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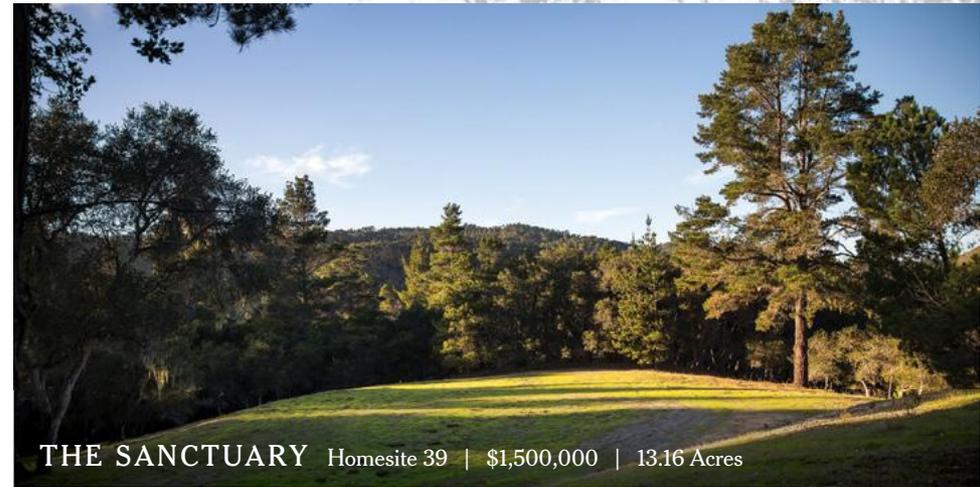
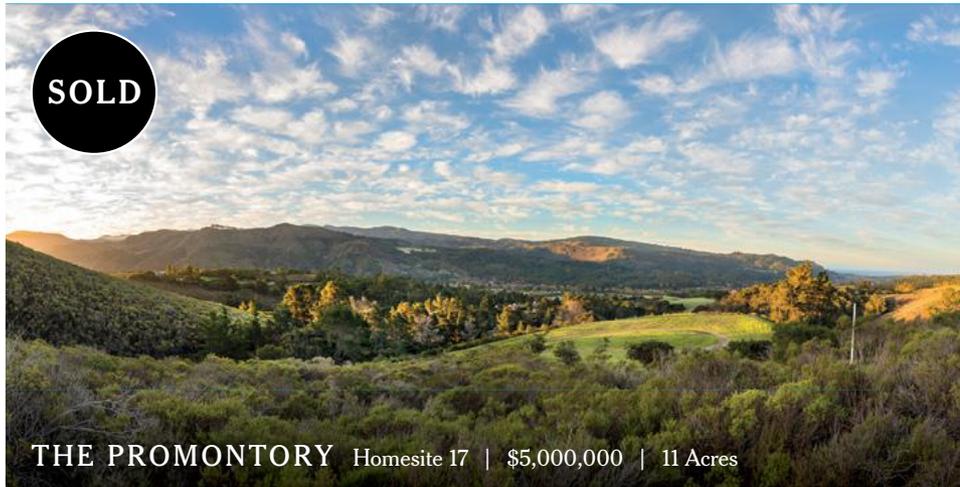
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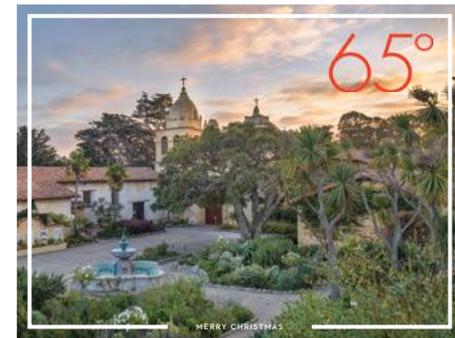
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A Look Back

COMMUNITY

Big Sur Food & Wine Festival

By Andrea Stuart



Cover Photo by Manny Espinoza



Monterey Bay Lightning by Brad Wright

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Nature's Vibrance

By Nora Heston Tarte

A bolt of lightning over the water, a rocky bluff at sunset, a shadowed figure traipsing through the forest—these are the images Brad Wright captures behind his lens, traveling far, but mostly near, to feed his creative desires.

His favorite places to shoot vivid landscapes and seascapes are near home: the crashing waves colliding with jagged rock formations of Monterey Peninsula and Big Sur. For Wright, a sandy beach gets boring. “I like to go out when there’s a lot of colors going on,” he says. “I like to get nice clouds in my photos. That’s something I’m always hunting for.”

Wright dabbled in photography while in his 20s, but at the time, he couldn’t afford to continuously develop film. After a few career changes and a move to Monterey, he decided to pick up the hobby again, with the assistance of his daughter, who holds a bachelor’s in photography.

His focus is on nature shots. Growing up, Wright was routinely exposed to the outdoors, through traveling to the mountains with his parents, meandering around the creek he lived by, and being a Boy Scout. “I love nature, so that’s part of me,” he says. “I’ve always felt comfortable in nature.” The secret to his success is in more than his artistic eye. He says being in the right place at the right time is part of the challenge, which often includes rising before the sun and tracking the weather.

After interest in his works piqued, Wright started a business selling his colorful captures. His website offers a full-service shop where guests may select portraits and make framing choices online. He also shares his photographs on MontereyCountyPhotography, a Facebook page he created to encourage others to share local photographs.

For more information, visit bradwrightphotography.com.



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The Champion

By Michael Cervin | Photos by Darren Lovecchio

When Sara Rianda was 15 years old, she wanted to do volunteer work but was told she had to be at least 15 and a half. That didn't stop her. Rather than wait six months, she secured a volunteer position as a lifeguard. It was at this time that Rianda realized that if she was creative, she could find a way to fulfill her dreams.

Growing up in Hollister—her father's side of the family goes back several generations—Rianda was always active, always outdoors, always moving. Though she was academically driven in school, doodled constantly on her paperwork in high school, and took an art class. There, she discovered, as an artist, her defining medium: charcoal. "My mind got to run free," says Rianda, and she began sketching faces freehand because of the stories their expressions held.

She went on to California Polytechnic State University (Cal Poly) San Luis Obispo, where she majored in business, focusing on finance. "I've always had a thing for the complexity of mathematics," she says. "I loved every minute of it." Keeping on the move, she took a job in San Francisco with BlackRock, an asset management firm. During her time in San Francisco, Rianda remained engaged with the community back at Cal Poly, where she served, and still serves, on the advisory board for Women in Business, which helps provide a framework for women and their future successes during and after college. "For me, the ability to give back—be that finance, or something educationally or artistically related—is very rewarding," she says. "It's really about encouraging the confidence of women with career choices and challenges they will face." While in San Francisco, she wanted to get involved with the Make-a-Wish Foundation, but no slots were available.

After three years at BlackRock, she returned to San Luis Obispo, to discover a tri-county chapter of Make-A-Wish. Ecstatically, she took the training, and now she is actively involved as a wish granter. Moreover, she joined Jack's Helping Hand in San Luis Obispo. The organization provides assistance and unique programs for children with cancer and special needs. "I've always had a desire to help and support kids," says Rianda. She continues with that theme, as she currently works with a small family-owned business that helps companies set up 401(k) plans for their employees. She sees it as a way to help people maximize their future.

Her time back in San Luis Obispo also allowed her to return with more ferocity to her artistic side and to charcoal drawings. "I like the raw intensity, the dirtiness of it," she says of using her charcoal-covered fingers to create shading on the canvas. Though black-and-white renderings may seem relatively simple, charcoal smudges easily and must be handled deftly to pull out detailed hues and shades. She hopes to use her artwork as an additional fundraising tool to increase her volunteer work.

There are similarities between the seeming disparate worlds of finance and art. "With finance, it's the complexity, it's finding the exact solution, it's the detail." Artwork, too, is always detail-oriented. "[Charcoal is] not forgiving," she says, "You can't make any mistakes. It has to be right and thought out in advance." And regardless of finance, art, and volunteer work, Rianda has carved out time to improve other of her facets. Currently, she's learning fly-fishing and the guitar. "Everybody has something to offer," she says. "I can champion anyone."

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Sacred Lands

By Andrea Stuart | Photos by Kodiak Greenwood



Acorns and leaves fall to the ground, giving fertility to the forest floor. Winds sweep in from the coastal west, carrying seeds that burrow into soil. And rains bring hydration, allowing earth-dwelling organisms to transmute death into life.

The elements of life are in a perennial dance; one celebrated for over 10,000 years by the indigenous people of what is now known as Monterey County. Composed of Esselen, Rumsen, Chalone, Sureño, Chunchunes, and Guatcharrone people, the Esselen Tribe of Monterey County (ETMC) is an assemblage of ancient tribal groups whose reverence for the Big Sur wilderness area of the Santa Lucia Mountains—in what is now part of the Los Padres National Forest—has informed their beliefs and traditions over the millennia. Since the 1700s, when native tribes in the Santa Lucia Mountains were displaced, becoming vassals and forced laborers of the Spanish, the Esselen have been a landless tribe. Today, the tribe is commemorating a return to their ancestry with the acquisition of the 1,199-acre Adler Ranch.

The ETMC tribal chairman, Tom Little Bear Nason, comes from a lineage of stewards of the lands of Big Sur and Carmel Valley. Protecting the land is deeply ingrained in him. His family has actively cared for and protected this land for over 150 years. Nason's great-grandfather Thomas Watson settled in Corral de Tierra and served as Monterey County's sheriff. Some of the first judges in the community were from his family.

Nason and ETMC contributed to the removal of the San Clemente Dam and are participating in the area's restoration. A major goal is to replenish steelhead trout, a threatened species, according to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Association.

"My family has been ranching and living on the land. [We] have been wilderness outfitters, nature guides, and have been guiding people into the Santa Lucia Mountains and the Ventana Wilderness on horses and mules," explains Nason. "That's how we started sharing our culture and heritage with people who come to Big Sur and want a genuine experience."

Over 30 years ago, Axel Adler of Adler Ranch invited the Esselen to his land. "He wanted to donate the land to us, but we didn't have the recognition or an organization set up to receive the land," he says. "As a result, it became Mill Creek Reserve under the Monterey Peninsula Regional Park District."

In 2016, Western River Conservancy (WRC), an organization dedicated to land acquisitions that promote critical habitat conservation while improving public access, was trying to acquire Adler Ranch on behalf of the US Forest Service. When that contract fell through, WRC's program director, Peter Colby, remembered meeting Nason in 2017.

"My job is to find those critical stretches of river and then work with our partners to ensure they're protected forever," says Colby. He was alerted by a land trust community member about the proposed sale of Adler Ranch, which linked isolated forest service lands between coastal holdings and inland areas, providing wildlife connectivity from the coast to the interior. "Our focus is on rivers, and the Little Sur River is . . . one of the few remaining healthy steelhead streams on this stretch of the coast," he adds.

In 2018, ETMC formed a nonprofit organization to support cultural traditions and preserve the tribe's cultural heritage as well as sacred lands and cultural sites. Also that year, Proposition 68 (Parks and Water Bond Act) provided \$40 million to the natural resources agency for primarily land acquisition,

specifically protection and preservation of cultural resources. The Adler Ranch land acquisition fell within its parameters, and in July 2020, the acquisition was completed, with ETMC as the beneficiary.

Colby describes this acquisition as essential to the preservation and protection of the area. "Steelhead are the most important fish for the ecology of the area. The river is pristine. The land provides habitat for condors, marbled murrelets, rare endemic plants, and old growth redwoods—some of the southernmost in the world," he says.

Nason is equally passionate about the area's diverse, fragile ecosystem. As such, he and the ETMC tribal council consider themselves stewards of the land, not owners. This perspective implies a sense of responsibility, accountability, and duty to preserve and protect the land for all living beings.

The tribe will not develop the land for commercial enterprises but instead will create a tribal village as a ceremonial site to revitalize their culture. They will also repatriate ancestral remains as they work to mend the sacred hoop of life. In keeping with the land grant, they will offer traditional cultural opportunities to tribal members and other bands of tribes. Finally, they will complete a two-year study, including an environmental study of ecological and cultural components, and the WRC will continue to be a resource for them.

"We are a nonprofit, and this is sacred ground to us. This property will be used for our traditions. Nature is our world. Rivers are where we drink and bathe," says Nason. "The forest allows us to collect ourselves. We visit the mountains to seek our creator's guidance and for rites of passage."

Axler Adler's wishes were granted, after all.

