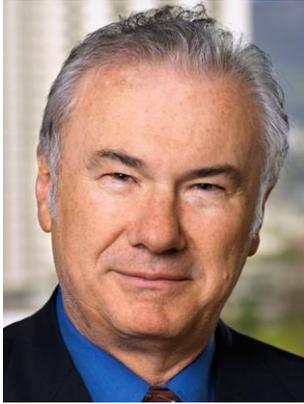


Dr. David J. Teece



Mt. Beautiful Founder David Teece is the quintessential Kiwi: curious, adventuresome and utterly devoted to his home country. His family arrived in New Zealand in the 1860s from Shropshire, England, eager to seize fresh opportunities in a country undergoing a massive gold rush. They landed in Lower Moutere, an area known for hops, sheep and dairy at the time, but which has since become regarded as an excellent region for viticulture.

Being raised by generations of farmers shaped David's work ethic, resourcefulness and business acumen from an early age; being a New Zealand boy through and through instilled in him a deep love of the outdoors, along with the desire to experience everything this rugged, expansive landscape offered. "It's almost impossible not to be outdoorsy when you are in New Zealand," David declares, recalling times spent boating, fishing, hiking and the occasional hair-raising river crossing by what he describes as "hanging on for grim death" to a set of wires.

That rough-and-tumble New Zealand boy grew up to be one of the world's most highly cited scholars in business and economics. In addition to founding Mt. Beautiful Wines and Teece Family Vineyards & Farms, David J. Teece is the Tusher Professor in Global Business at the University of California, Berkeley's Haas School of Business. He is also the director of Tusher Center for Intellectual Capital. David has authored over 30 books and 200 scholarly papers, and he is co-editor of the Palgrave Encyclopedia of Strategic Management.

The seeds for his successes were planted on his family farm, where he observed the entrepreneurial process first-hand. His father identified a need for reliable transportation from outlying farms to the marketplaces in the cities, and launched a trucking company that would do just that.

But his father's eye for opportunity didn't stop with heavy machinery. The empty quarter-acre plot next to their Blenheim home begged to be made into a profit center. David's father provided the seeds, David and his brother Bruce provided the labor—and a small family farm was born, with the profits split three ways. This farming venture led to David saving a tidy sum early on, whetting his natural instincts for economics. "I remember I took a chunk of my savings and went into the utility and asked to buy bonds—and I could hardly see over the counter! The teller asked me, 'Did your parents say it was ok?' But they sold me a bond!"

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David's natural curiosity and ability to recognize options and opportunities also made him an excellent student. His love of a course called Economic Geography sparked his interest in both economics and geology. But, he says, "I have to give accidental credit to my brother who was studying a Leland Bach book on economics and left it open on the dining table when I was 16. I picked up his book to start reading and said to myself, 'this is jolly good stuff.'" The incident ignited a passion for the study of Economics, which he majored in along with Geology at the University of Canterbury.

David would eventually have the opportunity to meet Bach, who became his mentor. The rest, as they say, is history, and David is now recognized by Accenture as one of the world's Top 50 Business Intellectuals.

But for a kid raised in the stunning natural landscape of New Zealand, a call to the land is, for David, "visceral." This love of nature, combined with his fervent belief that New Zealand makes some of the most captivating products in the world, evolved in David's mind as an opportunity to start a winery unlike any New Zealand had ever seen.

But where? As an Economist, David jokes that if something hasn't already been done, then it's likely not worth doing—and he wondered if for New Zealand, "the vineyard game was over." Fortunately, David's friend Ron Sutherland was a geologist and vineyard consultant, and he had, quite literally, walked almost every inch of the northern part of the South Island.

David only wanted to plant in a place that offered something he couldn't find anywhere else and where no one had tried viticulture before. He and Ron started exploring, and about two years later, Ron called and said the fateful words, "I think I found something."

The general area was familiar to David, who had driven, biked and walked there during his University days in nearby Christchurch. "I was initially skeptical," he recalls. "I remembered it as rather hardscrabble and hardly meritorious from a landscape perspective." But when Ron discovered 23 different soil types in this small area, plus an array of microclimates that could be utilized for very specific clones, the tables turned.

There were a lot of unknowns, but Ron felt strongly that this place had vineyard potential unlike any other. David weighed the idea. "The nearest weather station was three or four miles away and that's inaccurate because of microclimates all over the vineyard. We didn't have a good way of recording risk of frost or heat days, so we made rough approximations. But at some point, you have to decide are you going to collect information or put a stake in the ground first and take the risk?" The final answer was, take the risk.

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The result is one of the most compelling winery stories to come out of New Zealand in the past twenty years. An internationally recognized scholar with a profound love of his heritage has applied the lessons he learned throughout a life of farming, study and achievement to build a winery destined to serve as New Zealand's most elegant ambassador to the world. He has poured every bit of his heart, soul and business savvy into Mt. Beautiful, attracting the best people, relying on only proven sustainable practices and crafting sublime New Zealand wines.

David Teece lives in Berkeley, CA with his wife Leigh, who is Founder and is Chair of World Mentor, a global web-based mentoring program for companies, educational institutions, and NGOs. She also serves as President of the Teece Family Foundation, which focuses on supporting educational excellence in universities and high schools. The couple has four children: Jocelyn, Teddy, Austin and Dennis.

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