

## Q&A

**MICHAEL BALDACCI,**  
WINERY PRESIDENT AND WINEMAKER

Baldacci Family  
Vineyards – Napa,  
California



**VINTNER:** Why did you enter the wine industry and what makes you love being a part of it and stay in it?

**BALDACCI:** My father purchased our Stags Leap district property in 1998 as a real-estate opportunity. He quickly fell in love with the land and vineyard. His initial investment plan to renovate the knoll-top residence on the property went out the window and instead, we made a commitment to sustaining the land and vineyards so that generations to come could hold onto it. That's where I come into play.

The first vintage I worked in the cellar was in 2012 alongside Rolando Herrera learning the ins and outs of winemaking. It was fully immersive and truly the best way to get my feet wet. I then earned certificates from UC Davis and Napa College in formal viticulture and enology and took over winemaking fully at Baldacci Family Vineyards in 2018. It's been a decade of hard work at Baldacci Family Vineyards for me, and I look forward to decades more to come.

**VINTNER:** What do you feel have been new challenges in your position that have helped push you and make you better at your job?

**BALDACCI:** In recent years, we have risen to the challenge of keeping up with the luxury style of wine tasting experiences for which Napa Valley has been come to know. As both the winery president and winemaker, making sure the wine tasting experience at Baldacci Family Vineyards matches the quality of our wines was paramount. Thus, our main goal was to elevate the guest experience. In July 2021, we reopened our estate property with a newly rebuilt winery tasting

room, winemaking facilities, and wine cave. Our property now offers the kind of inviting and luxurious environment that guests expect from a producer of premium Napa Valley Cabernet, and our property boasts new, wonderful spaces to explore. The outdoor patio overlooks our estate vineyards and is thoughtfully designed for comfort, and our wine caves offer a glimpse into the aging and cellaring of our beautiful collection of wines.

**VINTNER:** How has the definition of growth for your company evolved and how have you adjusted to be successful in that new definition?

**BALDACCI:** Through the years, our definition of growth has been simple: elevated wines in an elevated estate. We started as a small, family-owned winery shortly after we purchased the property in 1998, and while we are still boutique-sized and family-owned and operated, the quality level of our wines has soared — and with it, our reputation in Napa Valley. We have begun to step into our new role as not just a family-owned winery, but a luxury family-owned winery that produces top-tier Cabernet Sauvignon from many of the valley's most esteemed appellations and vineyard sites. It really is exciting how far we have come, and we don't plan to stop here.

**VINTNER:** What strategic growth opportunity do you feel is still "out there" for your brand and how are you working on capitalizing on it this year?

**BALDACCI:** We have some exciting wines that have not yet been released to the public and we are looking for the right opportunity to introduce them. These are

going to be wines that are extremely limited in their production and will be highly allocated upon release. We feel that our brand is ready to release wines like this and are looking forward to sharing these exclusive new bottlings with wine collectors soon.

**VINTNER:** If you had one business strategy that you could implement to better the wine industry, what would it be?

**BALDACCI:** Focusing on and sharing what it means to be an estate-grown and produced winery is important to the entire industry. For many wineries, the components of winemaking are broken into pieces among different groups and facilities. It is becoming more common now for only family-owned and operated wineries to grow estate grapes and make and bottle the wine on site. Many of the larger wineries and corporate-owned brands loose that interconnectedness that seems so integral to producing wine.

We need to teach new wine enthusiasts the importance of working with estate vineyards and share how having daily oversight and interaction with the process from grape to glass ensures a more holistic wine, one that is crafted with intention and passion. Growing estate grapes ensures that our grapes are growing in the very best environment possible, and we work daily to farm the land in a way that gives back to and sustains the vineyards.

It can often be overlooked, but I think the more we talk about wineries who grow, craft, and bottle their wines all at their estate, the more people will be seeking these family-owned and operated brands.