

# Wineries *To* Watch

Four new Cabernet producers making exceptional wines

## ALL IN THE FAMILY { WHEELER FARMS }



The team at Wheeler Farms

This new project combines the vision of an accomplished Napa winemaking family with a historic estate and a talented winemaker. The result is an impressive portfolio of expressive, detailed Cabernets.

The family is the Araujos, who managed the iconic Eisele Vineyard for more than 23 years before selling their estate in 2013. Immediately after the sale, the Araujos got back into wine, starting with their Accendo label, blending high quality Cabernet grapes from around Napa. Their new home, Wheeler Farms, also inspired J.H. Wheeler, the Araujos' next line of wines, which focuses on single-vineyard expressions from top vineyards in and around Oakville.

Wheeler Farms was originally established in 1871 by Charles H. Wheeler, one of the largest landowners in the area, near St. Helena. Eleven acres remained in the Wheeler family until 2013, when the Araujos and a small group of investors purchased the plot, which now includes 7 acres of Cabernet Sauvignon and Sauvignon Blanc. There's a familiar face making the

“*It sounds kind of cliché, but I try to let the vineyard speak. I want to let the voice of the vineyard scream from the rooftops.*”  
—NIGEL KINSMAN

wines: Nigel Kinsman, who was also winemaker for the Araujos at Eisele (and has not been tapped by Bella Oaks as well).

“It sounds kind of cliché these days, but I try to let the vineyard speak,” Kinsman says of his approach. “I want to let the voice of the vineyard scream from the rooftops.” His focus, he adds, is more on structure than

flamboyance. “I like to think of my winemaking style in general as New World with Old World sensibilities.” This includes careful sorting, three to five days of cold soaking, and native fermentation for up to 35 days, drained directly into barrels. Kinsman also helped design the efficient and high-tech Wheeler Farms winery, which has become a custom-crush facility home to several boutique Napa brands, including Bella Oaks, Tor, Vice Versa and Kinsman's own eponymous label.

—MaryAnn Worobiec

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| 95 | <b>J.H. Wheeler</b> Cabernet Sauvignon Napa Valley<br>Beckstoffer Missouri Hopper Vineyard 2018 | <b>\$225</b> |
| 93 | <b>J.H. Wheeler</b> Cabernet Sauvignon Napa Valley<br>Beckstoffer Georges III Vineyard 2018     | <b>\$225</b> |