

9TH ANNUAL
INTRIGUING
ISSUE
PEOPLE & PLACES

PLUS:

HEALTHY TAKE
AWAY MEALS

NEW YEAR'S EVE
CELEBRATION
LISTINGS

NEW TRENDS
IN FITNESS

ARTIST
DON
HATFIELD



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Intriguing Valley

9TH ANNUAL
INTRIGUING
PEOPLE & PLACES
IN THE NAPA VALLEY

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photo by ART & CLARITY

VANESSA ROBLEDO

Running with the Black Coyote

Vanessa Robledo, 33, is part of the fourth generation of a family of master grapevine grafters of Mexican heritage in the wine industry. Most of the new plants in Napa and Sonoma valleys were grafted by the Robledo family. Vanessa herself has worked in the vineyards since she was eight years old. One of nine children, Vanessa said her father insisted all the kids learn about grapes because it was the family's future. At age five, she took on the responsibility of being the translator for her parents. By middle school, Vanessa was taking any business class she could, including accounting. In 1997, her Dad put her in charge of Robledo Family Winery, where she grew the business from 100 cases to 20,000 cases in ten years, with 80 percent of sales direct to consumer. Knowing the business would eventually go to her older brothers, Vanessa wanted to spread her wings, and started Vineyard Worker's Daughter. But it didn't take long for her to miss the land.

Ernest A. Bates, M.D., one of the first board-certified African-American neurosurgeons in the U.S., hired Vanessa as the president and managing partner of Black Coyote Winery, and quickly increased sales, distribution and wine club membership. Dr. Bates recently named her president of the Ernest Bates Foundation, created in 2004.

She has received recognition as an important member of the Latino community, including Latina Entrepreneur of the Year in 2008 and a 2007 Leading Young Professionals. In 2006, she was awarded the Latino Business Leadership Award, given to the most influential Hispanic leader in the Bay Area.

www.blackcoyotewines.com