

MICHAEL BEAULAC

WINEMAKER & GENERAL MANAGER

MICHAEL BEAULAC knew he wanted to be a winemaker after reading a single interview with winemaker Christian Moueix of Bordeaux's renowned Château Pétrus. From then on, the Burlington, Vermont, native likes to say, he learned about winemaking from the school of hard knocks, starting as a cellar rat and working his way up.

As a wine buyer in a Portland, Maine, jazz dinner club, Michael met Tim Murphy, co-founder of Murphy-Goode Winery, during a sales visit. Tim was impressed by Michael's palate and jokingly offered him a job. The following year, Michael moved to California and joined the team at Murphy-Goode Winery. There he spent the next eight years—four as assistant winemaker—and ultimately took over the development of new varietal programs for Pinot Noir and Zinfandel.

In 1997, eager for a new challenge, Michael crossed the Mayacamas Mountains and began making wine from the Bordeaux-style varieties that first inspired him. He spent four years as winemaker for Napa Valley's iconic Markham Vineyards in St. Helena, the fourth-oldest continuously operated winery in Napa County. After Markham, he moved to Rutherford-based St. Supéry Estate Vineyards and Winery to serve as vice president and winemaker. St. Supéry has roots in Southern France, and Michael began blending, tasting, and consulting on wines destined for the American market from vineyards in Languedoc-Roussillon, Corsica, and Châteauneuf-du-Pape.

Michael joined Pine Ridge Vineyards, in the Stags Leap District, at the beginning of 2009 as winemaker and general manager, overseeing winemaking from 160 acres of estate vineyards in Napa Valley's best appellations.

Going into his third decade of harvests, he can't imagine doing anything else. "I get to make wine in one of the most prestigious grapegrowing areas anywhere, and then I get to share and enjoy that wine with everyone I meet. I have the best job in the world."

When he is not making wine, Michael, his wife, and their two children can be found skiing in the mountains surrounding Lake Tahoe.

