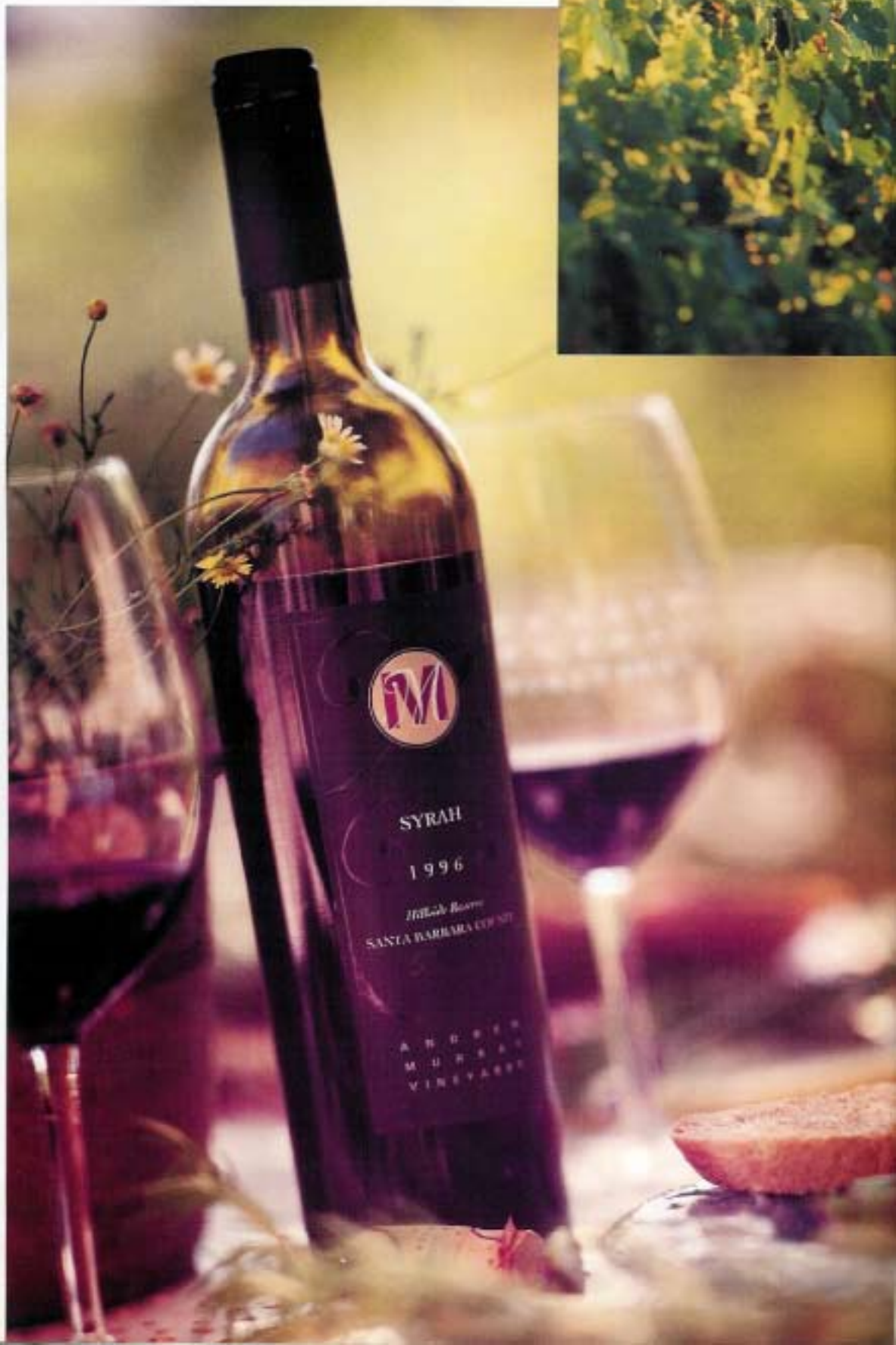


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appellation

W I N E C O U N T R Y L I V I N G

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A family affair

A YOUNG CALIFORNIA WINEMAKER DISCUSSES HIS LOVE OF RHÔNE VARIETIES AND HIS DREAMS FOR THE FUTURE.

