

Six to Watch

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Issue: October 15, 2013

ZIATA

Karen Cakebread is slowly adding to her small lineup of Ziata wines. A Sauvignon Blanc in 2008 was followed by a Cabernet Franc, a Pinot Noir and now a (soon-to-be-released) Bordeaux blend, all sourced from Napa Valley. She vinifies the Ziata bottlings at Napa Wine Co., in Oakville.



"Sauvignon Blanc and Pinot are the wines I tend to turn to the most," says Cakebread, 59, who started her own label after more than 20 years working with her family at Cakebread Cellars. "Pinot is a very sensual wine," she says. "I love its fruitiness and earthiness." It is also the most demanding of wines, she adds. "Working with it the first year, you don't know if you get it right. I love to watch how it changes over time. It drove [me and winemaker Anne Vawter] crazy because it kept on changing." Cakebread calls the 2009, sourced from the small, rocky Paladini Vineyard in Carneros, "a bold wine," and expects it to age well for a decade.

The name Ziata is a tribute to Cakebread's mother and grandmother—two inspirational figures in her life—whose surname was Annunziata. Vawter, 34, "brings an intuitive approach to winemaking," Cakebread says. "She's got all the technical education, yet there's a calmness [to her] winemaking." Vawter also makes wine under her own Red Mare label. Cakebread's next project is a Cabernet-based red wine from the 2012 vintage.

ZIATA Pinot Noir Carneros 2009 Score: 90 | \$45 | 325 cases

