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# GENTRY

WINE  
COUNTRY  
ISSUE

*Inside the Bidding at*  
**AUCTION NAPA VALLEY**

*Stories on*  
**IMMORTAL ESTATE  
CONTINUUM  
LOUIS M. MARTINI  
AMICI CELLARS  
SIGNORELLO ESTATE**

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Taking place amid vineyard vistas, art-filled wineries, and private estates, Auction Napa Valley has earned a storied reputation as the world's most celebrated must-attend charity wine auction and event. Now in its 39th year, Auction Napa Valley (May 30 – June 2) is set to break even more records. *Gentry* offers an insider's look at the bidding action.

### On the cover:

"Silverado Afternoon" shot on location in Yountville by Mars Lasar. [www.marslasarstudio.com](http://www.marslasarstudio.com)

## CONTRIBUTORS



### Jennifer Massoni Pardini

SENIOR EDITOR/MARKETING STRATEGIST

Now that our much-needed rains have subsided, spring has sprung and summer is already on the way. So, the first thing I wanted to do was head to the beach! I checked into Dream Inn Santa Cruz, where the new Jack O'Neill Restaurant & Lounge recently opened, offering live music every Thursday, Friday, and Saturday evenings as well as "surf's up" fare, local wines and cocktails, and a relaxing ambiance daily. If you visit this month, be sure to check the Dream Inn's in-room publication, "The Daily Dreamer," for a full list of local events, like a Mother's Day Brunch or the Santa Cruz Longboard Union Memorial Day Invitational (because every room at this inn has an ocean view!). Also, mark your calendars for the Sunbeam Foundation's annual fundraising event, "Cooks for a Cure," on June 9. This year, the event will take place at the Los Altos History Museum, where a like-minded new exhibit, *Silicon Valley Eats: A Taste for Innovation*, will also be on display. Make it a summer evening of food, friends, and fundraising for cures for pediatric bone cancers, which the foundation has worked tirelessly to combat since 2005. See you there!



### Fredric Hamber

CONTRIBUTING WRITER

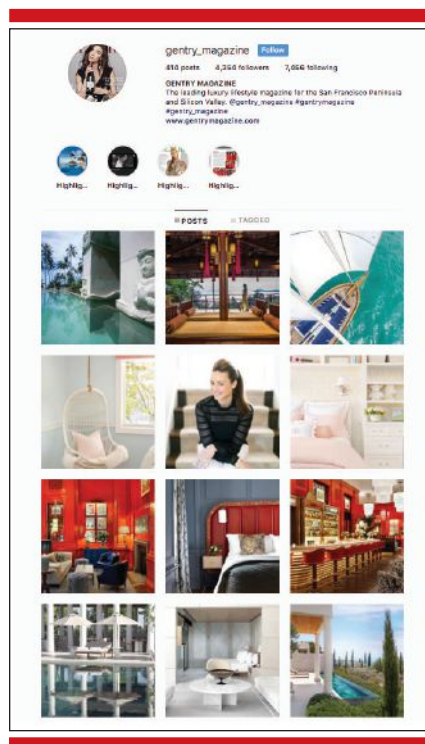
During my time spent with members of the Immortal Estate and Amici Cellars teams, I liked hearing about some of the unseen, often costly, work that goes into producing a premium product. Drones with infrared sensors fly overhead to determine particular areas of a vineyard that need attention. It is not unusual to harvest one part of a vineyard, then bring the crew back at additional expense ten days later when other vineyard blocks are deemed ready for picking.



### Emily Mangini

SENIOR EDITOR

I am always inspired by people who embrace their role as stewards, but I was especially inspired by Ray Signorello, Jr.'s, spirit and optimism as he leads Signorello Estate through its wildfire recovery. It was a privilege to speak with Signorello and his team and to see not only their drive to rebuild but to hear about how the Napa Valley wine community has rallied around them to provide support and encouragement. I hope *Gentry* readers enjoy this story as much as I enjoyed writing it!



