



## WINE

## Crush Camp

**T**HINK YOU'VE OUTGROWN camp? Not so fast. For three days each September, you can experience the wine-making process, from grape harvesting to bottling, at Crush Camp in Northern California's **Napa and Sonoma valleys** along with about 20 other campers.

Crush Camp's "counselors" are winemakers from five Diageo Chateau & Estates wineries: Beaulieu, Sterling, Provenance, Acacia, and Moon Mountain. Passionate and articulate, they convey the science—and art—that goes into every bottle. So whether you know an elegant tannin from a dowdy one, you're bound to come away with a better understanding of wine—while enjoying tastings along the way.

You'll definitely earn your chards, cabs, and zins though, learning to analyze brix (the sugar content of grapes) with a refractometer, gathering grapes in the vineyards, and snatching stems and debris from mountains of just-picked fruit as it whizzes by on the "sorting table" conveyor belt. You even get to custom blend your own vintage, using a pipette and beaker to create a red from six component wines (cabernet sauvignons and merlots from different vineyards, years, and barrel stock; plus a cabernet franc). The ratios are up to you. If you prefer a vintage that's mellow and immediately drinkable, go for the merlot. If you want big, aggressive flavors, in need of cellaring,

go heavy on the cab. Your formula is then bottled and presented the next day—with your name on the label.

But what's wine without food? You'll have gourmet fare, including a dinner prepared by James Beard Award-winning chef Joey Altman. Following the legendary 1994 Georges de Latour Private Reserve Cabernet, Altman may even pull out his guitar for a group sing-along. Though, for more traditional camp situations, head counselor Wayne Ryan advises that zinfandel is *the* match for s'mores. —GK

*Crush Camp 2007; September 20–22; \$910 per person, including two nights' lodging; 707/967-5288 for reservations.*