

# The Wine Press: News from the Napa community

From the June 3 recap: Napa Valley news you may have missed today series

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## A new home for Burgess

Burgess Cellars has a new home after the original Howell Mountain estate was destroyed in the 2020 Glass Fire.

The Lawrence Wine Estates, which now owns Burgess, has acquired 27 acres and a winery from Luna Vineyards, which will become part of the Burgess brand. It is scheduled to open in July.

Gaylon Lawrence Jr.'s Lawrence Wine Estates, managed by master sommelier Carlton McCoy, Jr., purchased Burgess in the summer of 2020 only to have it burn weeks later in Glass Fire. Lawrence now owns six properties in Napa Valley, including the historic Heitz Cellar.

Burgess Cellars was founded by Tom Burgess in 1972. Before that, the site was Souverain Vineyards, founded by J. Leland "Lee" Stewart, who first harvested grapes there in 1944.

George Lobjanidze will be the new estate manager, responsible for developing the private tasting program, providing team leadership for the tasting room, e-commerce and events.

He and winemaker Meghan Zobeck are transforming the 27-acre vineyard to "promiscuous farming," a polycultural technique that dates back to Roman times and combines regenerative farming with the cultivation of produce and livestock. The Burgess Cellars team will also implement biodynamic farming practices.

Born in the Republic of Georgia, Lobjanidze comes from a long family history of winemaking. After immigrating to the United States, he and his family settled in Atlanta, Georgia, where he attended Georgia State University. While attending GSU, he worked as a sommelier and bartender at Restaurant Eugene.

After completing his bachelor's degree, he became an assistant sommelier at Bacchus Management Group's Spruce in San Francisco. He went on to be a sommelier at The Village Pub, before opening Selby's in Atherton. During his tenure with Bacchus Management, Lobjanidze became a partner at Vine & Rare, a concierge firm.

Zobeck previously worked in the vineyards and cellar of Screaming Eagle and was an associate winemaker for Philippe Melka. She has also worked with Michel Roland and Fabrizio Iuli in Bordeaux, Chile, South Australia, and Piedmont.