To learn more about the Esselen Tribe, visit esselentribe.org.



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Anita Madison has been a strong member of the DiBenedetto Team with over 15 years of Real Estate experience. She has an impressive local network having worked in the service industry on the Peninsula for many years. Anita will continue collaborating with the DiBenedetto Team as a licensed Realtor at Monterey Coast Realty.

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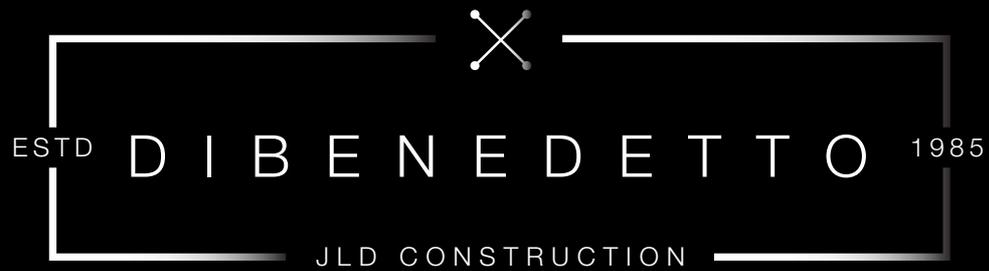


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What's Next for Tim Wood?

By Nora Heston Tarte | Photo by Manny Espinoza

Chef Tim Wood is a culinary artist. The award-winning and locally celebrated chef works tirelessly with the bounty of Monterey—including fresh catches and even fresher produce—to effortlessly create meals for locals and visitors to enjoy. “If you ask me my age, I’m 129 years old in chef years. Like other breeds, we age a little differently,” says Wood, laughing. “I will say it’s not all from hard work and dedication. Cooks and chefs tend to find some room to play as well, even if it’s not during conventional hours.”

As a youngster, Wood grew to love food through the enthusiasm of his parents. From there, his excitement around cooking blossomed as he worked various kitchen jobs, starting at the eatery inside of a vintage Catskill hotel in New York state. There, he learned to respect the knowledge that comes with cooking, collecting lessons from Bobbo and Timbo (senior chef and executive chef, respectively). He consciously chose traits from seasoned workers, eventually adopting those he liked most to integrate into his own kitchen when his career progressed. His managerial and cooking styles are thereby a hodgepodge from his experiences—a perfect blend that has led to more than a decade of success at his latest venture at Carmel Valley Ranch as well as his other food forays, which included a stint at Bernardus Lodge.

Wood’s unexpected downtime didn’t come with much relaxation. He has taken on several small projects, including consulting for other restaurants in need and jumping in whenever there is a call in the community, including food drives for the Monterey County Food Bank. Before the pandemic, he was also donating time and food to the Red Cross, Meals on Wheels, small-town chambers of commerce, local schools, and others. As we approach the holidays, Wood is already lifting off with a new dining experience. Locals and travelers alike will soon want to land at Woodies at the Airport when they get hungry.

When he’s not whipping up meals for the masses, Wood cooks at home, which, he says, keeps him out of trouble. His wife praises his grilled steak and veggies with a simple Caesar salad. Wood makes it his own by braising the meat and vegetables, a technique he is particularly fond of in the fall. It’s a skill he perfected after picking up the technique at age 25 while working for Chef Tom Valenti at Butterfield 81 NYC, learning his secret short rib braise and braised lamb shanks recipes. “That’s what being a great chef is,” says Wood. “Learning from others, learning from yourself, and producing items that people truly like.”

Cabernet Braised Short Ribs

Ingredients

5–8 pounds chuck steak or short ribs, cut evenly
1 bottle Boete Cabernet Franc, Saunders Family Vineyard
4 cups soft heirloom tomatoes, roughly chopped (or 1/4 cup tomato paste)
1 head garlic, split
1/2 bunch thyme
6 celery stalks, roughly chopped
3 medium carrots, roughly chopped
1 teaspoon peppercorns
1 bay leaf
1/4–1/2 gallon veal stock

Directions

Season the beef heavily with salt and freshly ground pepper. Leave the meat uncovered overnight in the refrigerator. The next day, allow the meat to temper on the counter. In a large heavy bottomed sauce pot, heat a generous amount of olive oil to coat the bottom. Sear the meat on medium heat and evenly brown the sides. Pull from heat and allow it to rest. Remove half the oil and cook the celery, carrot, onion, garlic, thyme, bay leaf, and peppercorns for about 20 minutes on low/medium heat, until soft and translucent. Turn the heat to medium/high, add the tomato product, and cook until it starts to show color, (about 5 minutes). Add the red wine. Cook down until almost dry. Add the meat and enough stock to cover by one to two inches. Season with more salt. Put in a covered pan into a 325-degree oven until it is tender, about two to three hours. Pull the beef out and reserve. Drain the braising liquid and adjust with fresh stock. Serve with fresh garden vegetables. Use a bitter green, such as mustard or wild arugula, for a garnish to contrast the braise.

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The Return of the Big Smile

By Andrea Stuart | Photo by Manny Espinoza

“My smile is big. I am a smiley person,” says Karen, a prominent horse surgeon and expert in her field. When she lost her four upper front teeth after an accident she was horrified.

Originally fitted with temporary teeth, which were not made well and were uncomfortable, Karen often went without them. Speaking and eating is difficult without front teeth but the temporary teeth made speaking and eating even more unpleasant.

Additionally, she was new to the community, working as an FEI (Fédération Équestre Internationale) veterinarian, and in the process of starting a nonprofit organization, Fort Ord Equine Foundation. Her job as a veterinary specialist requires her to give speeches and attend conferences. As a result, she was constantly explaining what happened to her teeth. It was time for a permanent solution.

In January of 2020, Karen sought treatment from Linda Martin, DDS at Vista Robles Dental Group in Monterey. Dr. Martin and Karen became fast friends as they bonded over family, horses, and an appreciation for community service. Although the process of restoring Karen’s smile would require multiple appointments, she knew she was in good

hands with Dr. Martin and Dr. Martin’s husband, an oral and maxillofacial surgeon.

The process of creating teeth for someone requires an artist’s eye to work with the curvature and tone of the face, an aptitude for mathematics to create teeth that are the proper size and proportions, and an architect’s mind to bring it all together. Dr. Martin takes the time to treat her patients holistically. Learning what makes them smile allows her to apply a personal touch when making their smile unique.

Since her procedure Karen’s big smiles have returned, for which she is so thankful.

Dr. Martin was inspired by Karen’s positive attitude throughout the dental process. And she was so happy to share a passion for horses and education that she joined the board of directors of Fort Ord Equine Foundation, where the two women work together every week, teaching children animal science, horsemanship, and the history behind it.

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High Class From Takeoff to Landing

By Bettina McBee | Photo by Manny Espinoza

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When two local charter services, Watsonville Executive Charter and Jet West, were for sale at the same time, McIntyre seized the opportunity, purchasing both, including the charter certificate from Jet West. McIntyre's son Matt has a B.S in Aeronautical Management and Technology from Arizona State University (ASU) and is chief pilot, a vital partner. James "Jeb" Garamendi, now director of operations, facilitated the transaction with Jet West and joined the partnership, adding his 20 years of expertise.

MPI Jet's air fleet grew, as did the flight crew. Shane Smit, director of marketing and sales, works as ground support,

broadening the visibility of the company's mission of professionalism, transparency, and flexibility.

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(left) RICHARD MACDONALD working
with model and actress Kelly Greyson
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Wellness in the Woods

By Fran Endicott Miller | Photos by Canyon Ranch Woodside

Maybe you've heard of Canyon Ranch. The iconic centers for wellness and life enhancement, located in Tucson, Arizona, and Lenox, Massachusetts, have long served as the ideal for those seeking the utmost in relaxation and rejuvenation. Now a new Canyon Ranch in Woodside stands ready to welcome West Coast serenity seekers. Surrounded by nature, located in the mid-peninsula hills among 16 acres of centuries-old redwoods, Canyon Ranch Woodside is the retreat everyone needs right now. There, thoughtful Thursday through Monday programming and rituals are designed to help you reenter the world energized, emotionally connected, and mentally focused.

More than a vacation, each visit to Canyon Ranch Woodside is thoughtfully orchestrated to inspire connections to nature, others, and self. Once home to the famed Skylonda Lodge and situated upon sacred Ohlone Indian land along Skyline Boulevard, this bucolic retreat incorporates the principles of harmony with nature, protection, and peace.

Featuring just 38 rooms, the property and its offerings feel intimate and authentic to its sense of place. There is, however, ample room to roam, including along the beautiful forest path full of wooden steps, meditation benches, and creek-traversing bridges. You can also meander along the meditation labyrinth modeled after the one in France at the thirteenth-century Chartres Cathedral. For a lovely meditative experience, attend the Thursday night evening ritual, a visually stunning, candle-lit labyrinth walk.

It's quiet at Canyon Ranch Woodside, and you'll hear birdsong piercing the fresh air. This is not only a place to disconnect. "It's really more of a place to reconnect," says Jim Eastburn, corporate director of transformational experiences for Canyon Ranch. "An experience here is grounding and healing, helping to deepen people's connection to

themselves and to those with whom they share their life. We provide a sense of connection to others, and to nature."

Recurring themes during a suggested three-to four-night stay include gratitude, forgiveness, self-compassion, greater mindfulness, idea of purpose, and how to transfer new outlooks to daily life. These topics are further instilled by informal fireside chats with a team of spiritual, wellness, and life coaches, each of whom is nearly always present and willing to engage. You can take your discussion deeper with scheduled one-on-one guidance on any number of topics, including spirituality, cultivating a life of purpose, or rites of passage.

You can fill each hour with a daily schedule of guided hikes, yoga sessions, fitness training, and mediation, or plan your own schedule with a program specifically designed to meet your needs. And you will not be judged if simply relaxing in the calm energy of the forest setting fits your idea of the perfect retreat.

Canyon Ranch's dynamic executive chef, Isabelle Jackson Nunes, plans and creates delicious and nutritious meals, which are included with your stay. She sources the freshest ingredients for creative offerings from local food purveyors. Her meals are driven by wellness philosophies that include root-to-stem use of vegetables and fruits, meat raised with humane animal husbandry practices, and ingredients and beverages that do not strain the region's natural resources. Don't hesitate to ask for a particular recipe—Nunes is not a proprietary chef and gladly shares.

"A Canyon Ranch Woodside stay is different from a typical getaway," says Eastburn. "Guests find themselves on a wellness retreat, a journey of self-discovery that gently unfolds each day. More than ever, we need to press the "pause button" on our busy lives, step away from the stress, and learn ways to not only cope, but perhaps thrive in the face of adversity and challenge."





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TORO とろ



Carmel's Newest Hotspot

By Bettina McBee | Photos by Manny Espinoza

Carmel's newest attraction, Toro, offers authentic Japanese cuisine with a sake bar and is quickly gaining attention. Located in Carmel on Dolores between 5th and 6th Streets, this new eatery, designed by co-owner Kristen Ridout and inspired by co-owner Fadi Alnimri (also owner of Treehouse Café) is a dream come true for Ridout.

Ridout, who is 28, dreamed of owning a restaurant when she was a teenager working for International Cuisine in Pacific Grove. She met Alnimri there, and their friendship grew through their shared passion for fine dining and excellent customer service. After graduating from San Jose State University, where she studied hospitality management, Ridout gained years of experience while employed by several private, top-rated county clubs, including Monterey Peninsula Country Club, managing the culinary specifications of their exclusive clientele.

With a mixture of Chinese-American heritage and a youthful flair, Ridout adds a modern vibe to traditional Japanese dishes at Toro. Entrees are artistic presentations reflecting the traditional style of dining, with Ridout's own subtle details.

The menu is simple in that it serves authentic Asian cuisine, highlighting the best quality fresh fish and vegetables. Praised for its fresh ingredients, flavorful fish, seasonal vegetables, and top-notch customer service, Toro has been labeled "the new favorite restaurant in Carmel," boosted by online reviews that offer "bombalicious," "amazingly fresh entrees," and "AAA grade sushi." A customer who drove from San Jose stated that it was "well worth the drive."

Toro, Ridout explains, is the best part of the tuna belly. The name reflects the high quality of the restaurant's classic rolls with a modern flair, all moderately priced.

