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D-Vine!

Dallasites plant roots in Napa Valley's enchanted playground | *By Stacy Girard* |

With ambrosia-rich scenery, so much wine you sweat red and a legendary food scene, relaxed Napa Valley offers a compelling excuse for early retirement. But for several Dallas denizens, the region has sparked new vino ventures. Swept up in a grape passion, a few of our lucky neighbors are testing the soil in the resplendent California wine country, and the fruits of their labor are paying off big.



A Donald Lipski bronze, resin and Swarovski crystal chandelier hangs in the Hall Rutherford wine cave.



Hall's Napa River Ranch.



Hall Wines grape bins



Hall Wines barrel cellar.

Vintage Notes

In Napa Valley, it seems you can't pop a cork without hitting a Dallas native who's assimilated into the region's prolific wine culture. One such expat, Beth Adams, now calls Yountville, California home. The Highland Park High School alum has been making her small-production, syrah-based Provençal-style wine since 2005 and now markets two labels: Abi Blanc and Adi Rose. Adams is also a minority partner in a just-released, lower-priced Cabernet project called Jam.

And when she's not making juice, she's consulting for other small brands such as The Big N, Dallasite Norma Hunt's Cabernet set to debut in September 2010 under the curtain of heralded Bordeaux-trained winemaker Philippe Melka.

Craig and Kathryn Hall (she's the former US Ambassador to Austria) are perhaps Dallas' most well-known resident wine couple, having sunk roots in Napa in 2003. Today, the couple owns more than 500 acres of Bordeaux varietals and a portfolio of 15 wine offerings. They recently received an LEED Gold cert by the U.S. Green Building Council for their St. Helena winery—the first in California to receive the designation. And in November, their meaty, currant-rich 2006 Kathryn Hall Cabernet Sauvignon earned 96 out of 100 points from *Wine Spectator Insider's* James Laube. The excitement grows, when, in 2011, they premiere their Frank Gehry-designed winery complex at Hall St. Helena, which will become a showplace for their Herbert Brandl and Gerhard Richter pieces, as well as other members of their extensive modern art collection. hallwines.com

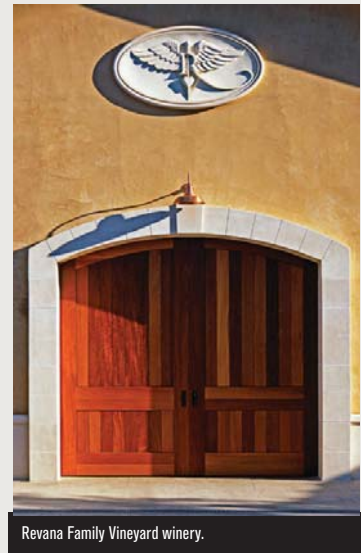


A Wine Romance

High school sweethearts Brenda and Clay Cockerell, married now for 33 years, visited Napa several years ago to celebrate an anniversary. Their trip returned a plan: Scoop up four scrumptious Calistoga acres and start growing grapes. Clay, a prominent dermatologist and fervent wine collector (he's even passed the first level of the Court of Master Sommeliers), and Brenda hired noted winemaker Christine Barbe to lead the charge in directing their vision—to create a wine in the French style. In 2006, the Cockerells saw their first commercial vintage under their Coquerel (the archaic French derivation of their surname) label. Four years later, their small-batch Sauvignon Blancs, crisp, dry Le Petit Coquerel and a richer French Oak-aged Terroir Coquerel are poured in elite dining rooms across the country. Look for their most recent release, the late harvest La Douce Revanche. cockerellwines.com

Bottle Rocket

South on the I-45 corridor resides a Houston cardiologist with a nose for wine. Dr. Madaiah Revana grew up on a farm in India and knew all about the flux of land and the intricacies of growing specialized crops. It was during a trip to Napa Valley that the doc discovered a small parcel of prime vineyard land north of St. Helena (the area has a rep for producing world-class Cabs). The doctor nabbed winemaker Heidi Peterson Barrett, of Dalla Valle, Paradigm and Screaming Eagle fame to create his small-production Revana Family Vineyard Cabernet Sauvignon. Achieving near-cult status, the brand is such a hot bottle that the only way you may be able to enjoy it is to enroll



in their allocation program or in the winery's tasting room, which doubles as a rotating contemporary art gallery. revanawine.com

Calistoga Dreaming: Sleep Here!

Canvassing Silverado Trail's winding winery row can leave a oenophile a bit weary. Auberge's newest Napa Valley iteration, Solage Calistoga, is an easy-going, yet still luxe answer to wine-logged travelers. The modern resort complex of 89 rooms nestled in the Palisades foothills is the first in a series for the new Solage brand—and is just five minutes south of Auberge's Calistoga Ranch (with a price point that's easier to digest). The resort's contemporary studios are imagined in a warm palette with an open floor plan, stone-walled showers, soaking tubs and private courtyards.

In 2009, the hot, environmentally focused property (bell staff, housekeepers, engineers and even room service attendants use pedal power to navigate the property) received a Michelin star for its resident resto, Solbar. Under the direction of Executive Chef Robert Curry, whose former culinary stints include nearby Domaine Chandon and Wine Spectator Greystone Restaurant, the eatery turns out what Curry calls "California soul food." Patrons call it "delish!"

And ever loyal to place, Solage is vintner partners with area wineries, hosting special nights for dining and dialoguing with winemakers. Head sommelier Kris Margerum blind-tastes 100 wines each week in preparing the 1,500-selection wine list and the 17,000 bottle cellar.

The resort gets high marks for its Spa Solage too, awarded the number two spot for best spas in the country by *Travel + Leisure*. A true spa-lovers spa, it boasts a separate bathhouse, complete with an outdoor mud bar, where "mud-tenders" blend a goopy cocktail of California clay and essential oils for their signature, skin-illuminating Mudslide treatment. 755 Silverado Trail, Calistoga, Calif., 866.942.7442 or solagecalistoga.com. ■

