**Consulting winemaker Bob Egelhoff carries** a bed-load of his new wine in the back of his pickup. The wine is a 1998 Napa Valley cabernet sauvignon called 2480 Hollywood & Vine. Almost no one has heard of it before, and the wine is made in such small quantity, 150 cases, that a large portion of the production fits back there in a rough, strapped-down pile. Careening up winding, steep Sage Canyon road, he loses a case. "Oh shit," Egelhoff says, screeching to a halt and throwing the truck into reverse. Fortunately the wine survives the tumble with only scratched capsules. A first-release cabernet, 2480 Hollywood & Vine is nevertheless priced $75, and it's sold out. "Everyone thanked me for not overpricing the wine!" Egelhoff says. There's an improbable math here, $75 adding up to a wine you've never heard of, never tasted, never even read about. So when Egelhoff's truck hits that bump, there's almost a thousand dollars hitting the tarmac.

# the anatomy of Napa Valley buzz

# THE NEW NEW CABS

How did this wine sell out? How can you account for the buzz that attends a new brand so small it doesn't ever leave Napa Valley? How does value accrue so quickly to a wine with no track record, no vintages behind it? Can the wine live up to the hype? 2480 Hollywood & Vine is not the only new cabernet sauvignon in Napa Valley which has garnered immediate attention, the kind of excitement that traditionally has followed wines with years of history behind them. The most-talked about cabernets in Napa Valley are some of the newest: Jones Family, La Sirena, Lail, Métisse, 2480 Hollywood & Vine and others. Go to the Cantinetta at *Tra Vigne* or *Dean & Deluca* in St. Helena, go to *Enoteca Wine Shop* in Calistoga and look at the bottles on their shelves, listen to the managers talking about their new favorite wines. Or grab a table at *Bouchon* in Yountville, or at *Meadowood* above St. Helena. These Napa Valley wine shops and restaurants are where much of the attention starts, where reputations can heat up and wines sell out as newborns.

by Taylor Antrim