

# THE DIPLOMAT

## From Games to Grapes



Apparently, Kenzo Tsujimoto, CEO of Japan's Capcom Group—known for creating popular video games series such as ‘Street Fighter’ and ‘Resident Evil,’—isn’t just all about providing us with blood, guts and adrenaline rushes. In fact, he likes his wine (American Cabernet Sauvignon, in particular)—so much so that he’s decided to open a \$100 million winery in California’s esteemed Napa Valley.

The Japanese businessman opened the doors of the tasting room at Kenzo Estate, a 4,000-acre property resting on the Valley’s Mount George, on May 1 (by appointment only). And like any super successful businessperson, he’s enlisted a team of top-notch talent to help him kick-start the brand. The new vineyard manager of Kenzo Estate is David Abreu, a viticulturalist who has worked for some of California’s most prestigious wineries, and he’s been called ‘one of the most influential wine personalities in the last 20 years,’ by industry bigwig Robert Parker. Another prominent member of the community, owner of La Sirena Winery Heidi Barrett, has been brought on as the consultant winemaker. Barrett has also been singled out by Parker as, ‘the first lady of wine.’

Interestingly enough, Tsujimoto purchased the property on which Kenzo Estate lies two decades ago, in 1990. It was, according to Bloomberg news, a horse training grounds—specifically for that of the 1984 US polo team. Of his decision to convert the property into a winery, Tsujimoto recently told the *Canadian Press* that while in the beginning, he bought the place for an outdoor escape from the (hectic?) video game business world, it just so turned out that the land was also ‘a great place to produce wine.’

While Kenzo’s wines aren’t exactly affordable—running from \$60 to over \$100 a bottle—I’ve personally got my eye on the 2008 'Asatsuyu' Sauvignon Blanc, which is described tantalizingly on the company’s website as a silky and intense Bordeaux-style wine, with complex pomelo and apricot flavours that combine with layers of honeysuckle and crushed stone.