

Vilafonté Wines

Background:

Located in the Paarl-Simonsberg wine region in the Western Cape, South Africa, Vilafonté Wines is the first South African and American joint wine-making venture within the global wine community. It is a small vineyard that aims to create the first luxury wine brand from South Africa.

After commencing operations six years ago they have already won global accolades. The Vilafonté partners are considered to be three of the most highly regarded wine professionals in the international industry with 80 years' combined experience. Zelma Long and Dr Phil Freese have served as President of oenology and Viticulture at Mondavi and Opus One Vineyards respectively. Mike Ratcliffe, the South African partner of Vilafonté Wines is also the president and co-founder of the United States South Africa Wine Foundation.

Vilafonté Wines also employs the most highly regarded black African vineyard manager in the South African wine industry, Edward Pietersen. Edward has risen through the ranks and is now able to present on matters viticultural on any platform worldwide.

Vilafonté is the only winery to have received nomination as 'New World Winery of the Year' from respected US magazine 'The Wine Enthusiast' – on two occasions.

How will Vilafonté Wines benefit from winning a British Airways' Business

Opportunity Grant?

"Travel is the lifeblood of our business. Without being able to travel we realise that we wouldn't be able to reach global markets and achieve our business objectives.

"The British Airways Business Opportunities Grant has provided us the opportunity to connect directly with the role players. It will also allow us to introduce a wider selection of our management to our global customers and allow us to take advantage of many



opportunities that we cannot currently even contemplate, especially since the budget of our small enterprise cannot extend far and wide.

"A year of British Airways' business class travel will revolutionise our business and allow us to spread ourselves wider, provide an opportunity for our fledgling business to spread its wings and provide the greatest opportunity yet for us to achieve our dreams.

Our sincere thanks to British Airways for giving us the opportunity help our business to fly to new heights."

Michael Ratcliffe, partner of Vilafonté Wines