

# EXPERIENCE

ISSUE 21 2013

**FLEXJET**  
BY BOMBARDIER

INTRODUCING THE LEARJET 85 AIRCRAFT



50 YEARS OF LEARJET HISTORY + A NEW TAKE ON NAPA VALLEY  
JAPAN'S RYOKANS + THOROUGHbred AUCTIONS + SICILIAN VILLAS

# BEYOND THE BOTTLE

Napa Valley's top wineries offer more than just a tour and a taste – they want you to stop and stay awhile. In town for Auction Napa Valley, we visited some of the region's best and boldest destination vineyards to see how they've set themselves apart.

BY EVE THOMAS



## 01 CAKEBREAD CELLARS

cakebread.com

**LOCATION** In Rutherford, along the St. Helena Highway, flanked by other major players – including Robert Mondavi and St. Supéry – and down the road from Oakville Grocery, the oldest continually running grocery store in the state. **SETTING** The Cakebread name may stand out on a wine list, but you could easily miss the unassuming black mailbox that alerts you to the winery itself, where the former ranch's original buildings are now appealing event and dining venues. The label celebrates its 40th anniversary in 2013, and founders Jack and Dolores Cakebread are still heavily involved in the winery's operations, as are their sons Dennis and Bruce. **EXPERIENCE** Cakebread takes the relationship of food and wine beyond simple pairing advice, with a professional kitchen, two resident chefs and eponymous cookbooks. Classes are hands-on and diverse, from Thanksgiving classics to a salmon fishing expedition that lets you cook your catch. Dolores Cakebread has offered homemade lunches to visitors

since they first opened, and in 1986 she launched the Harvest Workshop, a four-day event that has chefs from across the country coming to town to discuss wine and health, meet with local farmers and host harvest dinners. Any Cakebread fan can also simply scan a bottle's QR code to discover recipe ideas and video cooking demonstrations. **EXTRAS** Submit a photo featuring Cakebread wine (or wearing a branded hat or tee) and you can win behind-the-scenes tours with a viticulturist, winemaker and resident chef. Past winners have snapped a bottle in a surfer's hand while riding a wave, and alongside penguins in Antarctica. The contest is more than just a fun way to promote the brand – it hints at the origins of the winery. In 1972, Jack Cakebread drove from Oakland to Napa to shoot the area for a photography book, an assignment passed to him by former teacher Ansel Adams. While in town he mentioned wanting to own a winery, and that same day he was making an offer on a family friend's property.

## 02 STAG'S LEAP WINE CELLARS

cask23.com

**LOCATION** Just off of Silverado Trail near Napa, in the Stags Leap District. **SETTING** When we attended a winemaker's dinner during the 2013 Auction Napa Valley, oysters and shrimp were being served on a bed of ice in the shovel of a Bobcat – a show-stopping way to announce the groundbreaking of a new visitor center overlooking the FAY and S.L.V. vineyards. The designs for the 6,000-square-foot building were conceived by celebrated Barcelona-based architect Javier Barba. Take the Estate & Wine Cave Tour and you'll get to explore his previous work at the property, including the Great Room, glowing with hammered copper sconces, and the Arcade, an outdoor area lined with exposed rocks and offering an unobstructed view of the Stags Leap Palisades. **EXPERIENCE** Saying Stag's Leap Wine Cellars helped put Napa on the map is not an overstatement. The year was 1976. The place: Paris. A British wine merchant arranged a blind

taste test for 11 wine experts, pitting Bordeaux reds and Burgundy whites against California Cabernet Sauvignons and Chardonnays. Ultimately, the American wines came out the winners, with the 1973 Stag's Leap S.L.V. Cabernet taking top place. You can still find those winning bottles in the Smithsonian, though the real effects of the Judgment of Paris – the establishment of Napa as synonymous with wine – have been felt in the valley and on wine lists throughout the world. **EXTRAS** Book the Estate Collection Tasting Flight and you'll sample Stag's Leap's best-known wine, Cask 23, a Cabernet that is only made in years when the fruit is deemed to be just right. If you can't make it to the winery for a tour, head online to the Estate Wine Library where you can find scans of the original tasting notes for their vintages, dating all the way back to the 1970s. You can also add your own tasting notes or even personal anecdotes about Stag's Leap. ▶





