

An aerial photograph of a vineyard in Napa Valley. A dirt road winds through the center of the image, flanked by rows of young grapevines. The surrounding landscape is covered in dense green trees and shrubs. In the background, there are rolling hills with some rocky outcrops under a clear sky.

# **Napa Valley Newcomers**

## **Three standout newcomers are helping to invigorate Napa Valley's wine scene.**





# Palisades Canyon

Felicia Woytak's decade-long search for the ideal Napa Valley estate ended in 2015 when she discovered a stunning 796-acre property at the base of The Palisades cliffs in Calistoga. Inspired by agritourism during a visit to Italy, Woytak, a home winemaker, sought land to cultivate wine grapes; she found her perfect spot in this picturesque canyon, with its historic dry-farmed vineyard, 1881 farmhouse, and historic winery.

This fall, Woytak and her husband Steve Rasmussen will release their first wines

under the Palisades Canyon label, crafted with fourth-generation Napa winemaker Graeme MacDonald. The lineup includes a 2021 Chenin Blanc (\$75), a 2021 Petite Sirah (\$75), and a 2021 Cabernet Sauvignon (\$150). Each wine pays tribute to different eras of Napa Valley winemaking. MacDonald's approach, focused on authenticity and minimal intervention, ensures the wines reflect their exceptional origins.

Upon purchasing their estate, Woytak and Rasmussen embarked on an organic

farming conversion. Their extensive outdoor experience prepared them for managing the rugged terrain. They cleared old fire roads, built new trails, and planted native species. Through the Horns Canyon Outdoor Education Project, Rasmussen collaborates with local educational organizations to teach students about geology, farming, and conservation. He also leads wildflower walks and manages a grazing goat herd and a llama that help with wildfire prevention and provide guest enjoyment.

Graeme MacDonald, Felicia Woytak, and Steve Rasmussen