

# PINE RIDGE

## VINEYARDS

### MICHAEL BEAULAC

#### WINEMAKER & GENERAL MANAGER



In his own words, Michael Beaulac learned about winemaking from “the school of hard knocks, starting as a cellar rat and working my way up.” Originally hailing from Burlington, Vermont, reading a single interview with winemaker Christian Moueix of Bordeaux’s renowned Chateau Petrus inspired him to find an entry into the wine industry.

In a previous job as wine buyer for a Portland, Maine jazz dinner club, Michael met Tim Murphy, co-founder of Murphy-Goode Winery. During a sales visit to the club, Tim was impressed by Michael’s palate and jokingly offered him a job. Little did Tim know that the following year, inspired by Moueix’s philosophy of winemaking, Michael would call him and take him up on his unintended job offer. Thus began Michael’s eight-year career at Murphy-Goode Winery where he spent four years as assistant winemaker and ultimately led the development of new varietal programs for Pinot Noir and Zinfandel.

Eager for a new challenge, Michael crossed the Mayacamas Mountains and, in 1997, began making wine from the Bordeaux varietals that first inspired him to learn his craft. Four years as winemaker at Napa Valley’s iconic Markham Vineyards in St. Helena, the fourth oldest continuously operated winery in Napa County, were followed by eight years as vice president and winemaker for Rutherford-based St. Supéry Vineyards and Winery, where he worked with consulting winemaker Michel Rolland. St. Supéry’s roots in Southern France afforded Michael the unique opportunity to blend, taste, and consult on wine made for the US market in the vineyards of the Languedoc-Roussillon, Corsica, and Châteauneuf-du-Pape.

Michael joined Pine Ridge Vineyards at the beginning of 2009 as winemaker and general manager. After 25 harvests, he still subscribes to Moueix’s philosophy of wine growing, and brings this commitment to managing the winemaking and bottling of more than 200 acres of estate fruit from premium vineyard sites and appellations in the Napa Valley. “We have 12 vineyards comprising 200 acres in 5 appellations, and all of the fruit is completely different,” he says. “I came to Pine Ridge expecting the interesting challenge of showcasing these differences both by creating individual, appellation-specific wines as well as balanced blends that combine the outstanding qualities of the different vineyards.”

“I have the best job in the world,” Michael explains with a smile, “I get to make wine in one of the most prestigious grape growing areas of the world and then I get to share and enjoy that wine with everyone I meet. I can’t imagine doing anything else.” Except, perhaps, for spending a little more time on the ski slopes. Michael, his wife, and their two children live in Santa Rosa, but can be found most winter weekends in the mountains surrounding Lake Tahoe.