

NAPA

WINE, FOOD AND CONVERSATION FROM NAPA VALLEY VINTNERS



**HARVEST IS OUR
CHAMPIONSHIP SEASON**

Interns and Their First Crush

Winemaking Innovations
Raising the Bar on Quality

Faces of Harvest

Wine-Friendly Recipes and
Sustainable Travel Itineraries



JOEL ANTONIO
VITICULTURIST, ALPHA OMEGA

Joel Antonio's brother brought him to California at the age of 17 from a small village in Oaxaca, Mexico. While he only completed the third grade in Mexico, since coming here, Joel has earned his GED, graduated from an ESL program and is currently taking community college night classes. His first harvest was in 2003 and after time in other industries, he returned to the vineyard in 2009.

"I joined Alpha Omega in 2014. I see many regions, work in various vineyards, oversee 30 different ranches, 160+ blocks and each year my opportunities grow and change. Many of my dreams have come true here, including managing multiple vineyards and my own team.

I like Napa Valley because of the people and the technology we employ here. People are friendly and passionate about this place. They genuinely care for the valley and its future for their children.

My day begins around 5 am. I go out to see a few vineyards and then meet my team to discuss the day. Afterward, I drive to the vineyards to check them. I arrive home around 5 pm and get ready for my college classes. I usually finish around 10 pm, sleep and start over again.

During harvest, I am on call 24 hours a day. I supervise the picks and ensure we deliver the best fruit possible. Harvest is the culmination of the year's work. I never really get tired because I enjoy the energy of harvest and the satisfaction of completing the task.

How the vines are managed affects how hard the winemakers will work later. They say wine is made on the vine, and I work hard to bring forth the best fruit possible. My team and I call ourselves 'the grapemakers,' and we truly try to live up to that."

MATT HARDIN

VINEYARD MANAGEMENT, BARBOUR VINEYARDS



Born and raised in Pope Valley, CA on a ranch that has been in his family since the 1850s, Matt went to Cal Poly in San Luis Obispo where he majored in Agricultural Science and minored in Viticulture and Enology, Agricultural Business and Animal Science. After graduating, he headed home to Napa Valley, worked three harvests, and started at Barbour vineyards in 2008. Matt became a partner in 2012.

"I have always enjoyed that artisan, hands-on side of farming. Working with vineyards, especially our clients who typically have high-end Cabernet projects, really appealed to me.

I consider picking day to be one of the three most important days in the lifecycle of wine--the other two being how the last maceration is handled and the day you bottle. As a service provider, it is my job to produce the best quality fruit possible and deliver it on the day the client wants it.

I typically carry about 14 different picking crews going into harvest. Each crew is roughly 15 men strong. After picking and delivering to the winery, all the trucks, trailers and bins are moved and set up in the next location.

Even when the fruit is rolling across the scale, our work is not finished. The vineyards have just run a marathon and so we give them a nice post-harvest irrigation with a little fertilizer, seed a cover crop on the ground and then let them go to sleep. I make it a point to allow my guys to work on one ranch more than any other so that they form an attachment to the project and take pride in their work.

I suppose I could say I enjoy harvest because it has been a part of my family for so long but the truth is, I really enjoy the process and the dance with Mother Nature."