

KRIS MARGERUM

Head Sommelier, Auberge du Soleil

As Head Sommelier at Napa Valley's Auberge du Soleil, Kris Margerum follows a simple philosophy when selecting wine for the inn's Michelin-starred restaurant: One plus one can equal three. The right wine complements the food, and together, they create an unforgettable experience. Margerum has been in pursuit of the perfect food and wine pairings at the iconic wine country inn for more than 25 years, during which time he has developed close relationships with the top wine makers of Napa Valley. His wine list currently offers 1,500 selections from a 17,000-bottle cellar and has been awarded *Wine Spectator's* Award of Excellence for the past five years.

Margerum works in partnership with Executive Chef Robert Curry to create exquisite food and wine pairings for the six-course Chef's Menu and all of the other dishes Curry dreams up for the Restaurant and the more casual Bistro and Bar. Margerum is also responsible for the restaurant staff's wine education and conducts wine tastings and advanced-level winery tours for them on a regular basis.

"A few of years ago, I started conducting blind tastings," recalls Margerum. "This allows me to evaluate each wine on its own merits, without prejudice. I taste more than 100 wines a week to find four or five that meet my ideals and make the wine list and hope our guests can benefit from knowing that each wine has been hand selected."

Margerum has developed wine lists for a number of other Auberge Resorts' properties, including the opening wine list for Esperanza in Los Cabos, Mexico and for Calistoga Ranch in Napa Valley. More recently, he turned his attention to Auberge Spa, where he pairs wines by the glass with the floral or herbal notes in a selection of spa treatments to create the ultimate wine country spa experience. His newest project, a collaboration with Auberge pastry chef Paul Lemieux, showcases Margerum's passion for Madeira wines and Lemieux's talent with confections in an after-dinner presentation of Madeiras and house-made chocolates.

Margerum's career with Auberge du Soleil spans more than 25 years. Prior to being appointed head sommelier in 1999, he acted as the restaurant's assistant food and beverage director for six years, helping to oversee daily operations, planning, budgeting, forecasting, hiring and reviews, monthly inventories and guest satisfaction management. Before that, he acted as assistant restaurant manager for the Auberge and was promoted to restaurant manager after a year. He began his career at Auberge du Soleil in the dining room as a server.

Margerum is a graduate of the Sterling School of Service and created the Napa Valley Sommelier Society, which meets quarterly at various Napa Valley restaurants to discuss common issues and strategies – and, of course, to taste wine.

About Auberge Resorts

Auberge Resorts is a collection of exceptional hotels, resorts and private clubs, each with a unique personality that assures a memorable guest experience. Among the distinctive properties are Auberge du Soleil, Napa Valley; Esperanza, Cabo San Lucas; Calistoga Ranch, Napa Valley; The Inn at Palmetto Bluff, South Carolina; Encantado, Santa Fe; Rancho Valencia Resort and Spa, Rancho Santa Fe, Calif, with several others currently in development. While Auberge Resorts nurtures the individuality of each establishment, all are characterized by a set of communal elements: intimate, understated elegance; captivating locations that inspire exceptional cuisine and spa experiences; and gracious yet unobtrusive service. For more information about Auberge Resorts, please visit www.aubergeresorts.com.

Auberge du Soleil is also a member of **Relais & Châteaux**, the prestigious global hospitality association of intimate, elegant and independently owned hotels and acclaimed restaurants. Founded in 1954 in France, the association is comprised of 480 luxurious establishments in 56 countries.

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