Unique menu selections include Toro hamachi carpaccio and oysters, dynamite fried spicy tuna, crispy unary eel, and, of course, rolls. The rice is delicious, as are the mouth-watering menu items: nigiri and sashimi. The Sake Bar, according to Ridout, is “a fun challenge, pairing wines and sake with all the different types of fish.”

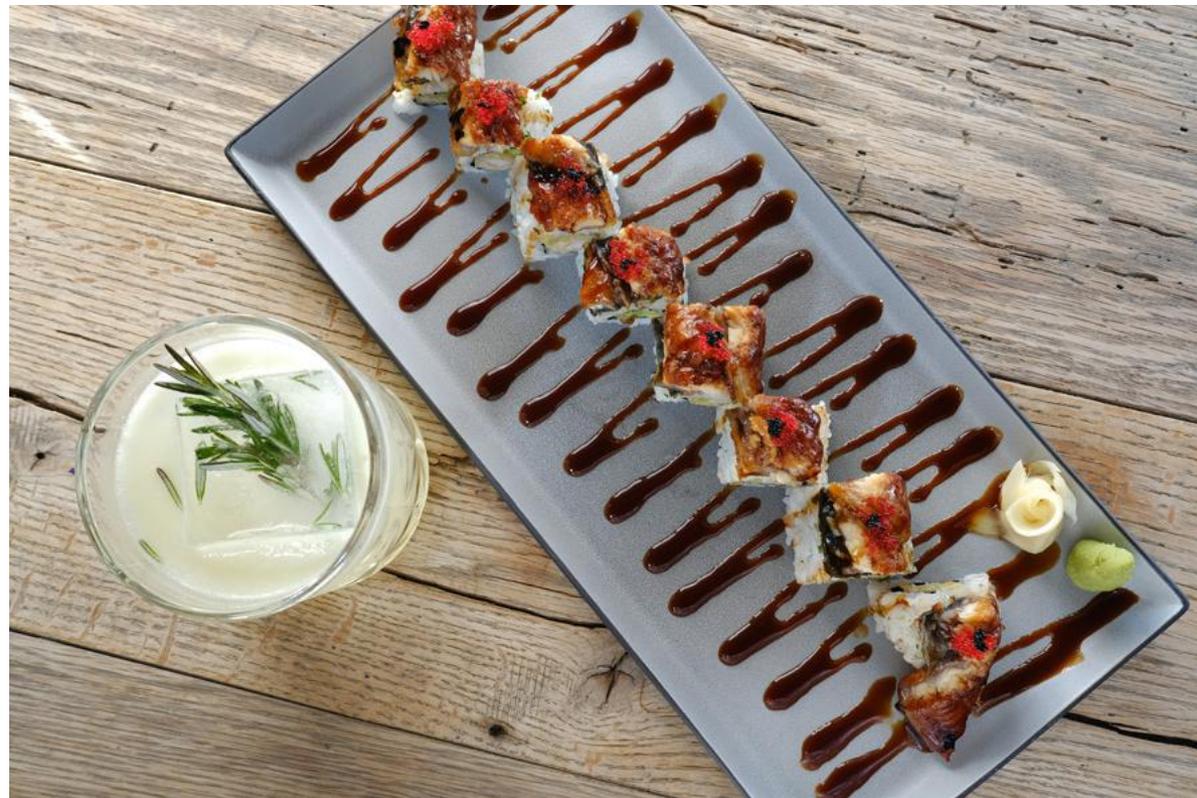
Ridout’s sommelier talents are expertly paired with the skills of her fiancé, Stephen Wilson. Together, they created a premium wine selection and unique sake tasting flight, as well as sake cocktails, offering a harmonizing twist to Toro’s ambience. For dessert, green tea ice cream and strawberry mochi ice cream top the list.

Dogs are welcome and have a menu of their own. They can choose either savory chicken or tasty salmon, either is guaranteed to make tails wag.

All food choices are eco-friendly, based on availability and sustainability. Included in the menu is a weight watchers selection. Combining different tastes and flavors to delight customer’s palates is Ridout’s objective. Chef Grant Kester is one of the newest additions, and the team at Toro is thrilled.

As the restaurant’s reputation grows, Ridout plans for it to evolve. “Toro is an embodiment of myself,” says Ridout, “I want everyone to feel welcomed as we strive to provide a great experience.” Outdoor dining is available as is ordering to go. Either way, you’ll be satisfied.

For more information, visit torosushicarmel.com.

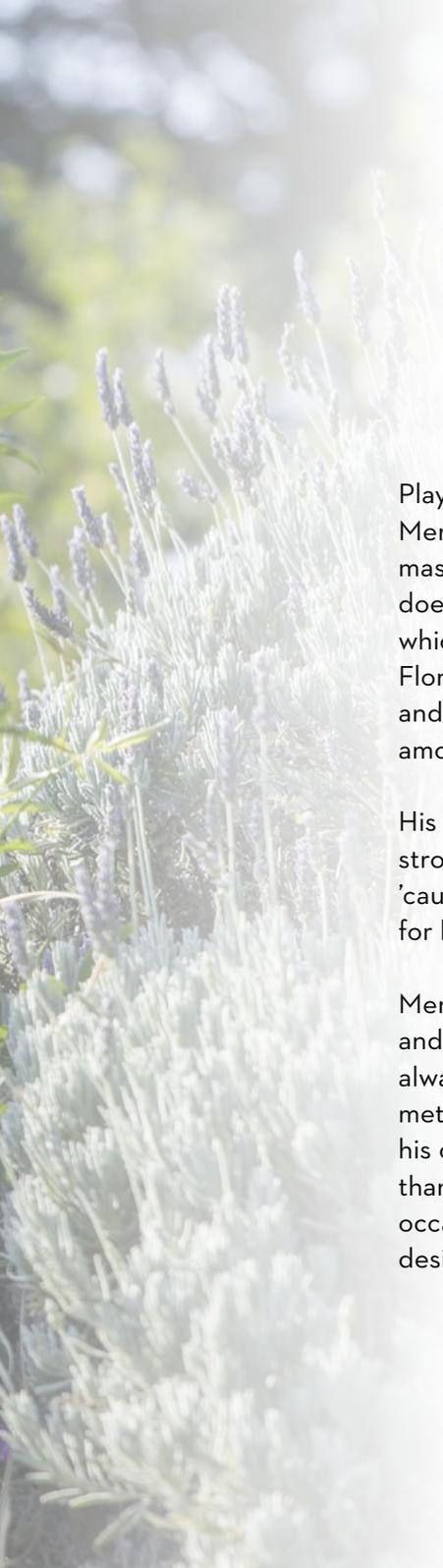






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Floral Masterpieces and Fresh Arrangements

By Nora Heston Tarte | Photo by Darren Lovecchio

Playful. That's perhaps the best way to describe the floral arrangements that concierge florist Michael Merritt (accredited member of the American Institute of Floral Designers, CFD) creates. They are masterpieces made from fresh florals, purchased directly from local growers. If you ask Merritt what he does for a living, he'll tell you he plays with flowers. "I never thought about it as work," he says of his job, which used to include a Carmel-by-the-Sea brick-and-mortar store. Under the Twigery-Michael Merritt Floral Art brand, he completes big jobs such as weddings, events such as birthdays, and get-well bouquets and home florals. He also completes art installations for places including the De Young Museum. "The amount of time I've been in this business, I've pretty much done everything," he says.

His inspiration can come from anywhere—a leaf he finds on the ground, a smell in the air on a neighborhood stroll, or the sound of birds pecking a nearby tree. "I'm probably the worst person to go on a walk with, 'cause I'm always stopping to pick something up," he laughs. Carmel itself has always been an inspiration for him, too.

Merritt holds a reputation as a skilled artisan, mixing color and texture to create eye-catching bouquets and other projects out various natural materials. While Merritt likes to be loose with his designs—he's always inspired employees to do the same, to avoid the formulaic look some bouquets evoke—there's a method to his madness. His clients' desires, the space in which he works, and the vessels that will carry his creations all inform the overall design. Attention to detail is a necessity. He will purchase more flowers than he needs to pick the best looking ones, and plan ahead so the flowers' freshness is on point for the occasion. Mostly, Merritt's love for life shines in his designs, as well as his happy-go-lucky attitude and his desire and ability to please those with whom he works.

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Manzoni Makes a Move

By Fran Endicott Miller | Photos by Tristan Babaian

The regulars and out-of-towners who routinely fill Manzoni Cellars' Carmel-by-the-Sea tasting room will no doubt be pleased with the extra space provided by its new 7th Avenue location. "We were extremely happy with our cozy San Carlos Street spot, but when this new Hampton Court space opened up just around the corner, we jumped," says proprietor Mark Manzoni.

The new tasting room—previously occupied by Holman Ranch—allows for double the occupancy of the old one. More customers can now fall for the lush, small production, award-winning wines that charm regulars, drop-ins, and the winery's devoted wine club members. But expansion ends there; Manzoni chooses quality over quantity in its small production portfolio of estate-grown Pinot Noir, Syrah, and Rose, Santa Lucia Highlands AVA-grown Chardonnay, and Manzoni's personal favorites: a Zinfandel sourced from Southern Monterey County and a Bordeaux Blend, Cuvee Louie, from Paicines. Tasting room visitors may purchase wines by the glass or a flight of four tastes. Charcuterie and cheese plates will soon be added to the menu.

"Our vibe is 'modern farmhouse,'" says tasting room manager Lisa Babaian. "It's very different from the old location. In addition to the added space, it is light, bright, and airy, with Edison lighting, leather bar stools, zinc countertops, sliding barn doors, and a wrought iron chandelier. It's very warm and inviting."

Manzoni oversees the Soledad-based winery with his wife, Sabrina, his brother, Michael, and his brother's wife, Kim. The four may be found within the Carmel tasting room at any given time, pouring and chatting with guests. Though he continues to work in the produce industry that originally brought his family to the area many years ago from Switzerland, Manzoni's passion is wine. "Our wine simply wouldn't exist if we didn't absolutely love it," says the third-generation Salinas Valley farmer. "We make wine that we, ourselves, would like to drink with dinner every night. That's really what it's all about."



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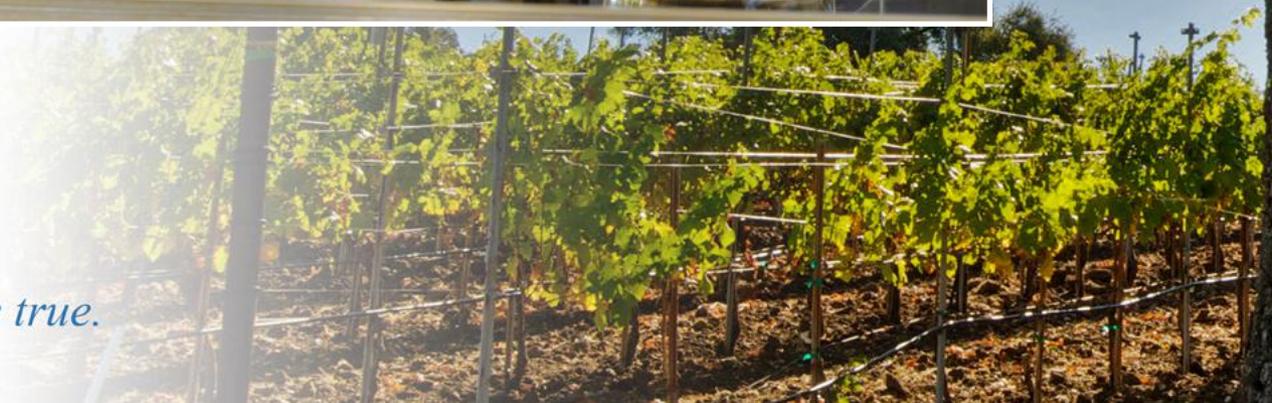




Photos by Manny Espinoza



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Carmel Highlands

If you're looking for open space and gorgeous surroundings, the Carmel Highlands are calling to you, most likely in the form of the sweet whistle off of the towering bluffs that flank the region's mini mansions. A luxurious seaside escape exists in the Highlands, South Shore, and Big Sur, hiding magical oases from plain view, with outdoor spaces that have been beckoning homeowners to the coast for decades.

No year, however, has been better than this. By October, there have been 28 listings sold in the Highlands, more than any other single year in the past 13 years, as people searched out space and beauty in California. Few call the exclusive properties in this coastal community home, but for those who want to sink into a life of peace and tranquility surrounded by teal blue lagoons, large sweeping cliffs, whitewater waves, vibrant sunsets, and natural ocean wildlife, Carmel Realty Company is the expert in finding your dream abode.

