

## SIR PETER MICHAEL, CBE

### Biography

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"Through my business and personal life I have had the good fortune to experience the sublime pleasure that fine wine, music, art and sculpture can bring" – *Sir Peter Michael, CBE*

The pet project of one of Britain's leading industrialists, "The Vineyard", is a monument to the highly personal passions of Sir Peter Michael, representing his zest for fine food and wine, combined with his desires to promote the role of music and the arts. Its impressive wine list is also a reflection of the unique relationship that Sir Peter can bring between the grand wines of France and the equally grand wines of California.

Sir Peter made his fortune in electronics as the founder of the Micro Consultants Group. He went on to found Quantel, which became the world's most successful digitised special effects company for television and film production, renowned for the now universal graphic-arts tool, 'Paintbox'. In the 1980's, Sir Peter's private interests merged with UEI and he became Chairman of this public company that now included the Grand Prix motor racing company, Cosworth, in its portfolio.

1989 was a key year, Sir Peter, having received a CBE in 1983, was knighted for his services to industry.

During this period he consummated a long infatuation with Californian wines by building the Peter Michael Winery (PMW) in the Sonoma Valley, California, which has been producing hand crafted wines on allocation since the first vintage in 1987. Robert Parker includes this winery in his book "The World's Greatest Wine Estates".

A wine lover who had been sceptical of the inflated reputation of Old World wines ever since an encounter with a couple of corked bottles in 1972, Sir Peter now produces wines that rival the great names of Burgundy and Bordeaux. Robert Parker rates these wines as amongst the very best in the world and says "Life is too short not to experience a bottle of PMW Chardonnay".

Some thirty years after the beginnings in 1981, the Peter Michael Winery now grows French noble grape varieties including Sauvignon Blanc, Chardonnay, Cabernet Sauvignon and Pinot Noir on three separate estates, each with its own terroir and micro-climate that optimise the fruit quality.

As a lover of classical radio music Sir Peter founded Classic FM in 1992 the first ever national commercial radio station in the UK. The formula of classical music and relaxed presentation was a spectacular success. With some eight million listeners internationally, Classic FM has become the largest radio station in the UK after the BBC. Classic FM has since merged with GWR and Capital Radio to form the largest radio group in the UK, before being acquired by Global Radio in 2008.

In addition to his love of music, wine, skiing and tennis, Sir Peter's private passion is sculpture. He served as Vice Patron of the Royal Society of British Sculptors (RBS), where Her Majesty The Queen is the Patron, and Chairman of the Society's commercial arm.

Sir Peter's public service activities have included advisory roles for the Cabinet Office and the DTI. He was a director of the NCB during the Scargill years 1983-86 when the UK was riven by flying pickets. As a resident of the Newbury area, he led an initiative that brought together a partnership of local business interests with local government to form the Greenham Common Trust, which purchased the infamous former air force base from the MOD and has since distributed over £15m to the local community.

Sir Peter is Chairman of the Pelican Cancer Foundation, the only charity that is dedicated to 'cures for cancer now', through the development of precision surgery and other new specialist techniques. Pelican concentrates on cures for cancer "below the belt" specifically; bowel, liver, prostate and bladder cancer that have resulted in thousands of lives being saved in the UK and internationally. In California a parallel Foundation supports specialist research into prostate cancer, where great positive strides have been made.