

OVERSEAS NEWS

Wine styles of the rich and famous



Grapes are grabbing the attention of the glitterati throughout the globe as celebrities, from pop stars to polities, are jumping on the wine-business bandwagon.

Arnold Palmer is one of a gaggle of golfing greats aiming for the 19th hole. His portfolio of private-label wines, produced in collaboration with California-based vintners Luna Vineyards, includes cabernet sauvignon and chardonnay varietals blended.

French actor **Gérard Depardieu** owns vineyards not only in the Loire Valley,

Bordeaux and Languedoc but also in Algeria, Argentina, Morocco, Spain, Sicily and the US. He's reputed to be an avid taster of his own and everybody else's wines.

Francis Ford Coppola, Academy Award-winning movie mogul, has an eponymous winery in Sonoma, California, architecturally inspired by Copenhagen's Tivoli Gardens.

Sir Alex Ferguson, knighted for his services to England as its football manager, is planning to embark on a new career as an importer of French fine wines. A knowledgeable wine enthusiast, he is said to have counselled players such as Wayne Rooney on how to build a cellar of collectable wines.

Robert Parker, arguably the planet's most influential wine critic and shaper of the public palate, practises what he preaches at his Beaux Frères Winery in the Willamette Valley, Oregon.

Nancy Pelosi, Speaker of the US House of Representatives, is the joint proprietor with her husband of a 3.6-hectare vineyard

in the Napa Valley. American winemakers are currently battling against proposed federal legislation designed to prohibit them from shipping interstate directly to consumers. Pelosi could be their most powerful ally.

Gordon Sumner aka **Sting**, school teacher turned pop idol, spent seven years renovating a 16th-century wine estate Tenuta del Palagio in Tuscany. The 300-hectare property boasts a luxury villa called Sting's Café, six small lakes, a swimming pool, olive groves and, not surprisingly, a recording studio. He employs 15 permanent staff, including a chef who harvests produce from the two-hectare kitchen garden. He makes wine, too. Last year he released 2500 cases of Sister Moon wine made from sangiovese, merlot and cabernet sauvignon grapes grown on the 16-hectare vineyard.

All of which illustrates the adage that if you're looking to make a small fortune out of wine, you'd better start with a large one.

ANTHONY MANIFOLD

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JAMES HALLIDAY, AUSTRALIAN WINE WRITER & CRITIC

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