



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

October 2010

**CROCKER & STARR RELEASES NEW VINTAGE AND  
CELEBRATES SECOND DECADE OF WINEMAKING**

**Winemaker-Owner Says 2007 Cabernet Sauvignon is Among Decade's Top Vintages**

ST. HELENA, CA – Crocker & Starr Winery, a partnership between Charlie Crocker and Pam Starr, has released its 2007 Cabernet Sauvignon “Stone Place.” According to Pam Starr, co-owner and winemaker, “We are proud to release this beautiful wine, which we believe will be a memorable one to enjoy now and for years to come.”

Starr says that the 2007 growing season was perfect and resulted in one of the finest in the last decade. Early bud break, bloom and fruit set the tempo for consistent ripening throughout a season of warm days and cool nights from May through harvest. This ideal weather contrast provided the grapes the perfect opportunity to build fully mature tannins.

Accessing the finest vineyard blocks at the Crocker Estate, Starr “designs and builds” the Cabernet Sauvignon in the vineyard. The old-vine heritage clone provides the core substance and power for the wine, which benefits from cold soaking the must and post fermentation maceration techniques. The wine was barrel aged for 20 months in new French oak, minimally racked and was not fined, allowing the wines to naturally balance. The 100% Cabernet Sauvignon is bottled aged for one year before release.

The Cabernet Sauvignon reflects the soil it grows in, which originates from the lower slopes of the Mayacamas Mountain range on the western side of Napa Valley. “The Cabernet extracts the essence of our historic soil,” she says, “and the result is a dense black/purple rim in the glass.” The flavors of vibrant black currant and dark cherry are followed by raspberry, vanilla, and lavender. The mid-palate brings notes of cocoa, espresso bean, dried lavender and rose petals and finishes with minerality, spice and cigar.

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“The 2007 vintage is young and concentrated and should evolve beautifully for 15 years,” Starr says. “Opulence, intensity and power are the hallmarks of our 2007 Cabernet Sauvignon.”

**About Crocker & Starr:** In 1997, Charlie Crocker and Pam Starr established Crocker & Starr, resurrecting a vineyard with roots going back to the 1870s on the Crocker Estate in St. Helena to create world-class wines. With Charlie’s 100-acre estate vineyard on farmland that has grown grapes for over 140 years and Pam’s winemaking expertise, vision and business acumen, the partners proved to be a spectacular match. Charlie is co-owner with Pam, the winery manager and winemaker.

The winery handcrafts a small production of exquisite wine from its organic vineyard, using cutting edge winemaking tools and expert hands to combine the best of both old world philosophy and new world fruit. Starr “designs” the estate’s wines to capture the essence of the extraordinary terroir of the vineyard. The result is complex and balanced elegant wine that expresses the aromatic profile of the Crocker Vineyard.

Crocker and Starr consider the estate Cabernet Sauvignon “Stone Place” – a Bordeaux-style wine of distinction with a slight mineralogy and a deep brooding quality of black chocolate – their crowning achievement. The winery also makes Cabernet Franc, Sauvignon Blanc and Bridesmaid Wine, a Cabernet blend. Crocker & Starr’s Sauvignon Blanc was rated “12<sup>th</sup> Best Wine in the World” in *Wine Spectator’s* “Top 100 List.” Crocker & Starr is located on the Crocker Estate’s St. Helena vineyard in a restored 1918 farmhouse.

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<b>Winery Owners:</b>	Charlie Crocker and Pam Starr
<b>Winemaker:</b>	Pam Starr
<b>Vineyard Owner:</b>	Charlie Crocker
<b>Vineyard:</b>	The Crocker Estate vineyard is located on farmland that has grown grapes in St. Helena since the 1870s, making it some of the oldest vineyard land in the Napa Valley. In 1971 Charlie Crocker purchased the estate and in 1997 Pam joined forces with him to resurrect the historic vineyard and establish a winery. The 100-acre estate, which borders Dowdell and Mills Lanes and stretches to the Napa River, is organically farmed. Today remnants of other commercial crops once grown here still thrive, including walnuts, citrus, apples, prunes and plums.
<b>Wines:</b>	Cabernet Sauvignon "Stone Place," Cabernet Franc, Sauvignon Blanc, Bridesmaid Wine (a Cabernet blend).
<b>Annual Production:</b>	2,400 cases
<b>The Winery:</b>	Crocker & Starr is located on the Crocker Estate's St. Helena vineyard in a restored 1918 farmhouse.
<b>Hours:</b>	By appointment Monday through Saturday. (707) 967-9111
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## **CROCKER & STARR HISTORY**

