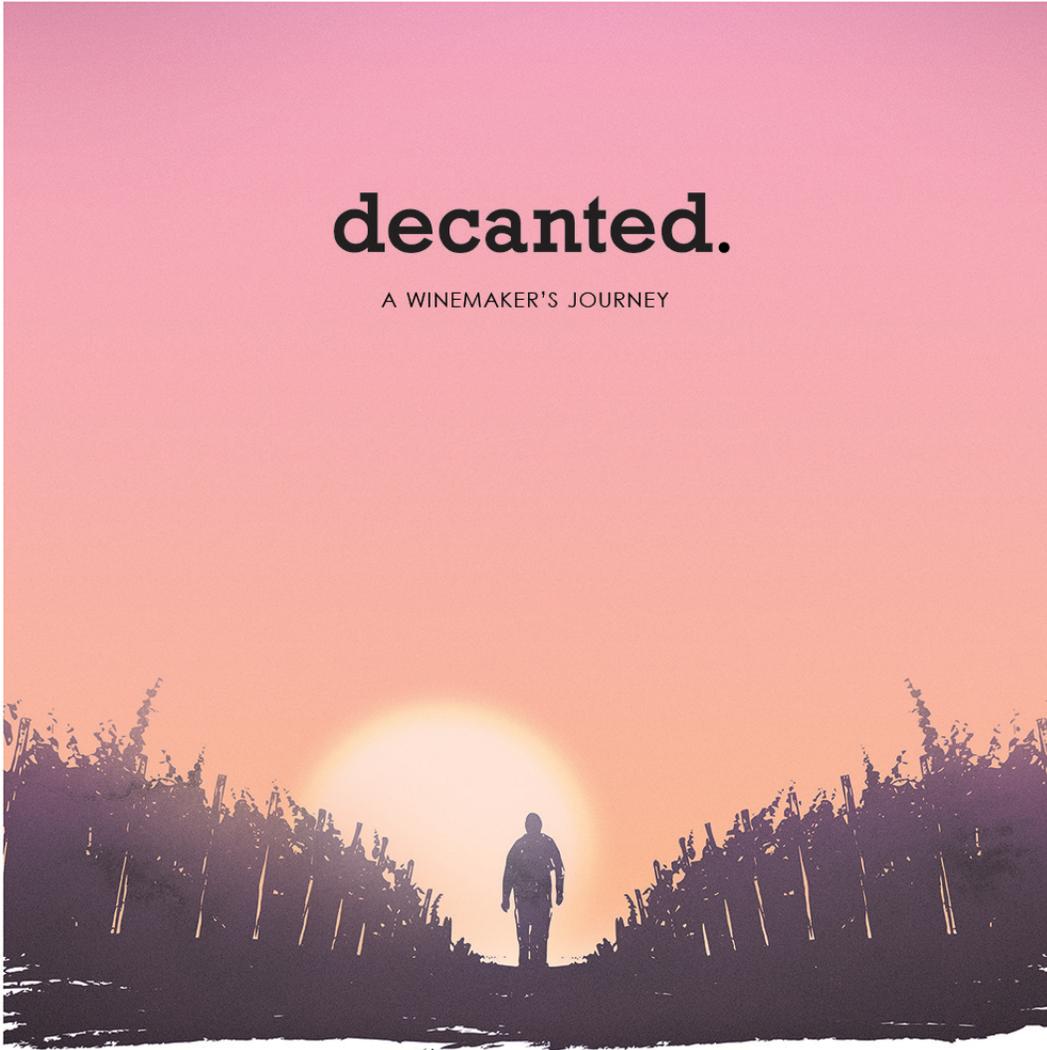


decanted.

A WINEMAKER'S JOURNEY



“decanted.”

A film by Nicholas Kovacic II
78 min. Documentary

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Logline

Look inside one of the most intimate winegrowing regions in the world, Napa Valley, as we follow the journey of new beginnings and mastering a craft.

Synopsis

“What does it take to make it in Napa Valley?” We follow the development of brand new winery, Italics Winegrowers, seen through the eyes of elite Napa Valley winemakers and pacesetters that share a passion for their craft in this small but highly revered wine region. Like a grape vine extending itself far under ground seeking nourishment, the story-telling digs deep to analyze what kind of person decides to jump into this highly competitive and now well – established arena... and – once started on the venture – what it takes to succeed.

Stylistic Visual Approach

This documentary was filmed in a “Cinema Verite” style with the aim of capturing natural moments that reflect the truth. We chose to shoot on RED; maximizing our choices when we got to post production.

Setting

Napa Valley, California remains one of the most remarkable areas to grow wine in the world. The region enjoys a dry Mediterranean climate, a feature only 2% of the world can boast. Despite being relatively small in size, Napa Valley remains big in stature, and the geological foundation from appellation to appellation ranges immensely. The region's established viticultural practices result in low yield of high-quality grapes. Nearly all wineries (95%) are family owned businesses. Napa Valley is known for making New World wine while maintaining Old World techniques.

