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Accendo wine brand changes hands as Napa Valley growers take ownership

Bittner and Bettinelli family acquire acclaimed label, plan to maintain quality and shift grape sourcing to estate vineyards

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Greg and Jaime Araujo have sold their Napa Valley wine brand, Accendo, to a partnership led by vintner Jack Bittner and the Bettinelli family. The transaction, which took place in June 2025, includes the Accendo brand and its current inventory but does

not involve any vineyard land. The financial terms of the deal were not made public.

Jaime Araujo, who is also chair of the Napa Valley Vintners board, explained that the decision to sell was rooted in the brand’s longstanding focus on growers. She said that transferring ownership to respected local growers was a logical next step for Accendo. Jaime will now concentrate on her other wine project, Trois Noix.

Accendo was established after Bart and Daphne Araujo, Greg and Jaime’s parents, sold their original Araujo Estate and Eisele Vineyard in 2013. The new label was designed as a tribute to classic Napa Valley Cabernet blends from the 1970s, with an emphasis on Oakville fruit. Since its first vintage in 2014, Accendo’s Cabernet Sauvignon has received high praise from critics, earning seven ratings of 95 points or higher out of nine released vintages through 2022. The wines are made by winemaker Nigel Kinsman, who will remain with the brand under the new ownership.

The new owners do not plan to increase production immediately. Accendo currently produces about 900 cases each of Cabernet Sauvignon and Sauvignon Blanc per year. Production will continue at Wheeler Farms, a facility now owned by Suzanne Deal Booth.

Jack Bittner, who previously partnered at Ovid winery and now manages Ecotone vineyard near St. Helena, emphasized that he and his partners intend to respect Accendo’s legacy and customer base. The Bettinelli family brings significant experience as one of Napa Valley’s largest grape growers, managing 350 acres of their own vines and farming another 600 acres for others. Giancarlo Bettinelli and his brother-in-law Paul Goldberg currently run the family business.

The Bettinellis have supplied grapes to Accendo since its inception in 2014, including fruit from their Sleeping Lady Vineyard. Over time, Accendo has sourced grapes from several top vineyards in Napa Valley for its blends. Some sources, such as Vine Hill Ranch and M-Bar Ranch, will no longer be part of the program under the new ownership. Instead, the Bettinellis plan to use fruit from their own properties, including Mast vineyard in Yountville and other sites they are developing.

A key part of the transition is the Mitchell vineyard in Yountville, which will become the new home for an Accendo estate wine. This site is located on land where Giancarlo Bettinelli grew up and has been under a long-term lease since 2021. Fifteen acres have been planted with Cabernet Sauvignon and Cabernet Franc, with the first harvest expected in 2025.

The new owners say they are committed to maintaining Accendo’s quality while exploring new possibilities with their vineyard holdings. Winemaker Nigel Kinsman will continue to oversee production and experiment with fruit from different blocks within the Mitchell vineyard to determine what works best for future wines.

The sale marks a significant change for Accendo but keeps it closely tied to some of Napa Valley’s most experienced growers and vintners.