Average costs in this area clock in just under \$3 million, with 10 sales over \$5 million each since January 2020. Carmel Realty currently has five homes for sale in the Carmel Highlands, ranging from a \$2.3 million property to a \$12,950,000 property, each with its own flair. Features include wraparound porches with

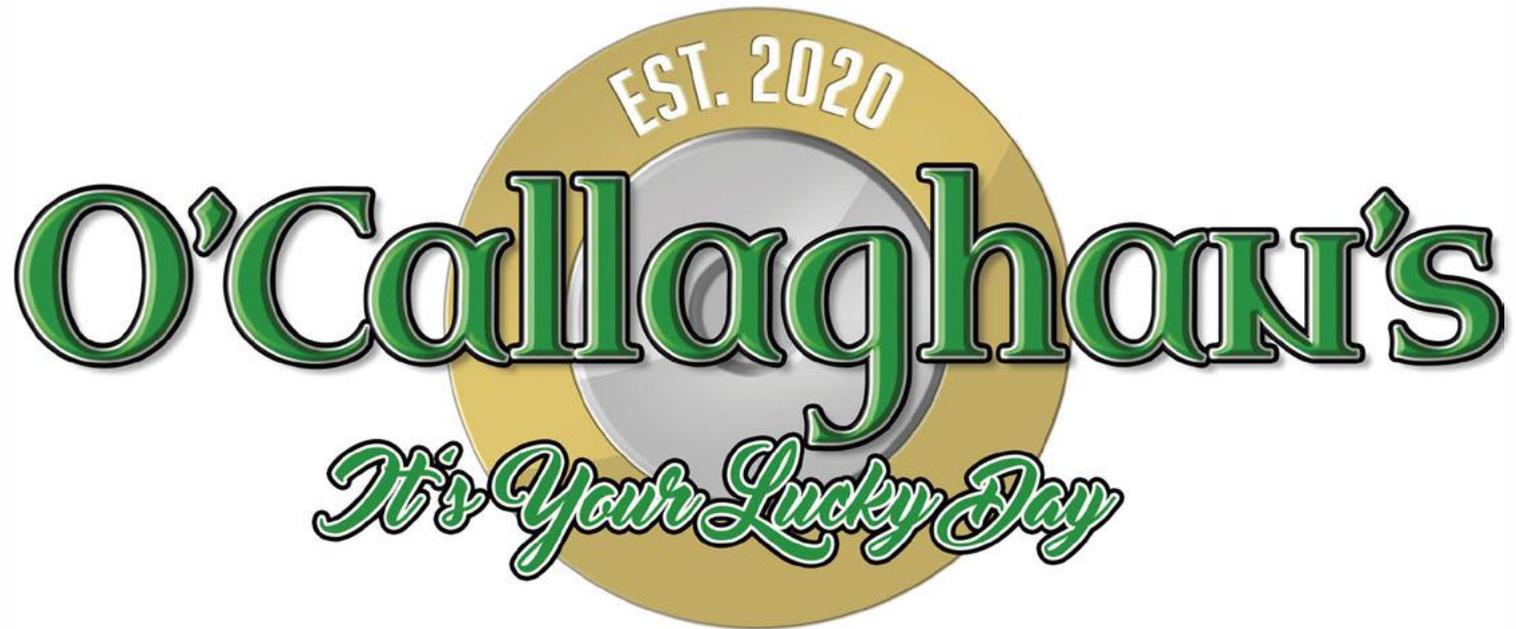
ocean views, floor-to-ceiling windows and infinity swimming pools expertly perched atop second-story decks, creating masterpieces of art enjoyed from every inch of these opulent properties.

Regardless of personal taste, there is sure to be something that catches your eye in the varied designs and styles of these generous homes. "Serenity" is the area's architecturally modern masterpiece, a contemporary home featuring elliptical curves and large sheets of glass that open to one-of-a-kind views of Wildcat Cove. A stark contrast is the Mondrian House, a stunning structure that boasts natural wood elements in a timeless design that marries sophistication and everyday living with access to a private beach.

Just a short ten-minute drive from the Highlands sits Carmel-by-the-Sea, featuring easy access to sophisticated restaurants, charming galleries, and eclectic shops that will become the background of your daily life on the Pacific coastline. If you find the place you want to come home to, don't hesitate. Many of the properties are being snatched up before they even hit the MLS.

Tour the homes on [estatesofcarmelhighlands.com](https://www.estatesofcarmelhighlands.com).

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Big Sur Food & Wine Festival

By Andrea Stuart | Photos by Michelle Magdalena & Michael Troutman



In early summer 2020, Big Sur Food & Wine Festival (BSFWF) made the difficult decision to cancel its yearly culinary event. The organizers began devising plans for 2021, as the shifting parameters of the current global pandemic continued to pose challenges. They put on their proverbial oxygen masks and prepared for an emergency landing into next year.

A project of the Big Sur Food & Wine Foundation, Inc., BSFWF's mission is to promote Big Sur "as a culinary destination, supporting the overall health, character, and vitality of the Big Sur community." Numerous nonprofits depend on BSFWF for financial support. In 2019, the festival raised \$100,000 for 12 local organizations that included Pacific Valley School and Big Sur Health Center.

As a result of having to cancel this year, the organization did not have the resources to provide its usual financial support, and consequently shifted its focus onto itself for funding. BSFWF is continuing to seek financial support in the form of grants and donations so it can plan for next year's activities, as well as exploring additional support platforms to draw long-term security for the organization.

One such campaign is seeking lifeline donors, that is, individuals or organizations with the financial resources to support the festival annually. This will enable the organizers to

promote the event and sell tickets earlier, which is pertinent in the evolving climate of uncertainty. "Historically, the bulk of our revenue came within a three-month timeframe leading up to the actual event," says Elsa Rivera, CFO and Events Director of BSFWF. Having relied on the generosity of private homeowners and commercial venues for hosting events in previous years—including Ventana Inn and Post Ranch Inn—the festival organizers are hoping that their supporters will be able to participate in the 2021 festivities.

Despite the challenges, next year's festival is taking shape. There are new considerations for a traditional three-day event, but Rivera and the other organizers are also considering segmenting the activities by hosting an opening night that is followed by a series of pop-ups. "One way or the other, guests can expect memorable winemakers' dinners, the Pinot Walkabout, Magical Mystery Tours, Hiking with Stemware, and likely a few more surprises," she says.

The foundation is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit charitable organization and runs on an all-volunteer staff. To inquire about opportunities, contact Elsa Rivera at 831-596-8105 or elsa.bsfw@gmail.com. To learn more about Big Sur Food & Wine Festival, bigsurfoodandwine.org.







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A cluster of red Christmas ornaments, including both shiny and matte finishes, hangs from a thin branch. The background is a blurred, dark outdoor setting. A large white temperature reading '57°' is overlaid on the right side of the image.

57°

MERRY CHRISTMAS

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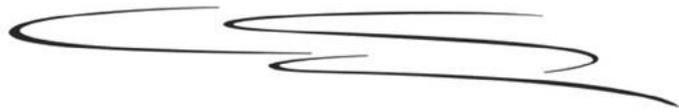


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ART

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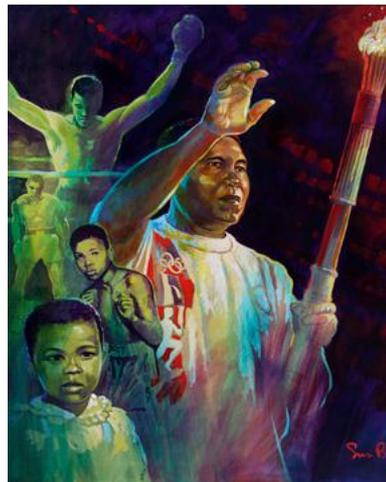
By Jennifer Moulaison

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PUBLISHER'S NOTE

By Rich Medel

Happy New Year, everyone. We're starting this year by thanking all of you for your loyalty and support. We are here because of you. And for that we are grateful beyond words.



the Monterey Peninsula for a visit at beautiful Canyon Ranch in Woodside, which offers retreat experiences with unique opportunities to unplug and reconnect with nature.

As usual, our appetites have led us down a delicious path. If you haven't already, you'll want to familiarize yourself with Toro for a sushi and sake experience that will blow your mind. Then, set another evening aside and put on your apron because Chef Tim Wood shares a recipe worthy of an award-winning cabernet. Speaking of wine, consider a trip to Manzoni Cellars' new tasting room in Carmel for a flight and charcuterie plate.

After a good meal, settle in to read about Sara Rianda, a local artist who's as creative with numbers as she is with charcoal. Then, venture a little way up from

Further north, in Sonoma check in at MacArthur Place, a ranch-turned-resort, that pays homage to its nineteenth century roots with a modern twist.

While there, pull up a chair and read our interview with Reagan Blackwood of Rombauer Vineyards. Part of the third generation to care for and run the winery, Blackwood has stepped into her role as the associate brand manager with appreciation for the vines her family planted decades ago. Keep your wine glass full because as you turn the pages, you'll also read about Stag's Leap Wine Cellars as it celebrates its 50th anniversary, continuing the legacy that it birthed during the 1976 Judgment of Paris.

This season wouldn't be complete without a visual stroll through the holidays via Bob McClenahan's holiday photography. We're grateful for his contributions this year. In another artistic vein, Simon Bull explains how his vivid Muhammad Ali series changed his life. And Brad Wright and Douglas Sterling share some of their vivid photography with us.

Finally, if you're craving a transoceanic experience with all the luxuries, allow My Yacht Group to tantalize you with their latest offering.

See you in 2021!

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THIS IS THE CITY

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POINTS

Wine Spectator



RED STITCH

Napa Valley
Cabernet Sauvignon

— 2015 —



The Christmas tree inside the caves at Far Niente.



The mustard in Carneros.



The vineyard at Calistoga Ranch.



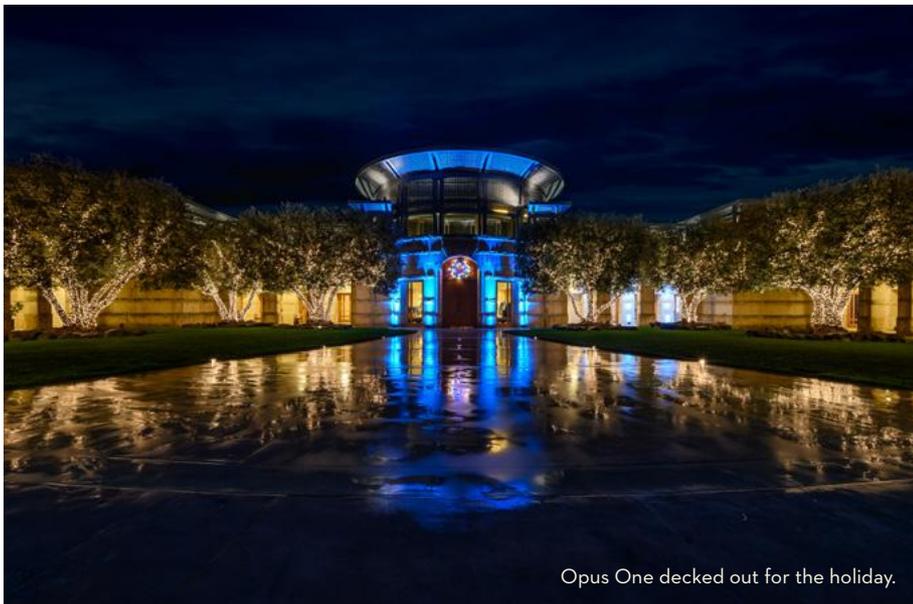
Downtown Napa.



The Riverfront.



"Grapes" still on the vine.



Opus One decked out for the holiday.



The mustard in Rutherford.

