

Winemaker says his work not all glamour

By ERICK PETERSON
For the Capital Press

PROSSER, Wash. — Gordon Taylor hesitates a bit when asked about his title at Daven Lore Winery.

“What am I?” he said. “I’m the winemaker, forklift driver, chief bottle washer and cleaner of the toilets.”

The winery’s owner, he covers all of the aforementioned positions, and more. He explains that winery ownership is less glamorous than people think, though many outsiders seem attracted to the industry.

Taylor is in the midst of celebrations and events to commemorate the winery’s 10th anniversary. Also, new wines have been released and membership specials have been created.

In all the excitement, the owner said the wine business is much like the agricultural work that he experienced growing up on a farm in Canada, though

Daven Lore Winery

Location: Prosser, Wash.

Started: 2005

Wines: Grenache, Mourvedre, Syrah, Cabernet Sauvignon, Tempranillo, Aridsol Red, Malbec, Merlot, Durif, Petit Verdot, Recovery Red, Port, Sweet Riesling, Dry Riesling, Rose, Muscadelle

with some glaring differences. The biggest difference relates to public involvement.

Nowadays, people volunteer to help him with his production. They ask him if they can clean bottles, clean or do anything else needed. That never happened on the farm, he said.

“People are just fascinated with the industry,” he said. “They think it’s sexy.”

He admits to becoming something of a celebrity in his community, which has value. The attention leads to greater wine sales. People want to meet him, ask to volunteer and then buy bottles of wine, even when

he tells them there are no opportunities for volunteering.

The glamour — the images of people standing around in fancy dress and filled glasses — is only 3 percent of the winery, he said. The remainder is “laborious.” He puts in 10 to 12 hours a day, “like most farmers.”

He starts his day at 5 a.m. and finishes at 7 p.m., or later if he has a pouring event.

He sticks with it because he is not discouraged by long days. This is the farmer in him, he said. It is a unique ethic, a feeling that work equals fun. He also likes seeing the enjoyment of others when they try his wine.

He makes 16 different wines, and said that his goal is to show people the greatness of Washington state grapes. He purchases nearly all of his grapes, and grows only an eighth of an acre of grapes near his winery.

“The wine is made by the growers,” he said. “It’s my job not to screw it up.”

He said he prefers buying grapes, as the growers are within 30 miles of the winery and dealing with the growers saves him the hassle of growing grapes himself. These growers are all established, and their fruit comes from highly reputed areas — the Horse Heaven Hills, Snipes Mountain and the Yakima Valley.

Sawtooth dates back to early years of Idaho wineries

By HEATHER SMITH THOMAS
For the Capital Press

NAMPA, Idaho — The vineyards that surround Sawtooth Estate Winery were once lush pastures owned by Charles Pintler. The Pintler family saw more potential than grazing in the steep, south-facing slopes and decided to grow wine grapes, creating a vineyard in 1982.

They planted 7 acres of European vinifera that included Chenin Blanc, Riesling and Semillon grapes. The next year they planted 4 more acres, to include Cabernet Sauvignon and Chardonnay. In 1987 they harvested the first fruit for their

winery.

The name was changed to Sawtooth that year, to honor Idaho’s famous mountain range and scenic grandeur. In 1989 the tasting room opened and curious visitors enjoyed Idaho’s new premium winery.

In following years, Chardonnay and experimental varieties were planted on what grew to be a 70-acre vineyard, which was eventually merged with a neighboring 400-acre vineyard. Syrah, Pinot Gris, Cabernet Franc and Viognier plantings added more varieties.

Pintler Cellars then joined Corus Estates and Vineyards in 1998, which later merged with Precept Wine.

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