



BERNARDUS LODGE

BERNARDUS MARINUS PON

Owner

Ben Pon's dream is to make a Carmel Valley red wine equal to the finest from Bordeaux. It is a dream based on the foundation of tradition. Born and raised in Amersfoort Holland, Ben inherited a European appreciation of wine. His company owns the oldest "wĳnkoper" distribution house in Holland, for which he annually visits the finest chateaux in Bordeaux. Inspired, he collects wines for his cellars, and adds fuel to the fire of his own passion for the best, with which he returns to the Carmel Valley.

The crest of the Bernardus wine label is colored orange, the royal Dutch color and the noble lions guarding the shield represent Ben's heritage. His is a family legacy to uphold. Ben Pon, Sr. imported the first Volkswagen "Beetle" to America and created the design for the revolutionary VW bus. Ben imagines carrying on this tradition-contributing to the greatness of America from a European perspective; and leaving something of importance behind in the New World.

Ben and his wife, Ingrid, chose the Carmel Valley. They believe in its potential to be the best viticultural appellation in America for traditional Bordeaux-style red wines. Ben's passion for Carmel Valley has now extended beyond wine. With the same pioneer spirit that created Bernardus Winery and Vineyards, Ben and Ingrid have now embarked upon the Bernardus Lodge. With 57 sumptuous suites, Marinus restaurant featuring award-winning chef Cal Stemenov, culinary and viticultural seminars, and a full-service spa and salon, Bernardus Lodge is a natural extension of the distinctive Bernardus legacy

of perfection.

Carmel Valley is one of the most beautiful places in the world," says Ben, a man who divides his time between Amersfoort, Holland, Somerset, England, and the Carmel Valley, and travels year round as a citizen of the world.

Ben is a *bon vivant* in the Old World tradition with an enthusiastic perspective of life. A professional sportsman, Ben was a race car driver for Porsche for many years, racing six times in Le Mans. He averaged 125 miles per hour in his best race, and says the thrill for him was in driving at the limit. Ben was also an athlete for Holland in skeet shooting during the 1972 Olympics. In skeet shooting the goal is to aim where the clay pigeon is going to be. Perhaps that is why Ben doesn't say that 2% of Americans drink wine. He says, "98% of the people are not drinking wine yet." Ben is shooting at where it's going to be.

Ben had a passion for racing cars and he won. He enjoyed skeet shooting and shot in the Olympics. Ben envisions making Carmel Valley red wine equal to the finest Bordeaux-*Bernardus-taste a dream*.