

EPISODE # 11 ANKIDA RIDGE

SPEAKERS

Fred Reno, Dennis, Nathan, Christine

Fred Reno

I'm delighted today to have the Vrooman family as my guests, we have Christine, Dennis, and then Nathan, the winemaker. And we're here at their vineyard at the Blue Ridge Mountains at 1800 feet, and in my opinion, they are accomplishing the impossible in Virginia, producing Pinot Noir that shows the potential to be the best from around the world. So, congratulations, I am Uber impressed with what I see here. And, and welcome. And I really appreciate the time, all three of you have. So, let me start just real quickly here with Dennis and Christine. How'd you get the idea to come up here? So, your veterinary hospital in Virginia Beach and come up here in the mountains and produce wine? What? What was behind this? How did this get driven?

Christine

Well, when we purchased this property in 1999, there was no hint or no intention of planting a vineyard, we did not purchase it for that reason was going to be our retirement retreat. And then as luck, fate, Destiny, serendipity, whatever you want to call it, would have it when we finally got electricity on this property. A few years later, we showed the excavator where we wanted to have our house built up higher on the mountain at 1800, 1900 feet. And we went back to Virginia Beach, we had staked out the spot for the house, went back to Virginia Beach, came back a few weeks later, he had cleared that area properly. But he also took it upon himself to clear another quarter acre below that he felt that that was going to be a better place for our house. So, we took it upon himself to clear that little bit of little spot of forest. And if he hadn't done that, we wouldn't be sitting here looking and talking with one another. Because we would have never been so crazy as to think we could get planted vineyard up on this rocky mountainside. So, after we after was cleared, we played with the idea of planting apple orchard or Christmas trees. But we're starting to taste some really good Virginia wine set was around 2005 and Veritas had produced a beautiful Cab Franc. We were so excited over the possibility of making and growing fine wine and up here on this elevation. And it was such a unique terrain and location, altitude, everything. so different from most of the other vineyards in Virginia, that we thought, well we could plant something that is not planted down in the lower levels. What would that be? Because it was going to be a passion project. It was not not something that let's start another big business because we had already done that with our veterinary practice for many years. We didn't really have any intention of plans of doing that. So, played with the idea of planting a vineyard. We got Lucie Morton up here. She's a renown ampelographer and viticulturist. We asked her what could we do up here that not everybody else is doing. In Virginia, we don't want to plant more of what everybody else is doing. Because this site is so unique. And it's a total passion project has nothing to do with profitability. Right? Well. the wine business doesn't but So when she was up here, she said, you know, if Pinot Noir could grow anywhere in Virginia, this would be the place that it would grow. Yeah, and with that is like, of course Pinot Noir that would be the ultimate unique grape to plant, because this wasn't that many years after sideways anyway, we did not want to plant some Merlot up there.

Fred Reno

well, prior to this Dennis and Christine, where did the love of wine start? You couldn't have just was it just birthed up here.

Christine

Well, we drank wine, okay, we're not wine aficionados or we didn't have a passion for the wine industry, or we knew nothing about viticulture. Nathan knew nothing about winemaking. Little baby steps entered this world and learned as we went it was a matter of a lot of fortuitous things happening so that we were able to successfully grow and raise these vines and Nathan made these wonderful wines,

Fred Reno

Well, Nathan because I know your time is short here. So, when did you then come into the family business and what made you believe you could be a winemaker?

Nathan

Well, I was actually living out in Colorado at the time when the vines were planted. You know, I've memories of the planting happening. You know, we've made it a you know a family ordeal. We had I think it was Mother's Day 2008, 2008 we decided we go ahead and start planting and we had relatives in town. Dad's, dad was here and that's one of the one of my most vivid memories was the whole family being here. Everyone just kind of going out and working on planting the vines together. The initial goal was to plant the whole vineyard. And I think we planted like 50 vines.

