



The Vilafonté Story.

Vilafonté is the first American and South African joint wine-making venture within the global wine industry.

This ground-breaking red wine project is a partnership between a well respected group of 'quality driven' wine specialist from South Africa and the United States. Vilafonté is also the first winery in South Africa to be focused on producing wine for the US market

The Vilafonté philosophy revolves around an obsession with quality, in all aspects of production, and an absolute focus on luxury positioning. The Vilafonté team blends a world-class combination of knowledge, skills, international perspective, and international recognition.

The Vilafonté project aims to create the first Luxury Wine brand from South Africa.

Zelma Long

Zelma is Head Winemaker for the Vilafonté project.



Zelma is one of America's best known winemakers with an enviable international reputation. One of the first women to study enology and viticulture at U.C. Davis; she began her winemaking career at Robert Mondavi Winery, rapidly working into the Chief Winemaker position. After 10 years at Mondavi Zelma was recruited by Simi Winery in Sonoma Country. Early on in her tenure, Simi was acquired by Moët Hennessey, under whom she worked for the next 18 years as both winemaker and CEO.

Zelma won notice for the quality of her wines, especially the Simi Chardonnay and Cabernet. She traveled to Italy and Argentina to provide technical assistance to Moët wineries. (later LVMH) She has won many awards, among them the prestigious James Beard Award for Wine Professional of the Year, the MASI award for international wine contribution, and the Wine Spectator sponsored Oral History of a California Wine Pioneer.

Zelma is also partner in a small winery called Long Vineyards in Napa Valley, a high end 5000 case producer; currently celebrating its 25th anniversary. Zelma has sometimes been described as 'fanatical' in her pursuit of quality in winemaking. Zelma currently consults at several properties in California, Washington, Oregon, Israel and South Africa.

Michael Ratcliffe

Michael Ratcliffe is General Manager of Vilafonté.



Mike qualified as a business major before attending the University of Adelaide and was in the first graduating class for the Graduate Diploma in Wine Marketing. Mike is Managing Director of his family Estate; Warwick produces about 20,000 cases annually and is recognized as one of South Africa's leading wine producers.

Mike is a leader in the Cape wine industry. At 28, he participated in reigniting the concept for a "Cape Blend" (Pinotage-blend) which has since become an integral part of the Cape high-end wine offerings. Mike is a board member of WOSA, (Wines of South Africa) the generic export promotion board for the South African Wine Industry on the international market. Mike maintains a keen involvement in black economic empowerment through his board membership of The South African Wine Industry trust. (SAWIT)

Dr. Phillip Freese

Phil is head 'wine-grower' and creator of the Vilafonté vineyard which he calls "Different by Design".



Phil spent 13 years as Mondavi's Vice-President of Wine Growing and was responsible for the design and planting of the OPUS ONE vineyards and for managing the purchase of fruit for the Opus program. Phil has consulted to some of the top wineries in the US including Cakebread, Far Niente, Buena Vista, Seghesio and the Stimson Lane group of Washington state and their various high-tier joint venture projects. Phil currently consults to some of the top wineries in South Africa.

Phil is responsible for the strategic direction of all Vilafonté wine-growing and vineyard development operations.

Bartholomew Broadbent

Bartholomew Broadbent is responsible for Vilafonté distribution.



Bartholomew owns and runs one of the most prestigious wine importing companies in the USA. Broadbent Selections was established in 1996 focusing on small, high end producers around the globe. He is a British citizen, whose father, Michael Broadbent, was long time wine auctioneer for Christies and is revered in the wine world for his extensive writings on wines.

Bartholomew was Named by Decanter Magazine as one of the 50 most influential people in the wine world – faces to watch in the new millennium; and his business named by Entrepreneur Magazine and Dun and Bradstreet as one of the 100 fastest growing companies in America.

The Vineyard

Vilafonté owns 30 acres of producing vineyard; and 103 acres total in one of South Africa's prime wine growing regions.

The average planting density of South African vineyards is about 2,500 vines per hectare (1,000 per acre) while Vilafonté has been planted to about 5200 vines per hectare. This high-density planting is a first for South Africa. The vineyard is designed to have a low production of grapes per vine, yet maintain an economically attractive yield per hectare due to the high vine density per hectare.

The vineyards are the first in South Africa to have underground drainage installed at the time of planting to facilitate the removal of excess groundwater. The introduction of NVDI aerial infra-red and multi-spectral imagery has also been pioneered at Vilafonté by Dr Freese in his work with NASA and local service providers and is a key factor in the monitoring and management of this vineyard to exacting standards.

The Vilafonté project is named for the rare and exceptional dominant soil type known locally as 'Vilafontés'.

The Wines

The Vilafonté vineyard will only produce 2 wines.

'Series-M' is a luscious blend of Merlot & Malbec with some spice added by Cabernet Sauvignon and Cabernet Franc. This wine is designed to be powerful and seductive yet, be accessible to drink at an earlier age.

'Series-C' is a bold and expressive with a classic backbone of Cabernet Sauvignon ably supported by small amounts of Merlot and Cabernet Franc.

The wines will be launched in the USA in summer 2005.

Visit our comprehensive website and sign on for our newsletter to receive further updates.

www.Vilafonte.com