What makes Napa Special

Many know Napa Valley as the “wild west” of winemaking due to its minimal regulations. Unlike prominent appellations within the European Union (Bordeaux, Burgundy, Champagne, etc.) winemakers in the Napa Valley have the right to grow whatever varietal they wish wherever they wish to grow it, as long as they own the property. The combination of climate and flexible regulations makes Napa Valley unlike anywhere else in the world.

Production notes

Decanted is a film produced by a team that set out to make a contemporary movie that explores the true world of winemaking from the perspective of Italics Winery. The amount of hard work, talent, and luck that goes into the art of winemaking often goes unnoticed, so our goal was to present the world with an accurate depiction of all the hard work that goes into a bottle of wine.

Director's Statement .

My inspiration for the film started with history and legacy. Napa Valley, California is this place where history and legacy are really starting now to intertwine creating some lasting effects on global wine. The film is also inspired by American perseverance even though Napa is very culturally diverse there is wild west feel to wine and that's something you can only find here in the US. To have the opportunity to tell a little bit of that Napa story from a contemporary perspective; is very special to me.

Decanted is a contemporary history; in the moment of this place and time. The film shows the enduring effects Prohibition has caused the American wine industry. Napa Valley has been lucky and blessed with amazing pioneers to really bring back the art of wine and winegrowing post prohibition, and now Napa is multi-generations into producing amazing wine. Sadly, most of the alcohol industries in the United States post prohibition were culturally homogenized and commoditized for the mass market so communities lost that history and legacy. Now there's a cultural shift leading to a greater appreciation to beer, wine, and spirits. I think that shift is driving innovation and ingenuity in the United States. End of the day its about the passion behind the vintage and believing in it for the future.

-Nick Kovacic

Our Subjects

Italics Winery

Italics is a luxury producer of Bordeaux varietals and blends from Napa Valley. Helmed by Winemaker Steve Reynolds and Managing Partner Andy Wilcox, we employ both estate and négociant winemaking to the same end: to highlight the best of what Napa Valley has to offer.

The brand began over a decade ago with the launch of Thirteen, a blend of wines created from vineyards in each of Napa's 13 sub-appellations. Over the years as Napa continued to sub-divide, Thirteen became Fourteen, Fourteen became Fifteen and soon, Fifteen will become Sixteen with the release of our 2012 vintage. While searching for a vineyard to represent Napa's 16th AVA (Coombsville) we found our new estate home.

Here, on 73 acres in the foothills of the Vaca Mountains southeast of Napa, we are constructing a winery, complete with 16,000 sq. ft. of caves and stunning views from almost every perch. We aim to create what can only be described as wine bliss.

Steve Reynolds

Steve's interest in wine started when he was living in Germany as a young teenager. Wine was always part of daily life and his father often took the whole family on wine tasting trips throughout Europe. At the time, Steve and his siblings curse him as they spent their day throwing rocks into a pond while he tasted.

Now, of course, he is grateful to his father for sharing his passion and infecting Steve with his enthusiasm. His father and Steve dreamed of building a winery together and their vision became reality when his wife, Suzie, and him traded Steve's dental practice for the life of wine growers in 1994.

They produced their first vintage in 1999 and haven't looked back. The Reynolds Family Winery, now creates many wines, including a Sauvignon Blanc, Chardonnay, two Pinot Noir's (from the Russian River Valley and Los Carneros), a Merlot, the Estate Cabernet, a Reserve Stag's Leap Cabernet Sauvignon and a red wine Bordeaux blend appropriately called "Persistence."

Anthony Bell

Anthony Bell was born into a South African wine family. Teenage work experience in Spain, France and South Africa developed an appreciation of the elegant, sophisticated European wine style. After completing his undergraduate viticultural degree at Stellenbosch University in South Africa and his Masters degree in enology at U.C. Davis, Anthony began a 15-year career at Beaulieu Vineyard, California's royal house of Cabernet Sauvignon.

During his innovative tenure as director of winemaking and later as general manager, he pioneered educational grower-vineyard programs, wrote the definition of the Carneros appellation, and raised the bar on BV's grape quality by conducting the now famous, groundbreaking research into the differences and impact of clonal variations on Cabernet Sauvignon.

Anthony crushed his first vintage of Bell Cabernet Sauvignon, Clone Six in 1991, thought to be the first single vineyard, single clone Cabernet produced and labeled in Napa. In 1994, Anthony left his positions of Director of winemaking, VP and GM of Beaulieu Vineyard to pursue fulltime his passion for Cabernet Sauvignon at Bell Wine Cellars, with a mission of producing small quantities of hand crafted, vineyard expressive wines.