## 03 SHERWIN FAMILY VINEYARDS

*sherwinfamilyvineyards.com*

**LOCATION** Among the pines on Spring Mountain in St. Helena, where the elevation keeps things a few degrees cooler during the day and warmer at night – perfect for strolling around the private pond or dining on the veranda. **SETTING** When the Sherwins moved their family of five to Napa Valley from San Francisco’s East Bay area in 1996, father Steve, whose background is in construction, originally just wanted to grow grapes for other vintners. But the property they fell in love with lent itself to winemaking, with a cellar and barrel room beneath the main building, and the picturesque setting proved to be perfect for visitors looking for a smaller, more intimate winery. Stop in for a tasting and you might assume you’re visiting their private home – which

is really further off on the property – whether you’re being welcomed by the Sherwins themselves or sitting by the crackling fireplace looking at framed family photos (spot their son holding on to a bucking bronco). **EXPERIENCE** While the setting may be reminiscent of the French countryside, it is truly an all-American experience. Sherwin is known as the home of “the patriotic pour,” as they’re the only winery in the country with federal approval to sell wine bearing a picture of the American flag. The first hand-etched bottle was made for a charity auction held in Lake Garda, Italy, raising money for families of the victims of 9/11. Every year a limited number of bottles are created and made available to customers and charitable causes. **EXTRAS** When life gave the Sherwins lemons, they made lemonade. Or, more precisely, when life gave them “scraps” after bottling runs of Cabernet and Syrah, they turned them into Cellar Scraps #6, a non-vintage blend that is produced every year and recognizable by its red wax seal. They are now on Cellar Scraps #6, notable for its aromas of vanilla and cherry pie as well as its lingering, plummy finish.

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## 04 RAYMOND VINEYARD & CELLAR

*raymondvineyards.com*

**LOCATION** Across 90 acres on Zinfandel Lane in St. Helena (though the estate comprises 300 acres overall in Rutherford and Jameson Canyon and sources fruit from a variety of other vineyards). **SETTING** Style meets substance at this destination winery, in large part thanks to the colorful vision of Jean-Charles Boisset, whose French winemaking family bought the vineyard in 2009 (the same year he married Gina Gallo, celebrated winemaker, brand ambassador and granddaughter of Julio Gallo). Past the bocce court and high-design swimming pool, the grounds are a veritable oenology campus, offering visitors a complete education from ground to glass. **EXPERIENCE** Where to begin? The Theater of Nature is a two-acre exhibit on biodynamic farming techniques, including beehives, composting and solar energy – which provides 100 percent of the winery’s power (who says you can’t have green luxury?). In the Rutherford Room, where oversized apothecary jars hold soil samples from Napa’s 16

sub-appellations, guests learn about the region’s unique terrain and geological history. The Corridor of Senses is lined with swatches showing the different shades of Cabernet Sauvignon and bottles holding wine’s many different aromas, including cherry and chocolate. In the laboratory-like Blending Room, play winemaker for a day and you’ll walk away with your own personal bottle of red, right down to the custom label. **EXTRAS** The cheeky “I am Raymond” club is open to anyone in the world with the name Raymond, and offers them complimentary tastings for life and an invite to a “Raymond-only” BBQ at the vineyard. Not a Raymond? You can still feel like a VIP under the Baccarat chandeliers in the Red Room, a sumptuous private club stocked with art books from Assouline and Taschen, vintage arcade games and a pool table (done up in red felt, of course). You’ll even find a bar serving Red Room Red Wine, a Bordeaux-style blend found nowhere else in the world. ➤



PHOTO: RICHMOND LAM (SHERWIN)

## Q&amp;A

## CHEF CINDY PAWLCYN

Napa may be almost as famous for its Michelin-starred dining as its wine, but that hasn't always been the case. When Cindy Pawlcyn opened Mustards Grill in 1983, the Minneapolis-born chef started out feeding locals and winemakers with fresh ingredients from local farms. Since then she's opened additional restaurants, put out five cookbooks and won a James Beard award. As Mustards Grill celebrates its 30th anniversary, here's why she still calls wine country home.

