

# THE WASHINGTON PANEL

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NAPA VALLEY

## The Sands of Time

JEFF SMITH HAS TURNED HOURGLASS DOWNSIDE UP

by Meridith May / photos by John Curley

Man of the Hour. Hourglass proprietor Jeff Smith on his Blueline Vineyard estate in Calistoga.



The Blueline Vineyard, located in Calistoga, is home to the Hourglass winery, completed in 2009. This incredible Hourglass 2009 Blueline Vineyard Merlot, Napa Valley is an example of the phenolic "magic" that occurs in this very special vineyard. Flavors are explosive; enhanced and stretched out along the palate, tannins are structured yet tame and balance is achieved.

### Tasting the Future

Hourglass winemaker Bob Foley knows the science behind the soil and is responsible for crafting wines from the estate's two unique vineyards. Before we tasted anything in bottle, Jeff Smith first introduced us to the 2010 barrel samples of the Blueline Vineyard Malbec and Merlot. These impressive barrel samples show Foley's skill at extracting the essence of the site.

**Hourglass 2010 Merlot, Blueline Vineyard, Napa Valley (\$75)** to be released fall '12. Saying that the 100% Merlot has a unique profile is understatement. Armed with chalky tannic grip, it has a sensation of stretching across the palate, a tidal wave of tanginess and concentration. Strawberry to cherry density.

**Hourglass 2010 Malbec, Blueline Vineyard, Napa Valley (\$75)** to be released fall '12. Fresh summer notes and rosemary are part of this high-toned, vibrant Malbec from the vineyard. The vibrancy and acidity from the wine electrify the palate with a jalapeño jolt.