

## RESEARCH ON LAUNCH AND IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES FOR A NEW LINE OF WINES IN THE DOMENIILE PRINCE MATEI, DEALU MARE VINEYARD

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### Abstract

*A wine company portfolio, like any Fast-Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG), should be diversified, innovative and very well correlated with the market requirements. Cash absorption and cash generation can be criteria for classifying the products portfolio. This research aims to identify the most efficient methods able to determine the structure and market positioning for Domeniile Prince Matei producer's portfolio. Such methods will be applied to design a new line of wines, to reduce the time for its production and implementation, to achieve the proposed results in the shortest time. The first step was to analyse the Domeniile Prince Matei's brand architecture, determine the profit for the present wine lines by using the Boston Consulting Group matrix, which is based on the relative market share and growth rate. The matrix application provided a general overview of company's products competitiveness and demand, which led to a portfolio rearrangement, a repositioning of the existing wines and creation of a new line of wines to replace the ones identified as unprofitable. Even if the Boston Consulting Group matrix is a smart reliable tool and helps a lot, in practice is better to take the final decision based on the results of more enterprise strategic analysis methods.*

**Key words:** Boston Consulting Group Matrix, brand architecture, wine.

### INTRODUCTION

As a product, wine belongs to the category Fast Moving Consumer Goods, even if it has a shelf life of more than three years, because it is bought for immediate consumption. Because consumer goods have a high turnover, their market is not only very large, but is also very competitive (Penn, 2014; Kolmar, 2021). For this reason, companies in this sector must focus their efforts to attract and persuade consumers to buy their products (Dobronăuțeanu, 2012; Neacșu, 2012; Ageieva & Agarkova, 2018).

In order for a wine to become known, either massive investments in the media is needed or ensuring that customers get a direct experience with that wine (Bărbulescu, 2018; Vergamini *et al.*, 2019).

**Brand architecture** is an important part of any business and depends much on the creation plan. The main factor that helps to generate a strong and sustainable brand is the brand architecture (Bezos *et al.*, 2021).

The brand architecture helps companies to organize and structure a framework that allows

for the independence and equal opportunities of the brand, increased attention and very well-directed communication. In short, it is about the structure of a portfolio within a company.

Regardless of the size of the business, the company needs a strong visual identity, a brand that will position it in the market, define the economic sector in which that product or service operates, transmit the company's values, be memorable and attract the attention of its customers (Kotler *et al.*, 2005).

The growth of any business also leads to the growth of the product portfolio, which determines a segmentation of the type of customers to whom it is addressed. It also gives the possibility to communicate directly to the specific customers through the brand. This is practically the time when it is necessary to create a structure, a coherent brand/portfolio architecture that meets the needs of the manufacturing company, ensuring positioning and further development, but also the requirements of customers who access that type of product or service.

Brand architecture can be of several types: the most well-known **branded house** and **house of brands**, to which the extended branded house, the house of a single brand etc. can be added. A branded house and a house of brands vividly describe the two extremes of alternative brand portfolio strategies. While a **house of brands** contains independent, unconnected brands, a branded house uses a single master brand to span a set of offerings (Aaker, 2004;2008).

In the case of a **branded house**, a producer practically offers a second wine and even a third wine, more affordable, all under the Grand wine/main brand, but with a similar visual identity.

**Château Angélus** (Figure 1) is one of the top producers in Saint Emilion, which owns 27 ha of vines, grown with Merlot (65%) and Cabernet Franc (35%). For the first wine, Château Angélus, the average price is 2000 euros (the older it gets, the higher its value), for Carillon d'Angélus the average price is about 500 euros, and for No. 3 d'Angélus 250 euros (Geoghegan, 2020).

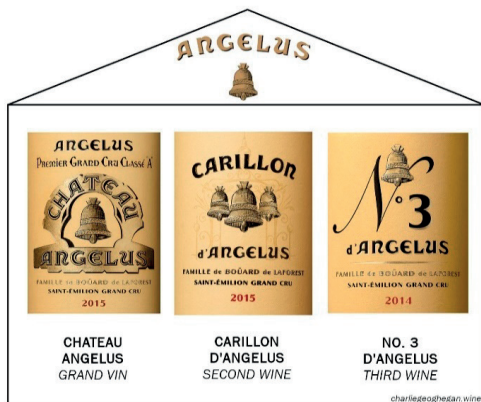


Figure 1. Example of Branded House architecture in Château Angélus, Bordeaux (Geoghegan, 2020)

Australian manufacturer **Penfolds** (Figure 2) also uses a similar visual identity for its entire product portfolio (7 lines, 44 products), whether a bottle costs \$ 40 or \$ 3000. In this way, wine lovers are offered the experience of wines that have the guarantee of the quality of the respective vineyard, but at affordable prices. In the case of **house of brands**, the portfolio consists of distinct brands, independent of each other and independent of any major brand. Each brand has its own type of consumer, its

communication being positioned entirely separately.



