



Wine and Roses

by Andrea Petrini, photos by Roger Casas

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“Between think big and make it small there are those – like Thomas Keller - who take the shortcut of asking winemakers or oenologists to make microcuvées almost exclusively for their restaurants. On a sunny Sunday afternoon, Tor Kenward is waiting for us on his terrace overlooking his garden in full bloom. Although a very important part of the staff of another winery – Beringer – it is as a solo artist that Tor has embarked on his latest personal adventure. He is the king of weightless winemaking. His mythic chardonnays, buttery and floral, with honeyed notes on an incredible mineral base – Durrell Vineyard Wente Clone or Two Rivers Ranch – are exceptional examples in a landscape often too fond of overpowering strength. Tor even has the look, the stance, of a cult winemaker. From “garage wine” - made with whatever means are on hand - he has been able to keep his freedom of expression and his concentrated resistance to the limp consensus of the market. His super exclusive wines circulate from restaurant to restaurant from palate to palate, carrying with them their fruity fragrances and a certain “know how” which has learned to listen to the most intimate expression of the grape. No mysticism, but a near-European introspection, a quest for the truth: “I’ve worked with wines for thirty years. At Beringer, I learned the basics of the business, basics that I continue to refer to constantly, in respecting the nature of each wine. Whether in the vines or in the winemaking, we know that filtering a wine can often be an aberration.” Tor speaks – elocution and philosophy in motion – and as with his wines, we don’t want to spill a drop. “Tom Keller asked me to make half-bottles, to make the wines more accessible.” The battle for exclusivity has only just begun.”