Christine

Then we got the Margaritas out

Nathan

Yeah. So then yeah, so then I, you know, I went back to Denver and was it was, you know, just working out there living, you know, young professional lifestyle working in the finance industry behind Excel spreadsheets all day, going to happy hours early. So, I was living the good life and I guess in 2009, late 2009 it was just me and my parents were up at their house talking about the, you know, the looming vintage 2010 was our first was going to be our first vintage. So, thinking this is probably December we we're talking so we were going to be harvesting you know, the following August we're just wondering what we're going to do with the with the fruit Are we going to sell the, sell the grapes? Are we going to, you know, hire someone to contract wine maker to make the wine for us? But ultimately, I think it was just one conversation one discussion that we had decided that we best for us to just go ahead and figure out how to how to make the wine and just do it. Just like we did we just like we did with the vineyard, we figure out how to do it make it happen. And between us and whatever resource resources we have, we just figure out a way to just to get it done. So, at that that was at the point where I sort of volunteered, I was gonna be moving back from Denver to the central Virginia Charlottesville area. So, I said yeah, I'll kind of take that task on and I volunteered to learn how to make wine.

Fred Reno

Well, I see you got hooked up with Matthieu Finot over King Family. Were you spending time over there were you learning from him?

Nathan

at the time we decided we're gonna make the wine I said I was gonna be the winemaker. You know, in training. We hired Matthieu as our consultant.

Christine

we actually sent an Email, not having any idea of what he would say. Would you be Interested in and he wrote back almost immediately, I would love to do that.

Nathan

So, a fun project I mean Matthieu he works with with a lot of different people. You know, he's a really influential guy in the in the industry. He works with a lot of different people a lot of different grapes, but he doesn't really at the time he wasn't weren't really working with with Pinots, I think was a really fun opportunity for him, you know, a fun challenge for him. He came up here and looked at the looked at the site. I remember that day, he brought a bottle of Chardonnay that he had made, you know, to show us what you know what he can do, and we all thought it was great. And so, we're like, Okay, let's do it. So, at that point, I started working with Matthieu as far as just getting gather the you know, the supplies and all that that we're gonna need. One thing we didn't have was we didn't have a winery to yea minor detail. So yeah, so where do you make your first vintage at? Yeah, so what happened was I started to sign up for classes at pvcc, Piedmont Community College, they've got a pretty good enology and viticulture program. And at the very first class a winery design and equipment class up at Jefferson Vineyards. I met Rachel Stinson and Scott Stinson, mother, father, daughter duo, they were just building a winery in Whitehall. So, we got to talking with with Rachel and Scott, coincidentally, using Matthieu as their consultant. They were using Lucie as their vineyard consultant so that all the stars kind of aligned. You know, very serendipitous for sure. And then, yeah, so and then we ended up bringing the wine, the Pinot up there to be made. And then Rachel and I got to know each other. Yeah, you got married. Yeah. So yeah, ultimately, Rachel and I, you know, we became a couple learning this whole process together. And she had as much experience as I had going into it, which was none. So, we worked really closely with Matthieu, Rachel and I work very closely together. Long story short, we're now married with two little girls. Yeah, it's a really, really cool, cool story.

Fred Reno

So now you, the vineyard itself. It's a little over five acres estate and what is the Mountain Terrace vineyard?

Dennis

We we planted a very limited amount of Chardonnay because we wanted the grapes of Burgundy. Little did we realize that the clone that we planted of the Chardonnay was probably the most scant producer in the world. So now we realize that we're gonna we need to make more than two or three bottles. Get another source. Mountain Terrace is a we're friends of ours, approximately five miles from here that we're growing at that point, Cabernet Sauvignon and the Chardonnay until we made arrangements to

buy part of their production. They're Amherst county as well: a little different site in terms of exposure, somewhat the same soils, not the same elevation. So, the flavor profile of their grapes was different than ours, which actually turned out to be a good combination. Now, we only worked with them for three, three or four years. Now we're getting our own production in place, which still is not enough.

Fred Reno

from that vineyard though Yeah because you're leasing part of this. Yeah.

