



## A PGAV PARTNER PROFILE

# Steve Miller

Vice-Chairman of Executive Committee

Executive Vice-President of Business Development

The Biltmore Company, Owner and Operator of Biltmore Estate

### ***How did you get started at the Biltmore Company?***

Growing up in Asheville, North Carolina, I knew about Biltmore Estate as a boy. During college, I interviewed for a summer landscaping job and ended up working for the William Cecil family, direct descendents of the Vanderbilts. Jobs were hard to come by in those days, so I was thrilled to be asked to join Biltmore Management Training Program. On school breaks, I worked in most departments, doing everything from planting flowers to helping with press tours.

### ***What keeps you there?***

The place, our people and the fact that every year is different. We are an entrepreneurial organization, and as a result, our growth has been phenomenal. Since 1979, our revenues have grown from \$3 million to \$120 million and our staff has grown from 100 to 1600 employees. Our primary strategy has been to evolve from a unique historic attraction to a world-class destination with an extraordinary hotel and winery.

### ***What is the Biltmore's mission?***

To preserve Biltmore as a privately owned, profitable working estate. This was George Vanderbilt's vision over 100 years ago. How we achieve that goal has changed over the years and continues to evolve, but the mission remains the same. We've moved from an emphasis on agriculture, forestry and dairy operations in Biltmore's earliest days to tourism, wine production, a hotel, and branding and licensing of home furnishings.

### ***You talk about core values.***

Every destination has a story to tell, and authenticity tops our list of values. When we think about adding new products or services, we always consider fit with Biltmore's story. For example, culinary arts were important to the Vanderbilts and the concept of self-supporting agriculture is fundamental to Biltmore's founding principles. As part of our authentic story, we raise beef and lamb, and offer "field to table" seasonal items to guests.

### ***How do you plan strategically?***

We are future oriented and constantly evaluate what might be missing. We also spend a lot of time listening to our guests. The addition of a vineyard became the natural extension of our agriculture story. Today, Biltmore Estate Winery represents about a third of our operating income. It is the most visited winery in the U.S. and produces 140,000 cases of wine each year. We know theme park rides would not fit here, but carriage rides, horseback riding, guided hikes, fly-fishing and float trips were developed as perfect outdoor activities.

### ***A bit more about your background?***

I have a BS in Business Administration from The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and graduated from The Executive Program there. I enjoy serving as an adjunct professor in the Center for Entrepreneurial Studies at UNC's Kenan-Flagler Business School.