

# BRION

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## JULIEN FAYARD

WINEMAKER



“Pleasure can be independent of price, origin, and wine type.... There are the magic moments when the wines are seamless, perfect, atemporal, and you have the thought that you’ve never tasted anything like this and you may never taste anything like it again.... What makes a wine great is the emotion it conveys.”

—Speaking with Erin Brooke, “Winemaker Spotlight: Julien Fayard,” *Wine Journal*, 2018

From the time Julien began working for BRION in 2016, his reputation as a serious, classically-trained winemaker has continued to grow. That same year he was named Winemaker of the Year by *Wine Spectrum*. Educated in the rigorous French wine heritage, his early years in the Napa Valley were as assistant to Phillipe Melka. Eventually he became Director of Winemaking for Atelier Melka. Today, in addition to being a sought-after consultant in his own right with his hand on many top wines, he is proprietor of a number of his own wine projects.

—[brionwines.com](http://brionwines.com)—

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“Philippe was a strong mentor,” he says. “He taught me about the diversity of Napa Valley, all the microclimates—the details—and about how to approach a vineyard in small pieces. Napa is almost Burgundian in how we approach vineyard blocks: there are so many small parcels and separate picks within a parcel.”

His own journey began in the south of France: “Want to start when I was born?” he asks. “From day one? I’m French with a little bit of Italian origins, a mix of Mediterranean with Italians living on the French Riviera. So, I grew up on the French Riviera, and started to work early.”

As someone who has not missed a harvest since he made his first wine at the age of sixteen, he grew up around his uncle’s vineyard. His education continued through a combination of formal studies, training, and internships in Provence, the Loire Valley, and Bordeaux, which included work at Château Lafite-Rothschild, Château La Grave Figeac, and Château Smith Haut Lafitte.

For Julien, the opportunity to work with Brion Wise for the BRION project provided opportunity for his favorite process—that of exploration in the development of wine.

“I tend to be a bit on my own road and prefer to research over time rather than take anyone else’s path. When you have a vineyard where you have a lot of high-end winemakers working, you know there might be something special, but... in a way when you go where people are already grazing; the grass is cut.

“Working with Brion Wise, I see that he has a passion for detail, but he’s not rigid about it. It’s like a hand-built stone wall—it can be beautiful and the texture gives the character. That attitude leaves room for things to be a bit eclectic yet very detailed; something special comes out of it. What he’s looking for with his wines is to have the best expression of the sites. He’s not so much looking for power of concentration. He is looking for finesse and texture. And that’s why he came to get me.

“He does his research, and in that I go along with him. We understand each other. He extends me a certain amount of freedom on researching what I want to do and on my style. But he is at *every single* checkpoint.”

Julien sees the working relationship as a three-way collaboration between himself, Brion, and the vineyard. “In this 3-party relationship, I think the site is occupying maybe 70 percent. So, I started making the wines and got deeper and deeper into it. For me, it’s over time that you realize the quality of the vineyard and now I have worked with every single clone from this site and have been able to see to what extent each block can change.”

—*brionwines.com*—

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## JULIEN FAYARD :: WINES FOR BRION

Explore the results of Fayard's hand on BRION Sleeping Lady Vineyard Cabernet Sauvignon:

CURRENT RELEASE: <https://www.brionwines.com/wine>

LIBRARY WINES: <https://www.brionwines.com/library-wines>

## CRITICAL HIGHLIGHTS

:: Began working for BRION with the 2016 season

:: Winemaker of the Year, *Wine Spectrum*, 2016

## EDUCATION

Master's Degree in Engineering and Agri-Business

*Ecole Supérieure d'Agricultures basée à Angers (L'ESA), France*

Master's Degree in Winemaking, Diplôme National d'Œnologie (DNO)

*École Nationale Supérieure Agronomique de Toulouse (ENSAT), France*

Master's Degree in Business Administration (MBA)

*University of California at Davis*

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