



PASSION PROJECTS

Toast of the town

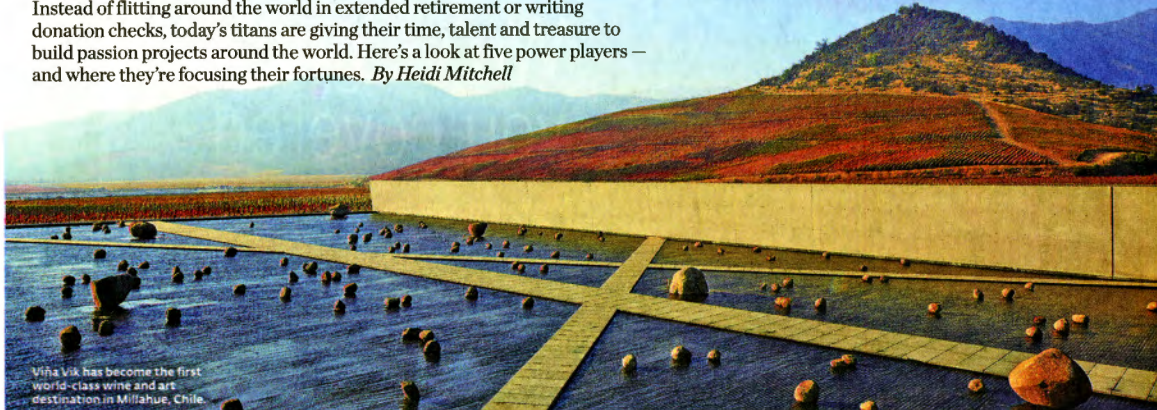
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BIG IDEAS

IF A BILLIONAIRE DREAMS IT...

Instead of flitting around the world in extended retirement or writing donation checks, today's titans are giving their time, talent and treasure to build passion projects around the world. Here's a look at five power players — and where they're focusing their fortunes. *By Heidi Mitchell*



Viña Vik has become the first world-class wine and art destination in Millahue, Chile.

THE REGION BUILDER:

ALEX VIK

Home base: Monaco; **Age:** 62

Day job: The Swedish-Norwegian-Uruguayan Vik has made billions on tech startups, sovereign funds, insurance companies — you name it.



Passion: Harvard-educated Vik and his college-sweetheart wife, Carrie, fell in love with Uruguay and revolutionized high-style/low-impact tourism in

the country with two game-changing hotels, planting the city of José Ignacio squarely on the Gypset map. Emboldened, they then set out to create a world-class wine destination in Chile.

Project: To create his Viña Vik retreat, Vik hired world-class winemakers from storied chateaux to dig 4,000 soil wells, test wind conditions, source root stock and grid 12 Chilean valleys across 11,000 acres to optimize each planting. A 22-room hotel and architecturally significant winery welcome guests to

the secluded Millahue region of Chile, now a proper wine destination just two hours from Santiago.

ROI: The Viks are champions of local creatives — each Viña Vik suite comes with its own vivid art (artists sometimes live on-site), and the couple even built an extension at Estancia Vik (in Uruguay) to accommodate a massive commission. They've also pushed the boundaries of environmentally sustainable winemaking, incorporating permeable fabric roofing, solar panels and natural cooling systems that take advantage of the thermal amplitude of the valleys.

What's next: The Viks hope to score 100 points from independent wine experts (some of their blends have already scored 94 to 97). "Some people say it's arrogant, but we are trying to do something that hasn't been done before," Vik tells Alexa. "With the hotel and winery, now travelers to Chile don't just go to Santiago and Patagonia; they also come to [Millahue]."

Kindred spirit: Anajit Singh, an Indian billionaire tycoon who's developed high-end vineyards, hotels, restaurants and even a hospital in the bucolic town of Franschhoek, South Africa.