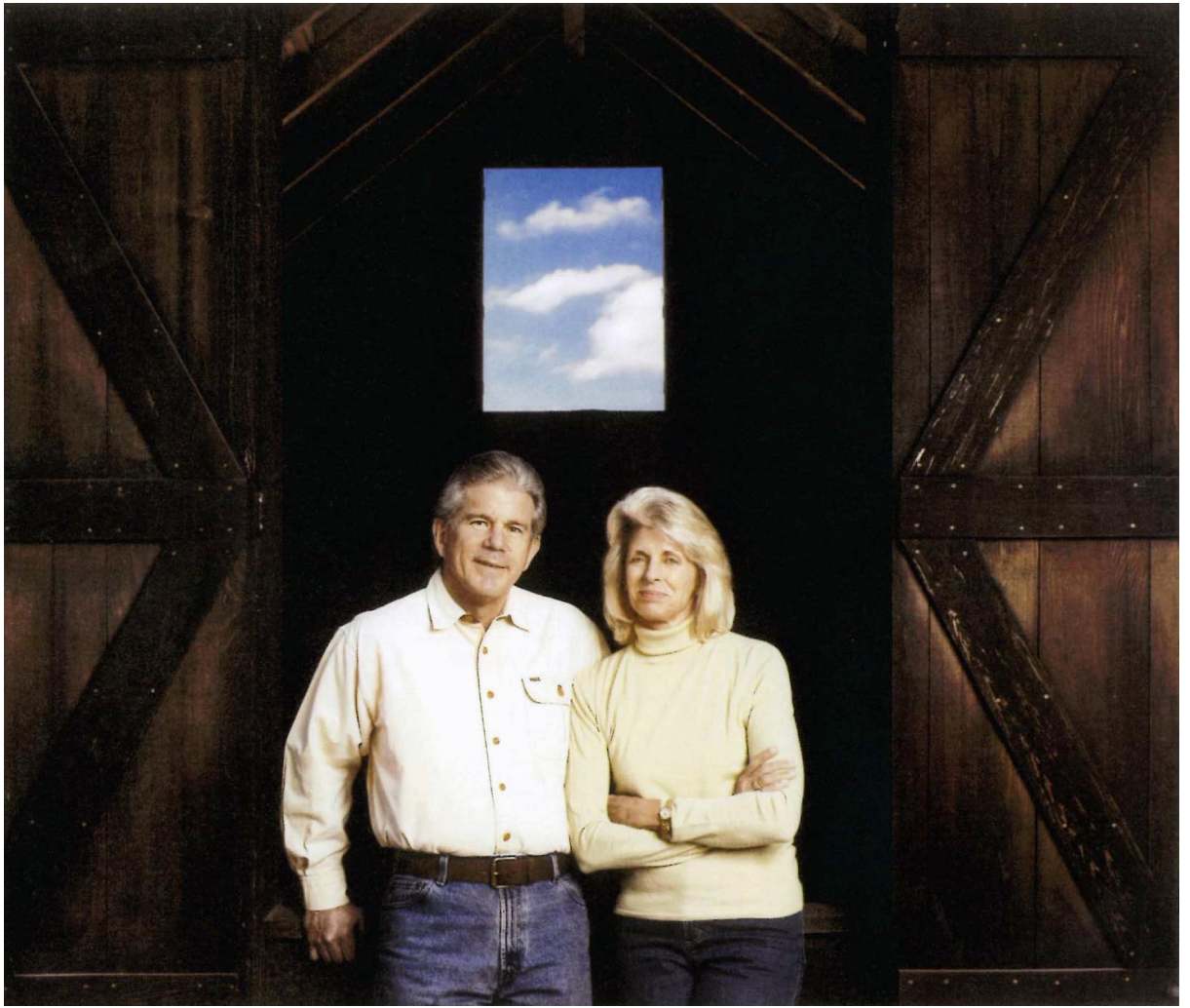


N A P A

BEHIND THE BOTTLE

PHOTOGRAPHS BY

BILL TUCKER



BART & DAPHNE ARAUJO

Araujo Estate Wines
Calistoga

P R E F A C E

B I L L T U C K E R

A thousand times I've been asked what this book is about. My answer has always been, "It's simply portraits of Napa Valley winemakers, vineyard owners and workers ... and it wasn't even supposed to be a book."

It started as a simple project between friends in Chicago advertising. In 1999 a group of us decided we would combine resources to create a 16 page booklet to showcase each of our talents: photography, design, prepress, paper quality and printing. The decision to shoot in Napa Valley came after a trip by my friend, Waseem Jafar. Waseem was the digital prepress side of our group and had recently been to Napa Valley where he met Ray Coursen, owner and winemaker for Elyse Wines. He thought Ray would like to be involved with a project like this.

But how? I called Ray and explained that I was looking for great faces with character. Ray agreed that Napa was the place to find them. He embraced the project and offered to put my studio manager, Jeff Bayne, and myself up at his guesthouse. It was the first stage of a long relationship.

2 We flew to San Francisco, rented equipment from Calumet Photographic and shot for a week. Ray and his wife, Nancy, were amazing. They invited us to their home for dinner and Ray cooked. I mean Ray really cooked. Fantastic wines paired with the perfect foods. Ray is a remarkable winemaker and a phenomenal chef. We were overwhelmed with gratitude and soon found this generous spirit to be typical throughout the Napa Valley. Ray and Nancy were our biggest supporters with Ray giving me a list of names of people to photograph daily. So the project began.

I could tell stories about every one of these fascinating people. From the hard-working pickers who sing and race through the vineyards while filling their boxes with the ripened grapes to the winemakers who decide when all of this action is going to happen each year block-by-block. However, as promised from the beginning, this is not a book about politics or agricultural reform or any other issues that might be controversial to the Napa Valley. It's simply my vision of a place in time from 1999 to 2008. It is my perspective on the faces of Napa Valley. This book is a portfolio of some of the extraordinary people that have made the wines of Napa Valley famous. I have learned how much effort goes into every phase of wine making. The sweat and toil of those in the fields, the growers, the winemakers, their assistants as well as the owners, their families and all the employees are collectively the spirit of Napa.

I have an observation to make that may not be apparent from the photographs. The people of Napa are neighbors. I didn't have to go through publicists, tiers of staff or public relations departments. These stars of the American wine industry were approachable and as grounded as the vines they tend. They are good neighbors to each other and good friends. "Napa Vallians" are givers, they give back not just with donations of wines for