

THE SOMMELIER JOURNAL

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THE SOMM JOURNAL

ADVENTURES
DOWN THE
ROAD AT

KENWOOD

THE STORIED SONOMA
COUNTY WINERY
CONTINUES TO BLAZE
NEW TRAILS

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Kenwood Chief
Winemaker
Pat Henderson in
the vineyards.

...me Trujillo, with
Trujillo's dog Ramone.

L'Eleganza Extravaganza

Every weekend in Los Angeles, you'll find at least one art gallery show where wine pours freely and guests—with glass in hand—muse about the artist's works. However, on May 19, Winemaker **Axel Heinz** of Tuscany's **Ornellaia** winery and Los Angeles-based artist Yutaka Sone took that sophisticated pastime to a new level for the eighth edition of Vendemmia d'Artista, a project showcasing the convergence of the contemporary art and fine wine worlds.

This year's edition was proclaimed "L'Eleganza," and celebrated at a gala dinner and Sotheby-officiated auction at Los Angeles's Hammer Museum. According to Heinz, the theme Sone captured in his artwork for the winery and special bottle labels translates the character of the 2013 vintage into three dimensions.

"We feel it sometimes can be counterproductive to classify vintages in terms of their absolute quality, and try figure out which one is the greatest," explains Heinz. "Each vintage has its own beautiful characteristics which makes it great and gives it its own story. L'Eleganza celebrates the 2013 vintage's more restrained, subtle and elegant expression of Ornellaia."

"Sone combined aspects of this great production of wine and the land, with sculpture carved from the same marble Michelangelo used to create his 'David' statue," added Ferdinando Frescobaldi, President of Ornellaia, as he pointed out the special labels on bottles up for auction, depicting Sone and his friends picnicking at the site of his creation for the vineyard.



Winemaker Axel Heinz of Tuscany's Ornellaia winery spoke at this year's eighth edition of Vendemmia d'Artista—a project showcasing the convergence of the contemporary art and fine wine worlds—held at Los Angeles's Hammer Museum.



President of Ornellaia Winery Ferdinando Frescobaldi (center) and guests at the gala.

The auction, which followed celebrity chef Suzanne Goin's exquisite pairing dinner showcasing Ornellaia's 2003 and 2013 vintages, raised more than \$128,000 for the Hammer Museum. Although many of the limited-edition bottles with Sone's imprint have now found homes, sommeliers and consumers will be able to find the masterpiece 2013 vintage, thanks to Folio Fine Wine Partners (www.foliowine.com), whose founder, Michael Mondavi, was in attendance.

—Elyse Glickman ■■

PHOTO COURTESY OF ORNELLAIA

PHOTO COURTESY OF ORNELLAIA

CHRISTY CANTERBURY, MW,
REINTRODUCES FELLOW
SOMMELIERS, BUYERS AND
OTHER INFLUENCERS TO
**CABERNET SAUVIGNON'S
BRIGHTEST EXPRESSIONS**
FROM CALIFORNIA AND
AROUND THE WORLD



Canterbury's Tales

story and photos by Elyse Glickman

JUST WHEN YOU think you've gotten to know everything about the hardy and always reliable Cabernet Sauvignon varietal, something new about it arises. Master of Wine Christy Canterbury put exciting selling points for Cabernet Sauvignon out on the table (as well as top-tier expressions) in her masterclass and tasting at The Cardinal's Room at Redbird in Downtown Los Angeles.



Top-tier Cabernet expressions at the tasting.

Louis M. Martini Lot 1 Napa Valley Cabernet Sauvignon (SRP \$145) served as the benchmark wine for all three flights (Global, Iconic U.S., and Napa) of five wines so attendees could compare and contrast the way the grape expresses itself under different climate and terroir conditions at various locations and from three recent vintages (2012, 2013 and 2014).

So why rethink this varietal now? According to Canterbury, there is more to its versatility and use in blending than even

some experienced sommeliers may realize. And there's no better way to unearth those secrets than through an unhurried tasting of expressions from around the world with back-stories running the gamut from the quirky to the sublime.

"The biggest challenge Cabernet Sauvignon faces is its familiarity," explained Canterbury over a post-session lunch of Redbird's cuisine, which provided a lovely foil for the rest of Martini's Cabernet Sauvignon portfolio: Sonoma County, Alexander Valley, Napa Valley and Monte Rosso Vineyard.

"People think they know everything about it. In recent years, they've moved on to experience other varietals, such as Savagnin or Poulsard from France's Jura region, for example. While it is exciting for people to experience unfamiliar varietals, they are forgetting the diversity of expressions of Cabernet Sauvignon that grow right their backyard. Furthermore, the timing for a masterclass like this is perfect because these excellent wines are just beginning to hit the market, and can be cellared in the years to come for optimum flavor."

While the wines tasted were definitely not the "kind of bottles one opens on a Thursday night, just because," Canterbury stressed that tasting the best expressions of Cabernet Sauvignon was important so wine professionals could re-acquire an appreciation for how deep and fascinating

this varietal category could be. She added that the curation of the featured wines from Napa, other California growing regions, and from Washington State, Italy, Australia, Chile and Argentina, was a collaborative effort between herself, Martini parent company E. & J. Gallo and wine marketing company Calhoun & Company.

Over the course of the master class, Canterbury revealed that the best expressions of Cabernet Sauvignon have notes of blackcurrant, cassis, cedar, eucalyptus, black plums and blackberries. "You see more major characteristics of a good Cabernet when it is part of a blend," she pointed out. "Even when Merlot or Petit Verdot are part of the mix, Cabernet's qualities will shine through."

Canterbury concludes it is also important to get to know Cabernet again because people forget there was a time when winemakers and customers were enamored with this varietal as they were with Chardonnay a few years ago.

"It serves one well to go deeper into Cabernet Sauvignon because there are endless possibilities in how it is treated by different winemakers within Napa as well as other regions," she says. "With many sommeliers and wine professionals out there looking to blaze their own trail, they owe it to themselves to rediscover what has made it such an indispensable varietal for so many winemakers." **SJ**