

AMERICAN ATLAS

# VALLEY



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# HIGH

THOUGH THIS *NAPA TOUR* DOES NOT STOP AT A TASTING ROOM, IT MIGHT BE THE BEST ONE YOU'LL EVER TAKE. RAISE A GLASS TO THE ARTISTS, REBELS, AND DREAMERS WHO CALL IT HOME.

By Alexis Traina  
Photographed and styled by  
Claiborne Swanson Frank

## ROMAN COPPOLA

He arrived in Napa Valley at age 12, when his parents, Eleanor and Francis, bought a house and moved the family up from San Francisco. "So many memories are connected to being outdoors," Roman says. "I had a dirt bike and loved exploring the mountainside on it." A writer and filmmaker (Golden Globe for *Mozart in the Jungle*, Oscar nomination for co-writing *Moonrise Kingdom*), he lives in San Francisco now but "still comes out every weekend."

## MICHELE OUELLET

Everything awesome about summer in Napa Valley can be traced back to a glass of rosé—people sip it like water here. Lorenza rosé is produced by Michele, a Napa Valley native and fashion model, and her mother Melinda Kearney.



**CARLO MONDAVI**  
 Equal parts entrepreneur, winemaker, and goodwill ambassador, Carlo is heir to a name that has long been synonymous with Napa. "As a child I knew I wanted to do what my grandfather [Robert] and father [Tim] did. I wasn't quite sure what that meant, just that I wanted to work with them."



**CORY EMPTING**  
 He got his first job at a vineyard at 15 and immediately became obsessed. Cory went on to become winemaker at Harlan Estate and Bond, producers of some of the most sought-after cult wines ever made in the United States.

**T**hirty-two years ago my serial entrepreneur father, Clarke Swanson, got an itch, a romantic notion of the American dream, and in the blink of an eye purchased a hundred acres in Napa Valley, on Oakville Cross Road. He hired André Tchelistcheff, godfather of American wine, and his young apprentice, Marco Cappelli, to make elegant and refined wines under the label Swanson.

Soon I too succumbed to the valley's charms and convinced my dad that he needed to hire me. I tried my hand in the vineyards and the cellar but found my niche in marketing. By the time the company was sold, a few years ago, I was its longest-serving employee. The sale marked the end of a chapter in the journey that has defined my adulthood, one that tested my father's patience daily as I discovered a love of product design and creating new tasting experiences.

We all have different reasons for coming to Napa Valley: the light, the air, the soil, the vistas, and, of course, the wine. For me it has always been the people—a tapestry of interwoven multigenerational tribes made up of families, farmers, field-workers, winemakers, chefs, and creative talent of all sorts. We are bound to one another by the kind of esprit de corps that comes with the pursuit of magic—magic in the vineyards, on the table, at the drawing board. Magic that celebrates one's surroundings.

As my temporary unemployment began, I knew I wanted to use my free time to tell the story of the valley, and to do it in ➤➤➤

**GINA GALLO AND JEAN-CHARLES BOISSET**

These two were the only ones audacious (and legit) enough to purchase Bob and Margrit Mondavi's Wappo Hill home. They immediately filled it with young children, good art, and a round-the-clock point of view. Now they're reinventing the narrative of wine—and doing a good job at it.





→ a way that would illuminate the fact that life here is no longer centered exclusively on wine. Yes, tourists still pack tasting rooms and trek wine trails, but Napa Valley has also become a haven for entertaining, hobnobbing, creating, and soul-searching. I started to research my book, *From Napa with Love*, which was published by Abrams in September, by reaching out to the area's most colorful characters, people I grew up around or just admired, like filmmaker and writer Roman Coppola, interior designer Ken Fulk, and Elizabeth Swanson, my wonderfully talented mother. I asked them to tell their Napa Valley stories and to describe the places, things, and experiences they love about the valley. The goal was to create a useful guide to the place and to offer a look at the people who make it special.

I always intended to collaborate with my youngest sister, the photographer Claiborne Swanson Frank, on the project. She specializes in portraiture and creates images that feel like intimate X-rays, pictures full of textured physical details set against backdrops of personal history. But as luck would have it she was deep into pregnancy with her second child, and a grueling four-week shoot for the book was out of the question. So when a chance to team up with *Town & Country* presented itself later on, we leaped at the opportunity and set out to capture the Napa Valley we love. We interviewed and photographed people—some of whom appear in my book, some of whom don't—whose spirit, innovation, and creative gifts we think define this magical place today. «

## TOURISTS PACK TASTING ROOMS AND TREK WINE TRAILS, BUT NAPA VALLEY HAS ALSO BECOME A HAVEN FOR ENTERTAINING, HOBNOBBING, AND CREATING.

### THOMAS KELLER

"When I first arrived at the French Laundry, Napa Valley's iconic images of vineyard-latticed hills dotted with châteaux and bountiful farms and orchards resonated with me. It was as if true refinement had sprung to life. I opened the French Laundry to celebrate the work of the farmers, fishermen, winemakers, foragers, and other purveyors who work directly with the land of this beautiful place."

*Hair and makeup by Sherrie Long (Molly Chappellet and Thomas Keller) and Bianca Rubi (all others).*