

Days of wine and roses

Five Applegate vineyards gain 'LIVE' certification

BY CATHY RODGERS

Some believe the expression “days of wine and roses” conjures up an era of days gone by and simplicity. Here in the Applegate Valley it is an era nothing short of “grape expectations.”

Commitment to environmentally conscious wine-growing practices is proliferating. Local wine growers are increasingly adopting farming methods that reflect the valley’s commitment to sustainable and ecologically friendly growing practices.

The Applegate is playing a lead role in this now-thriving market, which took time and hard work to gain traction. The organic food industry enjoyed early success, with consumers willing to pay premium prices for food without harmful ingredients.

Organic wines, on the other hand, got off to a rough start. Lack of sulfites, a key preservative, caused some early spoilage. The occasional “bad” bottle left a bad taste in consumers’ mouths. That, coupled with broad resistance from conventional wine growers challenging the legitimacy of organic benefits, contributed to a lackluster reputation and falling prices. As the industry lagged, only the most visionary continued to fine-tune their vineyards toward organic and sustainable practices.

Wine growers that held true to the notion that one could do good for the environment and still produce great wines were ultimately rewarded. Recent studies suggest organic wine consumption is now growing at 10-20 percent per year as wine lovers seek high-quality wines produced in a sustainable fashion. With less than five percent of the world’s vineyard acreage organic, there is plenty of room for bountiful growth.

Our local winemakers take pride in achieving “terroir,” the French term for

how land, soil, and climate conditions are reflected in the taste of the wine. With the loamy, well-drained soils of the Applegate Valley, its clear running waters, and its nestled products of apples, blackberries, and lavender, it is no surprise that we are home to some exquisite, award-winning organic and sustainably grown wines.

Organic, biodynamic, and sustainable viticulture practices continue to evolve as growers seek to align with consumer expectations for food and wines that are healthier, more natural, and grown in an environmentally sustainable fashion. A broad spectrum of approaches with an equally diverse array of certifying organizations and criteria adds a level of complexity.

Biodynamic, more rigorous than organic, looks at the farm as a cohesive ecosystem where sustainable farming practices ensure the land is treated in a manner that will preserve its health and vitality for generations that follow.

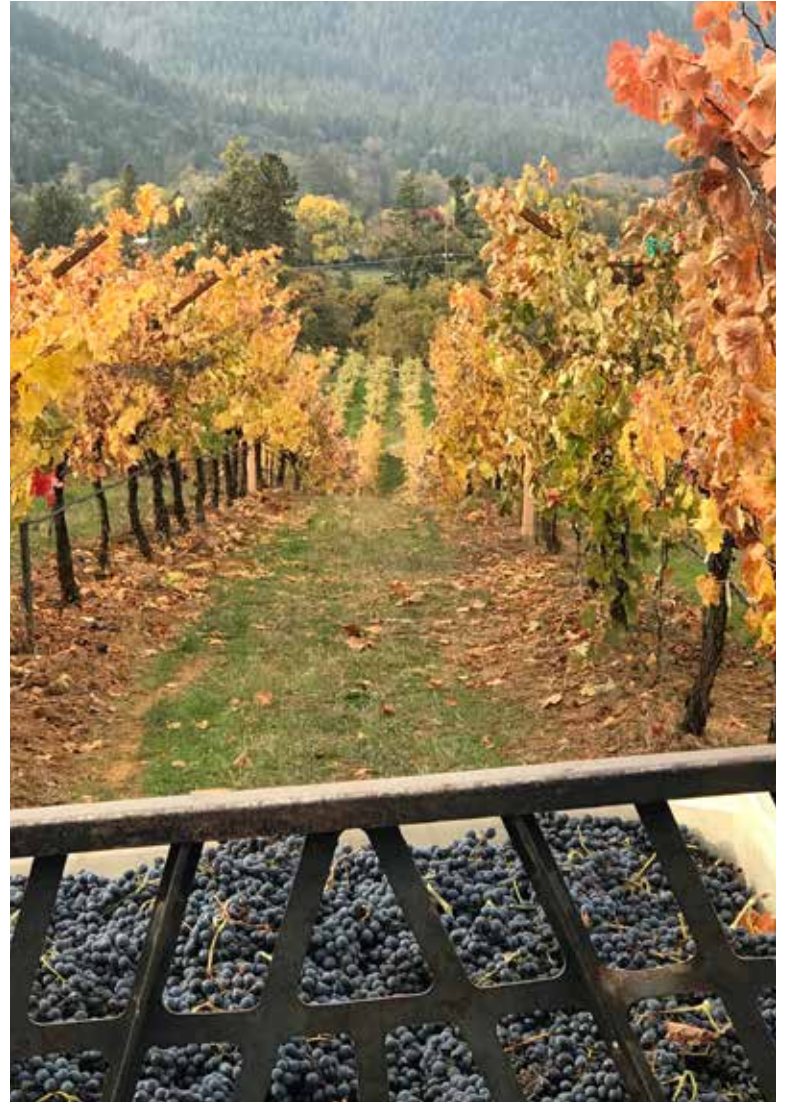
The Applegate has five vineyards that have achieved LIVE (Low Input Viticulture and Enology) certification. LIVE, operating in the Pacific Northwest since 1999, is a rigorous certification process supporting environmentally and socially responsible vineyards focusing on four elements:

- **Preservation** of native habitat, watershed quality, wildlife, and biodiversity
- **Social issues**, including worker health, safety, and good neighbor policies
- **Community**, for a healthy and vibrant community focused on the quality and compatibility of natural and built environments
- **Certification**, relying on broader issue assessments, including greenhouse gas reduction, waste management, and water and energy efficiency.

Brigid O’Keane, LIVE outreach director, said, “LIVE is proud to support growers and producers in the Applegate committed to sustainable practices. We use third-party independent contractors to ensure the strongest standards for certification. LIVE adheres to leading edge science-based standards that ensure both wine grape farming and wine production are sustainable with as minimal an environmental impact as possible.”

LIVE certified vineyards in the Applegate Valley include Quady North’s Mae’s and Eevee’s vineyards, Steelhead Run, Layne, and RiverCrest Ranch. RiverCrest is celebrating its second year of LIVE and Salmon Safe certification. Salmon Safe is a holistic approach to farm, land, and watershed management, including strict surface runoff protocols designed to protect fragile riparian areas and support local salmon populations.

“I like the LIVE program,” Herb Quady said. “It is Oregon grown and viticulture



Quady North’s flagship LIVE-certified vineyard during the 2019 harvest. Photo: Cathy Rodgers.

focused, requiring a commitment to sustainable practices across one’s entire property, not just the growing area itself. As LIVE members, we’re dedicated to protecting wildlife areas, waterways, beneficial plants and species, while growing grapes in an environmentally conscious manner.”

Vineyard owners following these practices reveal an unwavering commitment to them and a passionate belief that doing good turns out to be very good business.

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Rogue Harm Reduction offers free monthly services in Williams

BY JAMIE MENZEL

Rogue Harm Reduction is a volunteer-run, nonprofit health collective interested in promoting community wellness and harm-reduction strategies in response to substance-use disorders and other community health concerns. We are trained by the HIV Alliance and provide services from 10:30 am - 1:30 pm the first Sunday of each month at Sugarloaf Center, 206 Tetherow Road in Williams.

We offer free naloxone (a lifesaving medication that can interrupt an opioid overdose), free fentanyl test strips, and instructions on how to use both. Additionally, we provide free, on-site, rapid screenings for HIV, hepatitis C, and syphilis.

What is “harm reduction”?

“Harm reduction” refers to the provision of services and resources, in a non-judgmental, non-coercive way, to people who use drugs and to the communities in which they live. The goal is to assist them in reducing the harm related to drug use. Harm reduction as a philosophy seeks to avoid both condemning users and glorifying how people survive and heal, understanding that poverty, class, racism, social isolation, past trauma, sex-based discrimination, and other social inequalities affect people’s vulnerability to drug use and their capacity for effectively dealing with drug-related harm.

Is this a problem in our community?

Drug overdose deaths, including those involving opioids, continue to

increase in the United States. From 1999 to 2017, more than 702,000 people died from a drug overdose, and in 2017 alone, more than 70,000 people died from drug overdoses, making it a leading cause of injury-related death in the United States. Of those deaths, almost 68 percent involved a prescription or illicit opioid. State statistics show Josephine County trending somewhat higher than statewide opioid death rates and Jackson County dipping a bit below the state rate (see chart, this page).

Why fentanyl test strips?

Fentanyl is an opioid 100 times as strong as morphine. Buyers or users may not know that the opioid or non-opioid substance they’re buying contains fentanyl. In July 2016, the Drug Enforcement Administration issued a new nationwide report indicating that

hundreds of thousands of counterfeit prescription pills had been entering the US drug market since 2014, many containing deadly amounts of fentanyl and fentanyl analogs. People are more likely to die from a fentanyl overdose because it is many times more potent than other opioids and may require additional naloxone to reverse overdoses.

Most of the increases in fentanyl deaths over the last three years do not involve prescription fentanyl, but instead are related to illicitly manufactured fentanyl that is being mixed with or sold

as other substances, with or without the user’s knowledge. The current fentanyl crisis continues to expand in size and scope across the United States.

We are all in this together. We would love to meet you! Our next service day will be Sunday, April 5. Feel free to stop by to access services and learn about what we do.

For more information, go to harmreduction.org and hivalliance.org, or email me.

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Overdose Deaths by County



Josephine County drug overdoses deaths have spiked higher than the state rate, while Jackson County has dipped just below. Graph: Oregon Health Authority.