



**Press Release: EMBARGO DRAFT NOT FOR RELEASE**

## **Slate Mill Wine Collective Opens Full-service Winery Incubator in Fredericksburg, Texas**

**Fredericksburg, Texas, March 2, 2020** — Esteemed Texas winery, [1851 Vineyards](#), is now [Slate Mill Wine Collective](#): a full-service winery incubator. The Fredericksburg, Texas–based winery was acquired in 2019 by the Jones family. The family left the oil industry in 2019 to pursue a passion in viticulture and invested in 1851 Vineyards with their seven children. The property has undergone a transformation that includes significantly expanded production facilities, added vineyard acreage, and a fully remodeled tasting room and patio. In addition to continuing its core business as a winery, Slate Mill Wine Collective has a new mission to help provide other wine producers the ability to craft wines in its on-site custom crush facility.

The evolution of Slate Mill Wine Collective from a boutique family-run winery to a winery incubator expands its footprint, while retaining its celebration of the unstoppable maverick spirit for which Texas is known. Led by director of winemaking Tim Drake, winemaker Josh Fritsche and the Slate Mill Wine Collective cellar team continue to produce wines under the in-house 1851 Vineyards brand, as well as assist with production for custom crush clients.

"The Texas wine industry has earned a strong reputation for quality wines, which is drawing interest from many people who want to enter the business," says Tim Drake. "We have always been known for having this incredible pioneering spirit, but as the industry is growing there is less land available at affordable pricing. Our new business model gives others an opportunity to cost-effectively develop high-quality wines and grow their business, where it may have been prohibitive otherwise. Our custom crush clients can produce their own wines in our facility and can take advantage of the assistance from our team of winemaking experts. This is not your typical run of the mill winery. We make winery dreams a reality."

The Slate Mill Wine Collective tasting room has undergone dramatic renovation with the inclusion of a gorgeous namesake water mill, two new tasting bars, three times more space for seating and a gracious new design for relaxed hospitality. The makeover also includes the addition of a full wall of sliding glass doors that open to a multi-tiered patio with seating, a dance floor, and three new fire pits. Local cheeses and meats are available for purchase.

The spacious tasting room promotes education, experimentation, and discovery. Several excellent wines are available for tasting including the 1851 Vineyards house brand. Currently, several of the Texas wines made at the Collective are featured in the tasting room and wine club including:

- C.L. Butaud — Produced by winemaker Randy Hester, a Texas native who cut his winemaking 'chops' studying in many of Napa Valleys' finest facilities.



- Dandy Rosé — Produced by winemaker and sommelier Rae Wilson, who began her career working in the cellar with several of Texas' top wineries before beginning her brand Knipp Cellars.
- Tatum Cellars — Winemaker Josh Fritsche began working in the Texas wine industry nearly a decade ago, rising through the ranks from cellar rat to assistant winemaker to winemaker. He joined the Slate Mill winemaking team in April of 2019. His personal label Tatum Cellars was launched in 2012 to extraordinary critical and consumer acclaim.
- Farmhouse Vineyards — Wines crafted by Tim Drake for the Seaton and Furgeson families, both multi-generational farming families. Together they farm 7,000 acres of row crops and four vineyards with 112 acres of wine grapes within the Texas High Plains AVA.
- Majek Vineyard & Winery — Randy and Lynne Majek tapped into Tim Drake's 20 years of experience and Slate Mill's resources to help them produce award winning wines from vineyards in the High Plains and their estate in East Texas.

"Slate Mill Wine Collective makes financial sense for small brands like ours that don't yet have the capital to build a winery," says Randy Hester, owner and winemaker, C.L. Butaud Wines. "They have the right processing equipment and barrel aging facilities to allow me to make the best wines possible. When working with Slate Mill, you have options. I go with the hands-on approach so that I'm involved in every aspect of the winemaking process. You also have the option to work with their talented team of winemakers for a full-service approach that extends to assistance with vineyard planting and management, and sales including wine club shipping and fulfillment. Additionally, our C.L. Butaud wines are for sale in their Fredericksburg tasting room located in the heart of Texas wine country."

The winery production facility also underwent an extensive expansion with a new 9,600 square foot barrel room, improved crush pad, and enlarged tank storage. The increased space allows for additional capacity of up to 1,600 barrels and 24,000 gallons a year. The next phase of the remodel will include individual tasting rooms available for lease to wine brands in the "Wine Village" and commercial rental space all under one roof.

The Slate Mill Wine Collective property features a historic homestead, barn, and smokehouse restored to its original 1800s condition, which is commemorated with a State Historical Marker. It also boasts a 35-acre estate vineyard. With a second winery in development on Highway 290 and an adjacent 200-acre events facility in Fredericksburg, Slate Mill Wine Collective will be managing 150 acres of estate vineyards in the Texas Hill Country. These 150 acres, managed by Chase Jones and Emily Graff, are home to 35 different grape varieties well suited for the Texas climate. Slate Mill Wine Collective clients and partners have the option of selecting from these very varieties to use in their winemaking endeavors.

### **About Slate Mill Wine Collective**

Experience a piece of Texas history with unparalleled hospitality, education and pioneering spirit. Founded as "1851 Vineyards" in 2016, the winery was named for the Pioneer Flour Mills



which was built and established on the grounds in the year 1851. The original barn, main house, guest house and smokehouse that remain today, serve as a Texas Historical Landmark. In 2019 the Jones family purchased 1851 Vineyards and transitioned it from a stand-alone winery to a winery incubator. With the new business model, additional vineyard acreage, expanded production facilities, and a remodeled tasting room, the winery was relaunched as Slate Mill Wine Collective in 2020. The Slate Mill Wine Collective team is dedicated to producing the finest wines possible and offering a custom crush experience like no other. Connect with Slate Mill Wine Collective on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), and [Twitter](#).

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