When Charlie Crocker and his wife Lucinda first saw the Dowdell homestead in the little Napa Valley town of St. Helena, they were enthralled. Settled in the 1870s the beautiful property with its historic buildings and vineyards proved irresistible. In 1971, the couple acquired the property with its “ghost” stone winery, brandy house, vineyard and fruit orchards and renamed it “Stone Place”. Charlie replanted the estate vineyard with varietals based on his love of the wines of Bordeaux, emphasizing cabernet sauvignon and cabernet franc. Soon he was making a little wine for his family, developing vineyards for others and selling grapes.

Fast forward to 1997 when Crocker Estate’s historic vineyard site and a trailblazing young woman winemaker would serendipitously come together. Pam Starr, the winemaker for Spottswode Vineyard and Winery in St. Helena, stopped by the Crocker vineyard to take a look. She’d heard good things about the vineyard location, which had been growing grapes for over a century, and she was on the verge of launching a wine consulting business. After thoroughly testing the estate’s soils, she drafted a “design” of the wine she could make if the vines were groomed, organically grown and naturally balanced. Charlie asked her if she was interested in starting a winery. After several meetings, Pam and Charlie agreed that her winemaking skills and his property and grapes would be a spectacular match. Crocker & Starr was established.

With more than two decades of winegrowing experience to cull from, Pam set forth to cultivate the Crocker Estate vineyard. Known as a “dirt connoisseur” because of her great ability to extract flavors from the soil, Pam knew that with work she could capture the essence of the estate’s complex terroir in her wines. She also knew there were “blocks” or sections of the vineyard from which she could make great wines.

Charlie agreed with the vision and he began replanting while hiring soil experts to help transform the vineyard. They would rebuild the soil, bring it to its best possible potential and grow organic grapes. It took ten years but the crowning achievement is the estate’s Cabernet Sauvignon created from vines that are over 25 years old. The result is a fine Bordeaux-style wine of distinction with a slight mineralogy and a deep brooding quality of black chocolate.

“There’s something incredibly special about experiencing what goes into a delicious bottle of wine that’s made from a single vineyard like this one,” Pam says. “When people come to Crocker & Starr they taste our wine, see the vineyard in a historic district and they leave with a sense of being part of the history of this beautiful place in the Napa Valley.”

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## CHRONOLOGY

**1870s:** Dowdell & Sons Winery is established in St. Helena by the Dowdell family.

**1920:** Prohibition closes Dowdell & Sons Winery, but the vineyard continues growing grapes.

**1971:** Charlie Crocker purchases the 1870s stone Dowdell & Sons Winery and vineyard, renaming it the Crocker Estate. Over the years, Charlie will add adjoining properties to his estate. Today, 85 of the 100 estate acres are vineyard land.

**1978 - 1980:** Charlie Crocker plants cabernet franc and cabernet sauvignon.

**1997:** Charlie Crocker and Pam Starr establish Crocker & Starr, resurrecting the historic winemaking estate. Pam becomes Charlie's partner as well as manager and winemaker and begins transitioning from conventional to organic farming.

**1998:** To cultivate the best attributes of the sauvignon blanc grape, Pam plants the varietal in the warmer up-valley Crocker Vineyard and the cooler down-valley Hyde Las Trancas Vineyard.

**1999:** Crocker & Starr releases its first Cabernet Franc (1997 vintage).

**2000:** Crocker & Starr releases its 1997 Cabernet Sauvignon "Stone Place," an estate Bordeaux-style blend.

**2002:** Crocker & Starr releases its first Sauvignon Blanc (2001 vintage).

**2005:** Crocker & Starr's Sauvignon Blanc is named as the 12<sup>th</sup> best wine in the world in *Wine Spectator's* "Top 100 List."