Figure 2. Example of Branded House architecture - Penfolds portfolio (<https://www.penfolds.com/en/wines/lines/the-penfolds-collection>)

The **house of brands** portfolio strategy is placed at the extreme opposite end of the spectrum to the branded house. Here, the portfolio consists of distinct brands, independent of one another and of any overarching master brand. An example of this is the producer **Vignobles K** (Figure 3) which owns seven properties located in four of the most famous regions of Bordeaux (Saint Emilion, Pomerol, Lalande de Pomerol and Castillon Cotes de Bordeaux). The wines in the producer's portfolio correspond to each property and are positioned differently, communicated independently having no common element (Geoghegan, 2020).

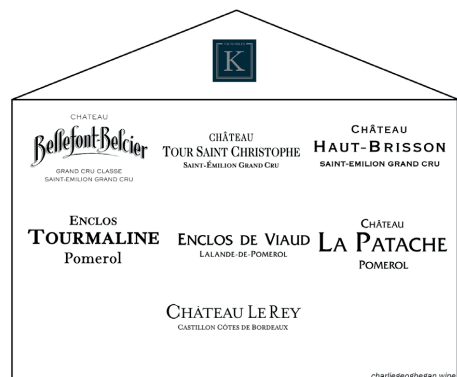


Figure 3. Example of House of Brands architecture in Vignobles K, Bordeaux (Geoghegan, 2020)

After achieving the portfolio architecture, by applying the **Boston Consulting Group Matrix**

(Chiu & Lin, 2020), the portfolio of products or services is ordered according to the relative market share and the market growth rate of each product, analysing in this way the profitability. This method of analysing and determining a portfolio is an important tool to order the list of products and implement a new line of wines on the market.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

The study aimed to identify the most effective way to determine the structure and market positioning in the manufacturer's portfolio of **Domeniile Prince Matei** new line of wines, in order to reduce the time of realization and implementation, so as to obtain efficient results in the shortest possible time.

**Winery location, cultivated areas and varieties.** The research was carried out in the period 2019-2021, on the portfolio of products belonging to the wine company **Domeniile Prince Matei** (previously known as **Villa Zorilor Winery**, Zoresti).

Located in the viticultural region of Muntenia and Oltenia, at the confluence of the hill area with the plain, Villa Zorilor winery belongs, since 2019, to the holding company that also owns Viticola Sarica Niculițel S.A., Vintruvian Estate. That year, the new owners changed the name of the winery into **Domeniile Prince Matei S.R.L.**

**Domeniile Prince Matei** is located in the southern part of Romania, in Vernești commune, Zorești village, Buzău county (GPS: 45.172821; 26.704623) and has an area of 80 hectares with vines, located at altitudes between 70 and 202 m, on hills with eastern and south-eastern exposure. The age of the plantations is about 40 years, and the production obtained is between 4 and 8 tons/ha, destined for DOC wines.

The cultivated varieties are: Merlot, Cabernet Sauvignon, Fetească neagră, Fetească regală and Fetească albă.

**Evolution of the product portfolio.** The wine portfolio of **Domeniile Prince Matei**, at the end of 2020, consisted of the brands *Prince Matei*, *Petit Matei*, *Red Paradox* and *Villa Zorilor*. Among these brands, compared to the portfolio of brands taken over in 2019, the only new wine label was *Petit Matei*.

For the new wine, *Petit Matei*, all the graphic/visual elements of the other existing wine brands were kept untouched. After 2019, when the ownership changed, the new owner added also their logo to complete the visual identity of all the products.

At the end of 2020, the current shareholders decided to reposition **Domeniile Prince Matei** on the market by taking several measures: adding a new retail line of wines, restyling the old Prince Matei and Petit Matei labels, and removing the brands Red Paradox and Villa Zorilor wines from their product portfolio.

### **Realization a coherent brand architecture.**

The brand architecture must meet the needs of the manufacturing company, both in terms of positioning and further development (Hsu *et al.*, 2010; Osorio, 2021). Even though several types of brand architecture exist, the best known and used in this study are brand house and house of brands.

