



Javier Bardem

One Serious Spaniard

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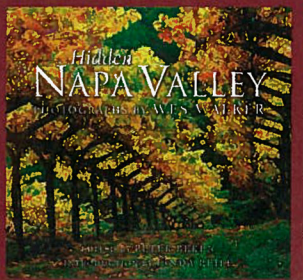
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NAPA NEWS



Vineyard Views

California's beloved wine country is showcased in the revised and expanded *Hidden Napa Valley* by photographer Wes Walker (Welcome Books). — L.S.



LABEL LOVERS

Film director Francis Ford Coppola did it. So did Bob Dylan, Olivia Newton-John, and Dan Aykroyd. Now, thanks to MOUNT VEEDER MAGIC VINEYARDS of Napa, California, you can put your name and logo on a personalized bottle of wine too. For around \$15,000, you will get the 20- to 24-month experience of creating your own premium Mount Veeder cabernet sauvignon using the vineyard's highly sought-after grapes (they are impossible to get outside of the trade). The finished product is 24 to 25 cases of the vintage in bottles with personalized labels. "A lot of people have great cellars, but they probably don't own a premium wine with their name on it that they are proud to pour," says Mount Veeder founder Karen Crouse. (866) 750-2091, mountveedermagic.com — W.K.

Standing on the flagstone terrace of THE NAPA VALLEY RESERVE in the last of the evening, gazing out over hypnotic rows of vines and olive trees and taking in Napa's soft dusk, it's very easy to think you're the only one in the world.

Not quite true, but you are among a distinct minority. The Reserve, as it's more simply known, may be the best little wine club no one has heard of, a 500-charter-member organization whose ranks currently comprise A-list actors, musicians, sports figures, and captains of industry who, as you quite rightly imagine, shall not be named. Let's just say that celebrations in the massive-timbered Hospitality Barn have included an evening with Itzhak Perlman and a cooking lesson from Dorie Greenspan. Members invite guests for wine-tasting dinners in a cave where their personal wine collections are stored. When there is a big event at The Reserve — say, October's grape harvest — private jets clog the Napa airport.

If it sounds elitist — snobby oenophiles debating a vintage's insouciance — it isn't. Membership is open to anyone (though board approval and a \$175,000 lifetime membership fee are required), and plenty of the members don't know much about wine, which is one reason they join.

"Many members don't come in as experts and they don't want to be experts," says Philip Norfleet, The Reserve's director. "They just enjoy the wine and the fine food and camaraderie that come with it." thenapavalleyreserve.com — K.M.

