



Dear friends,

Decanter magazine, based in the UK, is without question the authoritative wine publication outside of the US. They reach 2.2 million subscribers each month. In the October 2021 issue the focus is on the Americas', both south and north.

The featured article is devoted to identifying modern day trendsetters and pioneers on the two continents. One writer was given the task of identifying five wineries in South America and Jordan Mackey was given the same task for North America. Jordan chose three California wineries and two Oregon wineries in his article. We were one of the two he chose from Oregon. After forty four years of winemaking it is satisfying to still be seen as a "trendsetter".

North American trendsetters: five modern-day pioneers

North America has long been a land of brave pioneers and that can certainly be said of its wine community. Jordan Mackay introduces five movers and shakers, setting the standard for modern North American wine.



This recognition is very meaningful to me. We at KWC have never stopped pushing the limits of our understanding of both farming and winemaking. It began in the 70's when I was fortunate to be part of Dick Graff's Small Winery Technical Society. That experience taught the value of complete openness with other industry members and how constantly questioning lore and supposition was critical to improvement. Years later there were six of us in the northern Willamette Valley that formed a group called Cellar Crawl. It included the great folks from Beaux Freres, Bethel Heights, Cristom, Penner-Ash, Solena and of course Ken Wright Cellars. Over two decades we did experiments that were pivotal in improving the understanding of our region and what approaches in the vineyard and winery meant increased quality for our Pinot noir. Those experiments ranged from timing of thinning to profiling the yeast in our fermentations with the advent of DNA fingerprinting. The results of this collaborative work were shared openly and have played a significant role in furthering the quality of wine from our world class region.

From introducing the first sorting line in Oregon in 1986, to acreage contracts, dry ice for cold soaking, focusing on single vineyard production of Pinot noir and just last year learning of the effectiveness of ozone in eliminating smoke related issues, we have always and ever been at the forefront of discovery. That will never change. The complexity of grape growing, and winemaking is such that it is impossible to know even a fraction of what all the influences may be that affect performance and quality. We are constantly learning. In the end this is what is most attractive about our craft.

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In December of 2019 my son Carson joined our team as our General Sales Manager. I had hoped for years that he would take an interest as I knew he had a skill set for business that none of us on the KWC team possessed, including me. But over the years he was doing very well and compensated at a level we simply could not match. In perhaps a weak moment he mentioned to me that he wanted to explore helping us improve our sales management and I immediately said yes. It was incredibly timely. With the pandemic occurring within a few months of his hiring the traditional channels of wine sales either evaporated or changed dramatically. Carson has led us through this challenging time with an improved, focused sales team structure and a tenacity for finding opportunity that we needed to keep the lights burning.



Vintage 2021 is now in the house, pressed and put to bed (barrel). As I expressed in my letter last year 2020 was a great year in that our team had so many challenges and met them all head on. 2021 was far less dramatic. Maybe a little less drama is okay at times?

Our crop level averaged just under three tons this year which was perfect for the accumulated heat we experienced over the growing season. Disease was nonexistent with the dry conditions of the summer months and the fermentation's proceeded perfectly with nary a one going "sideways" on us. The new wine in barrel is rich, expressive, detailed and deeply colored.

We look forward to "thieving" examples of these beautiful wines for you at our Annual Barrel Tasting event on November 20 and 21 from 10am-4pm. Please RSVP by visiting our website.

If you can't join us Nov 20 or 21, please consider tasting with us at our tasting room Thanksgiving weekend. The winery will not be open Thanksgiving weekend. Reservations can also be made on our website.

Best,

Ken



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