

PETER BABICH MBE - New Zealand Wine Producer

Born; 20.06.1932 Auckland, New Zealand

Education; Swanson Primary School; 1938 – 1946

Avondale College; 1947 - 1948

Peter Babich, Babich Wines' Executive Director, joined his father, the founder of Babich Wines, in the family vineyard in 1949 at 16 years old and has devoted a lifetime to New Zealand wine culminating in being awarded an MBE in 1989 for services to New Zealand Viticulture and to the Wine Industry.

When he joined the family business in 1948 Babich Wines' production was around 20 tonnes with a resulting production of fortified wines. Being particularly interested in viticulture from an early age, Peter was instrumental in commencing the transition from hybrid to vinifera varieties in the vineyard and with his brother Joe, modernised the winery to enable the production of varietal table wines to commence. Peter was also instrumental in building relationships with Gisborne and Hawke's Bay growers when growing demand for varietal table wines during the 1960s and 1970s necessitated a rapid increase in grape intake.

Peter served on the Viticultural Association executive and helped to set up the New Zealand Wine Institute where he was Deputy Chair from 1976 to 1980. In all, he devoted days of unpaid time for over 40 years in pursuit of creating better conditions for the New Zealand Wine Industry. In recognition for his services to the Industry and the community he has in addition to his MBE also been elected a Fellow of the Wine Institute of New Zealand (1996), received the Sir George Fistonich Medal for services to New Zealand wine(2013), been inducted into the Waitakere City Business Hall of Fame (inaugural member , 1997), awarded the Rotary International Certificate by the Henderson Rotary Club in recognition of his leading role in the provision of the memorial to the pioneer winemakers of Henderson, and for his overall contribution to the wine industry (1996). In 2011 he was awarded Life Membership of the Waitemata Rugby Club in Henderson for long and dedicated service to the club.

When Peter was actively involved in the business, especially on the viticultural side, he regularly visited the company vineyards in Hawke's Bay and Marlborough. A highlight of his career has been the building of the new winery in Blenheim in 2013. Today in semi- retirement he still oversees the 10 ha home vineyard.

His second son David (3rd generation) is now in the role of CEO.