



**Michael Thurner** was born in 1972 in the Austrian village of **Würmlach**, situated in the mountains of Carinthia (Kärnten). He was educated in agricultural farming at an agricultural vocational school in Salzburg, Austria, before moving to Vienna in 1993 to study economics and international trade at the Vienna University for Economics and Business Administration, where he specialized in advertising and market research. He received his master's degree in 1999 upon completing his dissertation on "DAC - General Conditions and Communication Strategies for Austrian Wine based on Origin-related Positioning", which highlighted the potential of Austria's appellation system that would be introduced in the country in 2002.

This led Michael to begin his professional career at the Austrian Wine Marketing Board (AWMB) in Vienna, where his first two years were spent as a project manager. Also during this time, he worked toward a Wine MBA degree from the Bordeaux Business School in France, which included courses at the University of California at Davis, USA; the Universidad Catholica in Santiago, Chile; Keio University in Tokyo, Japan and the University of South Australia in Adelaide, Australia.

His focus and commitment during this intensive, highly successful period culminated in 2002 not only with his earning the Wine MBA – he was one of the programme's first 11 graduates of the world - but also in his promotion to Managing Director of the AWMB. Michael spent five years in this position, from 2002 to 2006, tirelessly promoting Austrian wine in more than 60 countries around the world. In addition to this role, he served as Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Austrian Wine Academy during its greatest expansion phase; today it is the biggest wine education institution in central Europe.

In 2007, Michael decided to strike out on his own with a more personal focus on his passion for Austrian wine. Today, he heads Austria's Fine Brands, which features a portfolio of some of the finest Austrian white, red and sweet wines produced by eight renowned Austrian winemakers. Michael runs this portfolio from an office in Vienna (Austria) his new home in Singapore; from here, he travels the world spreading the message – through the outstanding wines he represents – that Austrian wine is exceptionally sublime. His specific goals are reflected in his motto: Grow Europe, develop the USA and pioneer Asia!

Besides wine, Michael is also involved in the importation and distribution of selected, fine European food and contributes as a journalist to food, wine and travel related webpages, magazines and books. He also lectures "Wine Marketing" at the Hongkong University. Due to his efforts and energy, Michael was just recently promoted "The most dynamic marketer of the year in Asia" (Curtis Marsh, The Wandering Palate).

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