

WINE: Takes several years for a newly planted vineyard to begin bearing fruit

Continued from 1A

Walla AVA was an attractive choice for its unique geology, geography and climate — what the French call “terroir.”

“The Walla Walla AVA and its growers have definitely distinguished themselves,” Collier said. “It was just a very easy decision to decide we wanted to work with them.”

The local vineyard will be named after Pierre Pambrun, chief trader at the Hudson’s Bay Co. post in Walla Walla and fifth grandfather to Willamette Valley Vineyards founder, Jim Bernau.

Pambrun Vineyard will be part of a much larger development of vineyard properties known as SeVein, led by some of Walla Walla’s most recognized winemakers: Norm McKibben, of Pepper Bridge Winery; Chris Figgins, of Figgins Family Wine Estates; and Marty Clubb, of L’Ecole No. 41.

About 10 years ago, the partners bought more than 2,000 acres of wheat fields from the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints with the idea of boosting the wine industry around Milton-Freewater. They developed irrigation and water rights needed to support growing vineyards in what is otherwise an area of little rainfall.

“We knew the potential there,” McKibben said.

Though the Walla Walla AVA straddles the Oregon-Washington border, SeVein’s vineyards are located entirely in Oregon. The cornerstone property, Seven Hills Vineyard, is one of the area’s first and oldest commercial vineyards.

Nine wineries have now bought land in SeVein, including Willamette Valley Vineyards. Figgins said they are proud to welcome in their first winery from Oregon’s west side.

“For them, it was kind of love at first sight,” Figgins said.

Collier said she visited the site in January, and closed on the purchase in April for \$736,250. That includes both the price of the land and the cost of water rights for Pambrun.

In addition to the vineyard, Collier said they plan to build a winery and tasting room at Pambrun. They will start out with mostly Cabernet Sauvignon before adding Merlot and Cabernet Franc to the list.

However, Collier said it takes several years for a newly planted vineyard to begin bearing fruit. That means if Pambrun starts planting



Photo contributed by Willamette Valley Vineyards
Jon Meuret, of Maison Bleue Winery in Walla Walla, was recently named consulting winemaker for the new Pambrun Vineyard in Milton-Freewater.

next year, as anticipated, it likely won’t be able to harvest until 2019.

Until then, Collier said they will source grapes from the nearby Seven Hills. The winery has already named Jon Meuret, founder of Maison Bleue Winery in Walla Walla, as consulting winemaker, overseeing everything from farming practices to barrel selection and bottling.

“He’s one of Washington’s most highly acclaimed winemakers,” Collier said. “He’s very well respected in the industry, and just wonderful to work with.”

In addition, Willamette Valley Vineyards has an option through 2016 on another property in SeVein, where Collier said they would like to plant a second vineyard in the area.

“We’re definitely in it for the long term,” she said. “We’re putting a lot of investment out there. We just believe in it that much.”

Duane Wollmuth, executive director of the Walla Walla Wine Alliance, said the development is just another sign of the attention and recognition the Walla Walla AVA is

getting from outside the region.

“The quality of wines here is very excellent, and on par with the leading wine regions of the world,” he said. “The land potential here is fantastic for vineyard development.”

Collier pointed to the region’s hot days and cool nights, which she said helps the grapes to ripen and balances their natural acidity. The rocky basalt soils around Milton-Freewater are also surprisingly beneficial, allowing for better drainage and forcing the vines to struggle just enough to where they concentrate resources on the fruit.

She said Pambrun Vineyard should only add more awareness of Walla Walla’s and Milton-Freewater’s wine potential.

“It will certainly bring in new customers, new visiting guests and hopefully more talent,” she said. “It just gets everybody excited to be a part of it.”

Contact George Plaven at gplaven@eastoregonian.com or 541-564-4547.

SITZ: USC alumni include the creators of ‘Mad Men,’ ‘Scandal,’ and ‘Chuck’

Continued from 1A

Television was reintroduced to the Sitz household when the family got a Netflix account when Wil was 13 or 14 years old.

As Wil began catching up on various TV shows, he began to turn his attention toward scriptwriting.

Scriptwriting was mostly a solo endeavor for Wil, but he would occasionally share his work with others.

Wil was in a film club with Andy Sherman, a longtime friend who will also graduate Saturday.

When they filmed movies for a class project, Sherman said Wil always had the best scripts, writing parodies of literary classics like “Of Mice and Men and Zombies” and “Romeo and Juliet and Monsters.”

As he advanced through high school, Wil continued to hone his writing skills, culminating in acceptance to the University of Iowa Young Writers’ Studio, a summer

program for aspiring writers.

Michelle said it was a validating moment for Wil.

“I didn’t really have any other friends that wrote,” he said. “So it was nice to be a part of a community.”

When it came to looking at colleges, it was Los Angeles or bust for Wil.

While USC was the only film school he applied to, he also sent applications to Loyola Marymount University and Chapman University with the intention of eventually joining their film programs.

As a part of the mandatory writing samples Wil needed to include with his USC application, he included a 10-page script to a sitcom in the vein of “Friends.”

After he let Sherman review the script, Wil sent off the application knowing the competitive admission process.

When Wil was accepted, friends and family were not surprised,

knowing the years of dedication he put into the craft.

When Wil starts classes in the fall, he will join some esteemed company that have graduated from the program in past years.

Alumni include the creators of “Scandal,” “Chuck” and “Mad Men.”

Arriving to his interview for this story in a “Buffy the Vampire Slayer” shirt, Wil literally wears his own influence on his sleeve.

Other influences include “Twin Peaks,” “Arrested Development” “Enlightened,” and “The Comeback.”

Although Wil has a ways to go before he can add “hit TV show” to his resume, he’s starting to build up a small library of unproduced scripts.

