

VIDON – Past, Present and the Future

While on a Sunday drive around wine country in September, 1999, we noticed a 'For Sale' sign on Hillside Drive advertising 20 acres. Visible from the sign posting was an abandoned house, a double-wide, old cars, appliances, tires, old 55-gallon barrels and junk of every sort surrounded by scrub trees, rocks, over-grown poison oak and blackberries. However, it was very near the highly-regarded Rex Hill Jacob-Hart vineyard as well as the Adelsheim Quarter Mile Lane and Brian Creek vineyards, so I suspected it might be good vineyard land. I said – "this is very interesting!" Vicki thought – "I think I hear banjos..."



The following week I walked the property from wherever I could work my way through barbed wire fence, blackberries and poison oak. (I was later on prednisone for my poison oak outbreak.) I discovered a perfect vineyard site in the north east corner and the ideal location for a house on the northwest rise. Research at the county USDA confirmed that the soil was Jory – the best for Pinot noir. An offer was made within days and, after a bit of haggling, the deal was done.

Immediately we began clearing the site. The double-wide was given away and removed, the abandoned house destroyed and much junk removed. The first tractor, machinery and an ATV were purchased. Stumps and trees were pulled, blackberry and poison oak cleared into huge stacks and burned.



Rocks were hauled into piles. A building was erected, power was brought in and a well was dug. By August in 2000 we had installed the drip system and started planting the first half of the 5.2 acre Pinot Noir vineyard.

In 2002 we began construction of our house which was completed and ready for occupancy in March of 2003. We moved in and began our life on the farm. In 2010 we began expanding the vineyard with the planting of 0.7 acres of Syrah; in 2011 we planted 2.5 acres of whites – Chardonnay, Pinot Gris, Pinot Blanc and Viognier; and in 2013 we planted an additional 1.4 acres of Pinot Noir and Tempranillo bringing our vineyard to near 10 acres. Another 2.5 acres of Pinot Noir will complete the vineyard.



I attended 4 quarters of viticulture classes and a winemaking class at Chemeketa. In 2002, a small crop was harvested and 40 cases were made with John Grochau at Aramenta Winery – not enough to label and sell, but enough for personal and friend’s consumption. In 2003 and 2004 wine making continued at Aramenta but was moved to the NorthWest Wine Co. in 2005, where I worked with Laurent Montalieu. We obtained a Grower’s Sales Privilege license to pour and sell wine at various functions and in our vineyard building. In late 2007, we converted our building into a winery, became licensed to make wine on-site, and began producing Estate wine.



Until 2008 most of our wine was sold to 11 Fred Meyer’s stores, a few other wine shops and some restaurants as well as having a tasting room in our winery open on major holiday weekends. Many van loads of wine were hauled down to the Bay Area and sold in a few wine shops and restaurants. Next a California distributor was used but we soon learned that this model wasn’t sustainable if we wanted to continue and expand the business. We then went to being open every day and building our unique Cellar Club concept in 2008. The club approached nearly 800 members but was difficult to manage and being open every day was expensive and impractical for our small operation as we had a need to run errands, ship wine, and simply be out on the tractor in the vineyard as well as waiting for mid-week visitors to appear. Therefore, in September, 2013, we launched our Private Winery model.

Our new vines of Chardonnay, Pinot gris, Pinot blanc, Viognier and Syrah will begin to yield in 2014, and our current facility will not have the space to handle this production volume. Therefore we’re planning

to build a fermentation room and barrel cave adjacent to the current winery/tasting room site. The new underground cave would hold more than 80 barrels at ground temperature and the new crush-pad would allow for gravity-flow processing of grapes from the de-stemmer into fermentation vats. We would move all wine production into the new facility while the current building would be dedicated to functioning as a tasting room and bottle storage.



As a Private Membership Winery, we are open by appointment for our members, former Cellar Club members and for oenophiles by reference. When convenient, we prefer that appointments be made online a day in advance for scheduling purposes. However, we can often accommodate calls on short notice and always look forward to member's visits.

Already over half of our Cellar Club have registered as members online. We're holding open places for Cellar Club members until the end of May when we project reaching our membership limit based on our production capacity.

Our goal is to establish a friendly community for Vidon members to share their experiences and interests in wine and food. We plan to have membership events and encourage the use of our Peytanque court. We will attempt to make monthly Newsletters more interesting and informative. We encourage members to contribute comments, food pairing experiences and recipes to the Newsletter and an online blog.

We look forward to the New Year with excitement and anticipation.

Cheers!

Don, Vicki and Dave