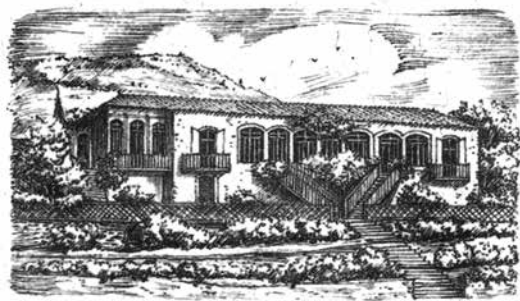


SORIN'S
WINE
ACADEMY





CHATEAU BELLE~VUE

Bhamdoun

FROM RUBBLE TO WINE

Born and raised in Bhamdoun, Lebanon, Naji Boutros left the beautiful country in the early 1980s when violence took over. He did not let the violence deter him from working hard, however, and earned scholarships to study electrical engineering abroad at Notre Dame. There he fell in love with a young woman named Jill Johnson, who was majoring in economics. After graduation Naji (ND '87) and Jill (ND '88) earned master's degrees from different schools and were married in 1990. They worked in New York and New Jersey, and then moved to London where they had their first of four children (one of whom is currently studying at Notre Dame).

With his beloved country always on the back of his mind, Naji visited Bhamdoun with Jill in 1994 and was shocked at the destruction he found. They decided then and there that it was up to them to bring the village back to life. In 1999, Naji and Jill moved their family to Bhamdoun and a year later, with the help of a local farmer Joseph Khairallah, planted 3,000 vines, founding Château Belle-Vue.



Not only has Château Belle-Vue become a successful, award-winning winery, but with 400,000 square meters of vines, many jobs have been created for local families. There is a new bistro, tasting room, and bed and breakfast at the winery, in addition to a Center for Peace and Reconciliation to help Syrian refugees.

Today, Château Belle-Vue cultivates 30,000 vines on dozens of plots in and around the community, and after years of neglect, Bhamdoun is once again the beautiful village Naji always remembered.

Naji and Jill donate \$1 from every bottle to fund scholarships for needy children in the village. They assemble special baskets of artisanal products made by local families to sell to their wine subscribers at Christmas time, donating the proceeds to those families. They established the Belle-Vue Community Library as a gathering space for young adults, and local boys, along with Syrian refugees, are now working in the vineyards.

