



# GUNDLACH BUNDSCHU

## FAMILY AND HISTORY

*For over 150 years since buffalo roamed the plains, and through and earthquake, Prohibition, beat poetry and disco Gundlach Bundschu has been producing high-quality Sonoma Valley wines. Our evolution continues.*

The Gundlach Bundschu family history spans over 150 fruitful years. Hard work, talent and good cheer have carried six generations of the family through the best and worst the years have to offer, and the Bundschu spirit and optimism continue to permeate the Rhinefarm tradition today.

In 1857, Bavarian-born Jacob Gundlach owned a successful brewery in San Francisco and looked to follow his father's footsteps into winemaking. He purchased a 400-acre parcel of land in Sonoma, which only 11 years earlier had been under Mexican rule, and christened it Rhinefarm. The next year, Jacob traveled to his homeland and brought back European rootstock, along with his childhood sweetheart and new bride, Eva.

Charles Bundschu from Mannheim, Germany, brought his florid prose and keen business sense to the company in 1868, and to the family as well, when he married Jacob Gundlach's daughter Francisca in 1875.

The next 30 years saw phenomenal growth for J.Gundlach & Co., distributing Rhinefarm wines from its San Francisco headquarters that spanned two city blocks, as well as from a thriving New York branch. After Jacob's death in 1894, the company was renamed Gundlach Bundschu. Family participation in the business and community swelled, with Charles Bundschu and Jacob's sons Carl and Heini at the helm, and Charles' sons Walter and Carl E. Bundschu

### *First and Second Generations*



*Jacob Gundlach*



*Charles Bundschu*

actively involved. Francisca's sister Eva married the literary Ben Weed and the couple initiated the first Vintage Festival in Sonoma. Charles established the Bacchus Club, a social group celebrating wine and prose.

The 1906 San Francisco earthquake and fire put a shocking halt to the momentum. The company offices and wine vaults were obliterated, along with several family homes. Despite the devastating damage, the Bundschu family continued limited production and distribution from Rhinefarm, winning the Grand Prize at the 1915 Panama-Pacific exhibition in San Francisco before being forced to close its doors with the passage of Prohibition in 1919. During this time, Walter planted pear trees on Rhinefarm to augment the controlled demand for grape juice and sacramental wine. After the repeal of Prohibition, Rhinefarm grapes were again in high demand. Walter's son, Towle, and Towle's wife, Mary, continued to grow wine grapes and market them under the name of Vineburg Wine Company.

History beckoned to Towle's son, Jim Bundschu, who hatched a plan to restore the family winery. In 1969, Jim began the four-year project of fully replanting Rhinefarm Vineyard to premium varietal wine grapes. He became the president of the family business a year later, in 1970. With the support of Jim's father, sister Georgia Fernandez, and brothers-in-law Barney Fernandez and John Merritt, Gundlach Bundschu Winery was resurrected in 1973.



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*Our ace in the hole is our spirit - our ability to look at life with equal parts passion, optimism and fun. There is seriousness in how we approach winemaking and estate viticulture without losing the spirit that brought us to the dance. ~ Jeff Bundschu*

Since then, fifth- and sixth generation Bundschus have worked together to evolve the family's historic Sonoma Valley property into a leading estate winery at the highest level. In 1997, the Bundschu family launched its most extensive initiative in earnest, when they acquired 140 acres of land adjacent to the existing historic Rhinefarm Vineyard.

Jim's son, Jeff Bundschu, had served in a variety of positions within the company, and the purchase of this land forced a pivotal dialogue between father and son about the future of their family business. As a result, Jim and Jeff agreed that the development and integration of the new property would coincide with higher expectations of the vineyard and of the wines. Jeff increasingly participated in managing Gundlach Bundschu and eventually took the helm in 2000. Later that same year, the Bundschus hired renowned winegrowing consultants Phil Freese and Zelma Long to develop a plan that further realized the potential of this distinctive vineyard site.

*Fifth and Sixth Generations*



*Jeff and Jim Bundschu*

*Fifth, Sixth and Seventh Generations*



*From left to right: Eva, Jeff, Liz, Katie, Nancy Rob, Gracie and Jim Bundschu*

Vintage 2001 was the turning point; during that year, Gundlach Bundschu Winery overhauled their vineyard and cellar management practices and have been building upon those efforts ever since.

More than 150 acres of the ranch have been planted over the last 10 years, including 47 acres of Pommard 5, Dijon 115, 667 and 777 clone Pinot Noir on the valley floor and 120 acres of Bordeaux varieties planted on the rocky slopes of Arrowhead Mountain. Rhinefarm Vineyard now has 256 acres under vine, farmed in more than 50 distinct blocks.

Today, Gundlach Bundschu produces profound wines with site specific character. The sixth generation of the Bundschu family, Jeff, Rob and Katie, continue to take delight in the omnipresent good humor with which these estate wines are shared. This spirit of creativity and dedication to excellence, which has been passed down through six generations, inspires the family to honor their legacy by ensuring the best vintages always lie ahead.