



## *Stags' Leap*

MOUNTAIN, GRAPE, STONE:

THE EVOLUTION OF THE STAGS' LEAP MANOR HOUSE PORCH SOCIETY

There are places on this earth acknowledged as power spots. This is not something that can necessarily be measured with Geiger counters, barometers, dousing sticks, or core samplers, although all of these and more may be brought to bear in order for people to satisfy their curiosity about places that are essentially in focus.

Stags' Leap is one of those places. It was beautiful and volcanic and nourishing of an abundant diversity of life, molded into picturesque hillsides of spreading oak and Manzanita, long before the advent of homo sapiens. Once the fish learned to walk and the people learned to rumba, this became a place that drew restless and creative people. Its particular complement of soils and air currents, and a proximity to the marine influences of the peaceful ocean, was found to be gratifyingly conducive to wine grapes, the kind of wines that move mountains, change lives, and inspire long complex evenings of conversation intertwined with delicious foods.

A porch, supported by mortared stone pillars, came into existence in order to shelter and protect all this vibrant animal life. Over the past 118 years, the Stags' Leap Manor House Porch has been the vantage point and staging ground for magic and tenderness. It has been a country resort and a dance floor, framed sunsets and moonrises, and provided faithful witness to feasts of owls and raptors.

The Manor House itself, built in 1893 of stone quarried from a local hillside, nestles up against the slope of the Stags Leap Palisades. This siting on the property has much to do with the way in which it plays with light. The rugged ridgeline to the east blocks early morning light with its massive shadow. When the sun eventually rises above the peak, the first rays filter out over the top of the roof and illuminate the western edge of the vineyards on the far



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side of the estate before they begin to travel slowly back across the land, lighting up the delicate rows of vines three quarters of an hour or more before they ever touch the building. A particularly beautiful side effect of the Stags' Leap *Madrugada* are the sunbeams that can be seen radiating out from behind the mountain's craggy peaks just before the first glance of sunlight strikes the Porch.

When Stags' Leap Winery decided to create a membership program for its patrons, the people involved in winemaking and hospitality gathered on the Porch to discuss its possibilities and potential structure. Winemaker Kevin Morrissey wanted an opportunity to make smaller lots of special wines, and to have a more intimate audience for those wines with whom he could discuss his particular vision of winemaking. The stewards of this property have always honored the limited access required by its beautiful but remote location on lands sensitive to wildlife, and the nature of the historic estate, located in its own private valley tucked off to the side of the larger Napa Valley. They wanted to share some of this experience with others, and they wanted this new entity to be based on the structure of the property itself.

A society is a group of people with an interest in common that goes beyond passive curiosity and becomes engaged. A porch that has been the gathering place for three diverse family groups along with myriad wine enthusiasts, nature lovers, artists, and adventurers is where these intersect: mountain, grape, stone.

When the self-evident had made itself perfectly obvious, and everyone had a good laugh over the solution that was right under their noses, they dispersed in their separate directions to go about the work of issuing invitations and establishing the Manor House Porch Society.

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Members of the Manor House Porch Society enjoy regular shipments of wines selected by winemaker Kevin Morrissey, including the inaugural release of our Reserve Chardonnay and other small lot, library, and large format bottles as they become available or prior to release to the general public. In addition, Society members receive invitations to events and tastings featuring our wines, in particular the annual Manor House Porch Society Gala held at the winery with our winemaking team.

To reserve your seat on the porch, see details of benefits to Society members, and for a listing of our current regular wine shipments visit us online: <http://www.stagsleap.com/wine-club/> or call the Manor House Porch Society at 1-800-395-2441.

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