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### Emily Heitmann

STYLE EDITOR

For the last three years, I've lived a paleo lifestyle. Well, paleo-ish. While I try to eat only unprocessed foods such as meat, fruits, and vegetables, sometimes my cravings come a'calling and I can't help but grab some chips or assorted cheese and crackers. Don't even get me started on ice cream. But, something happens every time I indulge—I become lethargic, cloudy, and irritated. Think Cruella de Vil meets Regina George meets Miranda Priestly—it's not pretty. So I decided that 2019 was going to be my year of paleo. I had the plan and now all I needed was inspiration. That's where Michelle Tam comes into play. Her *Nom Nom Paleo* cookbooks are filled with approachable recipes ranging from easy pressure cooker dishes to kid-friendly options. I had the pleasure of interviewing Tam and only mildly geeked out as I asked her about her paleo journey. She was full of laughter, relatable stories, and so much knowledge. She inspired me to share her story with *Gentry* readers and to continue my personal paleo journey. Don't get me wrong, I do miss that revolving bread basket and dessert menu, but my kids definitely don't miss those Disney villain mood swings! So, thank you, Michelle, for your knowledge and delicious recipes!



### Robin Hindery

SENIOR EDITOR

Looking at Rich Karlgaard today—longtime publisher of *Forbes*, best-selling author, and sought-after speaker—it's hard to believe he ever struggled to find his path. But his latest book on "Late Bloomers" hits close to home for the Los Altos resident. Whether you're a parent or simply someone living in the wunderkind-obsessed Bay Area, I think you'll be fascinated by Karlgaard's findings.



# CULTIVATING LUXURY

*Immortal Estate's quest for perfection.*

It is safe to say that Immortal Estate founder Tim Martin has gleaned his share of knowledge of Northern California wine terroir over the years. Early in his career he held positions with Lail Vineyards before starting several enterprises, including Tusk Estates, whose coveted vintages are only sold to friends-of-friends, with a 10-year waiting list. But when Martin first visited the Sonoma County vineyard that he and his partners would buy and rebrand as Immortal Estate, he knew the moment he turned off the road from Spring Mountain that this place was something different.

"When you turn to the left," he explains, "you drive Indiana Jones style for about a mile, deep into the woods. Further into the mountains...you're in the jungle. There are no vineyards around, it's not your typical bougie thing that's been built."

The steep spot where Immortal's vineyards grow appears on a 19th-century stagecoach map, identified with the inscription "Impassable Mountain." Today it remains inaccessible during rainy season; the property is not normally used to host visitors. What makes the place distinctive is a natural spring that feeds the property's ponds, and the 55° slope that had been terraced and planted by the prior owners in the 1990s, a far steeper incline than would be permitted today under county regulations.

That terroir, which produced Cabernet that garnered a 100-point score from Robert Parker, is what convinced Timothy Milos, the winemaker who had crafted that wine, to accept Martin's offer to continue as winemaker under the new ownership, with an eye toward greater successes ahead.

"Someone said to me, 'How do you get better than a hundred points?'" Martin says. "Points are very arbitrary, very subjective,

one person's opinion. I respect it and appreciate it, but I believe that you should always be striving to do more, and what I know is that this vineyard can actually do better, and so did Timothy."

As Martin speaks, his fiancée Jessica Biggins, who handles the marketing side of the business, pours from a decanter a glass of Immortal Estate's 2014 Impassable Mountain Cabernet. A welcome spiciness is notable on the mid-palate. Just a couple of weeks earlier, Immortal had released its second label, a more fruit-forward mountain Cabernet called

Slope, at a more accessible price point than Impassable Mountain.

"You see vineyards like this in Europe," Martin says of the steep terraces, recalling time he spent in Bordeaux with winemaker Philippe Melka. "You don't see them here. One of the things we're doing is going through all the blocks, and the ones that are good but not great, we're ripping them out and starting over." The plan is to replant the whole vineyard over the next 10 years or so, taking greater

care with the selection of root stock and clones than Martin believes was done for the original planting.

As we sip our Slope, talk turns to the conditions the Northern California wine country has endured over the past couple years: wildfires and, more recently, flooding. Martin views such events philosophically as part of what makes his job a happy challenge.

"Generally, if you're making a luxury good—a car, a watch—you're doing it in the containment of a shop, and you can control all the elements. We're still subject to Mother Nature. Wine is unique in the luxury space, in that a good portion of the entire project is completely not in your control. Therein lies part of the adventure and fun," he says. "And also for us, a lot of the stress. It keeps everyone in this industry on our toes." ♦



Partners Randy Nichols and Tim Milos with Tim Martin (center).