Holiday Vibes

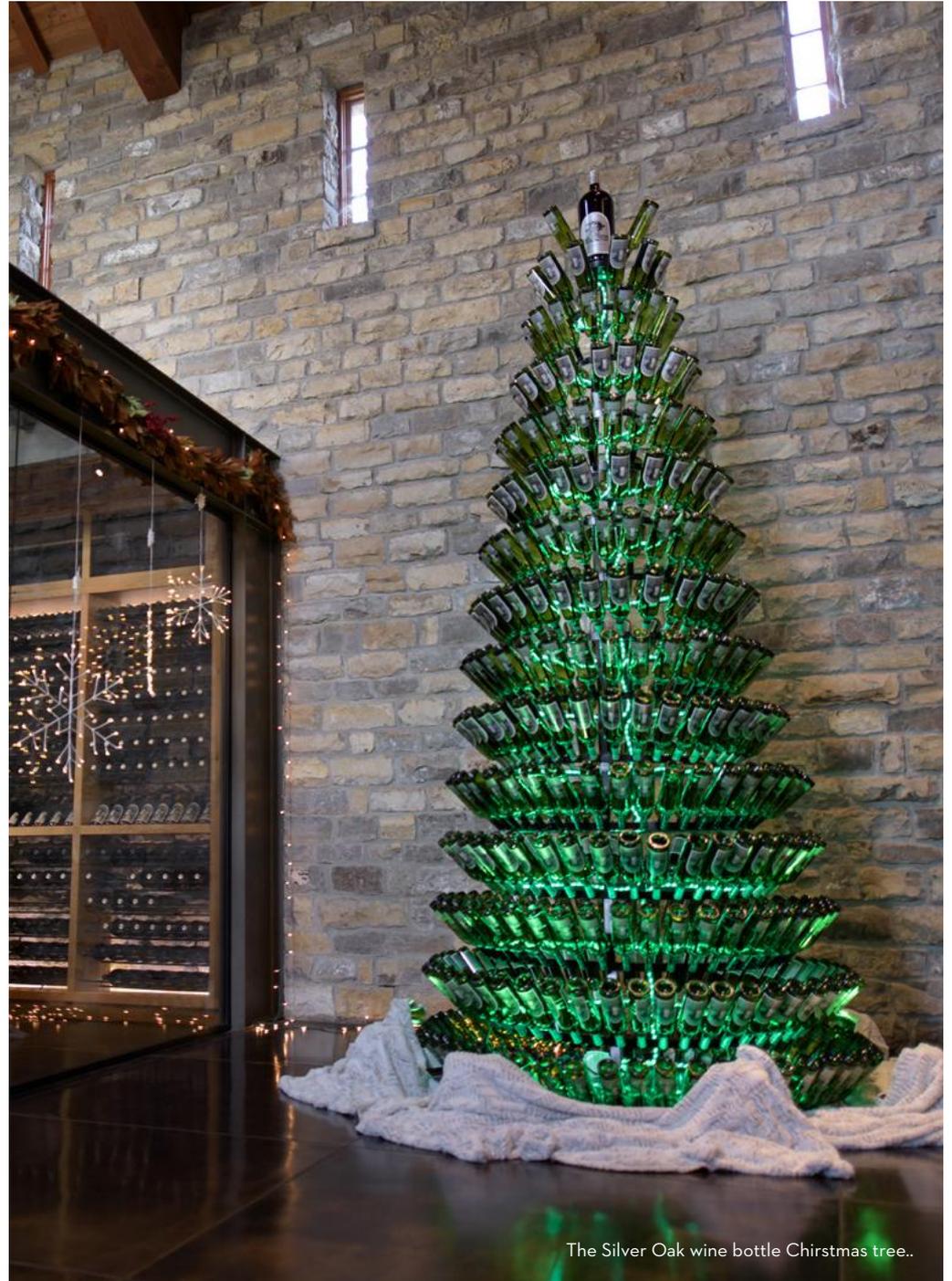
By Bob McClenahan

Holidays in Napa Valley are a special time, when things slow down, allowing us to reflect on the year and share memories with family and friends. And 2020 will not likely go down as a favorite year for, likely, anyone. And I think we're all looking forward to putting 2020 far, far behind us.

Around the Valley, a lot of wineries are decorated, and driving along Highway 29 is just dreamy, as the lights glow in the misty air. Calistoga Ranch lights up its vineyard with strings of twinkles. Far Niente has a beautiful Christmas tree hidden away in its wine caves. Cakebread has the entire Santa sleigh team on its roof. The Napa Riverfront is cheery and bright, and it's a great place to watch the lighted boat parade. Bunny Foo Foo is dressed up as Rudolph. The Wine Train rolls down the tracks on the way to the "North Pole," filled with families eating cookies and sipping hot chocolate. Yountville becomes the brightest town in the Valley during the Holidays in Yountville celebration.

Afterward, while the vines are still sleeping, the ground in between them blossoms with vibrant yellow mustard. Tourists pull off the highway and pull out their cameras to capture the stunning colors. The valley floor is carpeted in it, and the best way to see it is from a hot air balloon.

To view more work by Bob McClenahan, visit bobmcclenahan.com.



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A Master Photographer

By Nora Heston Tarte

Douglas Sterling fell in love with art at a young age. Born into a family of artists, he first dreamed of becoming a painter, but during a college photography course at Santa Rosa Community College, Sterling switched gears. His first photo assignment at 21 years old won a school competition. “That put the nail in the coffin,” says Sterling. “It just clicked for me.”

For the past 30 years, Sterling has honed his craft, becoming a master behind the lens as a prominent Bay Area photographer. His works include architectural, commercial, editorial, digital media, and fine art. His images subjectivize his themes and are intuitive and sensitive to design and aesthetic while remaining technical. “It’s the way I see light, form and shadows and how it plays on materials creating dimension to the subject, from architecture to editorial assignment,” he explains. Mostly he calls his process creative yet instinctual; often the final product plays on the translation of an overpowering mood, perfected by his inherent understanding of what to do behind a camera.

Sterling’s favorite moments include the once-in-a-lifetime shots where every element lines up. One such example comes from the day he shot Artesa for Sigma Architecture. It was late evening outside and Sterling predicted the shot before it happened. He

readied his camera and clicked just as the moon came into the frame over the apex on the entry portal. “It was just a magical time,” says Sterling.

The first day Sterling spoke to his (future) wife was the day he photographed the original Artesa building for Domingo Triay back in the '80s. She worked for the client, and after the shoot he went on a fishing trip to Alaska and brought back a salmon to cook for her. On their 25th wedding anniversary, he returned to Artesa for a second architectural shoot. “It’s come full circle,” he says.

When it comes to photography, Sterling is a master of balancing work and play. He knows the moment to be serious and focus on the shot, but he also knows how to keep the job light and fun. “[Clients] hire me not because I can focus a camera and take the picture, but because I am very creative,” Sterling says. Many of his images have appeared in magazines, books, brochures, digital media and private homes—a testament to his talent. “There is an excitement of being in that creative realm.”

For more information, visit douglassterling.com.







Photos by Bob McClenahan





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Detailed Luxury at MacArthur Place

By Fran Endicott Miller

If luxury is in the details, then Sonoma's MacArthur Place easily tops the list of Northern California wine country's most luxurious hotels. Nearly every aspect within the updated historic Sonoma property is custom, and every amenity is meticulously curated to promote elegant comfort, well-being, and freedom from stress.

MacArthur Place exudes a relaxed sophistication representative of its host town; locals describe Sonoma as what neighboring Napa Valley used to be—authentic and unspoiled. Grapes now fill the region, but Sonoma once was primarily horse territory, and MacArthur Place, formerly a nineteenth-century working ranch, embraces its original equestrian charm by paying homage to the farmhouse aesthetic while surrounding its guests in modern splendor.

Sixty-four rooms in 13 layout and size variations are found within 20 historic and contemporary buildings on the six-acre property. Furnishings, finishings, and artworks are thoroughly modern and tailor made. Several rooms feature private patios, wood-burning fireplaces, and outdoor showers. Sumptuous, overscaled furnishings are custom made in a soothing color palette of warm, creamy neutrals accented with taupe, pumpkin, and black. Bathrooms feature one-of-a-kind custom-designed millwork vanities in neutral limestone. Shower walls showcase Walker Zanger Café Collection tiles in a glossy milk finish, with organic toiletries supplied by Grown Alchemist of Australia.

The hotel hosts a trinity of culinary concepts, the star of which is Layla, an open, airy fine dining restaurant serving breakfast, lunch, and dinner. Beautifully lit with large picture windows and dramatic pendant lighting fixtures, Layla's modern design reflects its original nineteenth-century barn structure and is a stunning centerpiece and gathering spot. Layla's award-winning executive chef, Cole Dickinson, draws inspiration from Europe's southern Mediterranean region in his thoughtfully elevated dishes. As with every detail within the luxurious

resort, light fixtures, furnishings, and tabletop accessories are custom made. Jono Pandolfi Designs provides the handmade, understated, sophisticated tableware. Dramatic ceramic accent pieces are special ordered from Sloane Angell Studio in Los Angeles, and the alabaster fish platters are custom made in Egypt.

The Bar at MacArthur is a sultry and sumptuous jewel-toned lounge serving an inspired selection of classic cocktails, beers, and an all-day menu of traditional bar bites with a twist. And The Porch, MacArthur Place's all-day coffee shop and marketplace, features artisan brands of wellness, beauty, experiential, retail, and food and beverage offerings. This includes uncommon products from brands such as Moon Juice, Giddy Up Nuts, Wooden Spoon Herbs, Metta Good, Paper & Tea, The Floral Society, Bitter Girl Bitters, Jacobsen Salt Co., and BeeKeepers Naturals. Sonoma County roaster Acre Coffee provides the coffee, and an expansive tea menu features locally based Uppercase Tea.

Just four blocks from the boutiques, restaurants, and wine tasting rooms lining quaint Sonoma Plaza, MacArthur Place is perfectly situated for exploration by foot, bicycle (don't miss out on the complimentary use of the resort's Blix Electric Bikes), or car. Allow MacArthur Place staff to curate an off-the-beaten-path wine tour. Explore the many local trails, play golf or tennis, horseback ride, or take a hot air balloon tour high above the valley. Whatever your pleasure, a leisurely stroll through the hotel's own park-like setting is a must.

And when your stay has concluded, replicate the MacArthur Place vibe at home by purchasing the MacArthur Place candle. Custom created for the hotel by Parisian creative house Lola James Harper, its juniper fragrance perpetually wafts through the hotel lobby and evokes the resort's agrarian nature.

For more information, visit macarthurplace.com.



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Full Circle: An Interview with Reagan Blackwood

By Fran Endicott Miller

Reagan Blackwood, eldest grandchild of Rombauer Vineyards' founders Koerner and Joan Rombauer, was not initially drawn to a career in the family business. Though she fondly recalls her youthful days spent in the Napa Valley vineyards and at the winery, Blackwood, who lives in Dallas, had found a calling in residential real estate sales before being lured back to Rombauer, where she now serves as associate brand manager. As marketing strategist and the vineyard's representative at industry conferences and promotional and philanthropic events, Blackwood is proud to be representing the company her family founded 40 years ago.

65°: *Tell us your fondest memories of growing up in St. Helena at what is now an iconic winery?*

Reagan Blackwood: [When I was] growing up in the '90s and early 2000s, the winery was really starting to grow and see solid success. At that time, it was my family putting in all that they had to make the business work. When we first started the wine club, I remember my mom, grandmother, and me building boxes, putting in inserts, picking the wine, packing the boxes, and labeling them by hand. We would all be tired, have a few cuts from the boxes and tape gun, but proud of our work and excited to get our customers their wine. We grandkids always looked forward to harvest. My mom would . . . call us sick into school and take us to work with her to help pick fruit, pull out leaves, and ride with my grandfather, moving bins around on the



forklift [and all]. I can still remember the smell of harvest-sweet grape juice, pomace, fermentation, and diesel from the trucks and equipment.

65°: *Do you have a favorite remembrance of your grandfather?*

RB: When I was young, driving around with my grandfather in his blue 1957 Cadillac Biarritz, we would run errands, visit his friends at their wineries and homes, and have lunch at Tra Vigne . . . I remember listening to jazz and big band music on the radio as we drove. To this day, whenever I hear that music, I'm back in the car with my grandpa.

65°: *When did you have your first sip of wine?*

RB: I can't quite remember . . . but I do remember at holidays it was a big deal to me that I got a couple sips of watered-down Chardonnay.

65°: *Many children and grandchildren of vintners say they did not really*

know how unique their family business was until they ventured out into the world. When and how did you develop an appreciation for the winery?

RB: Many underappreciate their hometowns or how hard their parents work to build a life for their family until [they] leave, travel, go to school, work to earn [their] own money. It really wasn't until I graduated [from] college and worked a few other jobs that I

understood what a special business my family had built. A business where everyone has a shared goal, treats each other with respect, a feeling that we are all in this together, and a place of employment that people look forward to going to each day.