In addition to 10 scripts for his original sitcom, Wil has also started writing dramatic scripts, including a spy thriller with a transgender protagonist.

U.S. might deploy missiles in Europe to counter Russia

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Obama administration is weighing a range of aggressive responses to Russia’s alleged violation of a Cold War-era nuclear treaty, including deploying land-based missiles in Europe that could pre-emptively destroy the Russian weapons.

This “counterforce” option is among possibilities the administration is considering as it reviews its entire policy toward Russia in light of Moscow’s military intervention in Ukraine, its annexation of Crimea and other actions the U.S. deems confrontational in Europe and beyond.

The options go so far as one implied — but not stated explicitly — that would improve the ability of U.S. nuclear weapons to destroy military targets on Russian territory.

It all has a certain Cold War ring, even if the White House ultimately decides to continue tolerating Russia’s alleged flight-testing of a ground-launched cruise missile with a range prohibited by the treaty.

Russia denies violating the treaty and has, in turn, claimed violations by the United States in erecting missile defenses.

It is unclear whether Russia has actually deployed the suspect missile or whether Washington would make any military move if the Russians stopped short of deployment. For now, administration officials say they prefer to continue trying to talk Moscow into treaty compliance.

In public, administration officials have used obscure terms like “counterforce” and “countervailing strike capabilities” to describe two of its military response options, apparently hoping to buy time for diplomacy.

The Pentagon declined to make a senior defense policy official available to discuss the issue. A

spokesman, Lt. Col. Joe Sowers, said, “All the options under consideration are designed to ensure that Russia gains no significant military advantage from their violation.”

At his Senate confirmation hearing in February, Defense Secretary Ash Carter noted his concern about Russia’s alleged violation of the 1987 Intermediate-range Nuclear Forces, or INF, treaty. He said disregard for treaty limitations was a “two-way street” opening the way for the U.S. to respond in kind.

The standoff speaks volumes about the depths to which U.S.-Russia relations have fallen. And that poses problems not only for the Obama administration but also for the NATO alliance, whose members in eastern Europe are especially leery of allowing Russian provocations to go unanswered.

Western leaders are meeting Sunday and Monday for a G-7 summit — from which Russian President Vladimir Putin has been excluded — where Russian aggression will be a key topic. On Friday, Carter plans to meet in Germany with American defense and diplomatic officials to map out a counterstrategy to Russia’s military intervention in Ukraine and to reassure allies worried about Moscow. The treaty issue is not a specific agenda item for Carter, but aides said regional nuclear force issues could come up.

The U.S. and its Western partners have tried to use economic and diplomatic leverage against Putin on a range of conflicts, including Ukraine. But they also recognize that Moscow still plays an important role in international affairs, including the nuclear talks with Iran that are among President Barack Obama’s highest foreign policy priorities.

China suspected in massive breach of federal personnel data

WASHINGTON (AP) — China-based hackers are suspected of breaking into the computer networks of the U.S. government personnel office and stealing identifying information of at least 4 million federal workers, American officials said Thursday.

The Department of Homeland Security said in a statement that data from the Office of Personnel Management and the Interior Department had been compromised.

“The FBI is conducting an investigation to identify how and why this occurred,” the statement said.

The hackers were believed to be based in China, said Sen. Susan Collins, a Maine Republican.

Collins, a member of the Senate intelligence committee, said the breach was “yet another indication of a foreign power probing successfully and focusing on what appears to be data that would identify people with security clearances.”

A spokesman for the Chinese Embassy in Washington called such accusations “not responsible and counterproductive.”

“Cyberattacks conducted across countries are hard to track and therefore the source of attacks is difficult to identify,” spokesman Zhu Haiguan said Thursday night. He added that hacking can “only be addressed by international

cooperation based on mutual trust and mutual respect.”

A U.S. official, who declined to be named because he was not authorized to publicly discuss the data breach, said it could potentially affect every federal agency. One key question is whether intelligence agency employee information was stolen. Former government employees are affected as well.

“This is an attack against the nation,” said Ken Ammon, chief strategy officer of Xceedium, who said the attack fit the pattern of those carried out by nation states for the purpose of espionage. The information stolen could be used to impersonate or blackmail federal employees with access to sensitive information, he said.

The Office of Personnel Management is the human resources department for the federal government, and it conducts background checks for security clearances. The OPM conducts more than 90 percent of federal background investigations, according to its website.

The agency said it is offering credit monitoring and identity theft insurance for 18 months to individuals potentially affected. The National Treasury Employees Union, which represents workers in 31 federal agencies, said it is encouraging members to sign up for the monitoring as soon as possible.

ECHO GRADUATES!

CONGRATS

HOME OF THE COUGARS!

Echo Hills Golf Course

400 GOLF COURSE RD. • ECHO
WWW.ECHO-OREGON.COM
CALL 541-376-8244 FOR TEE TIMES

Congratulations Class of 2015!

Congratulations from City of Echo & Fort Henrietta RV Park

Echo High School - Class of 2015
Congratulations & Best Wishes

~Donn Walls & all at Hermiston Realty
2372 N. 1st St., Hermiston
541-567-2121

Good Luck Echo Seniors!

MAIN STREET MARKET
225 S. Main St. • Stanfield • Open Daily 6am-9pm

ECHO HIGH SCHOOL

Graduation: Friday, June 5 at 6 p.m. • Echo School Gymnasium

Colby Baker	Ameta Barzee	Savannah Colson	Jon Dorn	Dustin Goldie
Elizabeth McCarty	Madyson Moore	Haley Shockman	Bailey Srofe	Danny Tappo
Noah Taylor	Paeli Thorne	Stephen Walker	Robert Wirtz	Gabrial Zacharias