Julien Fayard

Julien gained his knowledge and defined his core winemaking style from working at grand Chateaux in France such as Lafite Rothschild and Smith Haut Laffite. In Napa Valley, he's worked alongside renowned winemaker Philippe Melka. He has come to be a Napa Valley veteran after many years of working with some of the most highly acclaimed and sought after wines from the Napa Valley.

His philosophy is to produce wines that express pure, terroir-driven specificities and characteristics. He believes that as a winemaker, one doesn't control the wine but rather wine style is the result of a combination of soil, climate and vineyard management. Wine style is an elegant combined expression of the fruit, soil, vines and climate.

Heidi Peterson Barrett

Heidi is one of the world's most renowned and respected winemakers. Since the 1980s, she has created some of the Napa Valley's most famous wines, including Screaming Eagle, Dalla Valle, Grace Family, Paradigm, and many others. She started her own brand, La Sirena, in 1994, and began her collaboration brand, Barrett & Barrett, with her husband, Bo Barrett of Chateau Montelena, in 2010.

Heidi got her start at a young age. Her father, Dick Peterson, is a scientist-winemaker, and her mother, Diane, an artist. She gravitated toward both fields, and found that the world of wine was an ideal place for her to explore and combine these passions. Growing up, she worked in numerous vineyards and wineries alongside her dad, and decided to pursue it as a career, attending UC Davis for fermentation science and going on to several internships and positions in the industry.

Her career took off in the late 80s when she began working for Dalla Valle as an "independent winemaker". She began to develop a tiny project called Screaming Eagle shortly afterwards, and from there, things escalated quickly. With 5 perfect 100-point scores for her wines in the span of just a few years, Heidi skyrocketed to international fame, setting a world record for the highest price ever paid for a single bottle of wine (\$500,000 for a 6L of 1992 Screaming Eagle at the Napa Valley Wine Auction in 2000).

Philippe Melka

Philippe spent much of his youth in Bordeaux, France, earning my geology degree from the University of Bordeaux. On a whim, he took a wine course in his final year of study - a decision that changed his life.

"My journey started at Chateau Haut Brion (where my passion for cabernet-based blends and sauvignon blanc began) and I completed a masters program in Agronomy and Enology under the direction of Professor Sequin, the renowned terroir specialist. I was fascinated by the relationship between soil and wine quality, a fascination which continues today."

"Yearning to know more, I set out for Napa Valley (Dominus Estate), Western Australia (Chittering Estate), Chianti in Italy (Badia O Coltibuono) and Bordeaux (Chateau Petrus) where I divided my time between soil study and winemaking. However, the great diversity of terroirs I found in Napa Valley, and its potential for extraordinary wines, was a revelation to me."

Aaron Pott

"I make wine because I need the intellectual challenge and the satisfaction of crafting something beautiful for those that will appreciate it. I look forward to those foggy, pre-harvest mornings when you taste the grapes and begin to imagine what they will do in the glass."

Pott practices viticulture because the vine is the ultimate teacher, no matter how long you have been at it. Vines respond to the slightest interaction; a leaf removal here, a shoot positioning there. In every case they show you, often with humor, how wrong or right you were! Vines give you back the effort you put in, which is a rarity in life and utterly satisfying.

Directed by
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Producer
Matthew Riggieri

Associate Producers
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Todd Yuhanick
Nate Pesce
Andy Wilcox
Paige Wilcox
Taylor Martin

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Matt Davies, MPSE

Sound Effects Editor

Decanted. | Documentary

Rich Bussey



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Jaime Horrigan

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Digital Cave

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Nicholas Kovacic II
Producer | Director | Editor

Nick Kovacic is a co-founder of Digital Cave based in Baltimore, MD. He works and collaborates with a diverse group of filmmakers exploring new mediums that are redefining visual storytelling. His most recent television documentary Brewmore Baltimore earned an EMMY award for it's Social / Cultural subject matter. He was awarded 2014 Food Filmmaker of the year by NY Food Film Festival.

He is a graduate of Stevenson University and participates in the Stevenson Film & Moving Image Advisory Board.

.Howard Community College 2004 Mass
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/ TV/ Theater
New York Film Academy 2005 – 16mm
Studies



Matthew Riggieri
Producer | Camera Operator

Matthew Riggieri is a founding partner of the creative boutique Digital Cave. He is an ICG member and has worked in the region as a top Digital Imaging Technician during the transition from film to digital. He has worked with top ASC cinematographers as well as numerous award winning independent films. He is currently signed to RADAR for music video representation and his music videos have played at SXSW. He was shortlisted for his short film *Singularity* in the Art of Amazing film festival and recently won an EMMY for his work on Brewmore | Baltimore. Matt try's to escape into the natural world, and when you can't find him on set or in the edit bay, he is outside, being immersed in nature, always searching for the inspiration that it provides. Constantly discovering the balance between naturalism and surrealism, Matt wants to give audience members a connection to the real world before accompanying them to the surreal.