**Branded house** (Figure 4) is the portfolio architecture that has a master brand and several sub-brands, all derived from the main brand as far as their positioning is concerned, along with their visual identity and message.

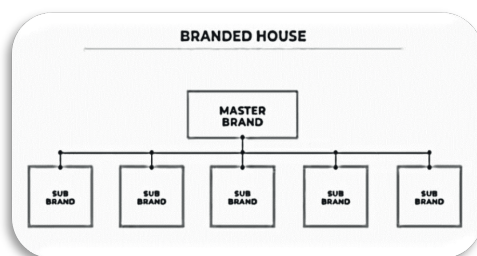


Figure 4. Portfolio architecture - Branded house (source: <https://brandmasteracademy.com/brand-architecture/>)

This portfolio strategy has clear advantages, by providing a simplified imaging solution for all products, and also reducing costs, due to the fact that no separate brand needs to be managed.

Customers accept new products or product lines much faster because they trust the main brand and if the main brand grows, automatically the sub-brands will receive recognition.

As a disadvantage, putting the main brand in the same basket with all other brands can lead to a loss of the main brand identity. Moreover, if one of the sub-brands does not live up to

expectations or it proves to be a failure, the negative reaction will affect all brands in the basket, including the main one.

**House of brands** (Figure 5) is the portfolio architecture in which each sub-brand is treated as a unique brand with its own positioning, customer category, visual identity, communication style and tone of voice. The link between the main mark and the sub-marks is almost imperceptible or even non-existent.

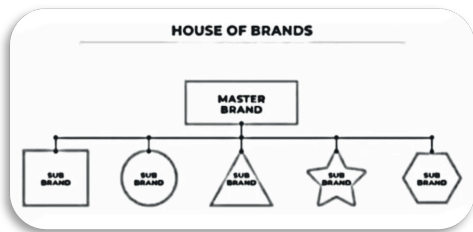


Figure 5. Portfolio architecture - House of brands  
(source: <https://brandmasteracademy.com/brand-architecture/>)

This type of product portfolio architecture offers more flexibility in terms of positioning, communication and customer type, because it does not have the constraints of a main company/brand philosophy that adapts its discourse according to the target audience.

If one of the sub-brands suffers an image loss or is considered of questionable quality, none of the other sub-brands or the main brand will be affected. In this case, resources can be allocated much better, because brands are very clearly differentiated in terms of positioning, and budgets will be clearly determined for each of them.

This portfolio architecture has its disadvantages as well, starting with the fact that managing brands that act independently, in accordance with their own identity, can be costly and cumbersome if the portfolio is large.

Because there is no main brand to support these sub-brands, they can only be based on their own reputation and, moreover, confusion can be created in the mind of the consumer regarding the identity of the manufacturing company.

When building its brand portfolio, every company must choose a strategy, according to the resources and architecture that suits best the products it wants to "place" on the market.

**Applying the Boston Consulting Group matrix** allows one to place the brands included in own portfolio, in a 2 x 2 square chart, based on the relative market share and the growth rate of each product / service.

The matrix is a table divided into four quadrants (Figure 6), each with its own unique symbol that represents a certain degree of profitability. Thus, the quadrants are the following: star(s), question mark(s), cash cow and pet or dogs or millstones (often represented by a dog).

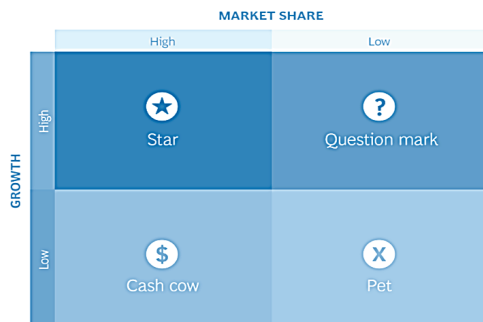


Figure 6. Boston Consulting Group Matrix  
(source: <https://www.bcg.com/about/overview/our-history/growth-share-matrix>)

By analysing and including each brand or service in one of these four categories, the decision makers in the company can later determine in which direction to focus their resources (human, research) and capital, to generate the highest profit, and where to reduce losses.

