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## **Vintage Point's New Brand Additions Drive Portfolio Gains**

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After adding a handful of strong brands to its lineup over the past year, California-based Vintage Point now has annual volume of around 350,000 cases. Vintage Point president David Biggar tells SND that the portfolio has also been in the process of premiumizing lately, with a clear focus on wine brands retail-positioned at \$15 a 750-ml. and above.

Most recently, Vintage Point added Department 66, Dave Phinney's Maury, France-based winery and vineyards, to its offerings. "It's the only wine brand on which Dave has owned the vineyards and winery," says Biggar. "He controls production beyond what he's done for other brands." Phinney owns over 300 acres of vineyards in Maury, located in the Roussillon region, and is focusing on Grenache-based blends with the Department 66 brand, which retails in the \$45 range.

Also new to the portfolio is Cigar Box, which depleted around 50,000 cases last year. Originally featuring a line of wines sourced from Chile and Argentina, Cigar Box recently launched the Humidor, a \$15 California Cabernet Sauvignon, to diversify and increase its price range. Vintage Point is promoting the brand through a marketing campaign called "Enjoy Life and Every Sip" with imagery that focuses on home entertaining. Cigar Box is expected to approach 60,000 cases for 2018, Biggar notes.

Another recent addition is Oregon-sourced Julia's Dazzle. A rosé of Pinot Gris—made from grapes allowed to hang on the vine until they develop a bright tint—Julia's Dazzle retails at around \$20. The brand depleted around 10,000 cases in 2017, selling out its production run. For 2018, supply has been boosted to 12,000 cases, with which Biggar intends to expand distribution into select East Coast markets.

While those new entries have boosted growth for Vintage Point, the company's role as the chain channel marketer for Mionetto Prosecco also continues to pay off. "Mionetto was underdeveloped in the West, but that's changing," Biggar says, adding that Albertsons and Vons are among the key chains driving progress for the brand. Mionetto reached 680,000 cases in the U.S. last year on 12% growth, according to Impact Databank.

Biggar notes that Vintage Point will continue to add intriguing small- and mid-sized wineries to its range looking ahead. "We've played a role in identifying some of these brands in their very early stages and have given them a platform to be successful to compete within the three-tier system," he says.—*Shane English*