



AU SOMMET NAPA VALLEY
CABERNET SAUVIGNON
2008

THE PINNACLE OF CALIFORNIA CABERNETS

A New Wine by Master Winemaker Heidi P. Barrett Exclusively for the Readers of *Robb Report*

Thanks to our unique relationship with the vintner, the publishers of Robb Report have secured the unprecedented opportunity to offer a select number of readers the inaugural release of this extraordinary new Napa Valley Cabernet Sauvignon from the celebrated winemaker behind Screaming Eagle, Dalla Valle, and Grace Family Vineyards.

WINE IS ART. John Schwartz has lived and worked by this credo throughout his career as a restaurateur and vintner. And so it was natural that, when he acquired a 45-acre vineyard property at the top of Atlas Peak in Napa Valley's Vaca Mountains, he turned to Heidi P. Barrett (pictured), California's foremost oenological artist, to create from its raw elements a new masterpiece.

A painter as well as a winemaker, Barrett shares Schwartz's finely tuned aesthetic sense. Indeed, their common passion for fine art inspired their first winemaking project, Amuse Bouche, which was honored on our 2008 list of Best of the Best wines. For each vintage of this silky, elegant Pomerol-style red wine, Barrett and Schwartz commission an original painting from a major contemporary artist for the label; each member of their allocation list receives a signed lithograph of that vintage's artwork with their wine.

Unlike Amuse Bouche, however, Barrett and Schwartz's new project did not begin as a blank canvas. Seven acres on the property were already planted with 10-year-old Cabernet Sauvignon and Petit Verdot vines, the fruit from which had been sold by the previous owner to the prestigious Paul Hobbs Winery. Given the vineyard's high altitude (its elevation of 2,100 feet places it well above the fog line and in view of the High Sierras) and the proximity of other high-caliber producers like Caymus Vineyards, Kongsgaard, and Stag's Leap Wine Cellars, Schwartz harbored lofty hopes for producing the finest Cabernet Sauvignon in Napa Valley.

Barrett's first recommendation was to call in her longtime friend, vineyard manager extraordinaire Jim Barbour. "The vineyard has great potential," she says. "And with Jim's influence, I believe it's going to get even better. He got involved right away as a partner and worked with us through our first harvest in the fall of 2008. It was no mean feat: You feel like you need a rope tow to get up there. But the quality of the grapes is pretty terrific."

Barbour, like Schwartz, views the project as an opportunity to coax a truly great Cabernet from the region. "We're taking the time to do this right," he says. "There were some challenges. But just by managing the vineyards a little better, we got better fruit in our first harvest. Both the top block and the bottom block have huge potential, and I'm farming it the way I have my other hillside vineyards to see if maybe we can produce the best Cab that's ever come off Atlas Peak's volcanic soils."

The wine's name, Au Sommet ("to the top"), suggests more than the vineyard's topography: It reflects Barrett's unrivaled winemaking talents at their peak. "The component wines are still in barrel, but they're lush and velvety," she says. "I look at them as colors on the paint palette." As is often the case with hillside fruit, its flavor components are explosively dense, dark, and wild, filled with earthy aromas and lusciously concentrated brambleberry fruit. To this lush raw beauty, Barrett brings her civilizing touch. "My job during blending," she says, "will be to tame that wild child—let it have some personality, but shape it up to be an honorable citizen as well."



LIMITED-EDITION AU SOMMET WINE OFFER

Small-production (approximately 400 cases) Napa Valley Cabernet Sauvignon and Petit Verdot blend. Priced \$250 per bottle; sold in three-bottle wooden boxes.

AVAILABILITY

To place orders, contact the winery (see below). Orders are received on a first-in basis until fully allocated. The 2008 release will ship in the fall of 2010. Purchase of the inaugural release guarantees a priority purchase position for all subsequent vintage offerings.

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