

A New Cult in Napa



Scott Palazzo and his
Akita, Kimba.

A decade ago, L.A. native Scott Palazzo was nominated for a Grammy for his work as a music video producer/director. But he chucked that career at age 45 to follow a dream that started in the picking fields of Bordeaux, something he had first encountered as a guitar-toting teenager.

Today, after only four vintages, his Right Bank-style Carneros-sourced Bordeaux red, Palazzo Napa Valley Red, has been referred to as "the next Harlan." The Merlot-driven blend can be found on lists at some of nation's top 100 restaurants. "As a wine-curious kid, I learned about the restrained elegance of French wines, and it has intrigued me ever since," says Palazzo, with a sparkle in his eyes. "I was on a mission to create a wine that exemplifies the elegance and structure that the cooler Right Bank region of Bordeaux yields in its fruit."

Palazzo's entry into California cult status has been a charmed rise. After making a 411 call to the legendary French Laundry, his first vintage landed on the wine list's holiday pairing menu. In his second vintage, famed chef Thomas Keller requested that Palazzo create an exclusive Cabernet Franc for his restaurants; the Cab Franc is now available to other buyers.

The affable, gray-maned Palazzo can be found between his homes in St. Helena and Studio City with his majestic Akita, Kimba, or fishing a high-altitude lake in the Eastern Sierras. —Alyson Dutch

Johnny Chow switches out
vodka for Hornitos Plata
to make a HorniKazie at
L.A.'s Viper Room



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