

A second generation Californian, Derek George Benham grew up in the dusty ag town of Bakersfield, California. During the long hot summers, he helped out on his Dad's farm. It was tough work, yet it stoked his enthusiasm for working with products that come from the land. However, a farmer's life was not in the cards for Derek, and he moved up to the bay area for college at UC Berkeley. While at school, he spent a summer traveling through Europe. It was in Spain, where Gin & Tonic is a high art form, that he first developed a love of gin. He dreamed of bringing that experience back home, but he had some wine business to take care of first. Following graduation,

 D. GEORGE   
**BENHAM**

Derek got his start selling wine out of the trunk of his '67 Mustang for a small Lodi winery, and ended up running the business. From there, he struck out on his own, creating successful wine brands including Blackstone, Mark West, Avalon, Calista, Raeburn, Bex and Cryptic, to name a few. While he thrived on building his wine business by day, Derek enjoyed a Gin & Tonic in the evening, dreaming of one day making his own craft spirits.

In 2014, Derek's dream became a reality and construction started on a new distillery at his

company's home base in Graton, California. The distillery's first spirit, D. George Benham's Sonoma Dry Gin was launched in February 2016. Derek's plans for Graton Distilling Company stretch far beyond gin, with more spirits and libations on the drawing board. One thing for sure, Derek will not be standing still. "I love spirits, and it's only the beginning," Derek declares. "We're doing what we believe is going to blow people's minds. I'm ready to rock!"



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