


**THE WORLD'S  
GREATEST  
WINE ESTATES**



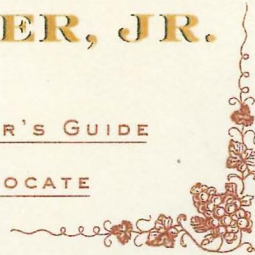
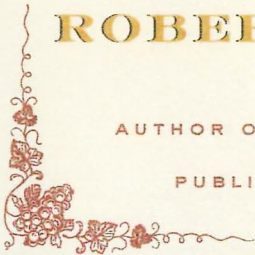
A MODERN PERSPECTIVE

**ROBERT M. PARKER, JR.**



AUTHOR OF PARKER'S WINE BUYER'S GUIDE

PUBLISHER OF THE WINE ADVOCATE





# THE WORLD'S GREATEST WINE ESTATES

A MODERN PERSPECTIVE



## ROBERT M. PARKER, JR.

SIMON & SCHUSTER

New York London Toronto Sydney

## ARAUJO ESTATE WINES

### WINES:

Cabernet Sauvignon Eisele Vineyard

Syrah Eisele Vineyard

OWNERS: Bart and Daphne Araujo

ADDRESS: Eisele Vineyard, 2155 Pickett Road, Calistoga, CA  
94515

TELEPHONE: (707) 942-6061

TELEFAX: (707) 942-6471

E-MAIL: bart@araujoestate.com; daphne@araujoestate.com

WEBSITE: www.araujoestatewines.com

CONTACT: Bart Araujo

VISITING POLICY: Not open to the public

### VINEYARDS

SURFACE AREA: 40 acres

GRAPE VARIETALS: Cabernet Sauvignon, Cabernet Franc, Petit

Verdot, Merlot, Syrah, Sauvignon Blanc, Viognier

AVERAGE AGE OF THE VINES: 12 years

DENSITY OF PLANTATION: 1,100–1,800 vines per acre

AVERAGE YIELDS: 2.5–3 tons per acre

### WINEMAKING AND UPBRINGING

Individual vineyard blocks are harvested and fermented separately to retain the nuances of each vineyard location. All fruit is hand-picked by the estate's own vineyard workers. Currently, 15 lots are kept separate for Cabernet Sauvignon, and 5 lots for Syrah. Grapes are sorted twice on sorting tables before and after destemming. The individual berries are then delivered to fermentation tanks without the use of pumping.

Following the primary fermentation with the native yeasts, the wines are transferred to French oak barrels for malolactic fermentation. They use 100% new barrels for Cabernet Sauvignon, 50% new for Syrah. The Cabernet Sauvignon is aged for 22 months prior to bottling, the Syrah for 15 months.

### ANNUAL PRODUCTION

Cabernet Sauvignon Eisele: 24,000 bottles

Syrah: 4,000 bottles

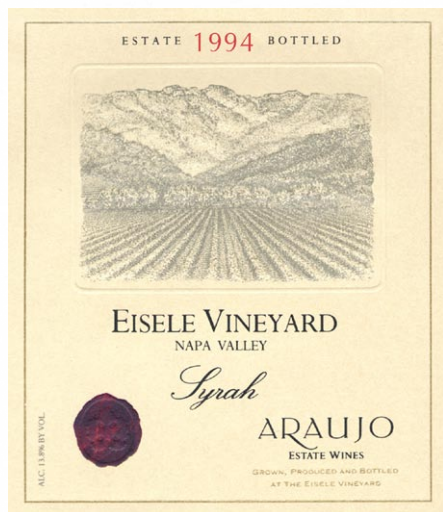
AVERAGE PRICE (VARIABLE DEPENDING ON VINTAGE): \$50–125

### GREAT RECENT VINTAGES

Cabernet Sauvignon—2003, 2002, 2001, 1999, 1996, 1995,  
1994, 1993, 1992, 1991

Syrah—2002, 1999, 1998





Since 1971, some of California's most ageworthy and intensely flavored Cabernet Sauvignons have been made from grapes grown at the Eisele Vineyard, located on benchland near the northern end of the Napa Valley, just east of Calistoga. Protected by the Palisades Mountains to the north and cooled by westerly breezes from the Chalk Hill Gap, this 40-acre vineyard is planted on warm cobbly soils that yield a small crop of exceptionally concentrated fruit. The wines produced in this remarkable place have a rare combination of forthright character with precisely defined flavors and fine textures, deep concentration without any sense of heaviness, and the capacity to develop profound complexity with age.