Christine

Yeah, we're leasing there out vines in that vineyard, but now with our second planting we have everything can be on our own from our own estate.

Fred Reno

show. I was gonna ask you that question. You touched on it Dennis so, what are the clones that you planted here, For Chardonnay and then Pinot Noir? I'm curious.

Dennis

Well, the clones for Chardonnay was a Tablas Creek, Nova vine clone, called petit la Vineuse, which is a, I think it's a Dijon clone. That was the the one bottle of Chardonnay that I drank early that I liked. Mostly I didn't care much for Chardonnay, but that particular clone appealed to me. I don't think it was the clone, I think was the way it was made. So that was what we ended up with our initial Chardonnay. Now since then, we've replanted in the newer vineyard, another Dijon clone 946, which has this?

Nathan

I don't remember. I don't even remember what it was in the original vineyard. It was 667,777.

Dennis

No, I'm talking about Chardonnay. Oh, Chardonnay. Oh, yeah. Sorry. Yeah. So that's got a similar minerality to it, that we like about this petite veneus. cones of Pinot we started off with was 115,114,667, and 777. for no good reason, other than that was a suggestion from Lucie Morton, we knew very little about what we were getting into with at that point, since, with a new, new vineyard, we planted additional clones with the idea that it would lead to greater complexity in the flavor profile in the wine. So, we've got Wadenswil, and we've got 943 we still planted more 667,777,115, we added in another three different clones.

Fred Reno

Well, it will be interesting as you chart this, from my experience with Pinot Noir, the clonal selection ends up having a mutating effect, once it gets in its own terroir in its own field, it starts to take on its character. So, it starts expressing its original clonal expression at first, and then it really kind of mutates, gets its own identity. So, it'll be really interesting to follow that progress.

Dennis

Yeah. It would be nice to have a lot more experience with Pinot Noir, so that we had a broader base of knowledge that we're sort of learning as we go on the fly. And so, things that we think we're learning to

reflect we're finding out, we're not actually true, a couple. So, it's really been a super learning experience. And at the same time, we're opening up the possibility, I think, for other people to deal with the same type of stuff. That's our goal, or at least a thought in the back of our mind.

Fred Reno

Well, there's not a lot as we both know, there's not a lot of Pinot Noir planted, and there's not a lot of Pinot Noir being produced right now. And that's why you stand such head and shoulders above, not just everybody here, but it must have been quite an honor to be invited to the IPN back in 2016. Talk about that experience a little bit how did that come to be?

Christine

Yeah, it was I got an email one morning, and they said that the deadline is tomorrow. We haven't heard from you and I'm thinking, what are they wanting from us? We never received the invitation. They sent it to our rural route street or rural road address or something. And so, I never received anything. So, I emailed back and said, Well, yes, we've invited you to be one of the vintners at the IPNC this year. So, there was a remarkable honor and experience. I believe we were the only vineyard outside the west coast in the United States, there might have been one in Michigan. I wasn't sure about that or not. We were the only the only Pinot producer in the United States outside of the West Coast states and the rest of the world.

Fred Reno

I'm just curious, did you ever find out how they got attuned to you They sent you an invitation.

Christine

We had gotten so much press I think before up to that point. Dave McIntyre was, was totally surprised right out of the gate. When we did the, the wine bloggers conference in 2011. We had only the wine had been in the bottle for seven weeks. And we went to it because it was too big of an opportunity to miss. And if they understood that as fresh, freshly bottled, you know, just understand that. And so, we were standing at this table, Nathan and I were there was 110 degrees, this big tent, there was a little fan up above us behind us. But Dave McIntyre came up and was tasting the Chardonnay, coming back for this, and bringing people back, and then he tasted the Pinot Noir. And he had Jancis Robinson back, Eric Asimov. And so all of these amazing wines, wine writers were kept coming back to our table. And I said to make this must be the need to get some fresh air from the fan. But they were so it was right out of the gate. Dave, Dave wrote an article the next day in the Washington Post or blog, and it was like, the Pinot Noir that wowed the crowd. It's like, Oh, I guess it's good. We have no idea. We're just taking the risk and going out there and, and, well, we liked it. Yeah. We knew it was good.

