

# A Sequence of Events

THE MATHEMATICAL CALCULATION KNOWN AS THE GOLDEN RATIO IS THE MIRACLE THAT CONNECTED GUSTAVO GONZALEZ WITH **MIRA WINERY**

by Meridith May

*Mira Winery winemaker Gustavo Gonzalez believes numbers influence our lives more than we may know.*

**WHAT DO MATHEMATICS** and nature have in common? The Fibonacci sequence offers one famous example: The ratio of the numbers in the sequence, as it goes to infinity, approaches what's known as the golden ratio, enabling mathematicians to calculate a logarithmic spiral whose growth factor equals the golden ratio. This spiral can be found in seashells, pine cones, leaves and petals, and the seeds of a sunflower; it's also found in architecture, galaxies, and, surprisingly, the stock market.

The numerical phenomenon has been a source of fascination for winemaker Gustavo Gonzalez for many years—one he happened to share with entrepreneur Jim “Bear” Dyke Jr. in addition to their mutual passion for wine. They discovered this when they met by chance in 2005 and hit it off, and although Gonzalez was satisfied with his prestigious position as red winemaker for Robert Mondavi Winery, where he was working under famed winemaker Genevieve Janssens, the opportunity arose to form a partnership with Bear to start their own Napa Valley winery.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF MIRAWINERY





*Mira Winery owner Jim "Bear" Dyke Jr.*

"We didn't even realize the meaning of the name we chose," Gonzalez explains of the moniker they adopted, Mira Winery. "We discovered it was from the Latin root for 'miracle' and is also Greek for 'destiny.' I can't believe no one chose this name before we did."

Their first fruit purchase was from Hyde Vineyard in Carneros, and Gonzalez is now also making single-vineyard, single-varietal wines, including a Cabernet from Schweizer Vineyard, next to Shafer's famed Hillside vineyard in the Stags Leap District (it's the first wine the Schweizer family has allowed to feature their name on the label), and another from Alsace Vineyard in Oakville. He's also replanting Mira's estate vineyard in Yountville to head-trained, dry-farmed Cabernet Sauvignon as well as Petit Verdot, Merlot, Sauvignon Blanc, and his newest projects, Sauvignon Gris and Cab Franc, the latter of which he partially used to make a white wine during the 2021 vintage.

"The idea is to take small steps in the sequence," Gonzalez says of establishing the small-production winery he's long been preparing for. "I keep building on the number before, and the leaps become larger and larger: That's what I think in terms of my relationships with growers and grapes. I have dreams to create a broad scope of wines. That dream is becoming more of a reality than a miracle." S

*Mira Winery and its Hospitality House in Napa Valley.*



**Mira Winery 2017 Cabernet Sauvignon, Yountville, Napa Valley (\$75)** The nose is so opulent that there are great expectations for lushness of flavor and texture: Scents of violets, graphite, tilled soil, and toasted oak are almost indulgent. Brilliant, fleshy boysenberry and a coating of licorice initiate the bold flavors and determined grip. Violets and slate tannins run in tandem with black olive, soy sauce, sage, and black pepper. From the Chandon Vineyard, a site with abundant morning sun and good water retention, it aged for 18 months in (75% new) French oak. **96**

**Mira Winery 2016 Syrah, Hyde Vineyard, Carneros, Napa Valley (\$89)** A striking lineup of scents, including ripe plum, dried violets, and sandalwood, takes one's breath away. Black pepper alights gently on dark plum as base notes of clove and cedar mingle. Grilled meats burst in on the satin-textured palate, and a tingle of spice is left behind on the dense and lengthy finish. **96**

**Mira Winery 2015 Petit Verdot, Alsace Vineyard, Rutherford, Napa Valley (\$89)** Both savory and floral, this big single-vineyard red aged in (50% new) French oak and comes in at 15.5% ABV. A pop of brushy heather, violets, leather, and tilled earth is a telltale sign of the wine's prowess and magnitude. Clove and other holiday spices work in tandem with teeth-coating tannins as anise, bittersweet chocolate, and black plum swirl in the liquid maelstrom. **93**



**Mira Winery 2015 Cabernet Sauvignon, Schweizer Vineyard, Stags Leap District, Napa Valley (\$233)** "This is a Grand Cru vineyard by Napa Valley standards," winemaker Gustavo Gonzalez points out. "With Shafer's Hillside as a backdrop, the volcanic soils from 25-year-old vineyards slope down to the Silverado Trail. The wine reminds me of St. Julien, with more acidity than Oakville and Rutherford." Indeed, the high pitch of the fruit proves that point. Dappled with white and red pepper and a whisper of cumin, the wine offers a flourish of violets, black plum, and graphite. Espresso whooshes in on the finish, percolating with dark berries and earthy sage. **94**