

# Vineyard operators focus on grapes

By **BRENNA WIEGAND**  
For the Capital Press

SILVERTON, Ore. — Through their 25 years in viticulture, Pete and Donna Paradis of Paradis Vineyard have been successful in shifting the nature of their business to suit the market and their lifestyle.

In 1990 they purchased the 100-acre property on North Abiqua Road near Silverton, Ore., that includes a 60-acre vineyard, woodlands and a home.

They got into winemaking in 2000 and helped form the East Valley Wine District to promote the wines on the east side of the Willamette Valley.

“We make just as good a wine or better than they do over there,” Paradis said. “It’s just getting the word out. Many have said that for every 20-dollar bottle of wine, 10 dollars go into marketing.”

Ultimately, they decided that marketing the wine took too much time away from the family and closed the winery in 2007.

Last year the vineyard formed a partnership with Adelsheim Vineyard, which now leases the entire 60-acre vineyard. This year’s crop is estimated at 120-140 tons.

“I’m real proud to have our fruit going in that direction,” Paradis said. “Before this it was usually blended in large vats with that of many other growers and our efforts to improve quality were lost in the tank, so to speak.”

Adelsheim Vineyard & Winery makes small production, single vineyard Pinot Noirs.

“They had an event where we were able to come and taste the wine made from our grapes,” Donna Paradis said. “The winemakers told us they liked what they were

getting.”

The steady income enabled Pete to retire from Silver Falls School District after 26 years to focus entirely on the farm. Donna went into real estate three years ago and found her farming background brings buyers and sellers — a California almond farmer, a large herbal company and currently Abiqua Wind Vineyard & Winery just down the road.

As son Pierre’s duties as vineyard manager lessened he focused on off-site equipment contracting for other vineyards and two years ago the 22-year-old launched Rainbow Valley Enterprises, doing hedging, leaf removal, hauling fruit and the like.

In March AgroThermal Systems of Walnut Creek, Calif., named him its first certified applicator of their heat-treatment technology. It involves making 4 mph pass-

es through a vineyard or other crop on a machine that shoots out 300-350 degree blasts of air, raising the temperature of leaves and clusters by 20 percent in less than a second. The treatment has been shown to increase yields by up to 25 percent and increase the wine’s phenolic content. Phenols impact the taste, color and mouthfeel of wine.

Last year Pete completed carving a 25-foot totem pole chronicling the family’s ventures and milestones, inspired by his American Indian heritage.

An intricate grapevine weaves its way through all the symbols of heritage, careers, children, weddings and affiliations because, as he said, their whole life wraps around grapes.

“There’s room throughout the pole for other ventures,” he added. “Who knows what we might do in the future.”



The Paradis family gathers around the family totem pole at the foot of their vineyard. From left to right are Tim Paradis and wife Maria, Pete, Donna, Jori, Lilly and Pierre. Pete carved the totem pole to chronicle the milestones in their lives.

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