The Eisele Vineyard was originally planted in the 1880s with Zinfandel and Riesling, and has been under vine since. The first Cabernet was planted in 1964.

Milt and Barbara Eisele purchased the 137-acre property in 1969, including 35 acres of vineyard. Initially they sold their crop to the local co-op, but suspecting that their fruit was of exceptional quality, they were advised by the late wine gurus Barney Rhodes and Harry Waugh to explore a vineyard-designation for their wine. The Eiseles approached Paul Draper, winemaker at Ridge Vineyards, who produced the first Eisele Vineyard Cabernet Sauvignon in 1971. This landmark wine, one of the first vineyard-designated Cabernets in

California, is gracious and beautiful after more than three decades in the bottle, and is considered by many to be one of the finest wines ever produced in the Napa Valley. The 1972 and 1973 vintages went to the Robert Mondavi Winery to be included in their Reserve Cabernet. The second vineyard-designated Eisele Cabernet, which has equally impressive longevity, was produced by Conn Creek Winery in 1974 to great acclaim.

In 1975, wine visionary Joseph Phelps began producing what would become a long line of legendary Cabernets from the Eisele Vineyard. Throughout Joseph Phelps's tenure there, the wines reflected the incomparable character and quality of the Eisele Vineyard. The 1991 vintage yielded two significant Eisele Vineyard Cabernets—the final Phelps bottling from the property and the first Araujo Estate Cabernet Sauvignon.

The Araujos acquired the property in 1990. From that point, the vineyards have been dedicated exclusively to estate-bottled wines.

In 1993, Tony Soter, Araujo's initial consulting oenologist, hired Françoise Peschon as his assistant winemaker. Raised in California with roots in Luxembourg, Françoise received her oenology degree from UC Davis. After postgraduate work at the University of Bordeaux and an apprenticeship at Château Haut-Brion, she returned to California to join Napa Valley's Stag's Leap Wine Cellars, where she worked for seven years before joining Araujo. She became winemaker in 1996, while Tony and his associate, Mia Klein, continued as consultants until Tony's retirement in 1998. The consistent character of Araujo Estate wines derives largely from Françoise's cumulative experience with the vineyard and the wines, and her dedication to producing wines that express the character of the vineyard.

Michel Rolland, the esteemed French consulting oenologist, has been a part of the Araujo team since 2000.

At Araujo Estate, the goal is to produce world-class wine that clearly expresses the estate's distinct *terroir*. They believe that farming organically and biodynamically is the most effective and sustainable method of growing fruit unique to the site, and that improving the health of the soil inevitably improves the flavor of the wines.

To produce the estate's flagship wine, three quarters of the 40-acre Eisele Vineyard is dedicated to Cabernet Sauvignon and its companion varieties, Cabernet Franc, Petit Verdot, and Merlot. The resulting

wine is an intense expression of the Eisele Vineyard *terroir*, showing the characteristic flavors of cassis, blackberry, black cherry, cedar, chocolate, and slate, with a lingering mineral finish. Cabernets from the Eisele Vineyard are known for their concentration without heaviness, silky texture, and ability to age for decades.

At the request of Joseph Phelps, Syrah was first planted on the property by Milt Eisele in 1978, but the intention of making an Eisele Vineyard–designated Syrah was abandoned due to lack of demand for Syrah in the marketplace. In 1986, the Syrah vines were budded over to Cabernet, although about 100 plants remained unchanged. The Araujos discovered these few remaining vines, and after making wine from them in 1991 and 1993, made a serious commitment to this an-

cient and noble grape, and increased the plantings in the vineyard. Viognier is co-fermented with some of the Syrah lots, making up 5% of the wine. Araujo Syrah is a profound, mysteriously compelling wine that reveals yet another aspect of the Eisele Vineyard’s unique *terroir*.

This reference-point winery is always one of my favorite stops in Northern California. I have been an admirer of the Eisele Vineyard Cabernet Sauvignons since I first tasted the 1974 Conn Creek Eisele. I’ve been inspired by the proprietors Daphne and Bart Araujo, who have taken this superb *terroir* and built it into a world-class winery and vineyard operation, producing not only spectacular Cabernet Sauvignon, but also fabulous Syrah.