Fred Reno

That's fantastic. So, Nathan, as long as I have you here still, question for you. I understand why you would do this. But talk to me a little bit about Rockgarden, the rouge in the Vert, what was the inspiration behind that?

Nathan

The problem we had was, we were, you know, opening a tasting room, we just had the two wines, not very much of them, they were sort of a higher price point wine that we wanted to establish from the beginning. So, we thought it would be interesting to just have a second label made from you know, whatever is out there. It's just kind of a free for all it just kind of gave us the artistic freedom to do whatever we wanted with it. So, in order to differentiate, differentiate these wines from Ankida Ridge, we wanted to just do another label on it because it wasn't made from Ankida Ridge, it wasn't made from Pinot wasn't made from Chard. So, we did a second second label Rockgarden. Well, I mean, that's clever Rock garden. Yeah. Yeah, I mean, it's I, you know, I was when I was living out west, I was really big into mountain biking. And so, one of the an obstacle when you're riding a mountain bike is a rock garden. So, you kind of come up on a bed of rocks, and you know, you run over it, you go around it, you do whatever you have to do to, you know, to get, you know, through the obstacle. So, I kind of wanted to have sort of a cycling, somehow mix that into the to the name. And also, it worked out because out here, at this site, it's this basic garden full of, of rocks there's rocks everywhere. So, it just it made sense to be you know, it was a great name for that for them.

Fred Reno

From a stylistic standpoint, you decided to make a white wine that was somewhat in the profile of a Vinho Verde, yeah. Where'd that come from?

Nathan

I was actually talking with with Matthieu, like, what would be cool, it'd be an interesting project to do to add, because we started out with port wine, cuz I've always I've always loved port. So, I thought it'd be really fun to make a port. So, we needed a, you know, a low price. Easy drinking white. And Matthieu was like, Well, how about a? Vinho Verde style? And I was like, yeah, that's sounds great. So that's what led us down that path. So, we just sourced the Vidal Blanc and picked it early and high acid. And when we bottled it, we just put a little bit of, you know, a sparging stone of co2 in the tank, you know, a couple of days before for cool the wine down. And it just adds a tiny bit of effervescence to the to the wine and it filled that spot that we were missing in our in our lineup.

Fred Reno

A question I always ask everybody, and I remember mine, I'll start with Nathan here. What is the bottle of wine you've had in your life is like, Oh, that's it that just, is there One you can point to sometimes or maybe not?

Nathan

I'm just trying to think a couple years ago, I drank a Sicilian wine. I don't know what it was. And I assume you're talking about wines, you know, other than the ones that we make. Yeah.

Fred Reno

Yea, but that's okay, if your wines are like.

Nathan

I mean, I A few years ago, I had a Sicilian wine. It was so interesting. I don't know the name of it, but it was just so interesting that it has so many like really beautiful floral characteristics on the nose. You know the taste was just a lot of interesting spice and tea and it was just a really interesting bottle.

Christine

Christine. Yes. So, I remember the table we're sitting at, I remember where the window was. It was at the Taughannock Farms Inn near Ithaca and the early 70s. And we were there for our anniversary I think, or my birthday. I can't remember that. I think it was my birthday, because it was cold, had a Ch. Lafite Rothschild. I think it was \$22 with the seafood. And it was that was that moment that wine and food? Oh, my gosh. I remember. So clearly. And I wish I bought a few more bottles. Do you remember the vintage? Well, this was the early 70s. So, it was I guess maybe late 60s? I'm not sure. I don't remember that.

Fred Reno

Well, Dennis, I assume you were at that table.

Dennis

Yeah. (he was) But she wouldn't let me drink any. My aha moment is a little different. It was in Ithaca at Cornell again. But it was a bottle of a Ripple I had too much of. And my aha moment was Aha, I don't want to do this again.

