



## Diamond Series



### Macauley Vineyard

Mac Watson was born into a family who loved wines. At an early age, he discovered the ultimate joy of wine pleasure. This experience took place at the hallowed grounds of Chateau Lafite Rothschild in the Pauillac Region of Bordeaux.

"I was all of 14," the San Francisco native recalled. "My parents were invited to lunch at the Chateau and I went with them. When we entered the dining room, there were rows and rows of glasses, more than I had ever seen. When I realized the glasses were all for wine, I was amazed. We tasted several flights of Chateau Lafite Rothschild and I found them to be wonderful. It was my wine epiphany, and you can see where it led me."

The 'where' Watson referred to is the ownership of Macauley Vineyard Winery, this month's *Diamond Series* Selection.

Macauley Vineyard first began operating in the early 1980s. Ann Macauley Watson, Mac's mother, ran the successful operation until her death in 1994. For a brief period, the label became dormant.

In the summer of 2000, Mac Watson decided to begin working in the wine industry for the prominent winery, Rudd Oakville Estate. The experience convinced Watson that he should revive his mother's label and the second generation of Macauley Vineyard was born. Only 600 cases were produced for Macauley Vineyard's first release in 2001.

Mac Watson now has a number of successful notches on his venture's belt. Production is still quite small (this year Macauley Vineyard will produce only 1,250 cases) but the plaudits and scores its wines have received is extremely impressive.

"We have been blessed," Mac Watson recently confessed, "It seems that all the decisions we have made have turned out well. To say we are ecstatic about where we are would be an understatement."

The credit for all this success must be aimed at Watson and some sound business decisions.

"We buy all of our fruit from selected vineyards in Napa Valley," he continued. "We have grapes from Mt. Veeder, Howell Mountain, Yountville, Rutherford and Oakville. All are on long-term contracts and they provide us with tremendous flexibility. We are not tied to a single piece of land and the fruit that a particular harvest provides."

Watson has also teamed up with his childhood friend, winemaker Kirk Venge to produce Macauley Vineyard's wines. Venge is the son of legendary Napa Valley winemaker Nils Venge who has produced numerous top caliber wines for decades. Kirk is a University of California Davis graduate who is also considered a star among Napa Valley winemakers. In 2008, he acquired full ownership of Venge Vineyards from his family.

Watson and Venge make an impressive team, a fact that emanated from a simple desire to share the winery experience. "Kirk is very tall and I'm rather short," Watson confessed. "It's been that way since grammar school. My neck has always hurt when talking to him."

"I really didn't have a business plan when I started Macauley Vineyard up again, I just wanted to make some extraordinary wine and preserve my mother's original idea. What has happened since is rather amazing."

Watson has no immediate plans for a winery complex, he feels that property is simply too expensive in Napa Valley.

"To acquire and erect a modern winery in Napa today would run in the 12 to 13 million dollar range. It doesn't make sense to invest in any property at this point, since our method of selecting fruit from available vineyards is working quite well," he added. "Besides, we are always on the lookout



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Mac Watson — Owner



for really top fruit. Some grapes that we buy make it into our wines, some do not. It is really quite simple.”

But, there is an additional feature for his venture, of which Mac Watson is quite proud.

A complete tasting facility is now open off the Silverado Trail in St. Helena that Watson promises “will

have serious personality.” The site figures to become an important stop for any serious-minded wine person and will provide the company with excellent local and national exposure.

Watson has accomplished all this with the help of his wife Amy Baxter Watson, the daughter of renowned winemaker Phil Baxter. The entire Baxter family is in the wine business. Her two brothers are deemed top winemakers in their own right.

Macauley Vineyard is a rare gem in the intricate winery crown that comprises Napa Valley. Its wines are classically conceived and produced and are in high demand.

## Accolades and Tasting Notes

### Macauley 2005 ‘Beckstoffer To Kalon Vineyard’ Cabernet Sauvignon

**94-Points**, *Beverage Tasting Institute* — “Aromas of dried currant, nut brittle, and black olive with a supple, dry-yet-fruity full body and a well-meshed chocolate, blackberry, and mineral accented finish. A graceful, mellow, well-aged red that will shine at the table...”

**92-Points**, *Wine Spectator* — “Very ripe and woody, with cedary, toasty oak holding the upper hand on roasted meat, ripe currant, sage and licorice...finishes with a wonderful burst of red currant fruit. 220 cases made.”

*Winemaker Kirk Venge’s Notes* — “True to To Kalon’s nature, this wine is a classic Oakville Cabernet Sauvignon. This ripe and seductively attractive wine speaks to the imagination with scents of chocolate dipped cherries, vanilla, barrel spice, sandalwood incense and espresso nuances. Soft, ripe tannin with round, red berry and black stone fruit land gently on the palate. This wine is incredibly silky and rounded and displays so many of the wonderful attributes that make To Kalon a legendary vineyard in its own time.”

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