

INSPIRED BY QUALITY

NUVO



SARAH CHALKER
ON A ROLE IN HOLLYWOOD

BUILDING PROJECT
HARIRI PONTARINI ARCHITECT

A DRAMATIC HISTORY
MIRVISH PRODUCTION

DRIVEN TO WIN
NASCAR RACER PIERRE BOURQUE



All photos by Steven Rothfield.

A LEAP BY ANY OTHER NAME

Stags Leap District makes a name for itself.

by **Jim Tobler**

Drive north from San Francisco. From the airport you can take the Bay Bridge and just catch fleeting glimpses of the City by the Bay, to your left, if you are in a hurry to get to one of the world's great wine destinations, the Napa Valley. Sonoma County is not far away, either, but Napa has been, since 1976, part of the fine-wine world—a hard-won international stature that no one there takes for granted. Among the famous wine routes in Napa is the Silverado Trail, and along the Trail, beginning at Clos Du Val and Chimney Rock and stretching to Cliff Lede Vineyards at the north end, is a group of wineries that have banded together and formed the Stags Leap District Winegrowers Association. They have teamed up to make a point, largely about their geographic location, and the soils that are commonly found in this very specific area. In other words, they have formed an association based on the terroir of the region. It is to many an excessively used and over-hyped word, often used rather haphazardly to generically describe a wine-growing area. But taking their lead from the illustrious regions of France and Italy, and actually following something of a trend globally, the Stags Leap District is interested in sharing the unique facts, of the soils and the climate, and of what

ultimately finds its way into a glass, with the rest of the world.

In Australia, even, that land of vastness that is home to some of the world's biggest wine brands, there is a significant push toward specificity, indicative of how important it is becoming to identify the wines of a region with particular characteristics. In Burgundy, you need not drive but walk your way from one remarkable wine to another, each differentiated from the last by techniques, but mostly by the different soils that constitute any particular hillside plot of vines. The grapes at the top of the hill are different from those at the bottom; the wines are different, too. That is how the idea of terroir made its way out of France, where it is pretty much taken for granted, and Italy, where it is understood as a simple fact of life, and into the world of high-end—and high-stakes—wine estates in other parts of the world. Napa Valley, a relative newcomer, wanted to stake its place, and has succeeded to a remarkable degree, aided by some significant international tastings that showed them to good effect against their famous European counterparts. So to say a wine comes from Napa, once a given quality marker, is not quite specific enough. The rare air of ultra-premium wine requires even more, even from Napa, and so we are beginning to see more