

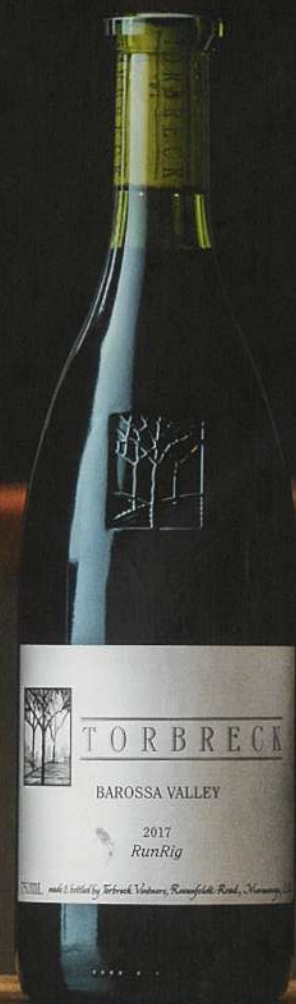
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Transcending BORDERS

DELICATO'S LUXURY
TRANSCENDENT WINES
PORTFOLIO SPANS
THE GLOBE



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DELICATO'S LUXURY TRANSCENDENT WINES PORTFOLIO SPANS THE GLOBE

San Bernabe Vineyard is located in the foothills of the Santa Lucia Mountains in the southern reaches of Monterey County.

by Michelle Ball

Delicato Family Wines built its business on affordability, producing accessible wines for the everyday consumer. Over the past decade, however, it has been building an aspirational collection into its portfolio with terroir-driven expressions that span international borders.

The company traces its beginnings to California in 1924, when Gaspare Indelicato, an emigrant from Sicily, settled there and planted his first vineyard after taking odd jobs to work his way across the United States. Today, the company is run by his grandson, CEO Chris Indelicato, who in 2019 created Delicato's Transcendent Wines sales division. "Our company has evolved over the decades as we have grown in the wine business," says Indelicato. "Focusing on luxury wines and forming Transcendent... was a natural progression in our long-term strategy to build a world-class portfolio. Partnering with other family-owned wineries is a great fit for us from a relationship and values perspective."

The purchase of Napa Valley's Black Stallion Winery in 2010 marked Delicato's first foray into the premium wine market (the brand's flagship Cabernet Sauvignon cuvée,

Black Stallion winemaker Ralf Holdenried samples barrel lots to decide on the final blend for the winery's flagship Napa Valley cuvée, Transcendent.

Transcendent, inspired the division's name). Yet the company began laying the foundation for the Transcendent portfolio long before it ventured into Napa Valley, starting with a vineyard whose name, like that of its namesake AVA, has rarely been seen on a label until recently: San Bernabe.

The history of San Bernabe Vineyard,

located at the southern end of Monterey County, dates back to the mid-1800s. When Delicato purchased the property in 1988, it was considered one of the largest contiguous vineyards in the world, with more than 8,000 acres planted. But the company's leadership quickly realized the expansive property's enormous potential for quality and over the years have invested in planting varieties suited to its best parcels. They sold off most of the land in the southern portion to concentrate mainly on the northern end, carving out roughly 100 blocks with 22 microclimates that stretch across the 1,800 planted acres Delicato farms today.

The defining feature of the broader San Bernabe AVA, established by the TTB in 2004, is aeolian soils on ancient, stabilized sand dunes. "Those soils give us a really nice brightness," says winemaker James Ewart—who has worked with the vineyard since 2000—noting that these wind-derived, low-nutrient soils produce round wines with great concentration. By contrast, on the western end of the vineyard along the foothills of the Santa Lucia Mountains is a limestone ridge with shaly loam soils known as the Lockwood series. "Those soils give us a little more texture in our wines," Ewart adds.

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GENERATIONS OF FAMILY WINEGROWING HISTORY RHEINGAU

Schloss Vollrads is synonymous with German wine history. As one of the world's oldest wineries still in operation, it also has the earliest documentation of a wine cellar, notarized in 1211. In addition, it was the first to designate its wines based on vineyard tiers, coining the term "Kabinett" and thereby informing buyers that the vines were kept in a separate cellar. "It gives a unique feeling to continue a tradition of winemakers who were running such estates for hundreds of years," says wine-meritologist and senior global brand director Dr. Rowald Hepp, adding that the estate is "priceless" opportunity. Hepp was born into the late Count Erwein, of the Griefenclau clan, 27 generations ago, which had owned the winery for over a millennium; following his death, his son took on the role as winemaker in 1998, and he has stayed ever since.