Each of the four quadrants is a combination of the relative market share and the growth rate of the market:

- **stars** have a relatively high market share and a high growth rate, which means high profitability with high financial need. Companies need to invest in these products because they have the potential to grow, to generate revenue, even higher than they produce at the time of evaluation;

- **the question marks** are products/services that have a high growth rate but a relatively small market share, meaning low profitability with high financial needs. In general, these are newly launched products, which have the potential to grow and generate profit, respectively, but in order to reach results, to become „stars”, they need investment;



- **cash cows** have a relatively high market share, but also a low growth rate, that is high profitability with low financial needs. These are the products that generate mainly the profit of the companies and do not require investments because they no longer need having a large market share. The profit of these products should be reinvested in „stars” and „question marks” so as to increase the number of products in a company's portfolio that are revenue-generating, „cash cows”;

- **dogs or millstones** have a relatively small market share and a low growth rate, meaning low profitability with low financial needs. Because they do not generate any revenue and have no potential for growth, these products must either be discharged from the portfolio or repositioned.

According to Boston Consulting Group, there are *three scenarios* in which a company can be found: *the optimal route, the sequence of success and the sequence of disaster*.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

**Establishing the new brand architecture at Domeniile Prince Matei.** At the end of 2020 the Domeniile Prince Matei wine portfolio included the following brands: **Prince Matei**, **Petit Matei**, **Red Paradox** and **Villa Zorilor**.

All wines are obtained from the Merlot variety, practically we are talking about a master brand, namely **Prince Matei**, split in 4 labels (Figure 7), therefore having a structure of a **Branded House**.

The branded house architecture relied only on red wines of 3 levels of quality: *first level wine (Prince Matei)*, *second level wine (Petit Matei)* and *third level wines (Red Paradox and Villa Zorilor)*.

In April 2021, a new image of the **Domeniile Prince Matei** portfolio was launched, with the following structure: **Prince Matei**, **Petit Matei** and **Domeniile Prince Matei**, including not only red wines, but also white and rosé wines.

Visually, the new labels were designed to be modern and appealing to consumers. The old labels were redesigned to respect the style of the newly introduced labels Domeniile Prince Matei (Figure 8). All labels have common elements that clearly define the architecture of a Branded House.



Figure 7. Domeniile Prince Matei wine portfolio in December 2020  
(source: Domeniile Prince Matei archive)



Figure 8. New labels in the portfolio Domeniile Prince Matei, April 2021  
(source: Domeniile Prince Matei archive)

The current portfolio is still structured on three price levels, namely:

- **Domeniile Prince Matei line** - which includes three wines, white, rosé and red, is meant to be positioned as a middle price line; the affordable prices (about 30 RON) are intended for retail (off trade), being volume-based revenue generators;

- **Petit Matei** - the second wine label in the portfolio, is a wine designed for both on trade and off trade, with a price that indicates a superior quality (approximately 60 RON);

- the famous **Prince Matei** - the first label wine, the excellence of the portfolio is offered at a high-end price (approximately 130 RON), being positioned as a wine exclusively for on trade (bars, restaurants, coffee shops, clubs, hotels).

**Considerations regarding the new portfolio of Domeniile Prince Matei. Analysis of the old and current brand architecture.** The **Branded House** strategy was selected and applied by this producer's portfolio because it was used before and it was known in the market. The sub-lines of wines *Petit Matei* and *Domeniile Prince Matei* are visually identified with common elements with the master brand *Prince Matei*, thus drawing from the notoriety of the most famous wine in the portfolio, which is already an established label (Figure 9).

This architecture has the advantage of using the image known for over 20 years of an iconic brand for quality Romanian wine, Prince Matei, which has been extended to other wines/lines, *Petit Matei* and *Domeniile Prince Matei*.

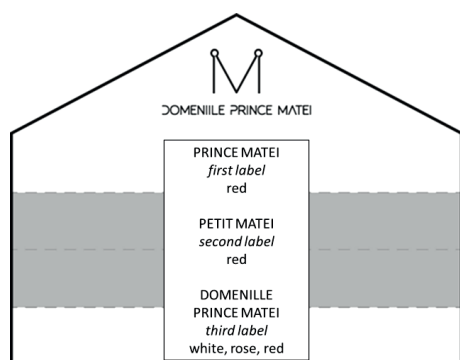


Figure 9. New portfolio of Domeniile Prince Matei - Branded House architecture (April 2021)

Introducing a new line such as *Domeniile Prince Matei* (shelf price 30/35 RON), to include for the first time in the portfolio white and rosé wines besides red, shows an opening to the consumer demands. This change proves that the new management sought a modern and non-conformist approach, but also shows a long-term development strategy, introducing a line that can generate income for the development of the company.

