Screaming Eagle loses Hermacinski

28 Sep 2010 by Jancis Robinson

As rumoured for some time, the Napa Valley's cult winery Screaming Eagle has now lost its popular sales and marketing person, ex-auctioneer Ursula Hermacinski (see American charity auctions - every one a winner and her own site www.gavelgal.com).

It seems as though the owner Stan Kroenke (a shareholder, inter alia, in Arsenal football club) is increasingly asserting his authority. Charles A Banks, who was originally in charge of the new regime in Oakville and their Santa Barbara estate Jonata, left last year and since then has been nosing around South African wine country (see Cape's Screaming Eagle connection). Winemaker Andy Erickson is still in place in the Screaming Eagle vineyard off Silverado Trail that is currently being extensively remodelled. See Screaming Eagle - the new regime.

This press release was published last night by the hitherto unknown (to me and our west coast editor Linda Murphy) wine enterprise Casey Flat Ranch. They announce primly that their new sales and marketing person Hermacinski 'most recently served in similar sales and marketing capacities at two of California's most prestigious wine estates in Oakville and Santa Barbara county'.

'I feel particularly fortunate to be joining the Casey Flat Ranch family at this most extraordinary time', said Hermacinski. 'This position represents a unique and rare opportunity not only to introduce wines from an entirely new and previously undiscovered grape-growing region, but also to work alongside some of the most respected names in the wine industry.'

The identity of these respected names is for the moment undisclosed, unless she is referring to the owners of Casey Flat Ranch, Robert and Maura Morey, of course. Casey Flat Ranch itself is way over on the eastern flank of the Napa Valley in the little-known Capay Valley near Lake Berryessa. Just 24 acres of the 6,000-acre cattle ranch are currently planted to vines. But managing partner Alison Morey Garrett announced yesterday that they were opening an office many miles away in downtown St Helena, the heart of the Napa Valley. 'We feel a genuine responsibility to have a presence and to be an active supportive citizen in the community where we work, and where are wines are represented,' she said.

So presumably Ursula will be based there, close to her many old friends in the fine-wine business.

See more at www.caseyflatranch.com