

Budge Brown

One man's broad interests come together in aviation.



Budge Brown is a farmer.

"This year I've got tomatoes, almonds and grapes," he says, describing crops growing on farms he has in Lathrop, Napa and Tracy, CA. "But I've always been interested in other things besides farming," Budge adds.

For example, he became interested in developing tubular waterslides out of fiberglass, at the time a completely novel concept in family fun. Brown's work spawned the creation of water parks all over the world. "I brought a lot of pleasure to people," he says with an honest smile.

Also along the way, Budge Brown became fascinated with tulips. Yes, tulips.

"In the early 1600s, tulips were so rare a flower that only the very rich could afford to buy, grow and display them," Brown says on his website. "Just one fine tulip bulb could command the equivalent of \$2,300 in today's dollars. To put the price in perspective, the same amount of money to buy one tulip bulb could also buy two loads of wheat, four loads of rye, four fat oxen, five swine, 12 sheep, two hogshead of wine, four barrels of beer, two barrels of butter, a thousand pounds of cheese, and a wagon to haul it all home."

So when he pursued yet another interest, winemaking, it shouldn't surprise you that Budge named his operation Tulip Hill Winery. He has since produced lots of award winning wines, as well as planting more than 30,000 tulip bulbs throughout the winery's prolific gardens.

With his farms in California, a winery with vineyards in Napa Valley's Pope Valley and Tracy Hill's Mt. Oso Vineyard, a tasting room in Rancho Mirage, CA, plus homes in Nevada and Baja, Mexico, Budge needed a way to compress the travel time between all those locations. That led to yet another interest—airplanes.

"It's a four hour drive from my home in Nevada to the winery," Budge confesses. "It's a 40 minute flight."

Over his more than thirty years of flying, Budge has owned a kaleidoscope of aircraft. He's hung on to a few of his favorites, including a Cessna 175 for visiting unimproved strips, a Lancair Legacy that clocks in at better than 250 knots for zipping around California, plus a couple of cabin class twins, a Cessna 320 and a Cessna 414 that he uses to come and go from his private landing strip in Baja California Sur, just below Punta Colorado. He crosses

the border down to his home in Mexico as often as he can.

"I just did my first eAPIS (Homeland Security's new electronic border crossing procedure)," Budge admitted. "It's very confining. Some of the people we know have had big problems. Seems like eAPIS is making it difficult for Americans to travel." But once he's in Baja, it's all behind him. Budge is all about relaxing and enjoying the free time fishing and scuba diving. "I have my own compressor and scuba tanks down there!" he says.

Despite the many blessings in Budge Browns life, he lost of wife of 48 years to breast cancer. During her battle against the disease, Budge was frustrated with the lack of research and possible cures for this type of cancer. "My wife died for no damn good reason. It's time to do something about this," Brown said emphatically.

What he did was start a new line of wines from Cleavage Creek Cellars (CleavageCreek.com). Each label on the half dozen varietals he sells feature the picture of a woman who has survived breast cancer, and 10% of the gross revenue from Cleavage Creek wines go directly into finding a cure.



"Someone buys a great bottle of wine and at the same time is making a donation to end breast cancer. That's a good deal for everybody," Budge reasons. He is not shy about telling you that finding a cure for breast cancer is his number one passion.

But no matter which of his interests Budge is pursuing at any given moment, you can be sure it involves aviation.

"I'm nervous about the future of aviation," he says. "It's so important to me personally; I couldn't do what I do if I didn't fly. I encourage everybody to become a pilot. It's a new lifestyle when they start to fly, and it's a great lifestyle."

Budge Brown is the perfect example!