



Erica and Kim Crawford of Loveblock wines. Courtesy Photo.

# Power Couple PURVEYORS

Wines Made by Duos  
Capture Labor of Love

By John Vankat

**I**t's the month for New Year's resolutions, and I suggest getting an early start on Valentine's Day by resolving to be a more loving partner in 2017. Then pair that resolution with wines that express and enhance love by being made by couples. Sarah and Sparky Marquis are such a couple. They met in college, and after some ups and downs in the wine trade, they started Mollydooker winery in 2006 fittingly named after Aussie slang for left-handed.

Their wines soon began getting rave reviews and this continues today. The 2015 vintage was such that their highest quality grapes went into their mid-priced wines. My favorite is the **Mollydooker 2015 Cabernet Sauvignon "Gigglepot, McLaren Vale"** (\$49) with rich, expressive fruit, fine balance, exceptional integration and impressive refinement. Among higher priced wines, I recommend the **Mollydooker 2014 Shiraz "Carnival of Love, McLaren Vale"** (\$75), an outstanding wine featuring an incredibly long finish and a name befitting the New Year's resolution.

Jennifer and Joey Tensley met in 2002 and married the following year. Joey had founded Tensley Wines in 1998, and after working side-by-side, Jennifer founded Lea winery in 2005. They share a wine-making philosophy of sourcing the best available fruit and letting the vineyard speak for itself. The **Lea 2014 Pinot Noir "Sta. Rita Hills, Santa Barbara County"** (\$38) features a powerful palate and smooth texture in which moderate tannins enhance the expressive fruit and suggest further development over the next few years (find online by search searching "Lea 2014 Pinot Noir"). The **Tensley 2014 Syrah "Santa Barbara County"** (\$28) is a highly romantic wine with exceptional refinement and forward fruit beautifully balanced with delightful acidity. It is expected to arrive in Arizona this month (or see [www.wine.com](http://www.wine.com)).

Christina and David Rossi work together in their Fulcrum

Wines, which was founded in 2005. Self-taught David is a no-excuses winemaker who makes all viticultural and enological decisions and even prunes the vines.

Christina is the winery's chief salesperson, but the excellence of the wines ensures that vintage after vintage sells out, allowing her to focus on customer service. The **Fulcrum 2014 Pinot Noir "Gap's Crown Vineyard, Sonoma Coast"** (\$60) is a wonderful wine. I loved its purple hue, powerfully complex nose and palate, as well as excellent integration, refinement and long-lasting finish.

Sara and Kenneth ("Joey") Gummere own and make wine at Transcendence winery in Santa Barbara County. Their plan to start a winery was inspired by making a special wine for a close friend who had become very ill. Today, Transcendence focuses on small-production wines and assisting selected non-profit organizations. The



**Transcendence 2015 Pinot Noir "Zotovitch Vineyard, Sta. Rita Hills"** (\$40) is impressive across the board, with beautiful, purple-tinged color, an expressive nose, and a complex palate that continually develops throughout an extended finish. It is available from <http://transcendwines.com/>.

In the case of Erica and Kim Crawford, "love" is on the label of every bottle of their Loveblock wines. Kim's name also appears on bottles of a very successful New Zealand winery they founded and then sold before starting Loveblock with Erica as founder and CEO and Kim as winemaker. They focus on producing exceptional wines through organic farming. Their **Loveblock 2016 Sauvignon Blanc "Marlborough"** (\$22) is light in color but strong in all other dimensions. I especially enjoyed its balance between fruit and delightful acidity, as well as its integration and strong personality. It is available from [www.wine.com](http://www.wine.com). ▲



Recommended wines can be ordered from your favorite Arizona wine store, except as noted. Write to John Vankat at [azpinewine@yahoo.com](mailto:azpinewine@yahoo.com).