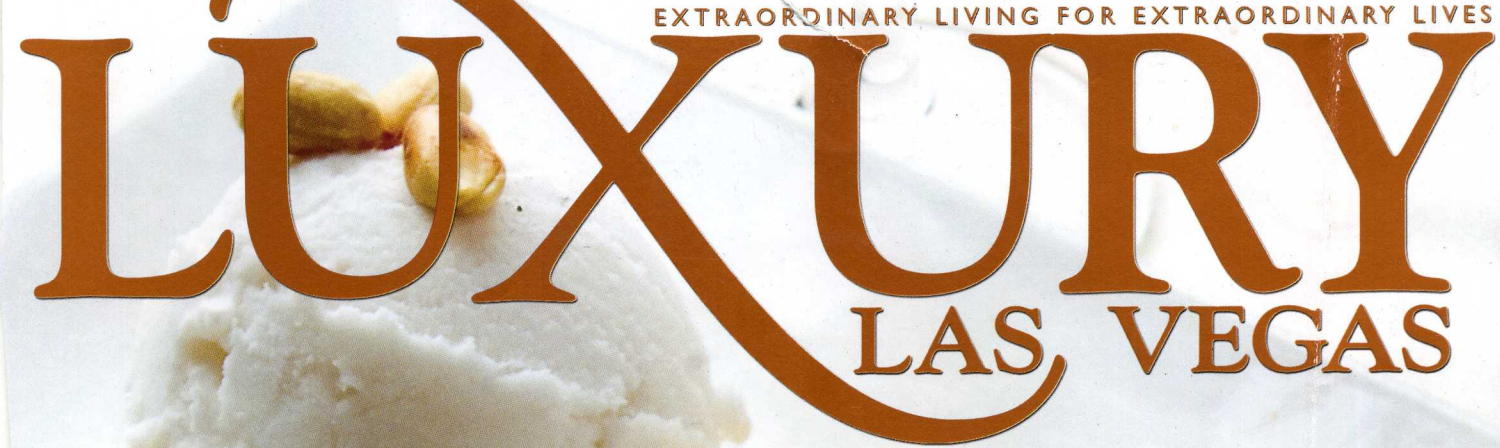


EXTRAORDINARY LIVING FOR EXTRAORDINARY LIVES

# LUXURY

LAS VEGAS



## ❖ BLACKBIRD

Michael Polenske is another entrepreneur associated with the technology industry, investment banking and management, and the accoutrements of the good life, including investing in restaurants and in New York's SoHo House, whose rooftop swimming pool starred in "Sex and the City," and importing European art and furnishings. In contrast, he also owns the landmark "Taylor's Refresher" drive-up in St. Helena.

Blackbird debuted its first vintage in 2003. Its name derives from the French patois for Merlot, "Little Blackbird." Appropriately, their vineyard in the Oak Knoll District is planted to Merlot, and their wine style reflects Pomerol wines, with an occasional splash of Cabernet Franc and/or Cabernet Sauvignon. This is another winery that plays the name game - Illustration, Paramour, Contrarian, Arise, and Arriviste (a rosé).

Paul Leary, chief operation officer, was with Duckhorn. "We believe in simplicity, in the brand name, in our label design," he remarked. "There are so many Cabs in Napa Valley, but there are very few wines in which Merlot is dominant. In addition to our home vineyard, we have seven others throughout Napa Valley. Diversity gives us a spice rack of flavors for our winemaker, Sarah Gott (Insignia and Quintera), to work with. You can't be all things to all people; so we focus on what's best in the region."

*[www.blackbirdvineyards.com](http://www.blackbirdvineyards.com)*