65°: *What did you do prior to returning to Rombauer full time?*

RB: In college, I worked a few part-time jobs, including tutor, bootcamp instructor, and office assistant . . . to build up my work experience and help pay the bills. Once I graduated with my business degree, my husband, Jake, and I moved to Ridgecrest, California, where he worked with the Navy weapons division. I interned with a local government contractor, that turned into a project management position. We moved to Las Vegas, where I received my real estate license and got my feet wet in sales. I really enjoyed helping people buy and sell their homes, and my schedule gave me flexibility to travel and spend more time helping with Rombauer Vineyards. Rombauer kept asking me to do more [while] my real estate career started taking off . . . I asked Rombauer for the opportunity to work for the company full time. I've now been back . . . for three years.

65°: *Is your Rombauer family connection known at work?*

RB: It is generally known that I am a Rombauer. I'm extremely proud of what my family has built, and it's very meaningful for people to meet a family member. We hear about many family-owned wineries, but sometimes I am the first real family member some buyers or customers have ever met from any of their favorite wineries. We are a humble and hardworking family, and everyone is very down to earth, so people enjoy meeting and connecting with us. In my day-to-day-life, [though], I fly under the radar.

65°: *Rombauer has remained family owned for 40 years. What are your hopes for the winery and the brand over the next 40?*

RB: It's the entire family's desire to keep Rombauer family owned for many generations. That takes a lot of planning and work, but my grandparents set a clear vision for our business that not only the family believes in but also our entire organization. It guides all the decisions we make.

65°: *You live in Dallas now—how often do you get to Napa Valley and what do you miss most about it?*

RB: This year, like most people, I'm not logging my usual frequent-flyer miles, but in a typical year, I'm there every other month or at least once a quarter. I miss a lot about the Valley on a daily basis, seeing friends and family I grew up with, favorite restaurants and shops. Every time I visit, I always pack my workout clothes and make a point to go on one of my favorite walks or hikes. There is nothing like the views over the mountains of the Valley in the morning or evening light.

65°: *How do you spend your spare time?*

RB: My husband and I are always flipping a house. Most of the time, we move in and improve it while we are living there, then move and sell it a year or two later. Currently, we are wrapping up our first house that we didn't actually have to live through the construction, so that was very luxurious. On the weekends, we love connecting and doing the construction work together, because most of the time our jobs keep us busy and apart. I also love the outdoors, working out, reading, and dining out with friends.





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A Natural Approach to Wine

By Nora Heston Tarte

Wine and food and well-being, it all goes together for a life well lived. That's the motto that vintner Gabrielle Leonhard O'Connell, winemaker and part owner of O'Connell Family Wines, lives her life by and influences her business. "Wine is a part of it, it's a huge part of it," she says.

Daughter of a German wine and food chemist and granddaughter of a European wine and food critic, O'Connell developed her palate at a young age, partly around the dinner table, as it's custom for many Europeans to give their children small sips of wine on special occasions. She later honed her craft with selective horticulture classes at the University of California Davis Extension in Napa, adding to her formal education that includes two degrees. "I took many, many classes and seminars over the years to develop my tasting abilities," she says. In 2000, O'Connell plunged into full-time wine making, producing her first vintage in 2003.

The O'Connell Family Estate vineyard property dates back to the 1850s and was designated as the best vineyard land in California by the California Agricultural Society (now the Department of Agriculture) in 1857. In the 1930s, the vineyard shuttered during Prohibition and remained inactive until O'Connell's family moved in. In the interim, silent movie actress Lenora Stern built a house that still stands on the property and was inspired by her New York Hampton roots and houses of her Hollywood friends including Ginger Rogers, Fred Astaire, and John Wayne.

O'Connell knew immediately what she would specialize in. "This is an extraordinary area specifically for cabernets," she explains, referencing the cooler climate in the southern part of Napa Valley benefiting from the San Francisco fog that seeps in from the bay. The climate also lends itself to an old-world style of wine, which O'Connell knows well due in part to her European roots.

Her approach to wine making sets her label apart from other Napa Valley cabernets. Long-aged, beautiful, big cabernets that speak for themselves without a lot of post-production influence are her specialty.

Her goal is to allow the varietal to shine. "By being in a cooler climate, we can slowly ripen our grapes so our varietal is the dominant character of wine. Instead of oak, butter, or jamminess, it's the elegance of the cabernet grape," she says.

Producing pure, balanced wines this way requires attention to detail. O'Connell says that winemaking starts with the soil—the entire estate is certified organic and sustainable—and soil that isn't well tended won't produce the award-winning wines she turns out. "Our first vintage immediately won a double gold from the San Francisco International Wine Competition," she says. That means the wine received a 100 percent gold score from the competition judges and another 100 percent gold from an elite panel of judges at the same event.

O'Connell is especially proud of her multi-vintage estate cabernet, OCFV INTE+GRA+TION 1, made using a challenging blending technique that not many winemakers tackle. "Maintaining a wine successfully in barrels for 11 years is a wine-making feat," O'Connell explains. It's an 82-case production featuring wines from 2005 to 2014. The finished product is divine—a tribute to the quality of the vineyard soil and the winemaking philosophy of minimalistic intervention. With 11 vintages in one bottle, O'Connell says the team successfully captured the essence of the historic estate vineyard. The multi-vintage approach was validated, as the wine received a 97 Robert Parker score. She will continue producing it every three years, with plans not to break 100 cases for each release.

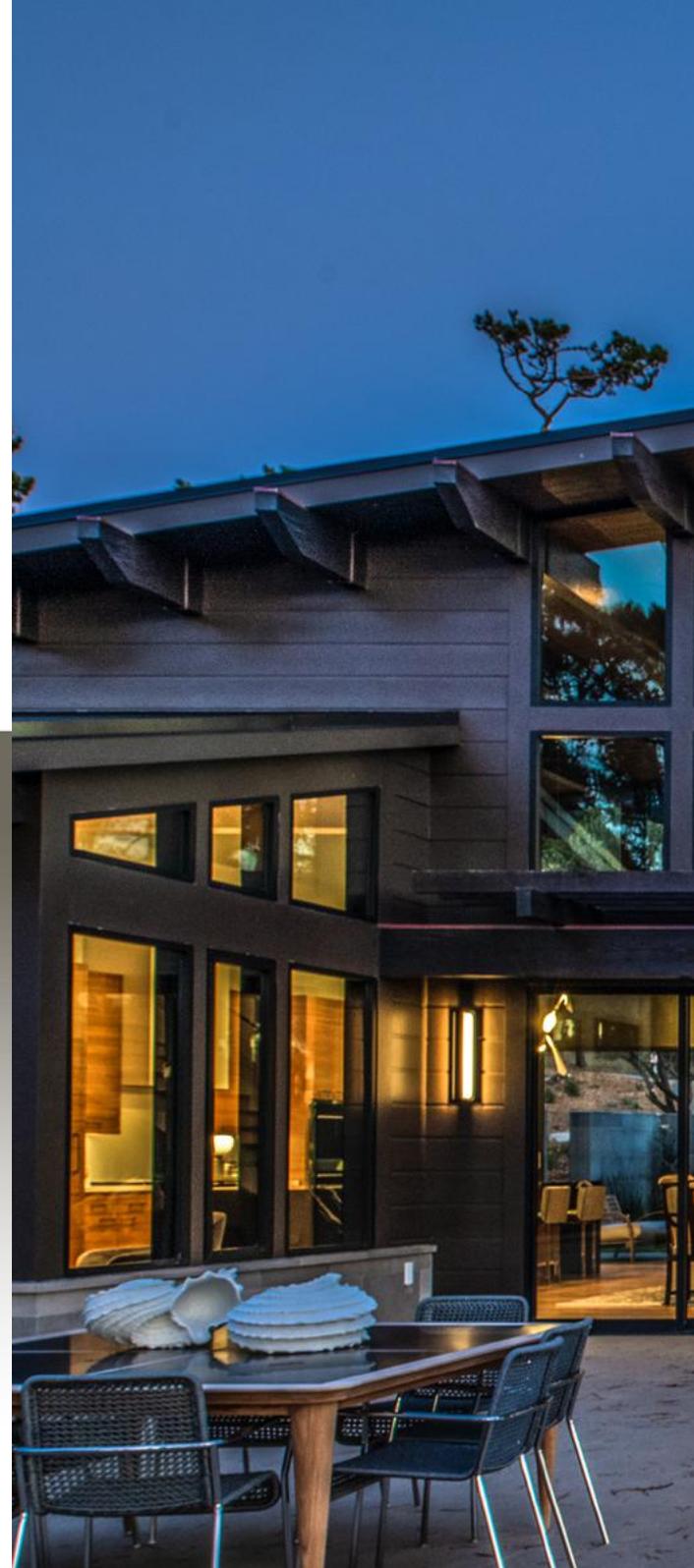
The vineyard is also one of few area wineries that do extended barrel aging, allowing wines to decide when they are done, often after three to four years in barrel instead of the standard two years. The tactic requires double the space, labor, and barrels, so it's quite a commitment to quality. This—along with O'Connell's winemaking techniques, organic and sustainability practices, and attention to soil quality—contributes to the success of her wines.

For more information, go to oconnellfamilywines.com.



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Finding Connection

By Nora Heston Tarte

Though located only one hour from San Francisco, Napa and Sonoma counties can feel a world away from the big-city inclusivity that surrounds the urban lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer or questioning (LGBTQ) community. For years, LGBTQ individuals would either seek solace in a place far from home or struggle in silence. In 2011, a young person decided to address the need for more inclusivity, connection, and resources for this underserved population. Thus, LGBTQ Connection, a nonprofit initiative of On The Move (OTM) devoted to uplifting the local LGBTQ community, was founded.

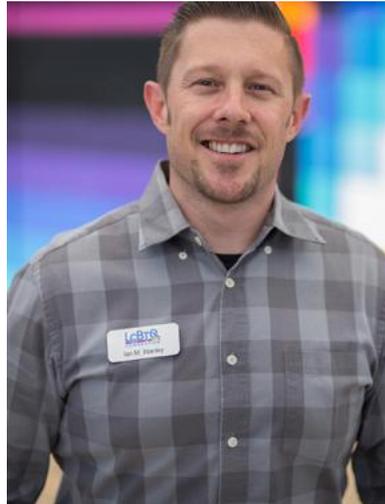
LGBTQ Connection has since grown to serve 3,500 LGBTQ people, their families, and their community each year. It also hosts trainings for prominent businesses in the region, teaching 500 trainees from local organizations across Northern California how to meet the needs of this population

“We believe that no one should have to hide out in or leave their hometown to find needed care or understanding,” says Program Director Ian Stanley Posadas. “Even though there are significant numbers of LGBTQ people in rural areas like Napa and Sonoma counties, many remain invisible or disconnected and face mistreatment.”

A big part of the organization’s efforts is creating a safe place for LGBTQ people of all ages to connect with others, build friendships, and explore themselves. Weekly youth socials address relevant social issues. “The topics each week align with what our young people are interested in and what is relevant in their lives at the time, such as hosting anything from back-to-school skills to TikTok dance parties,” says Isamar Alamilla, LGBTQ Connection’s youth program coach and advocate. Monthly socials hosted for seniors that were typically in person have been replaced by Zoom calls during the COVID-19 pandemic. There are program offerings in both English and Spanish.

“Our program is important because we help foster LGBTQ inclusion, acceptance, and connection. Without a hub, LGBTQ people [regardless of age] might feel isolated from others; we create spaces where all identities are seen, respected, and celebrated, helping people come together,” says Alamilla.

A youth leadership team caters to those aged 14 to 24 to encourage community involvement. It aims to give participants the courage and confidence to take on leadership roles as well as comfort in sharing their ideas effectively and standing up for their own opinions and rights. “On this team, youth and young adult leaders . . . identify a need in the community and propose a project or event to address that need, while we as coaches guide them to see their vision through to fruition,” says Alamilla. “By the end of the cycle, they have gained organizing skills, made friends, and feel accomplished for bringing about the change that they wanted to see.”



LGBTQ Connection’s Best Practices trainings educate top businesses on LGBTQ terminology and provide assistance in making organizational changes. Training attendees are often pleased with the results. “We’ve been wanting to make these changes for a while but didn’t know how or what needed to change,” says one attendee. “The presentation provided us with helpful tools and a guide that could simply align with our process.”