Fred Reno

Well, I've had both those moments. So, I can relate, you know in that regard. You know,

Nathan

I remember when I when I was had just turned 21. I think we came up here stayed over at the Bakers. My Dad and I had a bonding moment, you know, with steak and a bottle of red wine. I couldn't drink the red wine. I hated it. I was too young in my in my drinking career, but a beer stage. Yeah, yeah. But I remember that?

Fred Reno

What do you find different? If anything, about growing Gamay? And I know to me, I think this is a fourth leaf maybe for you. What do you find different about that versus Pinot Noir?

Nathan

It's hard to say. I mean, now, My, my opinion is it's it seems to bear a lot of fruit, or at least a few vines that we have about 300 vines planted, and you know, they just they they would bear a lot, a lot of fruit. Other than that, it seemed pretty, pretty similar. It seemed late ripen a little bit later than the Pinot. But that's probably because there was so much fruit on these vines. My opinion is it's it's very similar.

Christine

I think the grape clusters, I've never seen Gamay growing and the grape cluster is bigger. It's looser, there's more pulp to skin. Rather than the Pinot Noir, there's more skin/pulp ratio. So, I was just

impressed with the quantity of clusters. And the size of the clusters and the size of the berries are a little bit bigger than I mean, they weren't huge, but they were bigger than the than the Pinot Noir. Have you made wine? Yep. From the Gamay? We're making it. Is this first vintage? We made a little five-gallon jug of Nouveau style last year in a variable capacity tank. That held 50 pounds of grapes that we ended up in the tasting room to let people taste. They only got a taste. Yeah, right. What 2020 would be the first vintage Yeah

Nathan

we have a barrel of Gamay, a Cru and then about 10 cases worth of the Nouveau that this was my parents, parents project they drove it's a project that they took on on their on their own and did all the research on the carbonic maceration and did everything on their own. You know, when they I supply the, you know, the yeast and, you know, a few supplies here and there but they, it was a fun project for them. And it's

Fred Reno

So, Dennis and Christine you're the winemakers for the Beaujolais here. Yeah.

Christine

yea I don't know if we are proud of that, don't spread that around. It was fun learning about carbonic maceration because really, we didn't know anything about it. And when we decided we were going to do it last year. Let's just go ahead and do it. Let's see there's something about carbonic maceration what is that pick up the phone. carbonic maceration and that started doing a lot of research and just kept doing more and more research practice a little bit last year and then felt we had we had more grapes. So, we were able to use a regular full size variable capacity tank, which is like 300,300 liters, yeah, fill it with co2 and just let it sit. And then we do it as a partial carbonic We ended up doing the alcoholic fermentation when it was about halfway through. And then you know, we did the regular with yeast an alcohol fermentation with the rest and and then I actually stomped it Well, you, you, you tread the grapes. I love it. I stomped the grapes. And then we got it and added the yeast and started the fermenting in a one ton to bin with about 10 inches of fruit?

Fred Reno

Well, because I don't, and I admittedly, don't quite understand it myself, because I've never been a farmer, although I love growing tomatoes and everything. Talk to me about your sustainable farming practices. I mean, what does that mean? If it could be even explained,

Christine

it's a mindset. I think more than anything, that one of the most important things for us in that vineyard is to maintain as much balance in nature as possible. There is a French phrase, " la lutter pour la raison". And that's translates to the reason to struggle. So, you never give up that desire to spray as little as you can, to you always have the desire to do as much as you can, to the canopy to keep it healthy. We brought in chickens to help eat the insects to diminish some of the insect population, have cats to help with the rodent population. Sheep that give some fertilizing, massage the soil, and don't use herbicides, so, but we wait until the leaves are starting to senescence. And then we put them in the vineyard, and they keep everything cleaned down, like through to budbreak. And was trying different ways to get to

