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GOOD COMPANY

## On the North Fork, Wine Chat

By ALEX KUCZYNSKI

**T**O hear Michael Lynne, co-chairman of New Line Cinema, talk about it, making wine and movies are not dissimilar.

"Both rely on creativity and placing the creative process in a situation you cannot control," he said, strolling the grounds of Bedell Cellars, the 57-acre vineyard in Cutchogue, N.Y., he bought two years ago.

It was a drizzly Friday in mid-June, and Mr. Lynne was welcoming a dozen guests for lunch to celebrate the opening of the renovated tasting room. "This building is true to the North Fork in that it is a potato barn," Mr. Lynne said, his hands sweeping across the vast tasting room, hung with artworks like Matthew Barney's "Cremaster 2: 'vert scape/2step,'" which depicts two cowboys in an intimate embrace.

"But it's just a really updated potato barn," Mr. Lynne said.

Among the guests huddling under umbrellas as they shuffled between buildings were a local architect, Nancy Steelman; a landscape architect, Ed Hollander; and an interior decorator, Vicente Wolf — who had all worked to renovate the property. For lunch, they were joined by the artists Eric Fischl and April Gornik; Kip Bedell, who founded Bedell Cellars and is now the winemaker and general manager, and his wife, Susan; Dave Sokolin, a wine consultant who introduced Mr. Lynne to Corey Creek Vineyards, which Mr. Lynne bought; Pippa Cohen, an art consultant; and Michael Croteau, a graphic designer.

Once they had made their way inside Michael and Ninah Lynne's residence — a newly renovated 18th-century cottage that is also a historic landmark — lunch with Bedell wines was served, supervised by a local chef, John Ross. The first course was oysters panko with carried mussels and a 2000 gewürztraminer.

"What was it like waking up here?" Mr. Sokolin asked Mr. and Mrs. Lynne.

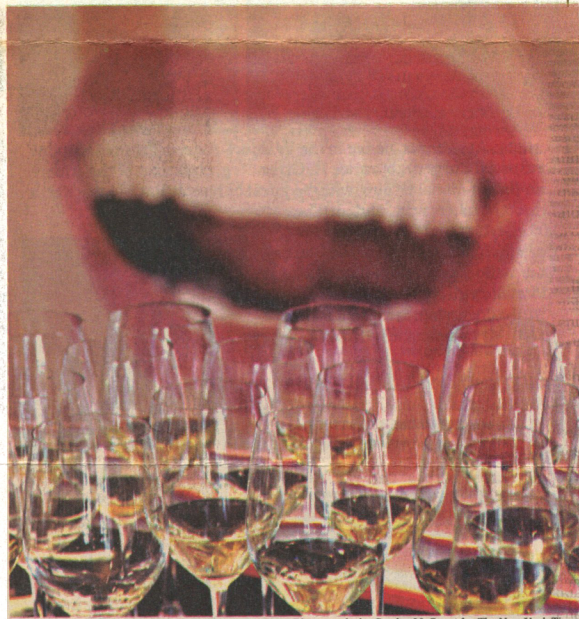
"We felt right at home," Mr. Lynne said. "Vicente has done all of our bedrooms, so that's why," Mrs. Lynne said, her Hermès enamel bracelets jangling.

Mr. Wolf smiled. He told a visitor that his first name, even though there is no "n" in the first syllable, is pronounced as if there were: VIN-CHEN-tay, not Vee-CHEN-tay. "I am Cuban," he added, intimating that that branch of Spanish was the barrier to his spelling abilities.

The second course, a half-lobster in the shell with cherry tomatoes tossed in a light basil dressing, arrived with a 1998 reserve chardonnay.

Mr. Fischl started to tell Mr. Lynne about an art project in which he gave a male and female model instructions as if they were actors. He then photographed the results.

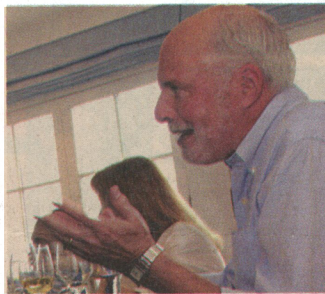
"First, I told the model that she was a heroin addict," Mr. Fischl said. "Then for a scene in which the model is enclosed in this kind of igloo



Photographs by Gordon M. Grant for The New York Times

ABOVE Art as backdrop to leftover wine in Michael Lynne's kitchen after lunch.

RIGHT Mr. Lynne holds forth with guests. The menu was supervised by John Ross, a North Fork chef.



of mosquito netting, I tell her: 'You're a wild animal. Whatever you do, don't let him in there.' So the guy takes his clothes off and approaches her. She snarls. And then he looks up, and you can see this look on his face: 'Aha. So this is what the deal is.'"

"What kind of camera did you use?" Mr. Wolf asked.

"An idiot camera," Mr. Fischl said. "I can't do the whole digital camera computer thing yet."

"Kip?" Mr. Lynne stage-whispered. "Why don't you tell us about the chard, Kip?" Mr. Bedell swirled the chardonnay in his glass, inserted his nose and sipped: it tasted of cloves, he said.

Mr. Fischl turned to Ms. Cohen and said: "You know, before I go out and hit with the pro, I just have to intellectually think, Let my arm go. So when I just let it fall, you can't believe how much better I hit."

"My little brother used to be a tennis pro," Ms. Cohen said. "He is an incredible teacher."

The main course arrived — char-grilled Long Island duck breast with portobello mushrooms and grilled vegetables, served with a 1998 reserve merlot — and a spirited debate

sprang up about whether South Fork people coming to the North Fork was a good thing. "They're going to ruin the place," Ms. Gornik said. "You know that if they start calling me, the neighborhood is going to hell," said Mr. Hollander, making the last word synonymous with "a favorite place of rich people."

"But the South Fork people will figure it out," he continued. "It's not so easy up here. It's a whole different mind-set, the North Fork. You have to like coffee from 7-Eleven."

Dessert — a lemon tart with fresh strawberries — arrived, and with it a late-harvest riesling.

"That is the cutest tart I have ever seen," Mr. Hollander said, his eyes moistening. The tart was so delicious and piquant that even after three man-size courses, everyone except Mr. Wolf, who has sworn off sugar, cleaned their plates.

As the guests pushed away from the table, Mr. Lynne said: "To think we would have had such an enjoyable meal on such an ugly day!" Then he sent everyone off with a Bedell six-pack: merlot, chardonnay, gewürztraminer, cabernet franc, cabernet sauvignon and viognier.

