

NICOLAS JAY

JAY BOBERG
COFOUNDER

FOR VISIONARY MUSIC ENTREPRENEUR JAY BOBERG, THE FOUNDING OF NICOLAS-JAY MARKS THE EXCITING NEXT ACT IN A REMARKABLE PROFESSIONAL LIFE, AND IS THE CULMINATION OF A LIFELONG LOVE AFFAIR WITH WINE. WORKING ALONGSIDE HIS LONGTIME FRIEND, RENOWNED BURGUNDIAN WINEMAKER JEAN-NICOLAS MÉO, JAY HAS IMMERSSED HIMSELF IN THE WORLD OF VITICULTURE AND WINEMAKING, AND IS DEEPLY INVOLVED IN EVERY ASPECT OF NICOLAS-JAY. SPENDING CLOSE TO SIX MONTHS A YEAR IN THE WILLAMETTE VALLEY, JAY IS BOTH THE DYNAMIC GUIDING FORCE BEHIND NICOLAS-JAY AND ITS MOST COMMITTED CELLAR RAT, TAKING SAMPLES, DRIVING THE FRUIT FROM THE VINEYARDS, SORTING GRAPES, DOING PUNCH-DOWNS, AND WHATEVER ELSE NEEDS DOING WITHOUT EGO OR RESERVATION. “ALONG WITH OUR ASSOCIATE WINEMAKER, TRACY KENDALL, JEAN-NICOLAS AND I MAKE UP NICOLAS-JAY’S THREE-PERSON TEAM,” SAYS JAY. “WE ALL DO WINDOWS.”

THROUGHOUT JAY’S LIFE, HE HAS MADE HIS AVOCATION HIS VOCATION. FOLLOWING HIS PASSION FOR MUSIC, AT THE AGE OF 21, JAY COFOUNDED THE SEMINAL INDIE RECORD LABEL IRS RECORDS, AND BY HIS MID-30s, HE BEGAN A TENURE AS PRESIDENT OF MCA/UNIVERSAL RECORDS THAT LASTED FOR MORE THAN A DECADE. THROUGHOUT HIS CAREER, HE LAUNCHED OR FOSTERED SOME OF THE MOST INFLUENTIAL MUSIC ARTISTS OF THE PAST THREE DECADES, INCLUDING R.E.M., THE GO-GO’S, BLINK-182, MARY J. BLIGE, SUBLIME, THE ROOTS AND B.B. KING.

DURING THIS TIME, JAY ALSO DEVELOPED A PASSION FOR WINE THAT WOULD SHAPE HIS LIFE. WHILE ATTENDING COLLEGE, JAY’S ROOMMATE WORKED AT A WINE DISTRIBUTOR, AND ON AN EARLY TRIP TO NAPA VALLEY, JAY MET ROBERT MONDAVI, AN ENCOUNTER THAT INSPIRED AN ENDURING INTEREST IN WINE. BUILDING ON THIS INTEREST, JAY STARTED FORMING WINE TASTING GROUPS WITH MUSIC INDUSTRY FRIENDS EARLY ON IN HIS DAYS AT IRS. HE ALSO BEGAN WORKING WITH PEOPLE LIKE KERMIT LYNCH (WHO HAS BECOME A FRIEND AND MENTOR) TO REGULARLY HOLD WINEMAKER DINNERS AS PART OF PROMOTING MUSIC EVENTS. “THERE ARE SO MANY PARALLELS BETWEEN WINE AND MUSIC,” SAYS JAY. “BOTH ARE DRIVEN BY PERSONAL RECOMMENDATIONS—ONE FRIEND TELLING ANOTHER—AND THEY BOTH ENHANCE AND ENRICH OUR LIVES BY CREATING EMOTIONAL CONNECTIONS. THERE ARE CERTAIN WINES, LIKE CERTAIN ALBUMS, THAT MOVE YOU AND STAY WITH YOU FOREVER.”

FOR JAY, WHETHER THEY ARE FROM BURGUNDY OR WILLAMETTE VALLEY, THESE UNFORGETTABLE WINES ARE ALMOST ALWAYS PINOT NOIRS. “PINOT NOIR IS MY DESERT ISLAND WINE,” SAYS JAY, “AND I LOVE THE PINOTS FROM OREGON. I’VE BEEN DRINKING WINES FROM WILLAMETTE VALLEY SINCE 1983. PEOPLE USED TO TALK ABOUT THEIR POTENTIAL, BUT NOW YOU CAN TASTE WHAT THAT POTENTIAL HAS BECOME—EARTH AND ELEGANCE.” IN 2012, AS JAY WAS WINDING DOWN HIS FULLTIME ROLE IN THE MUSIC INDUSTRY, HE APPROACHED HIS FRIEND, JEAN-NICOLAS, WITH THE IDEA OF STARTING A WINERY TOGETHER IN WILLAMETTE VALLEY. “JEAN-NICOLAS AND I HAVE BEEN FRIENDS SINCE 1988. WE SHARE VERY SIMILAR PHILOSOPHIES ABOUT LIFE, BUSINESS, WINE AND FRIENDSHIP. NICOLAS-JAY IS ABOUT MAKING THE VERY BEST PINOT NOIR WE CAN POSSIBLY MAKE. IT IS ALSO ABOUT BUILDING SOMETHING TOGETHER THAT ONE DAY WE HOPE OUR KIDS WILL BE A PART OF. WHEN YOU LOOK AT THE GREAT DOMAINES OF THE WORLD, THESE TWO IDEAS GO HAND IN HAND.”

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