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San Francisco Soon to Get a Second Winery

Foggy Bridge, the first winery in a national park, will open in 2008 with veteran winemaker Daryl Groom at the helm

By Lynn Alley

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The city of San Francisco will soon have its second winery, and the first in the country to be located in a national park. The new winery, called **Foggy Bridge**, is the brainchild of Presidio resident and real-estate developer John Kontrabecki, and will be situated on Crissy Field, the West Coast's first military air-defense station. The winery will open this summer.

The winemaker and partner in the project is Daryl Groom, fresh from his long tenure as senior vice president of winemaking and production at Beam Wine Estates. Groom was winemaker at Geysler Peak for 15 years, and is generally credited with the brand's high quality for value. He left the company after Constellation Brands bought Beam Wine Estates late last year.

"Lucky me. It's a dream come true," said Groom of the new project. "Happens once in a lifetime, and brings everything I love with it: winemaking, food, education and one of the most awesome locations there could be."

San Francisco's Presidio was established as a Spanish military garrison in 1776 on sand dunes at the northernmost tip of the San Francisco peninsula. It has been in continuous use as a military base since that time. In 1994, its 1,491 acres were taken over by the National Park Service and have been undergoing an ongoing conversion to civilian recreational use.

Foggy Bridge has been in discussion with the Presidio Trust, the group that runs the historic area, for more than a year. "Our goal is to find tenants that create vitality for the public with educational, recreational or cultural projects," said Jody Sanford, spokesperson for the Presidio Trust.

The winery will be housed in the 20,000-square-foot former aircraft hangar built in 1921, and will have a 3,700-square-foot tasting area in what was once an Army machine shop. There Foggy Bridge will offer educational seminars, food-and-wine pairing events and a tasting bar. In the fall of 2008, the winery plans to open a 120-seat restaurant called Left Bank Brasserie (Left Bank Restaurant Group runs a popular chain of these brasseries in the Bay area). Diners in the restaurant will be able to view winemaking activities through a glass wall while enjoying sweeping views of the San Francisco Bay, Alcatraz and the Golden Gate Bridge.

Foggy Bridge will make wines at the Presidio winery using grapes from its own 132-acre Livermore Valley vineyard, and will also partner with wineries in other regions to produce a Napa Cabernet Sauvignon, Santa Maria Pinot Noir, Sonoma Sauvignon Blanc and a Dry Creek Zinfandel. The partners will make the wines at their own facilities, with Groom overseeing viticultural and winemaking production.

In addition to the winemaking and restaurant facilities at Crissy Field, the winery also plans to offer food-and-wine Bay cruises aboard the historic USS Potomac, Franklin Delano Roosevelt's presidential yacht, also once owned by Elvis Presley.