



Dear friends,

2024 marks the retirement of Leda Garside from ¡Salud! She has led a remarkable effort by the wine industry, Hillsboro Medical Center (formerly Tuality Healthcare) other voluntary physicians and dentists, to provide needed health care to the men and women who play a critical role in caring for both our vineyards and wine cellars.

A bit of background information is necessary to appreciate the scope of her influence. In 1992 Dr. Larry Hornick of Hillsboro Medical Center reached out to the industry, first through Dick and Nancy Ponzi, to have a meeting regarding a growing health issue that concerned him. At that meeting, he related how there was an increase in visits to his emergency room of migrant agricultural workers who were seriously ill or injured. What bothered him most was that many of the issues he saw would have been easily solved had that person seen care immediately. The workers, many who were migrant at the time and not citizens of the U.S., saw hospitals or urgent care as being tied to government and were fearful of being deported. The delay in seeking help for their condition often led to serious complications. Dr. Hornick had seen enough and rightfully called us out for not being more involved.

The situation we were in was in great part due to a lack of a legal governmental path for temporary agricultural workers to be in the US. The closest we came to a workable plan was in 2004 when George Bush proposed a Temporary Worker Program. Unfortunately, he failed to get the support of either political party. What everyone recognized was that the migrant workers were the only segment of the population that wished to perform field work. Even with that agreement there has not been a federal program yet to allow for these workers to be in the US for periods of time that all could support.

Back to 1992. After Dr. Hornick's graphic portrayal of the health situation the ¡Salud! organization was formed with 18 original wineries. A board was formed that included several of the winery principals including myself along with several physicians. Maria McCandless, an employee of Hillsboro Medical Center, became our coordinator. Maria is still active in ¡Salud! and has been a foundational part of the success of the organization. She was the winery cat-herder for many, many years which is an almost impossible task.

The format for ¡Salud! began with a single day event with the silent auction at Atwater's restaurant and the live auction and dinner above on the 41st floor of the US Bank building in downtown Portland. Over the first 5 years the proceeds were given as grants to clinics located throughout the Willamette Valley. With everyone involved having day jobs it was difficult to provide much oversight as to how the funds were actually spent. We were only providing help for a few dozen workers over the course of a year and felt we needed to change our approach, bring our effort in house, and truly control the use of our funds. I was chairing the board at the time and we decided together to hire our own registered nurse to be the point person for the organization. That nurse would need to be bilingual and a believer in the cause. The first order of business would be to find every group of workers possible, meet with them face to face, hand them written information about the program and assure them it would be safe to receive services.

After Leda interviewed for the position every board member turned to each other, smiled and knew we had found the perfect person. She was super bright, loved the cause and relished the challenge of growing the program. We purchased a vehicle for Leda and tasked her over the first year with engaging every group of workers she could find. She was phenomenally successful. Within two years we went from a few dozen to well over a thousand health encounters and that level has been maintained to the present day.

The program continued to evolve under her watch with more medical staff, well equipped mobile vans and relationship building with volunteer physicians and dentists. With Leda at the helm, and with support from Hillsboro Medical Center, we successfully created a relevant program that has served our workers health needs at a high level.

As I first mentioned Leda is retiring this year. Over her tenure of a quarter century plus she has won countless awards for forging a successful partnership between an industry, its workers and health providers. She was honored at the very recent ¡Salud! celebration and auction for her incredible career. I was asked to be part of that recognition and participated in a video to do just that. A link to that video appears below and I hope you will take the time to view it. It is compelling.

The weather of 2024 was a script written for Pinot noir. Being thin skinned and therefore a bit more fragile than other varieties Pinot noir prefers a growing season without stress. 2024 was exactly that. We had a total of two days of 100 degree weather, no wild swings in temperature and though humidity was slightly higher than normal it did not lead to disease issues in any of our sites.

Temperatures were in fact remarkably mild and made for a beautifully long growing season. Long growing seasons equal increased complexity of aroma and flavor. The reason you and I love Pinot noir is that when it has this level of nuance and grace no other variety can begin to match it. For me, every other red variety ends up feeling like an intemperate bully compared to the layer upon layer of beautifully interwoven aroma, flavor and texture that only Pinot noir can deliver.

As you visit wineries in the Willamette Valley this fall you will hear about how remarkable the fruit and resulting wine are. Color and flavor began to develop significantly at the lowest sugar levels I can remember. The acids are the most naturally balanced I have experienced since I started my professional career in 1978.

We are excited to see everyone at our Annual Barrel Tasting on November 23rd and 24th and the opportunity you will have to experience this new vintage.

Best,



Leda's Retirement Video

Scan the QR Code to Watch



Annual Barrel Tasting

Scan the QR Code to RSVP

