



Philippe Melka Winemaker

Recently named as 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 more than a dozen of Napa Valley's most sought-after wines. Philippe is also working with Parallel vineyard manager Jim Barbour on wines for Hundred Acre. 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 name a Frenchman as the American Wine Awards' Winemaker of the Year, but Philippe Melka is an honorary native of the Napa Valley. Melka believes in strictly non-interventionist 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

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