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IF THE CALIFORNIA wine industry might be said to have anything akin to a mad scientist, it would surely be Leo McCloskey. The president and cofounder of Enologix—a wine consultancy firm in Sonoma County—and holder of a doctorate in biology, McCloskey has committed his talents and time to decoding the chemical secrets of fine (and high-scoring) wines for the purpose of schooling clients in how to improve their own productions. Yet, even while he coaches winemakers in how to raise their scores, McCloskey has advocated rather vocally the importance of *terroir* (the conditions of soil, climate, and sunlight that define the character and quality of the grapes) over technique in determining quality. In fact, he even has suggested that quality can be mapped out by region, declaring the Oakville AVA (American Viticultural

Area) the “first growth” region of Napa Valley. Despite the obvious contradiction in someone who makes his living through nurture arguing the virtues of



nature, one must admit that McCloskey is right: The Oakville appellation is home to many of the region's unique properties, including Harlan Estate, To Kalon, Screaming Eagle, and Gargiulo Vineyards. The latter's latest release, the Gargiulo Vineyards 575 OVA Cabernet Sauvignon 2004, takes its name from the winery's address at 575 Oakville Crossroad. This basso profundo Cabernet exudes rich aromas of bittersweet chocolate, coffee, leather, and spiced plum. On the palate, blueberry, cherry, and boysenberry flavors blend into a luxuriously textured wine, the sole flaw of which is its scarcity: Alas, a mere 248 three-packs (or 62 cases) were made. If only McCloskey could decode enough of this masterpiece's secrets to whip up more of the vintage in his laboratory. (\$575 per three-bottle case) www.gargiulovineyards.com