

People & Places

Portland's oldest urban winery thrives

By ALIYA HALL
For the Capital Press

PORTLAND, Ore. — When Laurie Lewis moved from Texas to Oregon, she said the extent of her wine knowledge was narrow. It wasn't until she met her future wife and avid wine drinker, Renee Neely, that her love for wine grew and the two decided to make their passion a career.

"We had a 10-year plan," Lewis said, "but once you get bit with the bug of 'This is what I want to do with the rest of my life,' it's hard to then say, 'Oh, I need to wait.'"

Hip Chicks Do Wine is the oldest urban winery in Portland, producing wine since 1999. Their mission was to offer a wine experience that was fun, approachable and empowering. Lewis recalled when they were wine tasting years ago and struggled to be served or receive any information on the wine, and those experiences also helped inspire opening their own winery.

"Was it because we were women? Maybe. Was it because we were young? Maybe. Was it because the man next to us had more money? Probably. There was a whole bunch of factors," Lewis explained. "We decided we wanted to be more accessible and be a winery that could fill that gap from young to old,



Renee Neely and Laurie Lewis are the owners of Hip Chicks Do Wine, Portland's oldest urban winery, which has been producing wine since 1999.

and we wanted to focus on being a winery women felt comfortable in."

They also wanted to bring a piece of wine country to the city. After commuting to her job at Duck Pond Cellars for 4 1/2 years, Lewis said she wasn't interested in continuing that trek, and the idea of moving to the country made her uncomfortable.

"It's beautiful, I get the idyllic romantic visions," she said, "but at that point 20 something years ago, the idea that two women, two lesbians, deciding to

move out into the country, who knew they were going to have a baby and start a family — I just wasn't sure if we'd be welcomed with open arms."

Hip Chicks Do Wine makes 16 wines under three labels: Hip Chicks; Pride wines, which are three small batch bottles available every year for Pride month; and Tiernan Connor Cellar Wines, which are reserve style wines in honor of their son.

The winery works with 12 different grape selections that are produced

in Oregon and Washington vineyards. They work with anywhere between two to six vineyards to have a wide variety of grapes.

Hip Chicks tries to be non-traditional with their flavorings and like having dry, less sweet wines as well as a variety of blends that can appeal to a wider variety of palettes.

"It's more appealing to have that surprise and 'ah-ha' moment," Lewis said about crafting the wines.

Although Lewis and Neely will still be asked

Western Innovator

HIP CHICKS DO WINE

Educations: Social work and theater

Hometowns: Eules, Texas, and Portland

Ages: 49 and 53

Family: Wives Laurie Lewis and Renee Neely, and their son, Tiernan Connor.

Website: www.hipchicks-dowine.com

"who's your wine maker," Lewis said that the treatment of women in the wine industry has only improved, and continues to be a bright market for them.

"It's rewarding at this point to look and see how many women are in the Oregon wine industry these days because when we started there wasn't that many," she said. "You could probably count them on both sets of hands, and there's so many more now. That whole idea of being a woman in the wine industry, it is both a challenge and it is rewarding."

Pumpkins help add to farm's bottom line

By CRAIG REED
For the Capital Press

ROSEBURG, Ore. — The tradition of going to the pumpkin patch can be both an educational and a memory-making experience for kids and families. It also connects the public to farming and agriculture, and is a big boost to the farmer's income.

For years, even decades, families have been visiting pumpkin fields on weekends and classes of young school children have been visiting on weekdays during October as Halloween nears. At many farms, a wagon with hay bales for seats carries both kids and adults into the field. Once off the wagon, the kids, with adults in pursuit, spread out in search of the perfect pumpkin for carving into a jack-o-lantern or for decoration for Halloween.

Some farms also have hay bale mazes or corn mazes to add to the family activities.

"It's really the only sector of U-pick farming that has grown in the past 30 years," said Evan Kruse, co-owner of Kruse Farms, a 500-acre family business near Rose-



Craig Reed/For the Capital Press
Corbin Currington, left, Hollyn Dinneen and Zayden Dinneen are pleased with their pumpkin choices during a recent visit to Kruse Farms near Roseburg, Ore. They made the trip to the farm with their grandmother, Amy Holmgren. Visits to pumpkin patches has been a tradition for Holmgren's family for many years, dating back to when she was a grade schooler.

burg, Ore. "There's a lot more interest in this type of ag tourism than U-picking fruits and vegetables to feed your family. It just shows the progression of the easier availability of produce in farm markets and grocery stores."

