

COVER ARTIST

Steve Cook

Painting with
a Passion

Steve Cook, the artist responsible for this edition's cover, *Resting in the Shade*, knows California's Central Coast. The San Diego native and avid surfer has been painting the landscape of Santa Barbara and its environs since moving to the area more than 30 years ago.

Eight years ago, he left a long career in manufacturing and turned his attention to the easel full time. "By then I had my studio and was spending more and more time painting. My mom was an artist and I inherited her talent. But until ten years ago, I was pretty much self-taught. Then I took some college classes and workshops. In the last four or five years it's become my main passion. I surfed every day for more than 45 years. Now I paint more than I surf."

The results of that passion are large oil paintings of vineyards, seascapes and the coastal lifestyle. Collectors and wineries have taken notice. Cook's work hangs in tasting rooms, and adorns labels.

His depiction of Santa Barbara landmark Stearns Wharf is featured on the Discoveries Vineyards Merlot label. It also helps illustrate the preceding feature on Santa Barbara. So do Cook's paintings of the historic mission and a young surfer. Like all of his work, they reflect the Coastal area's strong plein-air tradition.

"I divide my time between the studio and outdoors. I tend to work from plein-air studies or photos. This area developed a really strong school of landscape painters. I think the Gold Coast between Ventura and Monterey still lends itself to the California Impressionist tradition. It's still undeveloped and so beautiful." Learn more about Steve Cook and his work at stevecookfineart.com. ■



After the Harvest, oil on canvas 36" x 36"



Resting in the Shade, oil on canvas 34" x 42"



Beyond Retirement, oil on canvas 40" x 50"



After Lunch at the Cliff House, oil on canvas 24" x 36"