



## Heidi Peterson Barrett

*The First Lady of Wine*

At Fantesca Estate & Winery, we feel very fortunate to have worked with two of Napa Valley's finest winemakers, Nils and Kirk Venge, who have produced outstanding wines for us since our debut in 2002. In 2008, we welcome a true star on the winemaking stage, Heidi Peterson Barrett, who will champion the next generation of Fantesca's Napa wines.

Celebrated winemaker Heidi Barrett has been referred to as "The Wine Diva of Napa" and even "The First Lady of Wine," but she is surely one of the hardest-working women in Napa Valley, if not the entire world of winemaking. Well-regarded for the exceptionally high quality of wines she has produced for Amuse Bouche, Screaming Eagle, Dalla Valle and her own winery, La Sirena, Heidi Barrett has assured her place as one of the world's premium producers of cult Napa wines.

Heidi grew up in the Napa Valley in a winemaking family, spending her summers in the wineries and in the vineyards, and performing nearly every task from sorting vine cuttings to working on the bottling line. Already serious about a winemaking career, she sought her education at UC Davis where she assisted Dr. Ann Noble, the developer of the aroma wheel. After graduating from UC Davis in 1980 with a BS Degree in Fermentation Science, Heidi sowed the seeds of her eventual acclaim, pursuing a series of winemaking stints at Franciscan Vineyards, Silver Oak, Rutherford Hill, Bouchaine Vineyards, and Lindeman's Wines in Australia.

At age 25, Heidi became the winemaker at Buehler Vineyards, where she first attracted recognition by greatly improving the wines' quality and taking production from 6,000 cases to 20,000 cases. After five years, she left Buehler to become an independent winemaker on contract to a number of small local wineries. She was quickly hired by Gustav Dalla Valle to be his winemaker at Dalla Valle Vineyards until spring 1996.

It was at Dalla Valle where Heidi gained prominence by creating powerful yet elegant Cabernets, including the famous "Maya" cult wine, a proprietary Cabernet blend that received two perfect 100-point scores from Robert Parker for the 1992 and 1993 vintages. She was hired to make wine for Screaming Eagle in 1992 and again received two perfect 100-point scores for the 1992 and 1997 vintages. At the 2000 Napa Valley Wine Auction, a 6-liter bottle of Heidi's 1992 Screaming Eagle Cabernet set a world record for the highest price ever paid for a single bottle of wine, a winning bid of \$500,000. The following year, a vertical offering of this cult wine went for \$650,000.

In 1994, Heidi started making her own wine, La Sirena, achieving a small production of Sangiovese. In 1996 she made the first Cabernet Sauvignon for La Sirena, and in 2000 produced her winery's first Syrah. "I was looking for a name for my wine which would be as magical as I think wine is," Heidi recalls. "La Sirena, which means *The Mermaid* in Italian and Spanish, is a way of representing two of my great passions."