**2005:** Crocker & Starr releases its first Bridesmaid Wine (2003 vintage), a Cabernet Sauvignon blend.

**2009:** Crocker & Starr moves into a restored 1918 farmhouse on the vineyard in St. Helena and opens its tasting room by appointment.

**2009:** Crocker & Starr's 2005 Cabernet Sauvignon "Stone Place" is rated 94 points by Robert Parker and 95 points by Gary Vaynerchuk of Wine Library TV.

**2010:** Crocker & Starr establishes a vineyard wine experience for visitor.



## WINEMAKING & VITICULTURE FACTS

### WINEMAKING PHILOSOPHY

Crocker & Starr handcrafts a small production of exquisite, world-class wines from the organic vineyard estate in St. Helena. Charlie Crocker and Pam Starr's commitment to sustainable and organic farming techniques combined with cutting edge winemaking tools and guided by expert hands come together to combine the best of both old world philosophy and new world fruit. Winemaker and co-owner Pam Starr "designs" the estate's Cabernet Sauvignon, Cabernet Franc and Sauvignon Blanc to capture the essence of the extraordinary terroir of the vineyard.

Crocker & Starr's **Cabernet Sauvignon**, considered the winery's crowning achievement, is dark and dense with aromas of black cherries, chocolate and the earth itself. Its silky tannins along with the oak structure leave a lush mouth feel. The **Cabernet Franc** is rich and concentrated with aromas of cinnamon stick, clove and Asian spices and has a savory, lingering blueberry finish. The **Sauvignon Blanc** blends grapes from warmer upper valley and cooler down valley vineyards to create a lovely minerality and forward aromas of lime, kiwi, peach, pear and guava.

Our winemaking practices are gentle. We harvest at night when the berries are ripe and cool and the skin softened. To protect the skins, de-stemming and sorting are done by hand. The use of various extraction techniques depends on the vintage; sometimes we combine cold soaking and extended maceration for up to 45 days. After pressing gently, the new wine is matured in French oak barrels. Our Cabernet Sauvignon is barreled for 20 to 22 months and the Cabernet Franc for 16 months. There is no fining or filtration.

Blending at Crocker & Starr begins at harvest. Typically more than 50 lots are individually fermented and continually blended throughout the barrel maturation. The final blend is completed the day before bottling.

"Grapes express where they are grown and for me soil is everything," says Pam Starr. "I work the soil so it will express itself in the wine when blended. In this way I design the wine to capture the essence of our estate terroir. As a result we create complex, balanced, elegant wines that express the aromatic profile of the Crocker Vineyard."

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## VITICULTURE INFORMATION

Crocker & Starr grows the five Bordeaux varietals (cabernet sauvignon, cabernet franc, merlot, petit verdot and malbec) as well as sauvignon blanc from an 85-acre estate vineyard that has been continuously farmed since the 1870s. The vineyard lies in the St. Helena Appellation just south of town and is comprised of alluvial soils that gradually change as the terrain gently slopes down toward the Napa River. Years have been dedicated to organic farming to improve the already superior soil. The complex and varied components of our soils, which enjoy excellent drainage that forces vines to draw deeply from the earth, express themselves in powerful and balanced wines.

**The Vines:** We grow cabernet sauvignon, cabernet franc, merlot, petit verdot, malbec and sauvignon blanc.

**The Trellis System:** The “lyre” system is used for our 25-year-old cabernet sauvignon vines and a modified “Y” system for all others. The “Y” system positions the shoots so the berries are protected from a steady afternoon sun and provide shade to the soil.

**Watering System:** Drip is used when needed during hot summer days and for establishing new vines. In rare cases old vines are given a drink at the end of a dry season.

**Farming:** We farm organically and are working toward a self-sustaining vineyard that regenerates itself without interference. The vines are hand tended during the growing season and hand picked at harvest.

**Innovative Viticulture Practices:** Harvest is always at night so grapes arrive cool for crushing. Extraordinary attention is paid to the health of the vineyard: we have established a border of wildflowers to harbor good bugs, planted organic crimson clover for honeybees, and created a buffer zone between the Napa River (where the bad bugs live) and the vineyard. We frequently release ladybugs.