get those sheep to be able to stand in the middle of the vineyard. They would love to eat the vine leaves and the fruit. It's a it's a continual project, it's being observant. It's just a mindset of of maintaining a balance in nature. And the way you maintain a balance in nature, I think is to keep create a balance in your vines to make sure your canopy is balanced with the fruit and and that helps diminish disease pressure. And it's that site up there, though is so conducive to sustainable practices and, and diminished disease pressure. Because of our our altitude and the cool temperatures we have in the afternoon. Typically, five to 10 degrees cooler every afternoon in the summer, we have a very narrow diurnal temperature range, so it doesn't get real cold during the nighttime. And we don't need I know in California; they want that so they can maintain their acids. But we don't get that hot during the day. So, we don't need to have it cold cold at night. And that not having that having that narrow diurnal temperature range, we very rarely, I don't even remember if we ever have reached the dew point and having not reaching dew point overnight is a huge benefit for us because morning dew on leaves, especially if the sun doesn't hit it right away is very, for the fungal that's probably the biggest, it's huge.

Nathan

That's probably the biggest benefit of where we are is because you you look at the forecast, you know, and there's no rain in sight for the next 10 days. But every morning you're getting soaked with with dew essentially getting getting rain every day. So, you're having a combat those fungal spores. But without getting the dew you know the leaves just stay dry. That's it.

Fred Reno

This is this site, mostly southeastern facing, (yea) so, then you get protection from the storms coming over top.

Christine

Sometimes we almost like being under the waterfall. Sometimes the storms will just bypass us and coming over. And then also you can watch the storms coming from the from the south and southwest and they're just right up that valley. The mountains act as somewhat of a barrier. And they just don't you see the storms just coming right up there. And they don't come up and affect us. So, so we have less rainfall. No dew and we've been spared from spring frost because of the relative altitude, we're sometimes 20 degrees colder than water and the spring morning then then a mile down the road. That's that's 1000 feet.

Fred Reno

Well, that's what they called terroir. Yes, yeah, exactly. Which is what it's all about. Talking about the sales and marketing component of this. I see you have a little group called the Commonwealth C collective. If I'm right, it's Stinson, Ankida Ridge, Veritas an Early Mountain. Where did that idea spring from? What was the catalyst behind that?

Christine

I think it was our daughter Tamara when she was always has been in the wine industry for 20 years in distribution down in Atlanta. She was very passionate about the Virginia wine, not just because her family have a vineyard and winery, she wanted to help promote Virginia wines to the southeast

markets. She wanted to have a portfolio of wines, rather than just a single vineyard, just Ankida. So, it was sort of her her idea to create a portfolio of small family vineyards.

Fred Reno

But what have been the challenges to making that work? What has been the challenges how than the distribution system is completely broken?

Nathan

Yeah. Other than that, I think one of the biggest challenges, in general is its is convincing people outside of this region, that that Virginia is producing quality wine. I think that is it. yea the conception in many people's minds, that Virginia could possibly grow grapes that would produce quality, right? Is it impossible thought to even get their head around it, it's hard, you can convince a lot of times you can convince the restaurant buyer or you can convince the shop owner, right, they're still a little bit timid, because because you know, it's the end consumer, that's not getting exposed, you know, when you go out and you meet with buyers in the market there, you're not meeting with the person who ultimately is going to put the wine in the mouth. That's who needs the education right now.

Christine

They have to hand sell wine to restaurants or wine shops, have to hand sell, Virginia wines, because the general populace outside the region can't believe that Virginia can make, especially Pinot Noir, once they taste it, then that's a whole other story.

Fred Reno

I'm doing my best to change that folks. That's, that is my passion, find a way to break through that and change that and get that message out there. And if I can, not that this is about me, but if I can move this ball just down the field a little bit more, that would be nothing. But for me, that would be wonderful. That would be just wonderful to see because the quality is here. My wife and I we drink two things on a regular basis at home every night, either Virginia wine cru Beaujolais, those are the two things that are going to I can't tell you the last time I had a bottle of California Wine, it's all Virginia, and cru Beaujolais.

