

Megan McGrath Gates

Megan McGrath Gates has been the winemaker for Lucas & Lewellen Estate Vineyards since 2007. While Megan passionately embraces centuries-old vintners' practices, she is humble about the winemaker's role in the process.

Megan is fascinated with the natural sciences -- rivers, mountains and the ocean, which led her to become enthralled with geology. She wanted to know how the landscape was sculpted above and below the earth's surface. She likened her work in deep soil pits to freediving in the ocean; both revealed a concealed and otherworldly realm she found wonderful. Megan's love of soil gives her a ground-up perspective on winegrowing. "We make many decisions during the growing, fermenting and aging stages, but ultimately the grape has to express itself and that starts in the soil." She considers her style of winemaking to be neither Old World nor New World, but believes in "balanced wines with all components married together so that layers of complexity are allowed to unfold."



Megan, a ninth generation Californian and direct descendant of the historic Olivas family in Ventura, attended high school in Santa Ynez Valley. She graduated Cum Laude from Cal Poly in San Luis Obispo with a B.S. in Soil Science and a concentration in vineyard soils. Megan is also a graduate of the California Agricultural Leadership Foundation's two year fellowship program.

Her winemaking career was launched as an enologist for Flowers Vineyard & Winery on the Sonoma Coast, crafting Burgundian-style Pinot Noir and Chardonnay, while she earned a Certificate in Winemaking from UC Davis. She then spent a harvest making wine in Sebastopol's Green Valley with amazing fruit and legendary winemakers. At Lucas & Lewellen she has enjoyed the opportunity to visit the wine regions of Bordeaux, Burgundy, Piedmont and Tuscany to broaden her winemaking views.

Megan's experience includes promoting soil conservation for agriculture with the Cachuma Resource Conservation District and working as a soil scientist with the Integrated Wine Growing Consortium, a group of consultants who are considered leaders in the field of analyzing soils for future vineyards. She formerly served on the Board of Trustees of Midland School, her high school alma mater, a small boarding school with a science and environmental curriculum in Los Olivos.

When Megan is not managing the state-of-the-art Lucas & Lewellen winery in Buellton, she enjoys beach explorations and hiking along the Santa Barbara coast with her son and two dogs.