



For Ned Neumiller, great-great grandson of Edoardo and Angela Seghesio, the Chen vineyard in Dry Creek Valley where he grew up was a “56-acre playground.” Raised in a century-old Victorian in the midst of the vineyard by his parents, Jim and Julie Seghesio Neumiller, the fifth-generation winegrower was driving tractors and hanging with the vineyard crew from an early age. “I used to play hooky from school to be out with the guys,” Ned recalls. “They’d warm tortillas over hot plates heated by old redwood stakes and always try to slip the hottest pepper into mine.”

The taste for agriculture continued into high school, when Ned raised livestock and showed Suffolk sheep competitively, earning the prestigious American Farmer Degree. Classes in viticulture reinforced his desire to work in vineyards someday. “I knew I didn’t want to be in the winery ... too much concrete,” he says.

At his high school graduation party, Ned’s second cousin Peter Seghesio took him aside and advised him to first gain experience outside of the family’s business. So, while Ned studied fruit science and viticulture at Cal Poly San Luis Obispo, he spent summers and harvests working for Bevill Vineyard Management in Sonoma County, and eventually joined the firm in 2003. At Bevill he oversaw approximately 300 acres of vineyards in Dry Creek and Alexander Valleys; in 2005 Ned took a position at Lampson Tractor & Equipment Co.

When Peter Seghesio began transitioning out of his grower relations role at Seghesio Family Vineyards, the opportunity Ned had been waiting for opened up. He was named the winery’s Grower Relations & Viticulture Manager in 2012. “There was a void in my life until I came back to the family business. Kicking the same dirt clods my grandfather and great grandfather ... I’m thankful for it every day.”

Ned’s role involves managing over 30 different growers with multiple sites, accounting for approximately 1,200 tons of fruit. Some growers are 50 years Ned’s senior; others were his classmates in junior high and high school. Many come from families that have sold fruit to Seghesio longer than Ned has been alive. “I see myself as the growers’ advocate, though I make sure we deliver great fruit to the winery,” Ned says. “I like to kill ’em with respect.”

Ned also has the pleasure of working alongside his father, Jim Neumiller, Seghesio Family Vineyards’ vineyard manager who has worked on the family’s estate ranches for over 30 years. “We’ve always worked well together,” Ned says. “He’s a wealth of knowledge, one of Sonoma’s great Zinfandel leaders.”

