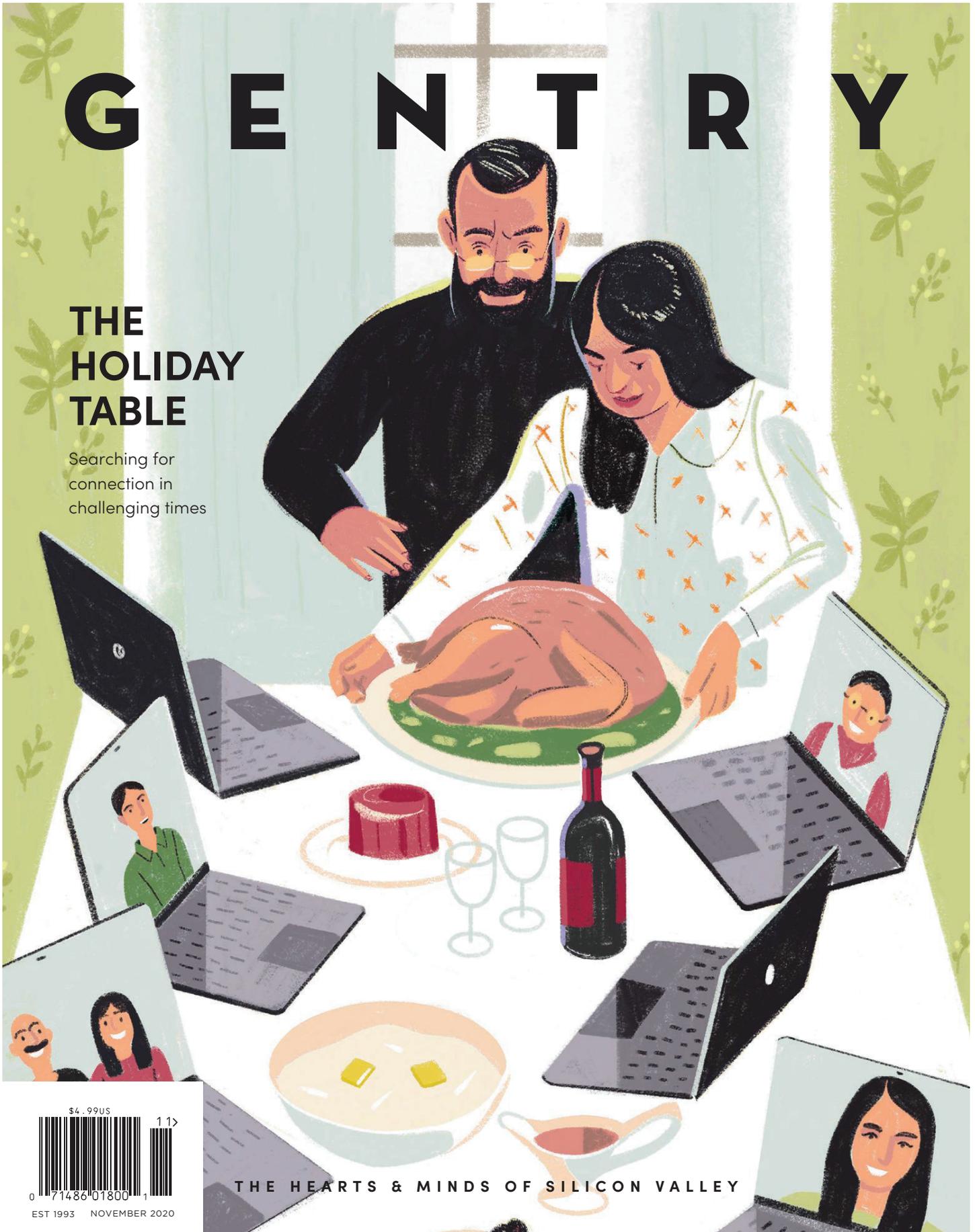


GENTRY

THE HOLIDAY TABLE

Searching for connection in challenging times



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THE HEARTS & MINDS OF SILICON VALLEY

STRONG ROOTS

Brother-and-sister team Jeffrey and Caroline Shifflett are taking their family's winery to the next level.

BY FREDRIC HAMBER

On an oak- and manzanita-dotted hillside vineyard ranch in Napa, **Jeffrey Shifflett** and his sister, **Caroline**, are bringing fresh energy to a 120-acre property that has been in their family for four generations. In 2018, they converted the property's old tractor barn into a grape crush and barrel storage facility, producing red blends and Bordeaux varietals bottled under the label Hunter Glenn, an amalgamation of the siblings' middle names.

Jeffrey, vineyard manager for Shifflett Ranch & Vineyard, delights in being hands-on through each step, "from pruning in January," he says, "[to] touching the vines about seven times a season through succoring, leafing, fruit adjustment, into harvest. And I get to do everything in the winery now as well."

Caroline, who handles the sales and marketing side of things, recalls discussing plans to go into the wine business, not long after college. "We both enjoyed wine and food and community and wanted to create something that we could share with our friends

and our family and bring people together to enjoy."

The siblings' Napa roots go back over a hundred years, to when their great-grandfather **Wade Shifflett** arrived from Iowa in 1917. During World War II he bought the property, then a fruit orchard, with an eye toward turning it into a ranch for his equestrian pursuits.

A couple of horses remained when Caroline and Jeffrey, born in San Francisco 19 months apart, spent weekends and summers during their youth visiting their grandparents and learning to ride, before eventually moving onto the property full time. In the 1990s, the family planted 54 acres of vineyard, replacing prior blocks of phylloxera-damaged chardonnay. "It was awesome," recalls Jeffrey, now 32. "Coming home from school we'd kick off our shoes and go run through the vineyard."

Although Jeffrey is a self-taught winemaker, he carries wisdom as the man who tends the vines year-round and spent his boyhood exploring all of the property's nooks and crannies. Pouring a glass of 2014 cabernet franc, he explains, "Partly because

this backside of the hill has southern-facing exposure and 100 percent rock, you really get that radiant heat in all aspects of the fruit zone on the vine."

The property is among the highest in the Oak Knoll District AVA, rising to 800 feet above the valley floor. The well-drained rocky volcanic soils are key to the notable garnet and ruby colors of their cabernet, merlot, cabernet franc and syrah. Caroline attributes their wines' flavor profile to the ranch's past life as a peach and plum orchard.

While honoring family history, they're looking resolutely to the future with plans for expanded production and hospitality on-site. Jeffrey's baby son is among the fifth generation who will grow up discovering the feel of that rock hillside, wading barefoot in Dry Creek, and seeing the light fill the valley floor as the sun rises over the Vaca range. ●

At press time, Caroline and Jeffrey have heavy hearts over the wildfire devastation continuing to impact Napa Valley. Thankfully, their property has been spared, and Hunter Glenn Estate is open for tastings by appointment.

ROBB McDONOUGH





Caroline and Jeffrey Shifflett are pictured at the vineyard property that has been in their family for generations. The siblings' Hunter Glenn Winery is known for its 2014 cabernet franc and the 2016 syrah, two single-vineyard, single-varietal vintages that owe their deep, rich color to the property's rocky volcanic soils.