CONN CREEK
NAPA VALLEY

# TOM KLASSEN, ASSISTANT WINEMAKER

"START BY ASKING THE VINEYARD WHAT IT CAN OFFER, AND TRY TO TRANSLATE THAT POTENTIAL INTO THE BEST WINE POSSIBLE." *–Tom Klassen*

Originally from a northeastern Montana, Tom Klassen earned a bachelor's degree in Classics and a master's in Ancient Greek from the University of Montana and Loyola University Chicago, with an eye to becoming an archaeologist. High points from a year and several summers spent in Greece studying and excavating usually involved food. Foraging for greens with locals in Crete, figs and apricots right off the trees, and sheep's milk yogurt with wild thyme honey all made as big an impression as the sculpture and the temples.

Leaving both the windswept prairie of Montana and the rocky hills of Crete behind him, Klassen moved to Northern California and turned his interest to the wine industry. After working grape harvests in both Sonoma County and New Zealand, he began working his way towards winemaking, first with time spent on the bottling line and then in the cellar. This led to classes in enology and viticulture at Santa Rosa Junior College and the University of California at Davis and a role in the lab as an enologist.

Prior to joining Conn Creek in 2011, Klassen worked at several Sonoma and Napa wineries including Landmark, Merryvale, Emeritus, and Dehlinger. Now working in the Napa Valley, Klassen enjoys the challenges and rewards of producing notable Cabernets and Bordeaux-style blends from the wide range of vineyards and growers that supply Conn Creek.

"For a winemaker, having such a diversity of sources and their varied terroirs, is a real luxury, whether we're selecting distinctive appellation bottlings or when creating blends."

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