

Sokol Blosser Winery: Celebrating 50 years

By **BRENNA WIEGAND**
For the Capital Press

DAYTON, Ore. — As Sokol Blosser Winery celebrates its 50th anniversary, siblings and co-presidents Alison and Alex Sokol Blosser have much to think about as they look back and to the future.

“Alex and I are incredibly proud and grateful to our parents for the leap of faith and the hard work they put in to create not just the family and winery, but also the industry itself,” Alison Sokol Blosser said.

The idea of starting a vineyard came to newlywed Stanford grads Bill Blosser and Susan Sokol while traveling in their Volkswagen camper bus for a teaching position in Oregon.

Within a couple years they had purchased and cleared 5 acres in the Dundee Hills and were propagating their first cuttings.

It was 1971 and there were only a handful of other pioneers to the Oregon wine industry. They shared ideas, equipment, reverence for the land and the courage to forge ahead.

“Dad’s education as an urban planner helped inform some of the work they were



Carolyn Wells-Kramer

Siblings Alison and Alex Sokol Blosser are co-presidents and second-generation winegrowers at Sokol Blosser Winery. This year marks the winery’s 50th anniversary.

doing,” Alison said. “My father collaborated with other pioneers to pass laws that would protect the hillsides as farmland vs. becoming housing developments.”

It seemed frivolous to some when they built the area’s first dedicated tasting room.

“Folks had tasting rooms in their garages or basements,” Alison said. “Consultants from California told my parents it would never make any money but would be a good marketing tool.



Andrea Johnson

Sokol Blosser’s tasting room, opened in 2013, is flooded with natural light and provides sweeping views of the estate and the Willamette Valley.

“Today we know just how important wine tourism is to our industry and state, not to mention it’s just a fun thing to do for people,” she said.

As important as the international recognition of their wines was the steady stream of awards from environmental organizations.

In 1983 the U.S. Soil and Water Conservation District honored Susan’s experimental use of cover crops to control erosion on hillsides. In 1996 they were the first winery to be certified “Salmon Safe” by the Pacific Rivers Council.

Environmental Design.

That was also the year they began the transition to organic certification.

Alison and Alex, who both have master’s degrees in business administration, took over the business in 2008 and continue to expand and define what it means to be sustainable and environmentally friendly. This resulted in the business achieving a B Corp certification in 2015 for its environmental and social sustainability.

“There’s no silver bullet to mitigate the climate change so we’re doing everything we can think of — farming organically, lessening the environmental footprint of our packaging, using solar and renewable power, running tractors on biodiesel and recycling everything we can,” Alison said.

“We also want to be good stewards of the community, taking care of our employees and focusing on increasing diversity and inclusion in the industry and in our own business,” she said.

The vineyards now span 106 acres, and each year about 90,000 cases of wine are shipped worldwide.

“Our growth has come across all aspects of our portfolio,” she said. “In addition to the Sokol Blosser estate wine we have the Evolution label, based primarily on fruit we purchase, introducing people to the Oregon wine category at a more affordable price point.

“We are excited about the possibilities ahead of us while staying true to our roots as pioneers, innovators and leaders in the industry and always producing the best wine that we can.”

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