The visual identity for the labels of the new *Domeniile Prince Matei* line (Figure 10) borrows many elements from the *first wine label*, starting with the chromatic and continuing to the visual elements and finishing with the bottle type. In this way, the visual experience at the first contact a consumer has with these wines is similar to that of the famous Prince Matei label.



Figure 10. Domeniile Prince Matei Line Labels, April 2021

Thus, the image capital of the brand was used, without large additional investments to support the other brands. Each new wine benefits by associating its identity with the image of the master brand. The visual unity that is found in the producer's portfolio can be an advantage for the off-trade sales, when the consumer goes to pick a wine from the store shelves and is undecided.

Associating new labels to a master label which guarantees the quality of the vineyard and winery it is a marketing strategy often found in well-known wine-growing areas, in traditional countries such as France and Italy, but especially in the new world wine countries Australia or California. In Romania, the strategy is less used, therefore this can be a challenge.

Others experiences proved that it is a good strategy for a small portfolio, making it easier for the consumers to understand the offer. A single clear brand, carefully managed over time and extended to the full line of products, is a simpler proposition than a line of independent brands.

**Branded house** is an architecture that is best applied to small producers in the wine industry (no more than 100 ha) because it does not require a big communication effort.

As long as the *brand architecture* is established and correlated with the attributes of the manufacturing company (size, positioning, etc.) *the time to make a new brand will be shortened very much*. Implementation and communication will be much easier to achieve when there is a concept that expresses very clearly what message the manufacturer wants to convey.

**Evaluation of the Domeniile Prince Matei portfolio using the Boston Consulting Group matrix to assess profitability.** Following the establishment of the new brand architecture for Domeniile Prince Matei, the wine portfolio from the end of 2020 was analysed using the Boston Consulting Group Matrix (BCG) to assess its profitability. For each wine brand the relative market share and relative growth rate were evaluated and included in the BCG Matrix (Figure 11).

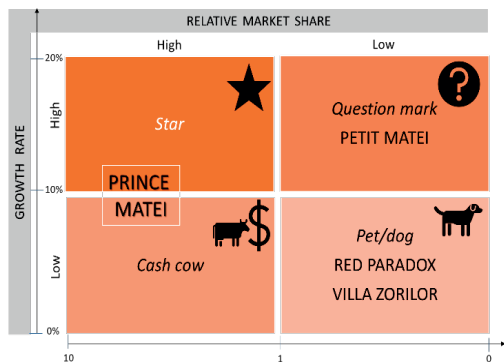


Figure 11. Portfolio analysis of Domeniile Prince Matei with the Boston Consulting Group Matrix before strategy change (December 2020)

**Prince Matei brand**, according to the BCG matrix, has a double role because, on one hand, it is the star of the producer's portfolio, contributing to the increase of the turnover, as well as to the improvement of its image, but on the other hand it is also considered a cash cow, meaning that it occupies a leading position in the market, but has nowhere to grow.

It represents the value of this producer, in the sense that it brings profit and provides liquidity to finance the other products in the portfolio. It is a wine that holds a steady position on the market, is well-known, but does not have a great possibility of development beyond the current state.

**Petit Matei** - launched in the past recent years, failed to impose itself on the market and can only be considered a question mark / dilemma.

**Red Paradox** and **Villa Zorilor** - although wines with affordable prices (30 RON in retail) were launched a long time ago and they do not

perform anymore in the market, thus being only be considered *pets / dogs* in the BCG matrix.

In that context, the company was right to want to rearrange the portfolio, reposition some existing wines and create a new line of wines to replace the two unprofitable wines (Red Paradox and Villa Zorilor).

In the present structure of the manufacturer's portfolio, launched in April 2021 (Figure 12), we observe the new arrangement of the lines in the BCG Matrix, considering the relative market share and market growth rate.

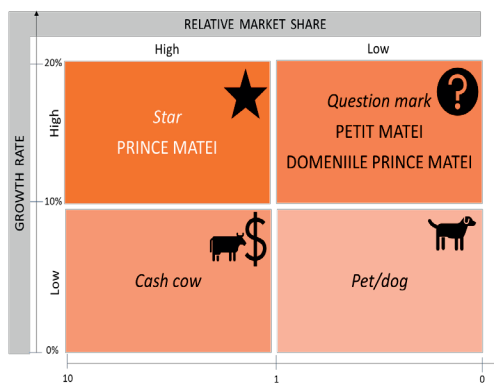


Figure 12. Portfolio analysis of Domeniile Prince Matei with the Boston Consulting Group Matrix after strategy change (April 2021)

**Prince Matei brand** remains the star of the portfolio with a larger market share now, dominating its market segment, but only with the need for permanent investment to keep up with the growth rate of competition and the preservation of its market share.

