

Whether THE TASTING PANEL goes to the winemakers or the wine executives come to us, there is an abundance of news to report, from the latest releases to behind-the-scenes experiences with some of the world's most influential importers, négociants, growers, enologists . . . well, you name it.

# Brief Encounters

We may not have enough pages in each issue to devote as much attention as we would like to each person whose path we cross, but please note that if it's in the publication, we deem it noteworthy.

—Meridith May, Publisher & Executive Editor

## Herzog Wine Cellars

When Joe Hurliman settled into Herzog Wine Cellars' new state-of-the-art winery in Oxnard, California, in 2005, the winemaker got the opportunity to source the most highly-regarded Cabernet in California and to actually oversee the entire production process under one roof.

Three years later, the facility has passed the test; the proof is that Hurliman is now procuring grapes from Napa's esteemed ToKalon Vineyard.

"I put my cards down on the table for this project," he tells THE TASTING PANEL.

Introducing **Generation VIII 2006**, a 100% To Kalon Vineyard Cabernet Sauvignon, signifying eight generations of winemaking for the Herzog family.

Hurliman related his hands-on progression from harvest to bottling. "I have a meticulous destemmer, a grape elevator: no hard-pressed wine here." Unmistakably age-worthy, the 200-case single-vineyard project is a juicy *objet d'art*.

SRP \$200, from Royal Wines.



Herzog Wine Cellars Wine Master Joe Hurliman.



## Domaine du Castel

From Israel's most densely planted vineyards, the textured reds with the long finish and the brilliantly sculpted whites from **Domaine du Castel** were introduced to us at a recent global tasting at Herzog Wine Cellars in Oxnard, CA.

"Every tank is one day's harvest," explains Domaine du Castel proprietor Eli-Gilbert Ben-Zaken, whose Bordeaux blend red, 2006 Petit Castel, from the Judean Hills near Jerusalem (he cleverly names it *Haute Judée*) offers a youthful glow with expressive fruit and acidity that begs for food.

"We age our wines in French oak for up to 24 months," says Ben-Zaken. "We like to say that we *give time to time*."

SRP \$40 (kosher) from Royal Wines.

Israeli winery owner Eli-Gilbert Ben-Zaken (right) of Domaine du Castel with Steve Wallace of Wally's Wines, a top L.A. retailer.