

TAKING THE LONG VIEW

WITH BRONCO WINE COMPANY'S SUPPORT,
TWO LONGEVITY WINES TO GO NATIONAL

BY W. R. TISH

Longevity Wines founder Phil Long couldn't imagine his wine would be enjoyed beyond his own neighborhood when he and his wife Debra first started crushing grapes in their garage in Livermore, California, in 2003. Sixteen years later, the brand is teaming with Bronco Wine Company to distribute his California Chardonnay and Cabernet Sauvignon nationally.

"As a winemaker, my goal is to keep challenging myself," says Long. "Each year's harvest is different, with the ever-present challenge of making better wine." In Long's case, his commitment to always improving his winemaking skills propelled his wine out of the garage beginning with the 2006 vintage, which is when he began using nearby wineries' facilities.

In 2008, the Longs opened their own urban-style winery in Livermore Valley, less than an hour from San Francisco, continuing to work with local fruit. From then until 2018, Longevity grew from 500 to 3,000 cases, spanning multiple varietals and blends.

As Longevity expanded, so, too, did the winemaker's achievements and involvement in the industry, most recently with Phil Long becoming president of the Association of African American Vintners earlier this year.

In 2019, Longevity was named 2018 Livermore Valley Winery of the Year. Sadly, the announcement came just a few days before Debra lost her long battle with pancreatic cancer. The heart-shaped logo, originally designed by Phil as a valentine to Debra, remains a constant reminder of their love and mutual passion for wine.

The effort the Long family has put into Longevity has now been rewarded with a new chapter in the brand's young history. Teaming with Bronco Wine Company in Ceres, California, Longevity has produced a 2018 California Chardonnay and 2017 Cabernet Sauvignon for national markets, beginning in California, Texas, and Georgia. The bottles will feature a unique cork that can be opened without a corkscrew and reused as a stopper.

Helix is the first corkscrew-free cork stopper, easily opened and re-closed by hand, without losing the celebratory "pop." The all-cork stopper is specially threaded to fit the custom bottle.



"Making Longevity available to wine lovers across America definitely fulfills my need for challenge," says Long.

"The Bronco team is proud to represent Long's wines and shine a spotlight on his award-winning winemaking and the innovative Helix cork from Amorim and Owen-Illinois," says Joey Franzia, national sales and marketing director of Bronco Wine Company. "The Longevity brand will give retailers the opportunity to carry quality wines that align with their supplier diversity programs."

STEPPING UP TO A BIGGER STAGE

While Phil Long's previous vintages were all effectively small batches, the new statewide-AVA varietal wines presented a new challenge. "The scale is very, very different, but my approach is really the same," he says. "When I'm in the lab, working to create a new blend that is better than the last, the quantities that my lab samples represent are not nearly as important as the end result."

The new wines slated for national distribution feature the same label graphics that are on Longevity's boutique bottlings. Soon those graphics will also be in POS materials in both on- and off-premise channels. Mindful of Longevity's humble origins, a note on every bottle encourages fans to visit the winery in Livermore Valley. ■

LONGEVITY 2018 CHARDONNAY

Phil Long remembers 2018 as being a near perfect vintage with a larger than average crop. Made with 13 percent Viognier, the wine has a nose of melon, pear, pineapple, and a touch of toasted oak.

The palate is clean and bright, with flavors of honeydew and lemon and a finish lengthened by balancing acidity.



Longevity
Life ••• Love ••• Passion

LONGEVITY 2017 CABERNET SAUVIGNON

A Bordeaux-inspired blend with a twist, this wine is a tad over 75 percent Cabernet Sauvignon, with the balance of mixed red grapes including the rare Arinarnoa. The plum-colored blend has vivid black cherry fruit, finishing with subtle oak, light vanilla, and soft tannins.