

Napa Valley *Register*

During PNV, Dinkels pour 2018 Cab from Atlas Peak at St. Helena's Alpha Omega

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Workers from Lopez Management carry grapes during harvest from Atlas Peak's Dos Lagos Vineyards.

Like a dozen other Atlas Peak vineyard owners, Tom and Marcie Dinkel poured a barrel sample of their 2018 Cabernet Sauvignon at St. Helena's Alpha Omega winery during last month's Premiere Napa Valley celebrations.

The Napa Valley Vintners' Premiere Napa Valley is a barrel auction for the trade that is held each February. This year's auction selling nearly all 2018 Cabernet Sauvignons that will be released in the future, raised \$3.9 million. The money will be used to "protect, promote and enhance" the Napa Valley Appellation.

What was the reaction to Dinkels' Cab? "We had a ton of folks there," Tom Dinkel said. "It was better to be at Alpha Omega than to be at a down valley winery."

Of the 2018, Dinkel said, "We love our '18, it is super delicious. Even though it's a baby and not ready for prime time, it already has a lot of the characteristics that we're looking for, including a big fruit explosion, super smoothness all through the mouth feel, a nice lingering finish and rounded tannins."

Besides the 2018 barrel sample, the Dinkels were pouring their Dos Lagos Vineyards 2016 Cabernet Sauvignon – their current release. (They did not make wine in 2017.) The 2016 was the first of DLV vintages to be made by Kent Jarman, a consultant for various small-production Napa Valley brands, including Kennefick Ranch, Sommerston Wine Company and Coup d'Foudre. Right now, Jarman is "learning the grapes as well as making great wine," Dinkel said. The '16 is "pouring just beautifully right now," Dinkel added. It's on the market at \$150 a bottle and is available at the Silverado Market in Napa and on Dinkels' website, doslagosvineyards.com.

Dinkel said he is proud of Jarman's efforts: American wine and cigar critic James Suckling awarded 94 points to the 2016 DLV Cabernet Sauvignon.

The 22-acre Dos Lagos Vineyards are high on the Atlas Peak's southern flank at 1,650-foot elevation. The five-plus acres of vines

struggle in the white volcanic ash soils, Dinkel said, and generally throw smaller berries than average for Cabernet Sauvignon.

Four years ago, the Dinkels changed its winemakers, from the “iconic” Robert Foley to Jarman. “We wanted to offer a wider selection of wines than our one selection of Cabernet,” including making some white wines and creating a second label, using their Atlas Peak fruit as a blending wine with some other Napa varietals, Dinkel said. “And Foley was unable to accommodate that. He was simply too busy.”

They asked Jarman to continue with some of Foley’s practices including using neutral barrels for the first year until the wine “speaks” to the winemaker and “tells him which barrels to use for the second year of barrel aging,” Dinkel said.

Vineyard manager Hector Lopez has been tending Dinkels’ vines since 2007, “from day one. It’s pretty cute, all the kids were running around and now they are grown up. One’s a foreman,” Dinkel said. “They’ve grown up with us and we’ve grown up with them.”

Currently on their website, the Dos Lagos Vineyard wines for sale include a 2013 Cabernet Sauvignon, \$250; a 2014 Cabernet Sauvignon, also \$250; 2015 and 2016 Cabs, each at \$150; two Napa Valley Cabernet blends, 2015 and 2016, both at \$85; a 2015 DLV 100% Chardonnay, \$50 and a 2017 Sauvignon Blanc, \$40.

The Dinkels’ initial release was in 2007 and each DLV 100% Cabernet Sauvignon has been made with their own grapes from Atlas Peak. They have been married for 25 years and have owned their 22-acre Atlas Peak property, including the Dos Lagos Vineyards, for the past dozen years.



Kent Jarman and Tom Dinkel tasting grapes from Atlas Peak's Dos Lagos Vineyards prior to harvest.

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