



Agustín Francisco Huneus (holding baby Ophelia), and his father, Quintessa winery founder Agustín, enjoy wine tasting as youngest daughter Emilia smiles at her grandfather. OPPOSITE Antonia, Agustina and Emilia run through Quintessa's vineyards of Cabernet Sauvignon.



HAIR AND MAKEUP KELI CAMPBELL WITH DAVID MAGNA WORKSHOP

# Pure Napa

IN THE NAPA VALLEY, QUINTESSA WINERY FOUNDERS AGUSTÍN AND VALERIA HUNEEUS HAVE CREATED A JOY-FILLED HAVEN AMONG THE VINEYARDS FOR THEIR FAMILY AND MANY FRIENDS BY DIANE DORRANS SAEKS PHOTOGRAPHED BY LISA ROMEREIN



THE  
ESSENCE OF  
QUINTESSA:  
LAND  
FAMILY  
GRAPES  
SUN  
WATER



A twenty-acre lake is the property's centerpiece. The winery is located in the Rutherford appellation not far from Oakville.





For Valeria and Agustín Huneeus, it was love at first sight the moment they walked onto a 280-acre property for sale at the eastern edge of the Napa Valley.

With five wooded hills, four microclimates, a 20-acre lake, a fresh-water river, handsome old oak, sycamore and eucalyptus trees and a coveted location along the Silverado Trail (not far from Rutherford), the land seemed ideal for producing elegant wines that would speak of terroir and finesse.

“It was virgin soil that had never been planted to grapes, so we loved the idea of being pioneers to establish our winery and home there,” says Agustín Huneeus. Patriarch of the family, Agustín, with his wife, Valeria, founded the landmark Quintessa winery in 1990. (Their families had been prominent in Chile for many generations, and they own a larger winery there.)

“The property had such a strong sense of place, of somewhere-ness. We wanted to put down roots and bring up our children and grandchildren there,” says Agustín.

With Quintessa up and running, the first vintage was introduced in 1994 and was released three years later. As the wines garnered plaudits and prizes, it was time to build a new family residence adjacent to the pristine lake.

“We found the perfect site nestled among the hills, overlooking the lake,” recalls Valeria. Greg Warner of San Francisco-based Walker Warner Architects, visionary responsible for planning the award-winning winery, was selected to design the residence.

“I wanted a very simple house, very unpretentious, where we could gather under one roof and entertain wine buyers and friends in the wine trade as well,” notes Agustín.

“I had long been drawn to the purity and elegance of traditional old country houses and churches in Chile. I wanted the same integrity and straightforward aesthetic. I did not want a lot of ornamentation or ceremony.”



In Agustín Huneeus's office, Bosnian artist Safet Zec's oil painting, acquired in Paris, hangs above the fireplace. OPPOSITE The Huneeus family's spacious living room overlooks vineyards and a waterlily-filled lake.



Handblown Quintessa decanters are often used to serve the wine. OPPOSITE In a corner of the living room, a painting of tango dancers by Chilean artist Irene Domínguez hangs above a Spanish desk—a family heirloom.







arner drew up a 6,000-square-foot plan with a high-ceilinged living room and adjacent dining room. There would be a private family wing with four bedrooms opening onto a sunny verandah.

“We went through many iterations of the concept, always paring down and refining the design,” notes Agustín (known affectionately as Cucho to family and close friends).

Warner and his design team dreamed up a house for all seasons. Keeping in sync with its natural surroundings, expansive terraces intimately connect to the garden (designed by San Francisco landscape architect Ron Lutsko), and vineyard views are for the looking from all directions.

A simple L-shaped structure, the house was planned to minimize energy use: Exterior stucco walls were colored a rich ochre using soil from the property. Support walls were built using a poured concrete and insulated foam system that retains heat in winter and keeps the house cool on scorching summer afternoons. To avoid air conditioning, doors were placed for efficient cross-ventilation, and the house is shaded by deep porches to the west and south. Floors were crafted from reclaimed and remilled teak, and all windows and doors were custom-made from sustainably harvested tropical hardwoods.

With plaster walls in a soft eggshell color and minimal exterior detailing, a simple palette allows to the residence to connect with the landscape.

Agustín and Valeria (a viticulturist with a Ph.D in biochemistry), ensured their house and garden followed their biodynamic winery’s ecological direction. Here, materials and plants work in harmony with nature. At the winery and around the residence (which includes an organic vegetable garden, and a coop and run for free-range chickens), planting follows a deliberate biodynamic approach, strictly avoiding pesticides, synthetic fertilizers and genetically modified organisms.

“I walk through the vineyards with the girls, and I feel as if the vines are my children as well,” she notes. “We planted the vines; we prepared the soil. We started with virgin soil, so everything here, we created. I love the energy the vines give out. For me and our children and grandchildren, this place is very nourishing.”

Out walking in the golden light of evening, Valeria and her lively troop often find obsidian arrowheads—a reminder of the Wappo Indians who earlier roamed the land. “I always feel the house is very solid and timeless,” notes Agustín. “It is for the ages, and it is here for the generations to come.” ●

Family patriarch Valeria Huneeus, with her granddaughter Ophelia, is surrounded by scenes of vibrant life at home and at Quintessa winery. Patriarch Agustín Huneeus and his son Agustín Francisco stand in the fermentation hall at the winery. The residence overlooks a placid lake. Macarena Huneeus, in a blue dress, is the mother of four lively bilingual daughters.





Inspired by traditional Chilean houses, the Huneeus family's Napa Valley residence has a sunny enclosed verandah. OPPOSITE Three generations on the Corona, a hilltop among the vineyards.

