



DUMOL

Associate Winemaker Julie Cooper



Growing up in the suburbs of Cincinnati, Ohio, and initially planning to attend law school in Virginia, Julie Cooper realized her true passions were food, wine, and the outdoors. After graduating from North Carolina State University, Julie spent five years working in some of Cincinnati's top-rated restaurants, immersing herself in fine wine and world-class cuisine. In 1998, looking to further her career as a sommelier, she moved to California to learn about wines straight from the source. She landed a management role at the Culinary Institute of America's restaurant in St. Helena where she connected with local winemakers to include the late Reg Oliver of El Molino Winery. She worked her first

grape harvest under Reg's tutelage in 1999 and became hooked on winemaking.

Julie returned to Ohio as the wine director for a premier restaurant group but her newly ignited passion brought her back to California for the subsequent three harvests. She continued to work with Reg and also took on roles with winemakers Nils Venge and Sara Gott. When Julie relocated to California permanently in 2003, Sara introduced Julie to Pam Starr who hired her as an assistant. It was an invaluable role for the apprentice winemaker. "There was a steep learning curve and Pam proved to be an amazing teacher and mentor," Julie reflects. "I am very thankful for the faith she had in me and the wisdom she shared."

Through Pam, Julie met DuMOL's winemaker, Andy Smith. "One day while we were racking some Chardonnay, Andy told me he was looking for a full-time assistant at DuMOL and suggested I apply. I admired Andy's winemaking and was very interested in learning from him, expanding my winemaking knowledge as I worked with different varieties."

Andy hired Julie in Spring 2004 and she has been instrumental in DuMOL's philosophy of intuitive winemaking over the past 14 years.

"We're very much like a family, everyone works together to keep the parts moving. There's a lot of willingness for give and take, a shared vision, a shared dedication, and a lot of respect for the fact we're all working as best we can."