

FOOD & WINE®

Winemaker of the Year, 2012

If you want to be a terrific winemaker, consider becoming a grape-grower first. That has been Steve Matthiasson's approach; he was a sought-after vineyard consultant for many years before starting his eponymous winery. It has quickly become a source for some of Napa Valley's most remarkable wines, like the 2010 Matthiasson White (\$35), a focused blend of Sauvignon Blanc, Ribolla Gialla, Sémillon and Tocai Friulano—a surprising mix of varietals in the heart of Cabernet country.

With his grapes-come-first sensibility, his skill at balancing lushness with crisp intensity and his fascination with little-known varieties, Matthiasson is helping to change the Napa Valley paradigm. — Ray Isle