**What are some of the biggest changes you've seen to Napa's dining scene since opening Mustards Grill?**

Well, competition has grown a hundredfold! I remember when French Laundry was doing an affordable set menu and there were live chickens in the main street Feed 'n' Seed. Napa is still a farming community, but now it's much more about olive trees and grapevines instead of cattle and dairy and fruit orchards. It's helped me, though! When I first started out, we'd get tons of tomatoes but just a few varieties – now there are hundreds of heirloom species to choose from. I used to have to go into San Francisco to buy fish, and now they deliver every day.

**Have you seen a lot of food trends come and go?**

Oh, let's see. Nouvelle cuisine in the '70s, Pacific Rim in the '80s. In the '90s everything was stacked – architectural food. And I'm so over foam. I was raised in a generation where, if it was foaming, something's probably wrong.

**Any trends you hope will stay?**

Fresh, local, simple. We've always done it, but people are finally starting to get "genuine flavor" – that if you get the very best local ingredients, you're going to get the best flavor. Luckily, here you can actually live the locavore lifestyle all year.

**Most people know some basic rules about pairing food and wine. How strict are they?**

There are classic things – like having Burgundy wine with Burgundy cuisine – but we have so many options in America, so many regions are represented. You don't always need to have white wine with fish, red wine with meat. You really just need to have wines you like.

**Plenty of visitors to Napa have access to prestigious Old World wine regions. What keeps them coming back to Napa?**

When you go to Italy, France and Spain – and I go there all the time – that's what you get. Italy, France and Spain. That's why you go. I've spent a lot of time in Asia and after a while I start



craving a dish that's not normally found there. But in Napa, when it comes to grapes, to food, to culture, it's a melting pot.

**You travel quite a bit for work. Has anywhere come close to tempting you to move?**

I'd have to say San Sebastián, Spain. It's very similar to here, with the ocean and the mountains. I used to be a city girl, and I moved to Napa kicking and screaming, but now it's hard to leave. I still love going to New York, Paris, London, Kyoto, but I like living in the country. It is a chef's heaven, and it's really fun to talk to the farmers, suppliers, help feed the goats. My whole life is about food, and there's never a dull moment out here. ■

## BID BIG, BID OFTEN

Since 1981, Auction Napa Valley has been giving wine fans unprecedented access to the region's vintners and their best bottles through auctions, private dinners and daylong parties. Best of all, every cent goes to local youth and health-care nonprofits – a record \$16.9 million was raised at the spring 2013 edition. Among this year's lots was the Ultimate Tastemaker's Experience, a partnership between Flexjet, Lamborghini and winemakers Nickel & Nickel, Dolce and Far Niente. The experience includes a trip on a Challenger 300 aircraft, driving a Gallardo on a racetrack and original artwork by Tarinan von Anhalt, created by combining paint and the blast from a jet engine. Now that's an experience that can't be bought – only bid on.

► [auctionnapavalley.org](http://auctionnapavalley.org)

### LANDING

**Napa County Airport (APC)**  
[www.napacountyairport.org](http://www.napacountyairport.org)

**Napa Jet Center**  
[napajetcenter.com](http://napajetcenter.com)

**San Francisco Airport (SFO)**  
[flysfo.com](http://flysfo.com)

**Signature Flight Support**  
[signatureflight.com](http://signatureflight.com)