WINE & CULTURE

DON HENDERSON

A BOLD, GOOD MAN REAPING THE FRUIT OF A GOOD EARTH

Written by Anthony Ewart



Khemia Wine is the marvelous creation of winemaker Don Henderson and his wife, Dr. Catherine Metayer, a university professor who recently left UC Berkeley for a position at the prestigious University of Paris, where the couple now live.

Don Henderson was a successful dolly grip and key grip working on Hollywood films shot in the Bay Area. His home base is Oakland, California, where he runs his wine business, **Henderson's Harvest**. He has had a great life in show business. During his Hollywood career, Don worked with Danny Glover, Eddie Murphy, Laurence Fishburne, Robin Williams, Michael Douglas, Cate Blanchett, Keanu Reeves and Sharon Stone, as well as legendary directors Spike Lee and Danny Boyle.

Don is also a photographer, and he always took advantage of the locations where he was filming to photograph the scenery. It was an exciting life. However, everything changed when Don and his wife visited her uncle and aunt in Bordeaux, France. He witnessed firsthand how Catherine's uncle crushed grapes in his private winery and created his own rose. He offered Don a glass of wine - a prophetic moment. Don took a sip, and it was love at first taste.

Don Henderson, the man from Hollywood with a successful career, looked around at the beauty of the Bordeaux countryside and decided in that instant that he was going to become a winemaker. It was a bold move, but Don was fascinated by the process of making wine and by the incredibly delicious finished product.

Rose is considered one of the oldest known styles of wine, reaching back to antiquity, so it is fitting that this was the wine that captivated Don Henderson's soul so completely.

The strength of a man comes from his family - all of it. This is masterfully exemplified by Don Henderson's family. His wife, Catherine; his daughter, Lucile; and his son, Julien, were all crucial to the success of **Khemia Wine**.

Don's wife, Dr. Catherine Metayer, is the reason the family was able to live in France. Don retired from working on films and commercials and now studies winemaking methods in various regions of France while absorbing French culture and history. He has been exploring French cuisine and perfecting the timeless art of wine pairing.

Don's daughter, Lucile, views her father as a wine alchemist and named his wine company **Khemia** after tracing the origin of the word alchemy to Ancient Greece. Khemia was also an ancient name associated with Egypt, referring to the black, fertile soil along the Nile River. The name was beautiful and perfect.

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FROM HOLLYWOOD TO THE VINEYARD

"Don took a sip, and it was love at first taste."



Khemia wine



Don at work among the barrels

Don's son, Julien, runs the family business from their home in Oakland when Don is away in France. Julien designed all the labels for Khemia and created the images for Don's website, **Henderson's Harvest Wines**. A graduate of San Jose State University who majored in computer animation, Julien has poured his creative talents into establishing the image of the family wine brand.

Don now travels between France, Napa, Sonoma, Mendocino and Oakland. His grapes are carefully selected and harvested from Mendocino, Sonoma and Napa. Don has been making his wine at Donkey & Goat winery in Berkeley for the past three years and was recently offered the opportunity to make his wines in Sonoma at the prestigious Three Sticks Wines.

In January of this year, Don released his Khemia Royal "Pineau" French-style port dessert wine, which was a huge hit with wine lovers. The reputation of Don's wine has grown exponentially. He was asked to be included in the documentary The Black Winemaker's Story, which will be released soon. This recent brush with Hollywood shows that the entertainment world will always be a part of Don's life. He accepts that connection, but now returns to Hollywood bearing fruits of the Earth - **Khemia**. Don has become a man of the Earth, building a connection with Mother Nature and producing delicious wines.

It is rare to see a photograph of Don Henderson when he is not in a vineyard working with grapes. It is a peaceful, fulfilling life. Instead of taking photographs near movie sets, he now takes photographs of the magnificent vineyards where he works to make his handcrafted creations.

It took courage for Don to walk away from filmmaking to become a winemaker, but he still sees his Hollywood friends at premieres and celebrity events. With glasses of Khemia wine in their hands, it is obvious that Hollywood has given Don's new career choice its full blessing.

Visit Hendersonsharvest.com to learn more about Don's wines, or find Henderson's Harvest Wines on Instagram.