LGBTQ Connection is recognized by the state of California as a model program. “Youth participants report that the program has increased their confidence, helped them make unique and lasting friendships, got them more involved at school, grown trust and communication in their families, helped them to cope with stress, depression, and anxiety, and connected them with a vast network of affirming resources,” says Posadas.

The organization’s funding comes primarily through state and county government monies, regional foundations, philanthropic groups, small-business and corporate sponsorships, and local supporters. It host events including backyard *fogata* (firepit) night, Drag Queens of the Valley benefit show, youth Pride dance, intergenerational luncheon, and Latinx house party. All are designed to be fun while helping participants build meaningful connections outside of their usual social circles.

For more information, visit lgbtqconnection.com.











Fifty Years of Excellence

By Fran Endicott Miller

On May 24, 1976, a simple blind wine tasting changed the world of wine forever. Organized by an English wine merchant in celebration of American Bicentennial activities in Paris, the tasting, known as the Judgment of Paris, pitted high-quality French red Bordeaux and white Burgundies against California Cabernet Sauvignons and Chardonnays. The wines' identities were concealed until after the jury of nine French tasters had voted its order of preference.

The red winner was a 1973 Stag's Leap Wine Cellars S.L.V. Cabernet Sauvignon, which topped four highly ranked Bordeaux, including first-growth Château Mouton-Rothschild and Château Haut-Brion—a bottle of the winning wine is part of the permanent collection at The Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of American History. At the time, the result was inconceivable, and today it continues to be cause for celebration within the Napa Valley and especially at Stag's Leap Wine Cellars, which celebrates its golden anniversary this year.

Since its founding in 1970, Stag's Leap Wine Cellars has exhibited an unwavering commitment to its S.L.V. and FAY estate vineyards. As a result, the terroir shows through in the grapes' characteristics. Today, its CASK 23, S.L.V., FAY, and ARTEMIS labels are among the most highly regarded and collected Cabernet Sauvignons in the world.

Nathan Fay first cultivated Cabernet Sauvignon in the Stags Leap District in 1961, discounting opinions that the area was too cool for red Bordeaux varieties. The area proved to be perfect for yielding grapes with luscious dark-berry fruit aromas and flavors, firm yet supple tannins in the wines, and structure that promises longevity in the cellar. A tasting of Fay's exceptional homemade Cabernet in 1969 led the winery to purchase and plant the adjoining ranch, now

known as S.L.V. In 1986, Stag's Leap Wine Cellars bought Fay's 66-acre vineyard and named it FAY in his honor. Today, it remains one of the great Napa Valley vineyards, producing fruit with an abundance of supple red and blackberry character, perfumed aromas, and seductive, fine-grained texture.

"Everything begins in the vineyard, and then it all comes together in the cellar," says Stag's Leap Wine Cellars winemaker Marcus Notaro, who joined the winery in 2013. "You need to do what the vineyard and the vintage tell you to do. It's important to me that, when you taste our FAY and S.L.V. Cabernet Sauvignons, you are tasting the true vineyard character."

Notaro first visited Stag's Leap Wine Cellars during his college years. "I knew I had to see this iconic winery and taste its wines," he says. "When I was the winemaker at Col Solare [Stag's Leap Wine Cellars' sister property], I started tasting the Stag's Leap Wine Cellars wines and visiting more often. When the winemaker position opened, I jumped at the chance to come to this winery to carry on the rich legacy."

Napa Valley visitors are invited to sample Stag's Leap Wine Cellars' award-winning varietals at the winery's FAY Outlook & Visitor Center. Located along the iconic Silverado Trail, the center features spectacular vistas overlooking the historic vineyards. "The tasting room makes the connection between wine and place," says Notaro. "Visitors can stand on the deck and see the Stag's Leap Wine Cellars story. And the elevated customer experiences drive home that connection. A visit to the estate is magical and beautiful, and the fiftieth anniversary is the perfect reason to come celebrate with us."

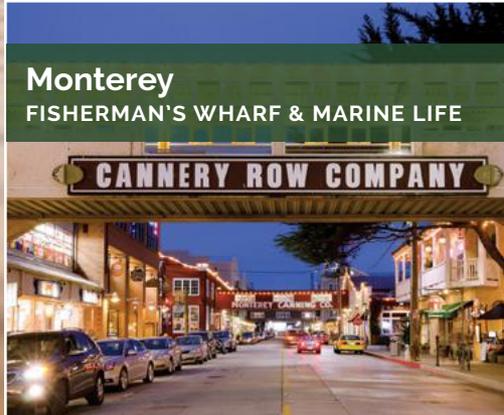


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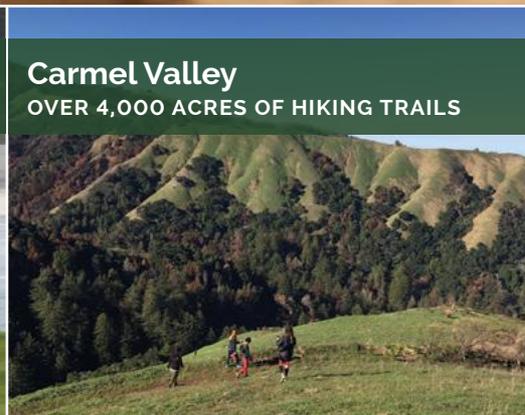
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Local Perspective for Success

Denise Paulson is a real estate agent and a residential real estate coach in the San Francisco Bay Area. As such, she offers private residential real estate coaching via her customized program for new and experienced real estate agents who are looking to pivot to an updated or new business plan. She



also works with recent college graduates looking to break into real estate in the lucrative Bay Area market. “I’ve always coached others throughout my 21-year career as a real estate agent. I have lifted many agent’s careers along the way,” explains Paulson.

Paulson steps into her student’s shoes, guiding them to becoming the best at supporting their clients. She empowers them and helps them move forward in a fast and concise program. Her current students refer to the program as direct, changing their “fake it until you make it” way of growing their businesses into a foolproof plan of action. As part of the coaching lessons, Paulson covers residential leasing and how it can empower and help grow an agent’s business.

Paulson offers two tips while you contemplate taking her 90-day course: One, get started to get ahead. Two, trust the timing of your life. You, too, will become financially secure ahead of the curve.

Paulson was born and raised in San Francisco and is a fourth-generation San Franciscan who loves her city and has never moved away. California has always “opened her arms” to make people stronger, better, wealthier, and more beautiful.

For more information, visit denisepaulson.com and follow her on Instagram @denisepaulsoncoaching.





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**Denise Paulson
DRE: 01268099
415-860-0718**



181 Fremont

181 Fremont is known as the most well-constructed building in San Francisco's South Beach neighborhood, winning awards for Best Structural Engineering and Best Geotechnical Engineering. This is in addition to their Awards of Excellence for Best Tall Building, MEP Engineering Award, Structural Engineering Award, Fire and Risk Award, and Geotechnical Engineering Award. This home has 2 bedrooms and an office (built-in desk and storage), 2 full baths ensuite, and a half bath for guest use. The details are like no other including, modern wall finishes (level 5), professional lighting throughout, custom closets and motorized window treatments. Finishes come from sources around the world including, France (handmade front door handle), Brazil (durable kitchen countertops),

and Italy (bathroom marble). Amenities include sophisticated security protocols, a full floor of offerings including a well-outfitted fitness center, conference rooms, and a dining room for entertaining. Outdoor seating is available on four corners on the amenity level. Allow me to take you on a tour of the building with you where you can view the homes that are for sale.

Denise Paulson DRE: 01268099 | 415-860-0718

**181 Fremont \$24,000 per month 58th floor.
Offered unfurnished at \$24,000 per month.
Available furnished at \$30,000 per month.**





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Napa Valley River Walk into Napa Town Center

By Karen Aiken

If you're eager to explore Napa's world-class dining, shopping, and wine tasting, allow me to guide your next Napa experience.

Begin at Kennedy Park for a three-mile river walk through the riverside habitat along the Napa River. Abundant in waders and waterfowl, such as mallards, heron, and egrets, the walk will take you to downtown Napa at the beautifully engineered flood gates of Oxbow Preserve at First Street. Home to concerts and weddings in non-pandemic times, it serves to hold floods that typically occur every couple of winters.

Begin your shopping adventure at the unique wine tasting room, Gabrielle Collection taste +, where you'll be warmly welcomed with a chilled glass of Sauvignon Blanc on their stunning terrace. While there, consider doing early Christmas shopping and peruse their estate-grown lavender, herbal bath and body products, olive oils, charcuterie board items, and herbal salts and peppers.



When you're done, proceed to Blackbird Vineyards and Art Gallery just past my favorite restaurant, Morimoto, for a wine tasting. Their logo came from the Beatles' famous song "Blackbirds." The beautiful artwork adds a visual dimension to this special tasting experience.

After passing charming restaurants and cafes, head to Acumen Wine Gallery. Allow yourself to be tempted by the kayak rental station or move straight to tasting the age-worthy Acumen Bordeaux varietals in a stylish lounge. You'll be wowed by their famed Atlas Peak AVA wines while surrounded by exceptional art during an intimate and casual tasting.

Finally, visit Ackerman Family Vineyards at the Ackerman Heritage House, a stunning, restored Queen Anne Victorian mansion a bit off the beaten path. The tour culminates in an educational wine tasting experience. They also offer high tea by reservation, which adds elegance to the experience.

Every visit to Napa has the potential to be new. Visit a winery you've never been to, try a restaurant not yet tasted, or take to nature on foot or bicycle along the myriad trails that wind through the Napa Valley countryside.





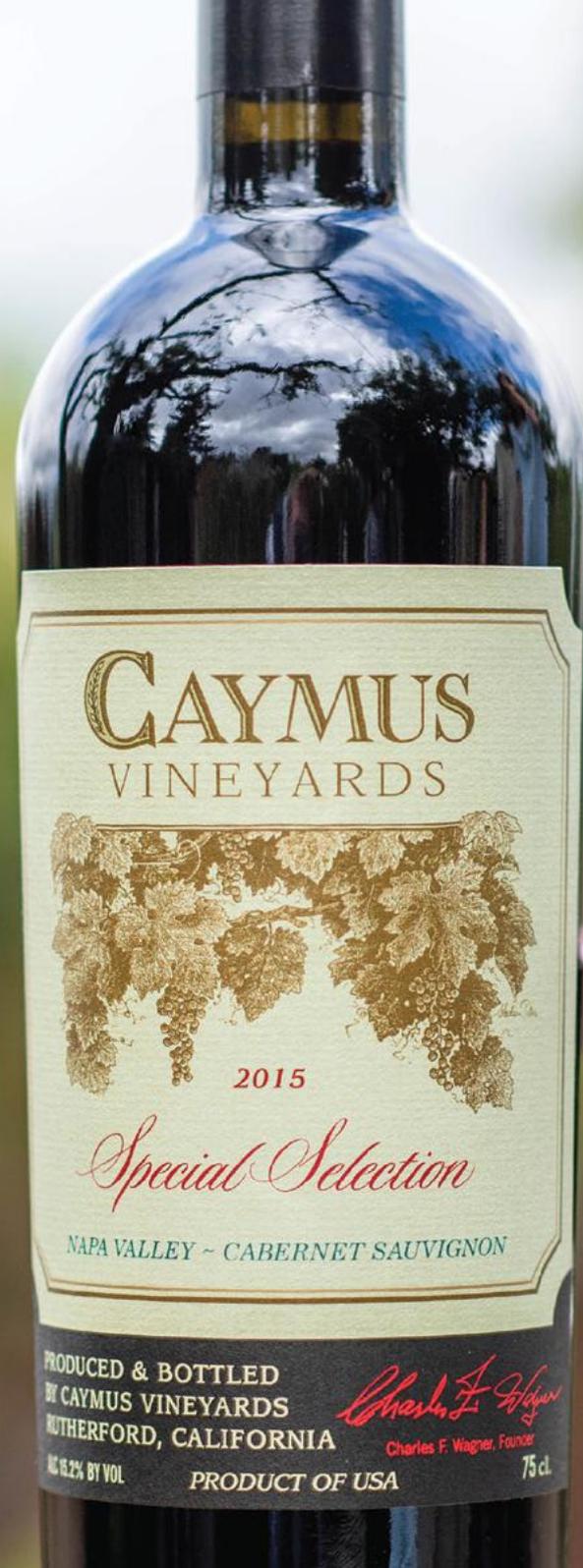




Photos by Bob McClenahan



*Chuck, Charlie & Jenny Wagner
Napa Valley, CA*





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Wish You Were Here

By Fran Endicott Miller

Each cork in every Brasswood Estate wine features the phrase Wish you were here. It's a sentiment shared by Brasswood fans, who also wish they were there, opening their bottle within the large, convivial St. Helena campus, where the best of food and wine is always within arm's reach.

