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THE RADAR WEEK ENDER

BY GILLIAN FLYNN



SUITE AND LOWDOWN: The latest Auberge property, Solage.



NOUVEAU NAPA *Wine Country gets a dose of hip thanks to starchitects, cabanas and... MTV*

CALISTOGA CHIC

"This sleepy little village of Calistoga is about to change," quips local restaurateur Mark Young in his new Bar Vino (www.bar-vino.com), where he doles out small plates and select pours from La Sirena, the "It" label from Screaming Eagles cult winemaker Heidi Peterson Barrett. This—or perhaps the local grocer's upgraded cheese section—should have been the ultimate proof of the tiny town's growth. But the dead giveaway? Locals in a bumbling pickup truck, yelling, "Tourists!" as we parked on Lincoln Avenue. (So maybe the convertible Mustang was not the ideal rental car.) Known more for its rustic mud baths, Calistoga is the latest Wine Country burg to undergo a chic makeover, thanks in part to Young's four restaurants, as well as the upcoming Solage hotel (*rates from \$325; www.solagecalistoga.com*), slated to open in July. The San Francisco-loft-meets-farmhouse property from the Auberge group will boast mud Mojitos, spa potions from the celeb-stamped Kate Somerville, and—families, listen up!—a kiddie pool and luxury linens for doggie. It is also the model for a massive rollout: five Solages in five years, with Cabo up next. Weddings are already booked for the mod barn with retractable glass doors, and the menu from chef Brandon Sharp, formerly of Gary Danko, will feature twice-daily snipped arugula from Forni Brown Gardens just blocks away.



NEW LOOK: The Restaurant at Meadowood.

THE INN CROWD

Reality TV has become, well, reality, even in the Wine Country. On a recent trip to the Inn at Carneros (*rates from \$480; www.thecarnerosim.com*), MTV had cameras on rapper Nas and his milkshake-brings-all-the-boys-to-the-yard wife, Kelis at the lap pool overlooking Pinot vineyards. What they ordered poolside, a dozen In-N-Out burgers, clearly should have been skipped for the fare at Farm, the hotel's newest be-seen restaurant, where glass fire pits are flanked by valley insiders. Keeping up with the Napa Joneses, the inn added a second pool with cabanas—thankfully first-come, first-served—along with fractional properties. Meanwhile, granddaddy Meadowood in St. Helena (*rates from \$550; www.meadowood.com*) is making up for lost time with its new Restaurant, where diners enjoy nothing short of brilliance from chef Joseph Humphrey, who pairs lobster with squab and antelope with spiced avocado mousse. Another original, Auberge du Soleil (*rates from \$525; www.aubergedusoleil.com*), stays in the picture with a sparkling new pool and revamped suites. **A**



GOING GEHRY: Hall Family Winery.

VINO, VIDI, VICI: THE VALLEY BUZZ

HALL FAMILY WINERY The countdown is on for 2009, when Frank Gehry is set to open his rambling Hall Family Winery (www.hallwines.com). The Halls (Kathryn is a former U.S. ambassador to Austria; Craig, a real-estate tycoon), own a whopping 3,300 valley acres and have also acquired La Residence, a luxury inn just to the north.

AETNA SPRINGS RESORT The latest Mondavi project comes courtesy of Michael, who, along with Billy Getty, has grand plans for the legendary Aetna Springs Resort in Pope Valley (www.aetnapreserve.com). Built in 1873 as an upscale retreat, it's slated to reopen in 2008 as a private club, with a cocktail lounge in the old soda fountain, a golf clubhouse and a winery.

CASTELLO DI AMOROSA Anyone who's ever picnicked at V. Sattui winery in St. Helena across from Dean & DeLuca has been anxiously awaiting the castle of love. After \$30 million and 12 years, Daryl Sattui's mountaintop Castello di Amorosa (www.castellodiamorosa.com) opens this month. Located off Highway 107, it includes 107 rooms, Italian frescoes and a dungeon (iron maiden not included).

DOMAINE CARNEROS Move over, caviar! You too, fromage! That other big castle, Domaine Carneros (www.domainecarneros.com), is adding sushi to its repertoire every Friday afternoon with Sushi & Bubbles, courtesy of Shiso, a new Japanese spot in neighboring Sonoma. The spicy tuna sings with the Brut Rosé.