



Philippe Melka

Parallel Napa Valley Winemaker

Philippe is a charter member of the Parallel Napa Valley team. Well before we ever picked a grape, Philippe was there to guide us. He has never wavered in his friendship with us or in his commitment to make the best wines that the Parallel Napa Valley vineyards are capable of producing. Philippe's credentials are staggering, but what continues to be most impressive to us is the man himself. His blend of hard work, integrity, affability, loyalty, joyeux de vie, and commitment to friends and family, surpass his terrific skill in blending wines. Thanks.....

Food & Wine magazine's 2005 Winemaker of the Year, Philippe Melka was born and trained in Bordeaux. In addition to working side-by-side with his friends at Parallel Wines, he crafts several more of Napa Valley's most sought-after wines. In addition to their cooperation on Parallel, Philippe is working with vineyard manager Jim Barbour on wines for Lail and Hundred Acre. Philippe is also currently making wine for Vineyard 29, Gemstone, Dana Estates, Roy Estate, Seavey and Marston. Despite his high-profile status, Philippe is humble about his many accomplishments. With a wonderful mix of humor and dedication, he applies his skills to every aspect of producing Parallel Wines.

Known for his terroir-focused winemaking - "We should emphasize much more the estate than the winemaker," he often says - Philippe's expertise and philosophy toward the land is the perfect fit for Parallel. Philippe believes the Parallel vineyard "is capable of producing some of the top wine in Napa Valley." With his help, it already has.

Philippe graduated with a degree in Geology from the University of Bordeaux in 1989. After taking a wine class in his final year, he discovered his true calling and earned additional degrees in Agronomy and Enology. As his knowledge grew to match his passion, he honed his craft within the legendary cellars of Petrus, Chateau Cheval Blanc and the first-growth Chateau Haut-Brion. He moved to the U.S. in 1991, then traveled to Italy, Australia and again to France to practice his skills on different soils and grape varieties. He settled in Napa Valley in 1994, quickly establishing himself as a caretaker of the land with a firm belief that "the wine must tell the story of the native soil."

It may raise eyebrows to think that a Frenchman was the American Wine Awards' Winemaker of the Year, but Philippe Melka is a long-time resident of the Napa Valley and holds dual citizenship in France and the USA. Philippe's touch is clearly evident in the wines he makes, although he believes in strictly noninterventionist winemaking, designed to let the fruit produced by a great vineyard - not the art of the winemaker - shine through. "I don't use any tricks," he says.- *Food & Wine magazine, October 2005.*