

PURSUING THEIR DREAMS

BY MARYANN WOROBIEC

The five vintners profiled below have diverse backgrounds and interests, but they share the goal of dreaming big. And their hard work is resulting in some of the best Cabernets in California today.

BEVAN CELLARS

Small-vineyard focus scores big

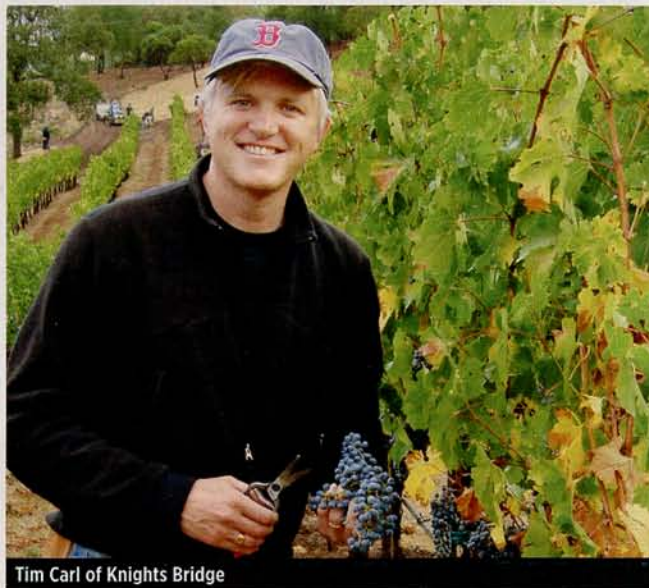
When Russell Bevan decided to move back to California and pursue a career in wine, he had never formally studied winemaking. But he knew what he liked to drink and used that as his guidepost. "I come at this with the palate of a consumer. I had a vision of the types of wines I wanted to make," says Bevan, 47. So far, his vision has resulted in six classic-rated wines (95 to 100 points on the *Wine Spectator* 100-point scale) in his first five vintages.

Bevan and his longtime companion Victoria De Crescenzo had lived in the Midwest, with careers in the dental field, before the return to California in 1999. Once back in the Golden State, the Santa Rosa native sought the advice of winemakers such as Greg La Follette and Philip Togni, whom he credits as mentors.

Since his first vintage, 2005, Bevan has focused on his vineyard sources—small vineyards in Napa and Sonoma, such as Showket, Sugarloaf and Kick Ranch. The couple owns a 2-acre vineyard in Bennett Valley that was originally planted to Syrah but now is being grafted to Cabernet Franc.

Bevan's winemaking approach centers on managing tannins, resulting in wines that are massive yet refined. To achieve this, he employs cold soaks and extended maceration. In addition to tending his own label, he consults for a handful of clients, including Wren Hop, Westerhold Family, Jemrose, Château Boswell and Harbison. "I have to think I have a shot at being one of the big boys on the block," says Bevan. It's a bold assertion, but shows the depth of his confidence, backed up by the quality of his wines.

96	Showket Vineyard The Curmudgeon Oakville 2009	\$150
95	Sugarloaf Mountain The Whitney Napa Valley 2009	\$150
93	Cabernet Sauvignon Oakville Showket Vineyard Bab's Cuvée 2009	\$150
92	Cabernet Sauvignon Oakville Showket Vineyard Julie's Cuvée 2009	\$150



Tim Carl of Knights Bridge

KNIGHTS BRIDGE

Setting down roots in Knights Valley

Napa Valley native Tim Carl pursued many interests before fulfilling a long-term dream of making wine. Carl was first a drummer in a rock band, then a chef, navigator for a nuclear cruiser, a student of molecular genetics, and a Harvard postdoctoral fellow. Yet Carl knew he was destined to get into wine. "If you think about something for 20 years, apparently it will happen," he says.

Along the way, Carl, 47, started up wine and food groups and met people who shared his passions. In 2006, Carl and four friends decided to become business partners and start their own wine label. "[We'd] wanted to make compelling wines that tell a story of where they come from, for a long time," explains Carl. The group purchased 100 acres in Knights Valley, planting 50. Carl is managing partner, living on the property with his family. Jeff Ames is winemaker, known for his own label, Rudius, and his work for Tor. "[Ames] is someone who can express wine elegantly, the simple way," says Carl.

Most of the grapes come from acclaimed Napa vineyards, but a growing number come from the estate property in Knights Valley, just a few miles north of Napa. "It's such an amazing place," explains Carl. "It's a place where Sauvignon Blanc, Chardonnay and Cabernet can grow on the same parcel." They will continue to purchase fruit, while expanding their Knights Valley production.

93	Cabernet Sauvignon Napa Valley Beckstoffer Dr. Crane Vineyard 2009	\$135
93	Cabernet Sauvignon Napa Valley Beckstoffer To Kalon Vineyard 2009	\$135
90	Cabernet Sauvignon Knights Valley 2009	\$115