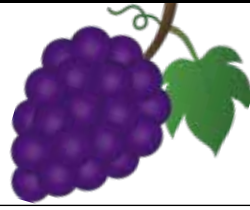


GRAPE TALK

New “A-team” wineries in the Applegate



Debbie Tollefson

BY DEBBIE TOLLEFSON

After changing hands and renovating, two new “A-team” wineries opened their doors in the Applegate.

Apricity Vineyard, on the former location of the Crow and Bear Winery, opened a new tasting room in the Jerome Prairie area. Augustino Estate and Vineyard has refurbished its vineyard and remodeled the tasting room at the former Bridgeview Winery on North Applegate Road.

Augustino Estate and Vineyard

When I talked with Augustino’s owners, Reggie Boltz and Debbie Spencer, in their tasting room in March, they told me they started growing grapes at their ranch in O’Brien, in southern Josephine County, in 2001. They have a great tasting-room tree house on Brown Road in O’Brien.

Both the vines and the tasting room at 16995 North Applegate Road needed some TLC when Reggie and Debbie took over in 2017. The newly remodeled tasting room has a fun “wine mine” room (wine cellar) for private events and dinners, and the remodeled tasting room is spacious and comfortable.

The current tasting-room flight features a variety of wines from Augustino’s many acres of grapes, including 2017 Rosé (a syrah and malbec blend), 2017 Pinot Grigio, 2016 Chardonnay, 2015 Pinot Noir, 2016 Syrah, and 2015 Cabernet Sauvignon. The tasting room also serves food, with an expanded menu for the summer months.

Reggie and Debbie’s success with their wines includes a Best in Class at the 2018 *San Francisco Chronicle* Wine Competition for their 2014 Syrah and recognition in 2019 by the *San Francisco Chronicle* for both the 2016 Tempranillo (Double Gold) and their 2014 Pinot Noir (Gold). The 2018 Oregon Wine Experience awarded their 2014 Pinot Noir a Gold, and the New Orleans International Wine Competition in 2018 gave Augustino’s 2016 Tempranillo a Double Gold.

Debbie and Reggie have lots of fun ideas for their North Applegate tasting room, including wine-tasting rides in a draft-horse wagon along the Applegate River and some special events for their growing wine club.

Apricity Vineyard

The other “A-team” winery I visited this spring was Apricity, located at the western end of the Applegate Valley. This new boutique vineyard and tasting room is striving to use sustainable practices in all aspects of farming and construction. The original design for the tasting room called for building with hempcrete, but Josephine County Building Safety Department’s hurdles for building with hemp, historically the most renewable resource available, became insurmountable. The original vision has dwindled to the only commercially interactive hempcrete learning wall that the owners know of in Oregon. This beautiful

wall, which displays information about hempcrete as well as the steps to build with hempcrete, now stands as a testament to their passion for utilizing renewable products in all aspects of their vineyard. They have incorporated reused and repurposed materials throughout the tasting room, including mushroom board, barnwood, brick, and steel.

Apricity owners, Laroni Cook and Noah Lowry, have created the only tasting room in the northwest Applegate Valley appellation. Laroni and Noah are growing their grapes 100 percent chemical free with an emphasis on microbiological health. They are certified by CNG (Certified Naturally Grown), a certification organization with even stricter standards than USDA organic certification. Their grapes are crafted at Pallet Wine Company by vintner Linda Donovan at southern Oregon’s first LIVE certified production facility, located in Medford. (LIVE is a certification that aims to preserve human and natural resources in the wine industry in the Pacific Northwest.) The wines Apricity produces are petite syrah, tempranillo, primitivo, chardonnay, syrah noir, and viognier. The Apricity winery and tasting room are located at 5719 Jerome Prairie Road, Grants Pass. Get on their



Apricity tasting room. Photo provided by Apricity.



Augustino wine mine. Photo provided by Augustino.

mailing list for special events, wine club offerings, and tasting-room hours.

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