

# ANDREW HARPER'S Hideaway Report<sup>®</sup>

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WE'RE LONGING TO RETURN TO...

## The Magical Napa Valley

Pool with a view at Auberge du Soleil

### KENZO ESTATE

Napa's most ambitious new winery of the past decade is Kenzo. It is owned by a Japanese entrepreneur, Kenzo Tsujimoto, CEO of Capcom, an Osaka-based video game developer and publisher. Kenzo became a wine enthusiast on repeated trips to France and, later, Napa Valley.

Visiting the estate feels like entering a hidden kingdom, as it encompasses Napa's largest single property at almost 4,000 acres (or five times the size of New York's Central Park). As well as vineyards, it contains streams, spring-fed reservoirs and abundant wildlife. Our visit began at the imposing, mountaintop entrance gates, after which the trip to the actual winery and private tasting room entailed a 20-minute journey through

forests of conifer, oak and manzanita. The understated architecture of the winery is in harmony with the glorious private valley location.

The wines are highly sought after by collectors but remain virtually unattainable, as the majority of bottles are reserved for the owner's Michelin-starred restaurants in Japan and, more recently, downtown Napa. Collectors clamor for these wines because they are a historic collaboration between two of the most revered practitioners in Napa Valley: original Screaming Eagle winemaker Heidi Barrett and "cult" Cabernet viticulturalist David Abreu.

During the winery tasting, we savored the hospitality in a well-appointed sampling suite overlooking the groomed vineyards.



The elegant and well-structured Cabernets mesmerized us, as did the incredibly refreshing Sauvignon Blanc, plus the finest rosé I've discovered outside Provence.

### TASTING NOTES

#### Kenzo Estate "Rindo" 2017

This is an early contender for the Bordeaux-style blend of the vintage in this price category. Its texture is ultra-silky smooth, preparing your palate for the excitement to come. The dazzling new release begins with a flashy bouquet that includes lavender, sultry dark fruit notes and fresh oak from the French barrels. Hints of baking spices and Swiss milk chocolate on the mid-palate evolve gracefully, boding well for enjoyment over the next decade.

#### Kenzo Estate "Yui" Rosé 2019

A particularly vibrant new vintage, this delightful rosé has hints of spring flowers in its aroma, but flexes a bit of muscle on the palate, displaying classic notes of ripe strawberry and crisp cherry, plus a refreshing brightness that culminates in a memorable finish. This is a perfect spring and summer sipper that will delight now or age for at least two more years.

Traveling the world in search of truly enchanting places



## Notable Restaurants

Although many of Napa's leading restaurants are inspired by European culinary traditions — an inheritance exemplified by Thomas Keller's the French Laundry — other culinary influences are increasingly in evidence. On our most recent trip, we enjoyed refined Japanese and Mexican food, appropriately paired with the valley's wines.

### KENZO

Kenzo has become one of Napa's hottest reservations thanks to a distinctive menu featuring both

Edomae-style sushi and kaiseki delicacies crafted with ingredients flown in daily from owner Kenzo Tsujimoto's native Japan. The fish is sourced from the acclaimed Toyosu Market in Tokyo. A slightly nondescript setting in downtown Napa belies the interior's understated elegance. The dishes are paired with cellar-worthy wines from the nearby Kenzo Estate winery in Napa Valley. High points of our kaiseki menu included dungeness crab okakiage and slow-roasted satsuma wagyu tenderloin with Kenzo Estate

"Rindo" reduction. We savored every sip of the Kenzo Estate Sauvignon Blanc, which proved a majestic match with the crab. Unsurprisingly, the tangy tenderloin paired with a Kenzo Cabernet was stupendous. Among our sushi tastings, my personal favorite was the scallop sushi paired with a youthful vintage of Montrachet. France's finest white wine highlighted the creamy notes of the scallop and heightened the experience of underlying umami flavors. 1339 Pearl Street, Napa. Tel. (707) 294-2049.