Christine

I think another thing is the state of the industry here in Virginia, there's such a sense of camaraderie, and collegiality, amongst all the vineyards and the vineyard owners and the winemakers it's almost a sense of family. We're helping one another, supporting one another, there's no sense of competition. And I think that has helped create inertia behind the movement of Virginia wine moving forward, that sense of helping one another and supporting one another, and not competing with one another.

Fred Reno

I know that you have, you know, on a level a bit of a smaller operation some of your competitors here in Virginia. However, I'm curious as to what impact negative or positive you've seen from COVID to your business,

Christine

initially, just essentially shut everything down. And we're all trying to figure out how am I going to get through this phase one going you could start thinking about how we're going to open up. But there were challenges when you're in a small facility like this, and you have to maintain the six-foot distance and social distancing. It really, really limits your indoor seating. So, we're trying to maximize our outdoor seating, expand outdoors, which is fine for the fall. But now winter's coming along, we're going to have several months where it's going to be an issue. But we find overall, now that people are just coming out there, they want to do something we were just so busy, it's just like at first everybody was timid and afraid and just very gradual. But they got to trust things after a while that it's going to be okay. everybody wears masks we require that when we're in the people come in, when they go to their seats, they're fine. And that's how most vineyards are.

Nathan

But for the most part, yeah, for the most part of the beauty of being an agritourism business is you know, most of these businesses, these wineries have outdoor space and most of these farm wineries are actually on some sort of farm and they have space and they have set up farm set up, you know tables and umbrellas and people can come out and they can feel feel safe. And we can offer that to people and its people really value that like at this point. In nice weather people just want to get out of their house and we can we can provide them place to go, which is great for everybody.

Fred Reno

Let me circle back to a question I have; the branding and the name How did this all develop? What was the moment you said, that's gonna be our brand name?

Christine

Oh, actually the name I fell in love with the word Ankida, way before we ever thought of having a vineyard. I was reading a book in the 90s on ancient Sumer by Dr. Zecharia Sitchin. And in the final page of the book was a poem. It's all written in Sumerian, and underneath each Sumerian word, in parentheses was the meaning of that word. And that poem was Ankida, the meaning of it, where heaven an earth join, that just captured my imagination. And I really embrace that philosophy of the interconnectedness of everything. We knew we were looking for mountain property, we were looking for it then hadn't found it. But I knew that when we found our mountain property, maybe we can name it Ankita. And then we found this property. And when we planted the vineyard up on the ridge, that's it Ankida Ridge, of course. And there was one story when the first spring we were here for the first warm summer, day, evening night overnight, and we put an old hammock between an old mulberry tree and, and a walnut tree down there in the front and the property have been vacant for almost a year. So, there were high grasses it was undisturbed, and the fireflies were out. It was Memorial Day weekend. And we just Dennis and I just sat there in the hammock swinging back and forth. The fireflies were sort of like the ladybugs now the the fireflies were in the grasses and then in the air, and then they were in the trees and of course were out back up to the National Forest. So, there's no light pollution. And we looked up, the stars were incredible. But you couldn't tell where the fireflies ended, and the stars began. So, it was this magical moment of chosen being transfixed by that that interconnectedness of the Fireflies and the stars and everything was a magical moment. And that really reinforced the concept of the meaning of Ankita where heaven and earth join and the interconnectedness of everything.

Fred Reno

That sounds very idyllic. You know, folks, this has been a real treat. I was very excited to come up here today. To meet you all. I can see it's a family affair. (it sure is) which is which is good. It's really healthy and really nice. There's authenticity. And the story I've heard her today just seems like there's a lot of serendipitous moments that just have happened, come together in such a beautiful way that it's like you're blessed.

Dennis

Yes, we count those blessings every day, quite frankly. Well, not every day.

Fred Reno

Okay, well, I know you're gonna have to go too Nathan. So, I will sign off. Thank you. Say it once again, Thank you!