



## PETER MERRIAM A LIFE ON THE EDGE

Peter Merriam brings his love for living on the edge and a finely tuned sense of focus to his vineyards and winery, with passions that span from the extreme in adrenaline to the extreme in patience. As a young child learning to ski, Peter developed an appreciation of nature and an ability to focus that would become the driving forces of his life. Now with several vintages of his Merriam Vineyards wines, he continues to love making his Bordeaux-style wines in his winery on the warmest edge of the Russian River Valley.

As a student at New England College, majoring in business and graphic design, Peter pursued his interest as an NCAA Division 1 skier on his college team. Peter continued to ski avidly for several years after college, broadening his craft to include heli skiing — off-trail, downhill skiing accessed only by helicopter, a variation that would allow him to experience the wild, natural environs that have inspired him throughout his life. In the most extreme example of Peter's passion for the edge, he dropped 12,000 feet on Alaska's Chugach Mountain Range.

At the other extreme, Peter is an accomplished fly fisherman, participating in an ancient method based on quiet patience and the ability to focus at a very slow pace. Peter sometimes fishes for eight-hour stretches, catching only two fish within that time. "I focus on the details at a very slow speed," says Peter. His largest catch, a 110-pound Tarpin, was caught off the Florida Keys.

As a vintner, Peter is finding that the discipline, determination and singular focus that he has developed through skiing and fishing are the skills that serve him best in the vineyard. As a skier, Peter focuses on the fall line; as a fly fisherman, he concentrates on the clean line of the fishing rod. In the vineyard, Peter's disciplined attention is on the vines under his care, because he knows that every step of his work will be expressed in the depth of the wines to come.

Working in the vineyards is another expression of Peter's love for nature. A natural conservationist, Peter has always been an outdoor person. "It's who I am," he says. Whether seeking the wildest mountain ridges as a skier, or finding deep focus as a saltwater fly fisherman,

Peter is at his best in natural settings. "I always stop to pay attention to the beauty of natural places," Peter says. It was the beauty of Sonoma County that compelled Peter to plant vineyards and build a winery in Russian River Valley. The lay of the land and the feeling that it provoked in Peter and Diana reminded them of New England. "It felt close to home."

As a member of the Fish and Game Association (IGFA), Peter is committed to the conservation of game fish and the promotion of responsible, ethical angling practices. Consistent with this theme, Peter is dedicated to sustainable viticulture as well, with the conversion of Windacre Vineyard to a sustainable property and the soon-to-be-cultivated Los Amigos Vineyard as certified organic. "I see being environmentally savvy as an integral part of my winegrowing," says Peter. "In founding Merriam Vineyards, I've basically found the balance with a business I hope will take me into the rest of my life."