



ALPHA OMEGA

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Alien Lands at Alpha Omega

Rutherford winery unveils innovative, optical grape sorting robot to improve accuracy and efficiency

RUTHERFORD, Calif. (Oct. 11, 2018) – Alpha Omega, a family-owned winery in the legendary Rutherford Bench of Napa Valley, proudly announces today that it has placed into operation an innovative, optical grape sorting robot called “Alien” for the 2018 harvest currently underway. Alpha Omega and Château Margaux in Bordeaux, France are the only two wineries in the world to have this patented, revolutionary machine, which utilizes high-sorting precision with surgical-like interception to help efficiently ensure only the best berries advance to the winemaking process.

“This machine will make my life easier and work on choosing the grapes more consistent and precise,” said Alpha Omega Winemaker Jean Hoefliger said. “So far, I am really happy to see how reliable it is.”

Thus far, Alpha Omega has processed more than 200 tons of red grapes (Merlot, Cabernet Franc, Cabernet Sauvignon, Petit Verdot, Zinfandel, Syrah and Petite Syrah) using Alien, which becomes the winery’s second optical sorter after the fruit goes through a Pellenc Selectiv’ Process destemmer and berry sorter. Alien’s cameras are programmed to detect Material Other than Grapes (MOG), green berries, stems, leaves, etc., which are sucked up from a conveyor belt and disposed of.

The machine uses delta robotic technology with each robot consisting of three arms which move up and down and from right to left very quickly and have a suction gripper at the end. Alien is designed to sort up to eight tons an hour and remove up to 400 MOG per minute. Alpha Omega currently has the machine set to sort three tons an hour, doubling the amount of fruit it processed when it used six humans to hand sort after the berries passed through the initial optical sorter. Alien allows Alpha Omega to process fruit more efficiently and with a higher level of accuracy.

“A human sorter, after two or three hours on the line, their eyes get tired. They’re talking and get distracted,” Hoefliger pointed out. “Alien achieves the same level of accuracy and consistency from the first second to the very last second.”

Hoefliger calls Alien a must-have luxury for wineries seeking precision and quality. “It’s the difference between Versace and J.C. Penney,” Hoefliger says.

The human sorters have taken on other responsibilities at the winery. Alien was developed by the French company Conception Industrielle & Technologies Futures (CITF), a major player in the optical sorting robot industry from Bordeaux. Representatives from CITF approached Hoefliger about the complimentary trial use of Alien, which will sell for \$170,000.

“Being located between Bordeaux and Cognac in France we have developed an expertise in working within the wine industry,” CITF Group CEO François Lalut said. “Our competences are now well recognized by many coopers. Many of them are also present in California. As CITF started developing Alien and thinking about bringing it to California, Alpha Omega winery was highly recommended to us.

“After visiting Alpha Omega, seeing where production takes place, tasting the wines and meeting with Jean, it became obvious to me that Alien had to be here. Alpha Omega had everything we were looking for: the perfect size and premises, the most beautiful Cabernet Sauvignon and the team shared the idea that technology can serve the wine making process. Today we are glad and thankful to have Alien showing its skills at Alpha Omega in the heart of the beautiful Napa Valley.”

Alien debuted at the Innovation + Quality 2018 trade show in Napa Valley last May. In September, CITF was awarded a silver medal for Alien in the Vine and Wine category by the committee members of the jury of “Les Trophées de l’Innovation 2018” at the 21st Trophées de l’Innovation Vinitech-Sifel competition in Bordeaux.



Alien Courtesy CITF Group

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About Alpha Omega

Founded in 2006 by Robin and Michelle Baggett, Alpha Omega began as a direct-to-consumer pioneer and now sells 95% of its wine through this channel. Located on Highway 29 in the legendary Rutherford Bench of Napa Valley, Alpha Omega produces world-class, Bordeaux-style, handcrafted wines made with prized grapes from its own vineyards and historic vineyards by Swiss-born winemaker Jean Hoefliger and consulting winemaker Michel Rolland. With its landmark fountains, tranquil pond and stunning views of the Mayacamas Mountains and vineyards, the winery exudes a sense of place and offers hospitality reflective of the farming community. Alpha Omega's land and winery are Napa Green certified. To learn more, please visit www.aowinery.com.

About CITF

Founded in 2009 by François Lalut and located between Bordeaux and Cognac, CITF is now a leader in the industrial conception industry in France. It has a wide range of expertise and craft allowing the company to tackle projects. CITF is centered around three main activities: **CITF PROCESS:** Conceptualizes and designs tailor-made, ready-to-use machines. **CITF SUPERVISION:** Can control and manage your production systems. **CITF DEVELOPMENT:** Innovation catalyst. In 2018, CITF opened a branch in California to present a new innovative machine for the wine industry: Alien. To learn more, please visit www.CITF-group.us.

Alpha Omega Media Contact:

Kelly E. Carter
Alpha Omega Director of Communications
Main: 707-963-9999
Mobile: 707-339-1527
kelly@aowinery.com

CITF Contact:

Christelle Dezaunay
Business Developer
Mobile: +33 (0)6 47 40 93 78
c.dezaunay@CITF-group.com

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