

Biography of Anthony von Mandl

Proprietor of British Columbia's Mission Hill Family Estate



Photo By: James O'Mara and Kate Ryan

Intensity, infectious passion and an unwavering commitment to living life to its full potential define Anthony von Mandl. A self-made man, he has dedicated his entire life's work, indeed his legacy, to one audacious dream: To produce world renowned wines in British Columbia's Okanagan Valley and showcase them at a landmark winery, one that would survive for generations, even centuries.

Von Mandl could have chosen Napa or Washington State, even Tuscany as the backdrop for his vision. Instead he opted to pioneer what was, in 1981, a little known valley in his native province. The Canadian-born, European-raised entrepreneur believed that with time, investment and hard work, the Okanagan's vineyards would yield stylish, classically-inspired New World wines.

A relentless champion of the valley, he has channelled all of his resources into

developing the land and creating one of the most dramatic winery destinations anywhere. Along the way, he single-handedly built a major North American fine wine and specialty beverage business to fund his dream.

Von Mandl began his lifelong career in the wine business as an importer in the 1970s. He attributes his respect for heritage and tradition, and a love of music to his parents and European education.

His firm, Mark Anthony Wine Merchants, grew to a national organization in Canada by 1981. To the world outside, von Mandl had made it, but he still had a bigger dream. He wanted to help pioneer a new wine region. The result: Mission Hill, named for its panoramic hilltop location.

A three-year global search to find the wine-maker who could put the region on the map led him to New Zealander John Simes. With a clear understanding that it all starts in the vineyards, land was acquired and the most advanced technology was employed to select the sites and microclimates with the greatest potential for grape growing.

With winemaking in hand, von Mandl began a six year transformation of the winery. Now complete, his Mission Hill Family Estate has been recognized internationally by *Food & Wine*, *Objekt*, *Wine Spectator*, *Wine Country Living*, the

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Bangkok Post and *Architectural Record*.

Situated high atop a hill, overlooking a 90 mile lake, mountains and vineyards, visitors enter the site through an imposing archway, arriving in a courtyard with a 12 storey bell tower as its centrepiece. Before descending into the underground barrel aging cellars, blasted out of volcanic rock, guests are welcomed in a reception area, home to a special Chagall tapestry.

In addition to sommelier-led wine tastings, the winery's culinary team, led by Chef Matthew Batey, also offers wine & food master classes and special events for private guests.

Paul Gregutt, wine writer/critic for the Seattle Times writes that if he was "asked to name the North American winery that best captures the beauty, the history, the industry and the magic of the total wine experience, that dazzles with finesse as well as sheer power, and that invites the visitor to return, again and again, to make

discoveries, it would be Mission Hill Family Estate in British Columbia's Okanagan Valley."

In 2005, von Mandl was awarded the highest Provincial distinction, the Order of British Columbia. In 2006 he was inducted into the BC Restaurant Hall of Fame by the BC Restaurant and Foodservices Association. A former International Board Member and Canadian Chairman of YPO (Young Presidents' Organization), von Mandl also serves on advisory boards at the Richard Ivey School of Business and the Sauder School of Business at the University of British Columbia.

Von Mandl served as President of the prestigious London based International Wine & Spirit Competition in 2006, the first Canadian and only fourth North American to be honoured. Notable IWSC past presidents include Robert Mondavi, The Baroness Philippine de Rothschild, The Marchese Piero Antinori and Dr. Anton Rupert.

