

# Araujo Estate 2008 Cabernet Sauvignon

*A mineral-rich masterpiece.*

ALTHOUGH CALISTOGA is home to what is perhaps Napa Valley's most fabled and historic vineyard, the region was only very recently approved by the Alcohol and Tobacco Tax and Trade Bureau as an American Viticultural Area, or AVA. First planted with Riesling and Zinfandel in the 1880s, the Eisele Vineyard is one of the rockiest sites on the valley floor, with a microclimate that for many decades has yielded some of the most precise and balanced vintages of Cabernet Sauvignon ever to come out of California. The vineyard's name has graced some rather impressive labels, including Joseph Phelps, Ridge, and Conn Creek; but today, it is associated with only one: Araujo Estate.

Having tasted many of the superb vineyard-designated Cabernets from this particular tract of land, Daphne and Bart Araujo recognized this soil's unique influence on the vines, and in 1989, when the Eisele family placed the vineyard on the market, the Araujos set out to acquire it. "Our concern was to try to be the



**Araujo Estate 2008 Cabernet Sauvignon**  
**Aubert 2009 Pinot Noir UV-SL Vineyard Sonoma Coast** ♦ **Gramercy Cellars 2009 Syrah Walla Walla** ♦ **Justin 2009 Focus Paso Robles** ♦ **Quilceda Creek 2008 Cabernet Sauvignon Columbia Valley** ♦ **Robert Foley Vineyards 2008 Merlot Napa Valley**

best possible stewards of the land that we could," explains Bart. "We knew that we hadn't acquired just another Napa Valley property."

"Eisele is really a unique little corner that's completely protected," says Araujo Estate's director of winemaking, Françoise Peschon, who believes that the site's distinctive characteristics enabled her and winemaker Nigel Kinsman to produce such extraordinary results in 2008, a vintage fraught with challenges that included drought, frost, and heat waves. "One of the marks of a great vineyard is that it goes through all that," she says. "So while in 2008 the production was way down, we kept the quality up."

Indeed, the Araujo Estate 2008 Cabernet Sauvignon (\$290) is a masterpiece of minerality, its immense structure softened by its all-enveloping, velvety texture and fine filigree of essences of brambleberry, black cherry, and smoky piñon. —BRETT ANDERSON

*Araujo Estate Wines, [www.araujoestate.com](http://www.araujoestate.com)*

MARK AUBERT'S CAREER has been a peripatetic one. After succeeding celebrated winemaker Helen Turley at Peter Michael Winery, where for nine years he produced magnificent Chardonnays and ethereally beautiful Bordeaux-style reds, he later replaced his former mentor as winemaker at Colgin Cellars. He also reinforced his reputation as one of Napa Valley's top talents with his consulting work for such esteemed labels as Bryant Family, Futo Wines, and Sloan, but he has since become better known for the stylish Chardonnay and Pinot Noir he produces from vineyards in Sonoma



than for these blockbuster red blends from Napa Valley. Not that there is anything delicate about the **Aubert 2009 Pinot Noir UV-SL Vineyard Sonoma Coast** ([www.aubertwines.com](http://www.aubertwines.com), \$80), a powerfully constructed red wine that balances its ripe, fragrant, and intense cherry and red-plum fruit with the earthiness of cocoa, mushrooms, and clay. —B.A.

MASTER SOMMELIER Greg Harrington is among those pioneering members of his profession who, in the past decade, have transitioned from buying and pouring fine wine to making it themselves. The wine director for the Wolfgang Puck Fine Dining Group and, later, beverage director for a national restaurant and hotel group, Harrington developed a taste for the restrained, earthy red wines being grown in Washington State's Walla Walla region, where a stint harvesting the 2004 vintage convinced him to produce his first wine the following



*Gramercy Cellars 2009 Syrah Walla Walla; Aubert 2009 Pinot Noir UV-SL Vineyard Sonoma Coast*



year. His **Gramercy Cellars 2009 Syrah Walla Walla** ([www.gramercycellars.com](http://www.gramercycellars.com), \$45), like his Tempranillo and Grenache, emphasizes subtle, savory aromas and flavors over brash ripeness and heavily concentrated fruit. Scents of smoked bacon, sweet tobacco, and tar prepare the senses for a spicy palate of anise, black plum, nutmeg, and pepper. —B.A.

♦  
ONE OF THE first wines of note to emerge from the now-bustling Paso Robles region on California's Central Coast was a wine called Isosceles, a Pauillac-style blend of Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, and Cabernet Franc from Justin Vineyards, founded by Justin Baldwin in 1981. Since that time, the region and this particular winery have gained renown for producing Bordeaux-style wines. One of the most spectacular releases to come from the area in recent years is the **Justin 2009 Focus Paso Robles** ([www.justinwine.com](http://www.justinwine.com), \$95), a blend of Syrah and Cabernet Sauvignon that surpasses in quality even the evocative

2008 vintage. Brimming with blueberry, sage, cinnamon, and roasted-coffee flavors, this stunning mélange is available only to an allocation list. —B.A.

FATHER-AND-SON winemaking team Alex and Paul Golitzin count among their ancestors Prince Lev Sergeyevich Golitsyn—a member of one of Russia's most distinguished noble houses and the founder of Crimea's oldest winery, Massandra—and winemaking legend André Tchelistcheff, the father of the modern California wine industry. Tchelistcheff advised Alex on his own oenological venture, Quilceda Creek, which was founded in 1978. Given this background, it should come as no surprise that the Golitzins' label ranks as one of the most collectible in Washington State. The **Quilceda Creek 2008 Cabernet Sauvignon Columbia Valley** ([www.quilcedacreek.com](http://www.quilcedacreek.com), \$130) offers sensory testimony to their viticultural prowess, exhibiting perfume-like notes of wild cherry and sage, as well as a

refined texture and layered flavors of plum, cocoa, and lavender. —B.A.

BEFORE EMBARKING UPON his own vinous enterprise, Robert Foley produced some 15 vintages for Pride Mountain Vineyards, one of the region's most alluring labels. He has also lent his gifts to such preeminent producers as Hourglass and Switchback Ridge, but his primary passion is currently his own label, for which he makes not only magnificent Cabernet Sauvignon and Bordeaux-style blends but also a number of more outré varietals, including Charbono and Pinot Blanc. Yet of his recent releases, the **Robert Foley Vineyards 2008 Merlot Napa Valley** ([www.robertfoleyvineyards.com](http://www.robertfoleyvineyards.com), \$52) stands out for its deftly articulated beauty. This dense red offers up aromas of black cherry, Dutch cocoa, and toasted marshmallow, and washes the palate in a profusion of luscious cherry, plum, blackberry, and coffee flavors.

—B.A. ☞

*Justin 2009 Focus Paso Robles; Quilceda Creek 2008 Cabernet Sauvignon Columbia Valley; Robert Foley Vineyards 2008 Merlot Napa Valley*