

San Francisco

MODERN LUXURY

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YOUR EYES

Our 2024 Guide to Food
& Drinks in the Bay Area

BIG NIGHT

THE GENIUS OF
TYLER FLORENCE &
SF'S DINING SCENE



First-time visitors to Napa Valley will likely recognize labels from Mondavi, Charles Krug and Chateau Montelena. Still, as historic as these wineries are, there's also a niche imprint of small-batch producers that source from some of the same iconic

vineyards as the big names.

"A small producer can catch the eye of wine collectors by making their debut with fruit from a famous vineyard," says Karen Williams, founder of St. Helena's ACME Fine Wines (acmefinewines.com), a wine gallery, boutique and club that

Small Wonders

FIVE SMALL-PRODUCTION NAPA VINEYARDS YOU NEED TO KNOW NOW.

BY JILLIAN DARA



focuses on bringing new, usually small-batch, family-owned, brands to market.

Unlike other parts of the world where vineyard classifications earn status like grand cru for the quality of fruit they produce, there are no official designations in Napa Valley. Yet, there are heritage vineyards that date back to the 1800s producing fruit of comparable quality to grand cru, and their names have become synonymous with quality across the valley. Notable heritage sites include To Kalon, Dr. Crane, Bourn, Las Piedras, Georges III and Missouri Hopper; producers like Beckstoffer and Mondavi own portions of these sites.

“The vineyard has already created a name for itself by the producers who’ve made incredible wines from them,” explains Williams. “Now, when the vineyard designate name is on the label of a start-up brand or a small producer, they gain the recognition they may not otherwise have been able to reach if it weren’t for the cache [of] the designate.” Here are five of those small producers worth seeking out.

AMULET ESTATE

amuletestate.com

Of the five wines from this family-owned, St. Helena winery’s

portfolio, there’s a cabernet sauvignon produced with fruit from Beckstoffer Vineyard Georges III. Along the eastern edge of Rutherford, the vineyard dates back to 1895 with well-draining soils and a warm climate that permits maximum hangtime for a full-bodied wine ripe with juicy dark fruit and luscious tannins.

ANNULUS CELLARS

annuluscellars.com

Launched this year, Annulus boasts plenty of clout. The limited collection of singular Napa Valley cabernet sauvignon winemakers source grapes from Beckstoffer Las Piedras and Vine Hill Ranch Vineyard, first planted in the 1840s and 1884, respectively, and working with world-renowned winemakers Nigel Kinsman and Michel Rolland. Proprietors Luke Evnin and Deann Wright stress how “it’s particularly meaningful that legendary growers like Andy Beckstoffer of Beckstoffer Las Piedras and Bruce Phillips of Vine Hill Ranch Vineyard are committed to working with small, family-owned producers like us.”

ARROW&BRANCH

arrowandbranch.com

When proprietors Steve and

Seanne Contursi purchased a Napa farmhouse in 2008, they were inspired to create wines similar to those from the right bank of Bordeaux. What began with a single bottling of cabernet franc has since evolved into an impressive collection of wines, sourcing fruit from Beckstoffer Dr. Crane, Beckstoffer To Kalon, Vine Hill Ranch and Stagecoach, as they continue to add renowned sites from across the valley to their portfolio.

LITHOLOGY ESTATE

lithology.wine

Sourcing fruit from three Beckstoffer Heritage Vineyards (Dr. Crane, Las Piedras and To Kalon) isn’t something Lithology’s winemaker Matt Sands takes for granted. “We take extreme care to craft vintages that are balanced expressions of

their home vineyards,” he says, adding that it’s a balancing act to also infuse and establish their distinct DNA. “This contributes to elevating the diversity of Napa’s wines at the highest quality level, showcasing our interpretation of the vineyard’s essence in every bottle.”

STEWART CELLARS

stewartcellars.com

In 2016, Stewart Cellars started its NOMAD Collection, a dedication to Andy Beckstoffer’s Heritage Vineyards: To Kalon, Bourn, Las Piedras, Georges III, Dr. Crane and Missouri Hopper. The portfolio of single vineyard cabernet sauvignon demonstrates the impact of terroir across the Valley, as the unique characteristics imparted by their nuanced site selection shine through in each glass.



From top: Stewart Cellars benefits from Andy Beckstoffer’s Heritage Vineyards; Hogwash from Amulet Cellars; Amulet sources grapes from Beckstoffer Georges III. Opposite page: Stewart Cellars.

FROM TOP: PHOTOS: BY BOB MCLENAHAN; AMULET COURTESY OF BRAND

