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After Sideways: Merlot movie to redress the balance
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After Merlot's drubbing in *Sideways*, lovers of the grape are fighting back.

Californian documentary maker Rudy McClain is making *Merlove*, a homage to Merlot.

McClain plans to include interviews with winemakers from around the world who have demonstrated that Merlot can more than stand up to its rivals, Cabernet Sauvignon and Pinot Noir.

The latter in particular has experienced a meteoric rise in sales and plantings since the 2004 hit film *Sideways*, whose protagonist, the anti-hero Miles, loves Pinot and loathes Merlot in equal measure.

Tom Rinaldi from Provenance Vineyards in Napa, speaking in a preview of the new film, says, '[Merlot] been slapped around a lot, there have been a whole lot of pretenders to the throne'.

McClain has interviewed winemakers such as Chris Phelps of Swanson Vineyards, Larry Stone of Rubicon and Jean Claude Berrouet of Chateau Petrus. He plans to visit Bordeaux in November 2007 to continue filming.

'People are putting one Merlot on a wine list today in Napa, where there would have been four before *Sideways*,' McClain told **decanter.com**. 'I used to think of Merlot as an intro grape, to drink between beer and a great wine, but then I realised that in the hands of the right winemaker, on the right terroir, it can make some of the world's greatest wines. This is the universal story of championing the underdog.'

Alongside the documentary, McClain intends to launch 'Merlot tours' through Napa Valley and Bordeaux, visiting the most famous vineyards in the region that have made particularly successful Merlot-based wines.

McClain is seeking financial backing for the film, offering an equity stake in the final product, which he hopes will get cinema and DVD release.