

Washington wine industry continues to grow



Erik Peterson/For the Capital Press

Maria Beltran and Spenser Stepniewski, wine stewards at Windy Point Vineyards in Wapato, Wash., greet customers. They say that their tasting room, long a popular destination, has grown even busier in the past year.

By **ERICK PETERSON**
For the Capital Press

WAPATO, Wash. — Belly up to the bar at one of the many wine tasting rooms around Washington state, and it might take a minute to be served.

The people behind the counter say that business is good, and some are hard-pressed to attend to the many people coming through the door.

The Windy Point Vineyards Wapato, Wash., tasting room is just one popular location reporting high visitation rates, according to stewards Maria Beltran and Spenser Stepniewski.

“Oh, we’re busy all right,” said Beltran, who was rushing around recently refilling glasses and chatting with visitors. “Things are really going

good.”

Michaela Baltasar, director of communications for the Washington Wine Commission, said that she feels positive about the state’s wine industry, as reflected by both customer and producer enthusiasm.

“We’re in a period of strong growth right now,” she said.

She adds that many new wineries are applying for licenses. The number of Washington wineries has jumped from 800 in 2014 to 880 this year. Also, according to Baltasar, yields are increasing, as is demand. More and more investors are coming into the state from other states and countries to plant vineyards to take advantage of a booming industry, she said.

She calls this growth “very exciting,” as 2014 was the state’s biggest harvest, with 227,000 tons of grapes. Coming years are likely to continue this growth, she said. She estimates a 5 to 9 percent annual growth rate between 2015 and 2019, with a lot of the new plantings coming on line.

It has been a warm year, she said, which should re-

sult in intense fruit flavors and variety that will excite many consumers. This should add to customer demand, she said.

Barbara Glover, executive director of Wine Yakima Valley, recognizes the state’s growth. She makes her way throughout Yakima Valley meeting with her local producers, and she has seen businesses grow.

“It’s a fun time to be in touch with producers,” she said.

With producers gearing up for an early harvest, perhaps the earliest harvest Yakima Valley has ever experienced, these growers said that their grapes looked “really good.”

These growers, she said, are happy to complete harvest early, but they are also enjoying having more time for ripening and planning.

As for the traffic in tasting rooms, she said it has also been outstanding. She has heard that most wineries are doing very well, with some doubling their sales from July to August.

“There’s a lot of good time happening for folks,” Glover said.

Wine Production Essentials

Gases used in the wine making process.

Cooling the Grapes	
- in the vineyard during harvest.....	CO ₂ Snow or
& prior to crushing.....	Dry Ice Pellets
In the Horizontal Press	
Blanketing the Must.....	CO ₂ , Gas or Snow
Stabilizing the Must.....	SO ₂
Temperature Control.....	CO ₂ Snow or
during fermentation in open top fermentors.....	Dry Ice Pellets
Aging Wine	
Purge barrels.....	Argon, CO ₂ or N ₂
Preserve barrels.....	SO ₂
SO ₂ adjustments.....	Sulfuric Acid (6% solution)
Pressure Transfers.....	N ₂
Blending	
Blanketing of storage tanks.....	Argon, N ₂ , Bev-Mix
Sparge the wine to adjust CO ₂ levels.....	O ₂ , CO ₂ , N ₂ , Bev-Mix
Stabilize Finished Wine.....	SO ₂
Blanket Bottling Tank.....	Argon, N ₂ , Bev-Mix
Bottling – purge bottles to lower O₂.....	Argon, CO ₂ , N ₂ , Bev-Mix
Winery Maintenance.....	Oxy/Acetylene, Argon & Mixtures
Tasting Room	
- Blanketing open wine bottles to prevent oxydation.....	Bev-Mix

Call your local OXARC sales representative today.

1-800-765-9055

or shop online: **www.oxarc.com**

Moses Lake, WA	509-765-9247	Walla Walla, WA	509-529-3060
Pasco, WA	509-547-2494	Wenatchee, WA	509-662-8417
Sunnyside, WA	509-837-6212	Yakima, WA	509-248-0827

V15-1/#14

Willamette Valley Bonded Winery/Vineyard

Scotts Mills, OR • Award Winning Wines • Turnkey Operation • 49.59 Acres

\$1,599,999



Donna Paradis, Broker
(503) 873-8600, ext. 532
Donna@NWOregonRealtyGroup.com
www.DonnaParadisRealtor.com

V15-2/#14D