



Davis Estates proprietors Mike and Sandy Davis started a tech company in their garage in 1989, building computing systems for leading science and aerospace clients. When they sold the company in 2010, the next chapter of their lives was destined to be in Napa Valley. Mike explained, "I saw a winery as a life experience rooted in hospitality, community, and shared enjoyment."

The Dynamic Balance of Yin and Yang at Davis Estates

by Meridith May

DAVIS ESTATES PROPRIETORS Mike and Sandy Davis were determined to make their family-owned winery a place for wine and food adventures. With two full-time chefs in tow, visitors are hosted to private tastings at the estate, designed by architect Howard Backen, which is located along the Silverado Trail on a 155-acre property in Calistoga, California.

Using fruit from four estate vineyards across Calistoga, Carneros, Rutherford, and Howell Mountain, winemaker Walter Leiva works with celebrated consultant Philippe Melka, whose vision helped to guide the direction of and philosophy behind the

wines' personalities. Leiva's background at fellow Napa producer Laird Family Estate, where he implemented fermentation management while overseeing blending and barrel programs, instilled his hands-on approach. In 2016, Cary Gott, who was making Davis Estates wines off-site, encouraged Leiva to join the winery, and in 2023, he was promoted to winemaker.

With Mike showing his entrepreneurial and creative

Mike and Sandy's son Brandon is the Director of Estate Experience. Their inviting hospitality center is a wine and culinary focal point.

talents in working with the architects and Sandy displaying an innate ability to position hospitality as an important element that augments visitors' interpretations of the wines, it's no wonder she refers to their partnership as "yin and yang." 



Davis Estates 2024 Sauvignon Blanc, Napa Valley (\$58) High-toned acidity and crushed stone give this spirited white its wings. A squeeze of lemon and a garden of green herbs tickle the palate. **93**

Davis Estates 2023 Cabernet Franc, Napa Valley (\$115) Aged 22 months in (60% new) French oak, this sumptuous and dense wine offers notes of blueberry, spiced sandalwood, and graphite. Warmed earth and ripe black cherry reap the benefits of a persistent violet tone—aromatic and textural—joined by a thread of cocoa and licorice. The result is disciplined, polished, and desirable, not decadent. **97**



Davis Estates 2022 Zephyr, Napa Valley (\$135) This startlingly silky blend of 53% Cabernet Sauvignon, 25% Cabernet Franc, and 10% Merlot with some Malbec and Petit Verdot glides across the palate, carrying notes of dark chocolate, new leather, plum pudding, and black cherry ganache. **98**