Andrew Murray doesn't look old enough to order wine in a restaurant, let alone run his own eponymous vineyard. But the twenty-six year old, whose winery is based in the fecund Santa Ynez Valley just north of Santa Barbara, is at the leading edge of the next generation of winemakers. Is Andrew California's youngest vintner? "I have to think that I am," he says with a proud smile. "There might be some other young winemakers out there, but not with their own label."

The twenty-six small, steep hillside vineyard blocks were situated and planted with the help



of James Murray, Andrew's father, who lives on the property with his wife, Frances. Andrew's wife, Kristen, manages the business affairs.

The idea for the vineyard, as well as Andrew's love of wine, grew out of travels the Murray family undertook years ago because of James' love of food and cooking. "The seed was planted from numerous trips we took to France. My father loves food, and he wanted us to experience all kinds." Andrew—who goes by Andy to

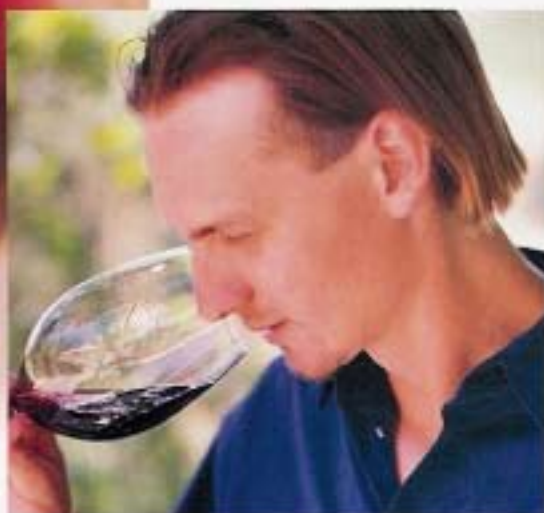
PHOTOS RACHEL WEILL

FOR LEFT: A 1996 Syrah from Andrew Murray Winery. TOP: Some of the thirty-four acres of vineyards in the Santa Ynez Valley, all planted with Rhône varieties. ABOVE RIGHT: Andrew, Kristen and Callum Murray.



top: Syrah by the glass. **RIGHT:** Andrew Murray wants to produce bold, food-friendly wines. **BELOW:** Wine and other products fill shelves at the new tasting room in Los Olivos, fifteen minutes from the vineyard. In addition to wine, Andrew Murray truffle oils, vinegars and sauces are also sold.

family and old friends—tells me as we stroll through the rolling hills of the 200-acre property, 34 acres of which are covered with vines. "When I was 15, I first tasted a Faury Viognier in the Condrieu appellation in the northern Rhône," he recalls. "That was my epiphany. It's an amazing wine, so richly fruity, so aromatic, that it struck me like no other. That



wine was out of this world."

Due to Murray's love of wines from that region, AMV is planted strictly with Rhône varieties, one of only a few such vineyards in the United States. The first commercial harvest was in 1994, and its first release was the 1994 Syrah, which was selected as a "wine of the week" in the

ticeship abroad. Roger Boulton, a UC Davis professor, told Murray to get some real-world experience before beginning school and helped arrange an unpaid internship at Capel Vale in Western Australia. Other employees were leaving the vineyard and Murray was soon able to take over their jobs, learning on the run with great energy and enthusiasm.

"I bottled all the wine, did the tasting room sales and worked all aspects—pumping the wines, filtering wines and so on. I was essentially the assistant winemaker, and with the winemaker traveling to shows, that let me do more. The owners let me run with it. Whatever I was willing to try, they would let me do," says Murray, who hadn't yet taken a course at Davis.

"I did school for me. Not for the dean or the teachers. Like the wine—we make the wines after our

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Los Angeles Times.

Murray, a lanky six feet two with a goatee and longish, straight hair, may be young, but he's not inexperienced. A graduate of University of California at Davis' wine-making program, he learned his trade through a combination of travel, schooling and an appren-

own tastes. That's why our wines are so different," Murray explains.

"It will be an evolution for us here," Murray says, looking around the Provence-like grounds of AMV. "We're not in it for the quick score or buck, but to build the business. What inspired me most in France was the aspect of generational businesses. You see three generations working together. I plan to have more children, and I hope they'll all want to go into the wine business."

—CHRIS RUBIN

