

Shake Ridge Vineyards

Amador County, California



RANDY CAPAROSO

**A SINGLE VINEYARD HAS RAISED
THE STATURE OF AMADOR COUNTY.**

Randy Caparoso is a career wine professional, longtime journalist, and restaurant wine consultant (Wine List Consulting Unlimited, www.winelistconsulting.com). As a founding partner and former vice president and corporate wine director of the Roy's Restaurant Group, he was Santé's first Restaurant Wine & Spirits Professional of the Year in 1998; in 1992 and 1999, he was Restaurant Wine's Wine Marketer of the Year.

The reputations of U.S. winegrowing regions have a history of being turned around almost overnight, often by just one or two producers. Look at what Beaulieu Vineyard and Inglenook did for Napa Valley, what Au Bon Climat and Sanford Winery did for Santa Barbara County, or what Eyrie Vineyards did for the Willamette Valley, among other examples. Similarly, as bottlings bearing the Shake Ridge designation have appeared over the past two or three years, the prestige of Amador County has suddenly skyrocketed, and the word has gone out: world-class wine is now being made in the Sierra Foothills. And as with many previous such developments in the industry, this emergence can be attributed to one person: Ann Kraemer, who owns Shake

Ridge Vineyards with her parents and siblings.

The clan has also established its own brand, Yorba, made by longtime friend Ken Bernards at his Ancien Wines in Carneros. Bernards calls Kraemer a "perfectionist"; Helen Keplinger, who crafts Shake Ridge wines under her own name at Napa's Bryant Family Vineyard (where she is the full-time winemaker), refers to Kraemer as "a winemaker's grower—definitely among the most brilliant vineyard managers I've ever worked with."

Among the other highly regarded producers currently drawing from Shake Ridge Vineyards are Favia Erickson Winegrowers, owned by Annie Favia (who has also worked for David Abreu) and her winemaker-husband Andy

Photo by Randy Caparoso