Kruse, who has three young children, said a visit to the pumpkin patch is play compared to what might be considered work when U-picking beans, strawberries or any other

fruit or vegetable.

Kruse Farms offers visitors 10 acres of pumpkins to choose from, a 4-acre corn maze, a hay bale maze in a greenhouse and a 1-acre sunflower walk.

"It's the most important 15 acres on the farm out of the 500 because they provide the most connection to the public," Kruse said.

"There's so little exposure to agriculture, but a pumpkin visit allows people to see what we have and to see a

still working farm."

Roseburg teacher Robin Huselton brought her class of 20 kindergartners to Kruse Farms on Oct. 22. After about 30 minutes of searching, each student had picked out a pumpkin.

Huselton said prior to the visit, the kids read books about the lifecycle of a pumpkin, watched science videos about pumpkins and made a book about pumpkins. She explained that in learning about the different seasons, it is easy for the students to make the connection between pumpkins and fall.

She added that once the pumpkins are back in the classroom, they'll be weighed and measured by the kids as a numbers lesson.

"A pumpkin patch trip gets the kids out in nature," Huselton said. "A lot of my students live in apartments. It's good for the students to see and understand that they can get produce grown right here where they can see it."

Amy Holmgren said her grandchildren make two or three trips to pumpkin fields each year, making those visits with grandparents, parents and classes.

She said those family trips have been a tradition for many years. When she was a child, she visited pumpkin fields with her parents and grandparents.

"The kids love it every time they go," Holmgren said. "As kids get older and the world changes, there are not a lot of wholesome traditions left. It's good to have certain things like this that the kids can count on."

Holmgren said she talks to her grandchildren about the process of growing pumpkins, that they need good soil and water, and that a farmer needs to do the work.

"They need to know pumpkins and food are not just a magical thing," Holmgren said. "They need to know where food comes from, where and how vegetables grow, and that they're just not from a store."

For the farms, in addition to exposure to the visiting public, pumpkins provide one more income source.

"Pumpkins offer another good opportunity for an earning month for a farm after the summer months when most crops are harvested," Kruse said.

CALENDAR

WEDNESDAY, NOV. 6

Women and Leadership 3: 5-8 p.m., Urban Studio, 935 Northwest Davis St., Portland. Jordan Ramis PC announces the Third Annual Women & Leadership event. Designed to motivate, inspire and educate women who are leaders or aspiring leaders. Food, drinks, and whiskey tastings will be provided with the goal in mind of bringing women and allies in the agricultural industry together to network, discuss issues regarding careers and growth and enjoy the company of like-minded colleagues. A panel discussion features Caylin Barter, an environmental and natural resources attorney with Jordan Ramis; Cory Carman, owner of Carman Ranch in Walla Walla County, Ore.; Leigh Geschwill, owner of F&B Farms and Nursery; and Mallory Phelan, executive director of Oregon Aglink. Contact: info@jordanramis.com, (503) 598-7070. https://bit.ly/WomenAndLeadership3

WEDNESDAY-SUNDAY NOV. 6-10

American Agri-Women Convention: 8 a.m.-5 p.m., Embassy Suites by Hilton, 9000 SW Washington Square Road, Tigard, Ore. Hosted by the Oregon Women for Agriculture, the American Agri-Women Convention will bring members from around the nation. Contact: Oregon Women for Agriculture, 541-791-6031. https://owaonline.org/2019-aaw-convention/

FRIDAY-SUNDAY NOV. 8-10

Tilth Conference 2019: Yakima Convention Center, 10 N. Eighth St., Yakima, Wash. Every year, the Tilth Conference brings together hundreds of farmers, producers, researchers and food system professionals for a week-end of learning, building relationships and sharing best practices. Contact: Kevin McAleese, kevinmcaleese@tilthalliance.org, http://www.tilthconference.org

