

CRUISING WORLD

Perfect Pairings

As seen in the November 2005 Issue

WAS IT THE WINE TALKING?

Possibly. But the more I thought about it, albeit between sips of a delicate fumé blanc and nibbles of fresh crab, the more it felt right: Vintners and voyagers toil with patience over vine and vessel, so when they bestow praise on the fruits of their labors, they often speak the same language. And if the sailor also happens to coax gold from grapes, well then, you've struck pay dirt—or *terroir*, in wine-speak.

The surf-meets-turf dinner took place last winter in Newport, Rhode Island, with the family of sailors who founded Dry Creek Vineyard, located in northern Sonoma County, California. Owner and general manager Don Wallace had come east on a tour to promote Dry Creek's successful varieties, and between tasting and courses, it became clear from conversation that the decision to put portraits of America's Cup yachts on the wine labels is no standard marketing hook. The attractive packaging of images by artist Michael Surles is in fact a testament to the family's extensive involvement with sailors and sailing.

David Stare, the vineyard's founder, was an avid Cape Cod sailor who "got bitten by the wine bug in the late 1960s," said his daughter—the vineyard's marketing director, Kim Stare Wallace. It was through his marriage to Kim that Don Wallace was drawn into the business. Though Stare, an engineer-turned-enologist, is truly a wine fanatic, he kept sailing, too—aboard *Fumé Encore*, his Pearson 365, on San Francisco Bay. As the business grew, so did his desire to help young people chasing marine dreams. He provided wine for events that raised money for the sea cadet training programs of the *Californian*, the state's tall youths with their enrollment fees. On another occasion, when a student from Sonoma State College asked Stare to help buy a boat for the school's sailing team, he enthusiastically complied.

That was 20 years ago. Today, the winery is the title sponsor of the annual Dry Creek Vineyard Pro Am Regatta held each fall at the Bitter End Yacht Club in Virgin Gorda, B.V.I., and it also supports US Sailing, the governing body of the sport, at various team and match-racing events. And by lending support to Around Alone sailor Brad Van Liew as well as various America's Cup syndicates, Dry Creek has shown its interest is as much with solo pursuits as with team efforts.

Famous sailors aren't the only ones who benefit. "We as a family have long had a personal connection to sailing, and our involvement is very much at a grassroots level," Kim said. "We're trying to support

sailing and bring our wines into the sailing community as the natural choice for sailors. They like rum—we know that. We're trying to introduce them to wine."

A small business, Dry Creek likes to send some of its customers and family to Virgin Gorda each November to meet sailors at the Pro Am Regatta, a platform for amateurs to race with top talents. "The rock stars of sailing get to teach us goofballs the tricks of the trade," said Kim.

In November 2004, it also turned into a reunion. The former student from Sonoma State turned up at Bitter End and ran to find Kim and thank her family for their help decades ago.

His name?

Peter Holmberg, world renowned America's Cup helmsman.

E.L.



The 12-Meters *Zio* and *Nightwind* are featured in the painting that was commissioned for the 2003 vintage of DCV3 Fumé Blanc.

Dry Creek
VINEYARD

