

Hospitality Connoisseur - From Hotelier to Winemaker

By Gigi Ragland



A few years ago, Tom LaTour could be found graciously pouring chardonnay at one of the Kimpton Hotel's evening wine hours. The chairman and CEO of Kimpton Hotels & Restaurants enjoyed these occasions as much as the guests delighted in meeting him. The convivial setting provided an opportunity for guests to mingle with a hotel management member and, for the lucky few, sometimes the CEO of the company. Today, LaTour is still pouring wine for guests, but this time at his own winery.

One would think after resigning from the top leadership role of a very dynamic and successful hotel and restaurant company, LaTour would want to sit back, relax, sip a glass of his own hand-crafted wine and settle down. But no. To remain static does not appear to be part of the LaTour blueprint.

Like many winemaking hobbyists turned winemakers, in 1990 Tom started making wine out of his San Francisco home's garage. It was only a matter of time before the connoisseur hobbyist became a serious winemaker. In 1999, the garage operation transitioned into a professional wine-production facility with

LaTourVineyards.com
Napa Valley, California

Mt. Veeder Vineyard
Napa Valley Chardonnay
Napa Valley Heritage Clone Chardonnay
Napa Valley Syrah

Lazy River Vineyard
Willamette Valley Pinot Noir

the acquisition of 25 acres of premier vineyards on Mt. Veeder in the Napa Valley. He and his wife, Barbara, now bottle wines under the LaTour label.

The moniker of "hospitality connoisseur" truly fits the profile of the LaTours. With a passion for entertaining and a taste for fine food and wine, the couple looks forward to sharing their vineyard's creations with friends and the public. Winemaking is just a natural extension of their hospitable lifestyle. The Web site www.latourvineyards.com offers information on the beginning of the vineyards, the winery and selections, tasting notes, plus how to join the LaTour Wine Club. In addition, there are a few factoids on Tom's current entrepreneurial hospitality endeavors. ✈



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