**Petit Matei** is the younger "brother" brand, which, being launched recently (in 2019), it did not have time to prove itself and thus remains in the square of the question mark. This means that it has a low market share, but a high market growth, on condition that the company invests in the brand to prove that it can occupy an important position in its market segment. The lately introduced **Domeniile Prince Matei** brand is also in the question mark square because it is a new and not-so-known line, that will need investment before it will establish itself a cash-generating wine brand, able to support the other wines in the present and future portfolio.

**Results of the analysis of the portfolio of the manufacturer Domeniile Prince Matei using the Boston Consulting Group Matrix.** After analysing the portfolio of the company, it was determined that, at the time of this study, the company does not generate profit and needs capital to support itself. The situation exists because there is only *Prince Matei* who is in the position of *star*, meaning that even if the brand generates some capital, it also needs permanent investment (visual identity promotion, communication, location on the shelf etc.), in order to maintain its position and eventually increase its market share.

The other two brands, *Petit Matei* and *Domeniile Prince Matei* are still in their infancy, in the position of *question marks*, so they need investment as well in order to make a profit.

The ideal situation for this type of portfolio would be for both *Petit Matei* and *Domeniile Prince Matei* to occupy a cash cow position, so as to generate capital for the development of new lines and maintaining the leading position in its segment for *Prince Matei* (Figure 13).

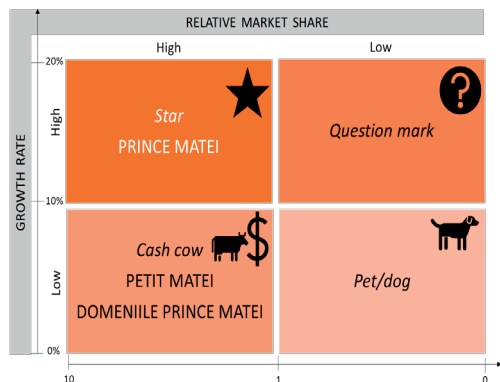


Figure 13. Ideal portfolio structure for Domeniile Prince Matei, shown by the Boston Consulting Group Matrix

However, what a production company wants and needs does not always happen in the real market, so that anytime the conditions can change and one or more of the brands in the portfolio can become a *pet/dog*. For this reason, the people in the marketing department, together with those in sales department, must constantly analyse the market, the competition, the external conditions etc. to know very well the market share for each brand, to realise what their goals

are and, most importantly, to be aware of the resources they have.

## CONCLUSIONS

After applying the Boston Consulting Group Matrix method for the portfolio analysis of the producer **Domeniile Prince Matei**, it was found that out of the four wine brands initially owned (*Prince Matei*, *Petit Matei*, *Red Paradox* and *Villa Zorilor*), only one generated capital, namely *Prince Matei*, but not enough to support the entire company. Thus, at the end of 2020, it was established that a restructuring of the **Domeniile Prince Matei** portfolio was necessary, but with the preservation of the existent brand architecture, that is the one of a Brand House.

The *star* but also the capital generator - *Prince Matei*, *first label wine*, underwent a change of form, but not of core, maintaining its position as a grand wine, a star, thus improving its opportunities to increase its relative market share.

*Petit Matei*, the second label wine in the portfolio, was brought much closer to the image of Prince Matei, but positioned in a younger market segment, remaining as a *question mark*, with the possibility of growth, but without generating significant capital.

The elimination of the non-profitable *Red Paradox* and *Villa Zorilor* wine labels and the creation of the new line for off-the-shelf sales, brings to the portfolio a new *question mark*, the *Domeniile Prince Matei* line (white, rosé and red).

In order to have a future successful portfolio the recommendation for this producer is that both *Petit Matei* and the *Domeniile Prince Matei* lines benefit from investments so that they perform better, increase their relative market share and end up producing enough capital to be considered *cash cows* (according to the Boston Consulting Group Matrix).

The company must also create the framework for further development of the star brand, *Prince Matei*, which together with the other two wine lines would produce the necessary capital to support the business, but also for the development of new product lines.

In conclusion, the the Boston Consulting Group Matrix method is quite effective, but not enough



to establish very clearly the success of a new line of wines. The manufacturer will have to use other marketing tools (market research, scientific research of the market sector, etc), to constantly measure the evolution of the market, to constantly adapt its portfolio to demand and to communicate permanently and coherently through its marketing specialists.

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