Since its 2016 opening, Brasswood's vineyards, caves, wine-making facility, sensory room, art gallery, bakery, and bar and restaurant have served as a living room of sorts for the area—a 57-acre living room with 17,000 square feet of wine caves. Known as the “wine and food village of Napa Valley,” it's a one-stop shop, offering tastes and glimpses of the best that Northern California wine country has to offer. Brasswood's concept is simple: celebrate the local bounty by making elegant wines, cooking delicious food, and creating a warm, welcoming space where guests can relax, slow down, and enjoy the finer things in life.

This amalgam of food, wine, and culture is the brainchild of restaurant and wine industry veterans Marcus Marquez and Stacia Dowdell. The duo met in 2012, while Marquez was opening and developing Goose & Gander in St. Helena. Their primary goal with Brasswood was to create a space in which locals felt at home and where guests' needs and requests were anticipated. Their goal has been achieved, as an estimated 70 percent of Brasswood's clientele live within the Valley.

Moreover, Brasswood welcomes visitors with open arms, and the restaurant's palpable sense of community spirit provides an authentic Napa Valley experience. “Imagine you are visiting Napa for the first time, and as you bite into our luscious mozzarella al minuto,

your server tells you that the wine you are enjoying was made by the person at the table next to you,” says Brasswood's executive chef, David Nuno. “Visitors get to connect with the Valley in a way that isn't often accessible. We are proud of that.”

The atmosphere at Brasswood Bar + Kitchen is upscale yet cozy. The sociable vibe is palpable and is accentuated by a unified hospitality team. Most of the staff have been together for years. Nuno formerly worked at Domaine Chandon under Philippe Jeanty for 17 years and at Valley favorite Tra Vigne for 11 years, and there he honed his craft for making crave-able, delicious Napa-style comfort food with an Italian flair. Brasswood menu favorites include the warm egg and Brussels sprout salad, roasted beet salad, pork and beef meatball on three cheese polenta, herb crusted lamb chop, made-from-scratch pastas, and the famous house-made mozzarella, a secret, must-have menu item. Naturally, every dish can be complemented by local and imported wines and fun, thoughtful, and creatively crafted cocktails that often feature an element from the Brasswood garden. Nuno's illustrious background notwithstanding, working at Brasswood is his dream come true. “The great assistance from my two sous chefs and pastry chef, the excellent team we've put together, and being able to create my own dishes is always inspiring,” says Nuno.

“I love when our guests tell us how comfortable and welcomed they feel at Brasswood,” says Marquez. “I always strive to create a leisure atmosphere that allows everyone to soak in all of the great sensations that the restaurant and the entire property deliver.”

For more information, visit brasswood.com.

LODGE AT THE PRESIDIO

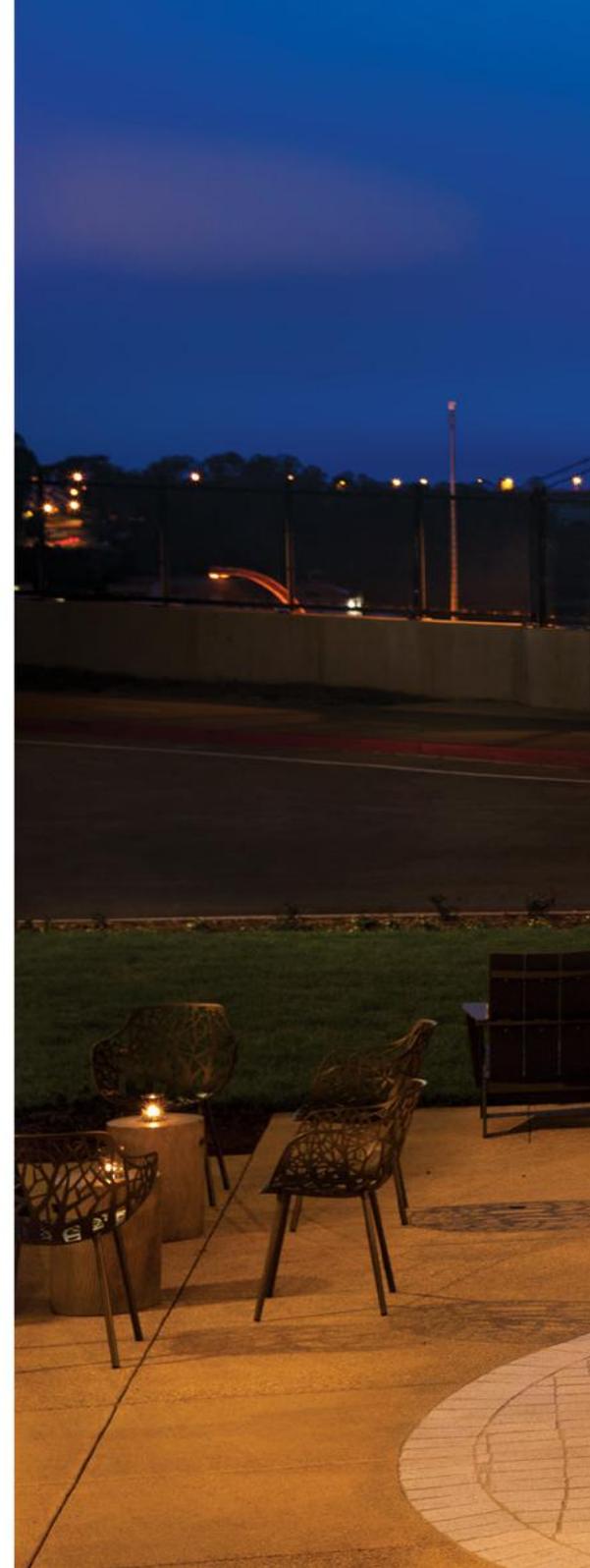


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Simon Bull's Muhammad Ali

By Jennifer Moulaison | Photo by Darren Lovecchio

When it comes to an iconic personality such as Muhammad Ali, few among us are unfamiliar with his legacy. Not merely a champion boxer, Ali leveraged his celebrity to benefit his philanthropic endeavors and civil rights awareness. For internationally renowned abstract artist Simon Bull, the task of portraying one of the most significant figures of the twentieth century was no simple undertaking. And from the fusion of Bull's unapologetically vibrant technique and Ali's larger-than-life persona emerged a striking series of portraits.

Bull, whose agent at the time was acquainted with Ali and his wife, Lonnie, coordinated what turned out to be an advantageous merchandising collaboration, using Bull to create a series of portraits for Ali to sign. Shortly after Bull completed the project, he received a phone call from Lonnie and Ali asking that he create portraits of Ali for their home.

"It was a thrilling compliment, and I was delighted at the opportunity," says Bull. Leaning into the brilliant use of color for which he is known, Bull set out to capture Ali throughout the stages of his life. "It was a particularly unique privilege to create the only chronology of Ali's life, from when he was a child to when he was matured before his death. However, I encountered that all of the images from his youth were only the cliché black-and-white photos, with which everyone was already so familiar," says Bull. He wanted to rejuvenate those images and

present them in a way that was, in his words, "shocking, so that viewers were compelled to engage with the image[s] in a way they never had done before."

Bull drew inspiration and direction for the series from the Fauvist art movement, in which artists used color to evoke emotion. "Fauvism turned familiar images on their ear through the use of color. A horse wouldn't be brown. It would be a bright primary red," explains Bull. This approach, combined with the inspiration of Ali's legacy, manifested beautifully in the oversized portraits. "He was obviously a social justice warrior and forged his own path. His career started and emerged out of a desire to set something right, and through that gained such universal appeal. Not everyone loved boxing, but everyone could align with what Ali believed in," he says.



Beyond the prestigious professional achievement, the collaboration provided was the exceptional personal experience of the project. "It was such a pleasure to work with Ali and Lonnie," says Bull. "They sort of adopted me, which I could never quite get my head around, but having me on stage, unveiling paintings with them, or inviting me up to Vancouver to speak on their behalf at the film festival were such unforgettable experiences. I kept thinking, 'I'm just the guy who paints the pictures, how did this happen?' I'll be forever grateful for the experience."

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Bend, Oregon



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- 2 bed/1 bath apartment
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- Kitchen & laundry
- Private entrance w/ patio
- Nearby trails, golf, skiing
- Includes wine, coffee, tea, fruit
- Pet-friendly
- 7 miles from downtown Bend
- Overlooks national monument



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The Ultimate in Social Distancing

You've been telecommuting and Zoom-ing for the past however-many months. The kids are going stir-crazy (though perhaps not as much as their parents), and everybody needs a safe place to escape, relax, regroup and recharge. With a possible La Niña winter forecast, you may be better off ditching Aspen and opting instead for Aspen Alternative, particularly with interest rates at an all-time low.

Custom-built by Trinity Yachts of Gulfport, MS, M/Y Aspen Alternative is a tri-deck, 164-foot (49.99 m) motor yacht built in 2010 to the highest specifications, with interiors by award-winning Canadian designer Sylvie Charest, presented in turnkey condition following an expansive 2016 refit. With continual upgrades and improvements since then (including brand-new exterior cushions throughout and refinished teak furniture), this is a serious pedigree yacht.

If her luxurious modern design, expansive decks and lounges, and large Jacuzzi look familiar, it might be due to her supporting role in *Overboard*, the 2018 remake of the 1987 movie that starred Goldie Hawn and Kurt Russell. Indeed, with her exquisite woodwork, oversized windows, and fine attention to detail, a starring role would have been more fitting.

Stepping on board, you're greeted by a vast aft deck with raised seating offering panoramic views, a prime spot to watch the (socially distanced) world go by. Enter the yacht through sliding doors, and the bright main salon welcomes you with rich polished woods and neutral furnishings with nautical blue accents.

Ahead is a formal dining space for 10, with service buffets and concealed access to the crew pantry and a modern galley that is fully equipped and finished to guest standard. An elegant stairwell connects all key guest spaces, leading from the main salon forward to the owner's full beam, on-deck suite featuring a private study, oversized walk-in wardrobes, and large marble bathroom with a Jacuzzi bath, walk-in shower and double vanity. The remaining four guest cabins uniquely offer two King VIP cabins plus another King and Twin, all with the same stunning décor of neutral tones, varnished woods, nickel trims, marble countertops, and modern entertainment systems.

Vast communal spaces provide endless opportunity to relax together or enjoy quiet time apart. The full beam sky lounge is wonderfully light and bright, boasting large windows, a wet bar, two separate seating areas, and a 52-inch flatscreen with

full Crestron® and Kaleidescape entertainment systems, while outside, the large rectangular teak table is home base for family meals and on-deck dining.

Continuing skyward, sun worshippers will find their happy place with ample room for chaise longues, the large aforementioned hot tub, plus a happy hour (or any hour), friendly, built-in bar with polished stone seating; plus BBQ, dumb waiter, and air-conditioned day head. If your idea of an escape is to swim, then the yacht's large swim platform offers easy access for all your favorite watersports.

Boasting transoceanic capabilities (a semester at sea, anyone?) with a semi-displacement hull design, quantum zero speed stabilizers, and twin Caterpillar engines, she cruises at 15 knots, with a top speed of 18 knots. Perhaps most appealing is her newly reduced price: fresh off a \$500,000 reduction, M/Y Aspen Alternative is offered at \$1,740,000 by a motivated seller.

For more information, contact Yachts@MyYachtGroup.com.

M/Y ASPEN ALTERNATIVE SPECIFICATIONS

Price: \$17,400,000

Current Location: Newport RI

Builder: Trinity

Model: Tri Deck Motor Yacht

Exterior Designer: Trinity Yachts LLC

Interior Designer: Sylvie Charest

Classification: American Bureau of Shipping

MCA Compliant: Yes

Engines: 2 x Caterpillar3512-B-E-Rated

Fuel Capacity: 17,345.00 Gal

Water Capacity: 2,676.00 Gal

Gross Tonnage: 459

L.O.A: 164' (49.99m)

Beam: 28' (8.53m)

Draft: 7' 8" (2.34m)

Hull Material: Aluminum









Photos by Drew Altizer