The Rheingau-based producer focuses exclusively on Riesling, crafting ten to 15 different wines of the varietal in any given

year. Hepp attributes the distinctive profile of the wines to the soil: While drilling a new well in 1998, he and his team found that the roots of their vines—which averaged 35 years of age—reached 18 meters deep. Hepp saved the drilling cores, which revealed six unique layers of rock permeated by the vine roots: a top layer of loess followed by gravel, calcareous soil, red slate, black slate, and quartz. Although he admits there is no scientific proof of what these minerals contribute to the wine, he believes varieties with a long hang time like Riesling must be affected. "Riesling always looks for cool climate and complex soils, which offer a wide range of minerality," says Hepp. "For elegant, racy Rieslings, you need different minerals. It doesn't matter if you have just one, you need to have all in a good balance in your soils; otherwise you will never find the best expression for Riesling."

The grapes in the **Schloss Vollrads 2018 Kabinett Riesling (\$35)** were destemmed and sorted before they underwent three days of cold maceration prior to fermentation with native yeast. "If we give our grapes the chance to have [skin] contact with the juice, then the enzymes in the berries crack the cells of the skins and extract more flavor," explains Hepp, noting that this can only be done if the grapes are fully ripe or bitterness will be extracted

from the seeds. The result is a wine with lively, palpable texture; aromas of honeysuckle, petrol, and lemon peel; and off-dry flavors of tangerine that are offset by sprightly acid.

The Transcendent Wines portfolio also includes the **2018 Ayler Kupp Kabinett Riesling (\$34)** from Bischöfliche Weingüter Trier; which farms 200 acres of ancient vineyards on the steep blue-slate slopes of the Mosel River. This single-vineyard wine offers expressive notes of pear, jasmine, and fleshy honeydew, which are lifted by acidity before the tangy, lemon-tea finish. The **Franz Keller**

2018 vom Löss Pinot Noir (\$38), meanwhile, hails from a benchmark estate in Baden; situated in the region's sunny volcanic hills, it helped establish Baden's reputation for world-class wines made from Burgundian grapes. This expression offers an intriguing interplay of bright red fruit and earth, with a nose that suggests cranberry, mushroom, and wet black stone; a flow of bright red cherry on the palate is framed by a whisper of oak and firm structure.

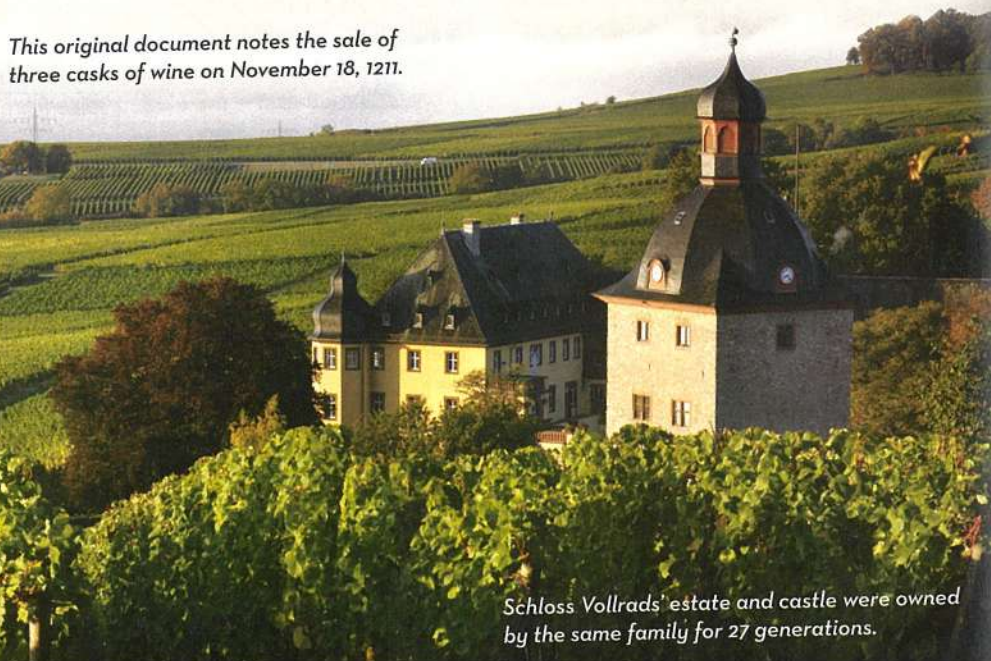


PHOTO: JEREMY BALL



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This original document notes the sale of three casks of wine on November 18, 1211.



Schloss Vollrads' estate and castle were owned by the same family for 27 generations.

