern art.

His art collection attracted the attention of *ARTnews* in 1981 where he was ranked one of the top 200 art collectors in the world—a distinction he has retained on the annually-revised list. Works from his international collection of modern and contemporary paintings and sculpture are exhibited in the galleries of the Hess Group wineries in the Napa Valley, South Africa and Argentina. The galleries are open to the public without charge.

Hess established The Hess Group, Ltd., headquartered in Luxembourg, to direct a wide range of natural enterprises that include premium wine grape vineyards and wineries, real estate, an organic alpine trout hatchery, restaurants, hotels and wine distribution.