

Napa Valley *Register*



Alex Sotelo Tastes Cabernet Sauvignon from the barrels at Robert Pecota Winery. Sotelo, an immigrant from Mexico, started as a cellar rat, took English and Viticulture classes at Napa City College, and is now a winemaker at Pecota.

Rewards Worth Waiting For

By HEATHER OSBORN

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Consider Alex Sotelo, a Mexican immigrant who started in the cellar at Robert Pecota Winery at 21, and worked his way up to winemaker. "I knew it was critical for me to go to college and get an education," he said.

Sotelo took English, photography and viticulture classes at the college, attending day and night classes, until graduating in 2000. Now 31, he said he owes much of his success to the college. If not for the college, "I wouldn't be the winemaker," he said.

The majority of students at NVC are under 25, but the college has seen a steady number of older students enrolling during the past decade. The so-called re-entry students are returning to college after a period of absence, according to Robyn Wornall, director of institutional research at NVC.