

Dry Creek sets off in new direction

By TOM MARQUARDT & PATRICK DARR

“**W**e’ve been fans of Dry Creek Vineyard for most of the 20 years we have been writing this column. Fairly priced, easy to drink, fruit-driven wines marks this family-owned winery in Dry Creek Valley in Sonoma County.

Founded by David Stare in 1972, Dry Creek was the first new winery constructed in Dry Creek Valley since Prohibition and introduced Fumé Blanc (Sauvignon Blanc made in a Loire Valley style) to Sonoma County. Family members Don Wallace and Kim Stare Wallace are now in charge, and looking to “reinvent the winery.”

Kim Stare Wallace recently traveled to Annapolis to meet with us to taste their current releases, and talk to us about their plans for the future. We started with the **Dry Creek Vineyard Chenin Blanc Clarksburg 2006 (\$12)**. This is a perennial favorite for those that don’t like their wine to taste too dry. Although this wine is technically dry, the abundance of fruit flavors gives a rich appealing mouthfeel and texture that appears a touch sweet. Perfect with crab cakes and other bay seafood.

The **Dry Creek Vineyard Chardonnay Russian River Valley 2005 (\$20)** was a real pleasant drinking experience and a step up from the previous vintages of this Sonoma County chardonnay. Bright spicy nose, with luscious tropical fruit and pear flavors, this winner is aged in new French oak - and it shows. **Highly recommended.**

The star of the show, though, was a new product that Kim was very proud of. In addition to the new appellation of chardonnay it is an example of the new direction that she and her husband aim to take. The **Dry Creek Vineyard The Mariner Dry Creek Valley Red Wine Meritage 2004 (\$45)** is a claret-style blend of 46 percent cabernet sauvignon, 40 percent merlot with the balance made up of malbec, cabernet franc and petit verdot. This wine is aged in French oak for 25 months and is a very special wine worthy of a wine lover’s attention. Cherry, berry nose and flavors with a hint of mint in the aroma as well. Very well balanced with soft tannins and good acidity make this a good pairing with red meat dishes.

We held on to this opened bottle of wine for two days in the refrigerator, and then brought back to room temperature it had evolved into amazing level of sophistication and complexity. **So our recommendation is to try this wine now and tuck a couple of bottles away for 3 to 5 years and try them then for an amazing wine experience.”**



Dry Creek
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