

OUR BEST-TASTING ISSUE EVER

# Robb Report

RobbReport.com



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## Culinary Masters Competition



Meet 5 of the World's Greatest Chefs  
And Their Nominees for the Top New Artist of the Next Generation

OCTOBER 2012



PLUS

**FERRARI IN FRANCE** | Rare 250 GTs Rally from Champagne to Paris

**GRAND OPENINGS** | New Hotels and Resorts in Italy, Japan, Turkey & Vietnam

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*H. Stern uses fauna as fodder, and Fernando Pensato strikes oil with black diamonds.*

**ANIMAL ATTRACTION** \* The bracelet, ring, and earring designs in Brazilian jeweler H. Stern's new **Ancient America Collection** ([www.hstern.net](http://www.hstern.net)) subtly represent animals that were symbolic to pre-Columbian cultures. The pieces are priced from \$990 to \$81,700. Serpents, which symbolize rebirth, are expressed as sinuous rings and bracelets crafted in "noble" gold (a gold alloy created by the company) and adorned with cognac and black diamonds arranged to look like snakeskin. Rose-gold pieces are set with black and white pavé diamonds to evoke the spotted coat of a jaguar, an animal associated with strength and power. . . .



**H. Stern Ancient America Collection**  
18-karat yellow-gold bracelet.

**REFINED OIL** \* Too many truffle oils, even the priciest, are the kitchen equivalent of cheap perfume: Their aromas are so overpowering that they

offend rather than entice. Italy's **Fernando Pensato Olio di Oliva Extra Vergine Tartufo** (available through the Sandy Butler Market in Florida, [www.sandybutler.com](http://www.sandybutler.com)) is that rare oil with subtle fragrance and potent flavor. This summer

it was one of 30 food products—out of nearly 2,000 in competition—to win a medal at the National Association for the Specialty Food Trade Fancy Food Show in Washington, D.C. Fernando Pensato Tartufo is priced at \$30 for an 8.5-ounce bottle.

Unlike oils that are chemically scented (most are), this one is infused with extract from Périgord black truffles, known as the black diamonds of the South of France. The extra-virgin oil is pressed from Peranzana olives, grown in Apulia and harvested while still green, which results in a smaller yield of higher-quality olives with very low acidity. ☐

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**FROM THE ROBB CELLAR** \* *Fine wines & spirits worthy of a place in your private collection.*

**ENTREPRENEUR MICHAEL POLENSKE** has a gift for discovering the sublime. In 2007, he purchased a turn-of-the-century stone building in Yountville, Calif., that for more than 50 years had served as a hotel. At the time, the structure was in need of repair, but the century-old masonry captivated him. In a short time, he and his team transformed this near-ruin into one of the wine country's gems, Ma(i)sonry Napa Valley, a gallery and tasting room where guests can sample another of Polenske's projects, the wines of Blackbird Vineyards. This label also owes its existence to the keen eye (and palate) of Polenske, who in 2003 bought a parcel in Napa's Oak Knoll District that produced Merlot on a par with Pomerol, France's most impressive estates. This fruit now forms the core of Blackbird's wines, which emphasize varietals other than Cabernet Sauvignon. The **Blackbird Vineyards 2009 Paramour Proprietary Red Wine** relies mainly on Cabernet Franc and Merlot for its decadent bouquet of blueberry and fresh-ground-coffee aromas, as well as its flavors of black cherry, toffee, and nutmeg. (\$125) [www.blackbirdvineyards.com](http://www.blackbirdvineyards.com)

**HAD GERMAN CHANCELLOR Otto von Bismarck** not annexed a portion of Lorraine in 1871, the world might have

been denied one of France's greatest Champagnes—and one of California's finest sparkling wines. After all, if the Taittinger family had not fled this region for Paris after the Franco-Prussian War, Pierre Taittinger might never have purchased Château de la Marquetterie, home of Champagne Taittinger, and his descendant Claude Taittinger would not have established **Domaine Carneros**, a leading producer of sparkling wine in Napa Valley. The New World analogue to Taittinger's famed Comtes de Champagne Blanc de Blancs, **Domaine Carneros by Taittinger 2006 Le Rêve**, the winery's *tête de cuvée*, represents a synthesis of French technique and California soil. With aromas of honeysuckle, citrus blossom, jasmine, white peach, and pear, this 100 percent Chardonnay exhibits on the palate flavors of vanilla, buttery pastry, and marzipan, before dissolving into a cool mineral finish. (\$95) [www.domainecarneros.com](http://www.domainecarneros.com)



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