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## **CHARLIE CROCKER**

### **Owner**

Charlie Crocker, co-owner of Crocker & Starr and owner of the Crocker Estate, descends from one of California's old families. His great grandfather, also Charlie Crocker, spearheaded construction of the Central Pacific railroad, completed in 1868, which began the extraordinary growth that transformed California into an economic powerhouse.

A San Francisco businessman, Charlie has had a life-long love affair with the Napa Valley as well as an enduring interest in wine. In 1971, Charlie and his wife Lucinda acquired the historic Dowdell property in St. Helena that included both vineyards and old stone buildings from the 1870s, and decided to bring it back to life. Charlie began by replanting and selling grapes, making wine for family and developing vineyards he sold to other wineries. Desiring to complete the resurrection of the old wine estate, in 1997 Charlie established Crocker & Starr with Pam Starr whose Bordeaux-style wine he greatly admired.

During his many years in business, Charlie founded, managed and grew two public technology companies. The first, BEI Technologies, specialized in high tech electronic sensors, including those developed to provide electronic stability control in automobiles. Today electronic stability control is required in every car sold in the United States. The second, BEI Medical Systems, developed sensor based proprietary medical devices for women's health care. A few years ago, Charlie sold both companies and today he serves as director of a number of public and private companies and charitable organizations in the Bay Area.

Charlie was born in San Francisco and earned a Bachelor of Science degree at Stanford and an MBA from the University of California at Berkeley. He divides his time between his home in San Francisco and the Crocker Estate in St. Helena. In the wine country one will find him walking the vineyard, driving his 1966 Ford truck, running a tractor or enjoying a glass of Crocker & Starr wine with his family.



**PAM STARR**  
**Owner & Winemaker**

Pam Starr has been the co-owner, manager and winemaker of Crocker & Starr since its inception in 1997 when she helped resurrect the vineyards on the Crocker Estate in St. Helena and established a winery to create world-class wines. After toiling as a winery employee for 18 years, Pam's transformation at a relatively young age into owner, manager and winemaker was unique and remarkable. It required a special mix of skill, passion and dedication. All of which describe Pam Starr.

Pam's love affair with winemaking began as a harvest intern for Sonoma Cutrer in Sonoma after graduating from the University of California at Davis in 1984 with a degree in Fermentation Science. Headed down a different path, the daughter of an orthopedic surgeon who was planning to go to dental school quickly switched gears. Attracted by the fast pace, the pleasures of working the land and the wine itself, Pam knew she'd found her calling. "I was simply smitten – the way one is when falling madly in love. Winemaking is mysterious, it's sexy, it's magical." And it's been her life since.

After the internship, Pam worked for Edna Valley Vineyard in San Luis Obispo stacking barrels for a season. Her dream of becoming a winemaker began to take shape. For the next six years she was an enologist and assistant winemaker for Carmenet Winery in Sonoma, a job that taught her how to run a winery from cellar to bottle. In 1991, she became the winemaker for Spottswoode Vineyard & Winery in Napa Valley where she worked until she and Charlie Crocker established Crocker & Starr and she built the foundation of the business. At the same time Crocker & Starr opened its doors, Pam began wine consulting for Adastral Vineyard in the Carneros, Gemstone Vineyard in Yountville and Garric Cellars of Calistoga, among others.

Passionate about translating terroir into wine, Pam is known for her distinctive Bordeaux-style blends that express a deep sense of place. For this enthusiastic and inspired winemaker who views her job as translating soil into wine, great wine must taste of the sun, of the earth it comes from and of the place it grows.

Pam is a member of the Napa Valley Vintners, Appellation St. Helena, American Society of Enology and Viticulture, Concierge Alliance Napa Valley and Wine Entre Femme, an international consortium of women winemakers. She is married, lives in Napa and embraces mountain biking, scuba diving, water skiing, sailing, gardening and motorcycling wine roads with her husband. Pam's dog Griffin, a Wirehaired Pointing Griffon, is her loyal vineyard companion.