

BIOGRAPHY

Angela Gutiérrez Bortugno



Passionate is the word that wine-industry colleagues use to describe Angela Bortugno. Her passion is wine—a passion made more intense by her love of food, people, their stories and worldwide cultures.

As senior manager for the luxury collection of Diageo Chateau & Estate Wines, Angela was responsible for marketing 21 domaines in Burgundy, the wines from Spain and South America and the top-tier luxury brands of California, which included Chalone Vineyard, Beaulieu, Hewitt, Provenance Vineyards and Orogeny.

Her approach to marketing is through education and storytelling. “I love opening the doors of the wine world to other people and watching them become as excited about wine as I am,” says Angela. “I was fortunate to visit the countries that we represented, where I met the producers and their families, walked their vineyards, tasted their wines in the cellars, shared their meals and listened to their histories. These trips helped me to better market the wines and communicate their stories. I love this work because it’s essentially anthropology, the study of people and cultures.”

Angela was already working in the wine industry when she decided to study anthropology at Mills College in Northern California. “I was especially interested in the traditions, legends and superstitions of wine in many cultures around the world. After achieving my bachelor’s degree at Mills, I took graduate courses in folklore at the University of California, Berkeley. Anthropology has enriched my appreciation of wine, and I use it to tell the authentic stories behind each wine.

“I grew up in a Latin culture where there was great passion for food, for gathering people together and telling stories. I began volunteering for the American Institute of Wine & Food and ended up working there for five years during the mid-1980s, when chefs and winemakers were first becoming superstars.”

One of those superstar winemakers, Dick Graff, was so impressed by Angela’s passion that he hired her to work for Chalone Wine Group. “Dick believed strongly in education. When I first toured the Chalone estate high on a mountain plateau in Monterey County, my life changed and I knew that wine would become my focus. I felt such a strong connection to that site and still do.”

Among her many accomplishments as marketing director, Angela especially enjoyed launching three new brands, Provenance Vineyards, Hewitt Vineyard and Orogeny. “I felt like I gave birth to Orogeny, having even named it,” she added.

Angela says spending time with the Burgundian producers really rekindled her passion for wine, although one doubts that it ever diminished. “Dick Graff had such an influence on my life, and being in Burgundy was magical for me because his goal was to make wines that rivaled those of the Côte d’Or. I felt the same strong connection there as I did at the Chalone estate. The vigneronns are great stewards of the land and I loved watching them nurture the vines, guide the wines and then share them for all to enjoy. It’s the story of their ancestors and they’ll pass it on to their children.”

Angela lives in Napa with her husband, Ed, a geologist; a well-stocked wine cellar and hundreds of cookbooks. ●

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