MONDAY-WEDNESDAY NOV. 11-13

Idaho Cattle Association Annual Convention: Sun Valley Inn at Sun Valley Resort, Sun Valley, Idaho. The annual ICA event is focused on cattle-men's needs, putting them face-to-face with some of the industry's most renowned experts. Contact: 208-343-1615, www.idahocattle.org/

TUESDAY-THURSDAY NOV. 12-14

Willamette Valley Ag Expo: Linn County Fair and Expo Center, 3700 Knox Butte Rd. E, Albany, Ore. Produced by the nonprofit Willamette Valley Ag Association. The expo is over 250,000 sq. ft. of exhibitors, equipment, seminars, classes, food and fun. In addition to the exhibitors and classes, attendees can enjoy other

attractions such as "Dine Around Oregon," an antique farm equipment display and an educational area from Oregon Women for Agriculture. Parking is free. The hours are 9 a.m.-6 p.m. Tuesday, 10 a.m.-9 p.m. Wednesday and 10 a.m.-5 p.m. Thursday. Contact: Scott or Jill Ingalls, info@wvaexpo.com, 800-208-2168. http://wvaexpo.com/

WEDNESDAY, NOV. 13

Big Idaho Potato Harvest Meeting: 8 a.m. Shoshone-Bannock Hotel and Event Center, 777 Bannock Trail, Fort Hall, Idaho. The event includes meetings of the Idaho Grower Shippers Association, United Potato Growers of Idaho, Southern Idaho Potato Cooperative and the raw-products group of the Idaho Association of Commerce and Industry. They will be followed by presentations by Potatoes USA President and CEO Blair Richardson and National Potato Council CEO Kam Quarles and Idaho Potato Commission President and CEO Frank Muir. Contact: Jeweldean Hall, 208-334-2350. https://idahopotato.com/industry/harvest-meeting

WEDNESDAY-THURSDAY NOV. 13-14

Dairy West Annual Meeting: Centre on the Grove, 850 W. Front St., Boise. This is the annual meeting of Idaho and Utah dairy industries. Contact: https://www.dairywest.com

THROUGH NOV. 2

92nd National FFA Convention and Expo: Indiana Convention Center, 100 S Capitol Ave., Indianapolis, Indiana. This is the organization's annual gathering. Contact: https://convention.ffa.org/

FRIDAY, NOV. 1

Oregon Hay King Samples Due: Hay quality samples are due for Oregon Hay King Contest, which will be held on Nov. 16. \$30 per entry. For more details and entry form go to www.oregonhaygrowers.com or contact Mylen Bohle at 541-447-6228 or mylen.bohle@oregonstate.edu

SATURDAY, NOV. 2

Goat Discovery Day: 9 a.m.-4 p.m. Pleasant Hill High School, 36386 Highway 58, Pleasant Hill, Ore. If you are an experienced "goat person" or you hope to be, this event is for you. A full day of workshops, demos with live goats, vendors and networking. Presented by Emerald Dairy Goat Association and Oregon State University Extension Services. Contact: Teagan Moran, teagan.moran@oregonstate.org, 541-713-5011

SATURDAY-TUESDAY

NOV. 2-4

2019 Angus Convention: Reno Sparks Convention Center, 4590 S.

Virginia St., Reno, Nev. From outstanding educational seminars to nationally known entertainment. Website: www.angusconvention.com

MONDAY, NOV. 4

Exploring the Small Farm Dream: 6-8:30 p.m. OSU Extension Office, Josephine County, 215 Ringuette St., Grants Pass, Ore. This three-session beginning farmer training series meets in Nov. 4, 11 and 18. Southern Oregon abounds with enthusiastic farmers involved in pursuing the commercial small farm dream.

TUESDAY, NOV. 5

WSU Extension Forest Health Seminar: 6-8 p.m. Bob Lyle Community Center, 700 Main Ave., Morton, Wash. This seminar will help you understand forest health, what to look for, and what you may be able to do about it on your own property. To register, go to https://bit.ly/2qxLwOL Contact: patrick.shults@wsu.edu, 360-740-1213

TUESDAY-WEDNESDAY

NOV. 5-6

Intermountain Native Plant Summit IX: Boise State University Student Union Building. The use of native plants on rangelands in the West. Open to the public. Contact: Thomas Jones, thomasjones@usda.gov



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