



THE FOUNDRY

WINEMAKER CHRIS WILLIAMS TEAMED UP WITH FRIEND AND WINEMARKETER JAMES REID IN 2000 TO ESTABLISH THE FOUNDRY, A BOUTIQUE WINE LABEL WITH A FOCUS ON RHÔNE VARIETALS. THE PAIR AIM TO PRODUCE SMALL QUANTITIES OF WORLD CLASS WINES THAT CAPTURE THE NATURE AND CHARACTER OF THEIR SOURCE VINEYARDS WHILE REFLECTING VINTAGE VARIATIONS. THE FOUNDRY RANGE IS CURRENTLY COMPRISED OF A SYRAH AND A VIOGNIER. BOTH ARE EXPRESSIVE, ELEGANT BOTTLINGS THAT HAVE WON GREAT CRITICAL ACCLAIM FOR THEIR REFINEMENT AND SUBTLETY.

The dynamic young Williams was initially drawn to the legal profession and began pursuing a law degree at the University of Cape Town. But a part time job at the legendary Klein Constantia estate during school breaks led him to his true calling; it was there that he developed a passion for wine and an interest in winemaking. After graduating from Elsenburg College of Agriculture with a degree in viticulture and oenology in 1994, Williams worked at the historic Meerlust Estate for six years under the brilliant Giorgio della Cia. He left his assistant winemaker position at Meerlust in 2000, only to return as Cellarmaster in early 2004 upon della Cia's retirement.

A strong believer in minimal intervention winemaking, Williams seeks to craft wines that are a pure, natural expression of the grapes and the soil. His philosophy is to "take the best of both [the modern and the traditional] approaches, because there are no recipes or sacred cows in the quest for great, terroir-defined wine." Grapes for The Foundry wines are sourced from small, prime vineyard parcels throughout the Cape, chosen based on factors including the health and age of the vines, annual yields and vineyard practices. Williams works closely with a small set of growers who place great emphasis on proper site selection for their given varietals. Each lot of grapes is vinified separately using a combination of traditional methods and modern techniques. The resulting wines offer bold intensity of fruit while maintaining a graceful finesse.

In addition to wine, Williams' passions include travel, cooking, and studying the history of great battles. He is currently studying for his Master of Wine, and he hopes to someday produce The Foundry wines from his own vineyards. One thing is certain: Chris Williams is making his mark on the South African wine scene with his boutique label's noteworthy bottlings. *Wine Spectator* recently hailed him as "one of the young vintners changing the face of South Africa's wine industry."

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-Chris Williams



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