

## **Greg Morthole** *Winemaker*



As an Air Force brat, Greg moved around throughout his childhood. His family eventually settled down in Sacramento, where he spent his formative years. Greg's love of nature led him to the University of Wyoming where he earned a bachelor's degree in Natural Sciences. After graduating and returning home, he considered his life's many options. Initially turning away from dentistry and the Peace Corps, and fatefully moving to Sonoma County to join his girlfriend, now wife, Mary, he landed in Santa Rosa. Intriguingly, many

local lab jobs were in the wine industry, a career path he hadn't anticipated. Greg quickly landed a position at Vinquiry in 1999, working for renowned winemakers Marty Bannister and MaryAnn Graf, who owned Vinquiry at the time. Four years later, after a sleepless night thinking about his future, Greg left Vinquiry for the Enologist position at Chalk Hill Winery. Two years after that he left Chalk Hill to take a position at Rodney Strong. Since that fateful day, his position has progressed from QC Lab Manager to Associate Winemaker to Winemaker, and he is now winemaker for Davis Bynum Winery, and the Pinot Noir and Chardonnay wines for Rodney Strong.

Asked to describe his approach to winemaking, Greg responds, "Mostly low impact, with the thinking that 98% of the work is done in the vineyard and at fermentation." That's perhaps a more humble answer than an accurate one, but Greg had the rare fortune to work alongside and learn from three of the legendary winemakers in California history: Rick Sayre, David Ramey and Davis Bynum. What does one learn from such highly regarded winemakers? "From Rick," Greg says, "I learned to be honest about the wine, but find the positive and lend a voice to that. From David I learned to relax, don't be too reactionary. And from Davis, to be humble and real and avoid telling the bookkeepers the true story if you need to." There's wisdom in that for just about every occupation.

Greg lives in Santa Rosa with his wife Mary and their two children Lucas and Cora. He claims to be an amateur backyard birdwatcher because in the front yard, "You have to be careful where you point the binoculars." An avid hiker and mountain biker, he hopes one day to hike the length of the Pacific Crest Trail from Mexico to Canada. That's 2650 miles over about five months no matter where you point the binoculars. But from lab tech to winemaker for Rodney Strong Vineyards and Davis Bynum Winery, Greg is used to dreaming big.