

Duo seeks best grapes to make classic, budget-friendly wines

By **Alexa Gagosz** - January 22, 2021 2:10 am



SCOURING THE GLOBE: Cousins Liana Buonanno and Paul Fede, co-owners of Gooseneck Vineyards, work with farmers in six countries to source the grapes for their classic, budget-friendly wines, which they sell in their North Kingstown vineyard shop. PBN PHOTO/MICHAEL SALERNO

From the hills of the Treviso in Italy to the stony Wairau Valley river flats in Marlborough, New Zealand, Liana Buonanno and Paul Fede have scoured the world, testing various varieties of wine grapes to produce a better, everyday glass of wine in Rhode Island.

The duo, who are cousins, started Wickford Wine Co. LLC, doing business as Gooseneck Vineyards. They have partnered with farmers in the U.S. and five other countries to find the perfect grapes in every major wine-growing region to make their nine classic but budget-friendly wines.

Bottles are priced at \$16, \$18 and \$24.

"[Before starting Gooseneck], we realized that you have to pay more to get a decent bottle of wine. It is very hard to find a bottle of wine that you are satisfied [with] that is varietally correct," said Buonanno.

"And not industrialized," added Fede.

By not trying to "do it all at once," such as growing the grapes, to fermenting, to answering customer inquiries, the two thought they could simplify the process, chopping up the steps to ultimately make a better product.

Their idea, said Buonanno, has always been to go after everyday, high-quality varietals.

Varietals such as pinot grigio, chardonnay, pinot noir and cabernet sauvignon are well-known. And instead of turning up their noses at the basics, Buonanno and Fede look to perfect them.

For example, their pinot grigio was crafted with the assistance of Italy's winemaker of the year at a family-run vineyard that can trace its roots back to the 1800s. The grapes are grown in the Veneto region, a cool climate due to the proximity of the Adriatic Sea.

Or their chardonnay: a buttery composition with a slight aroma of oak from the barrels in which the wine is matured after fermentation. The oak is sourced from Nevers, France. Before bottling, viognier is blended in, a white wine that, on the nose, smells of honeysuckle.

While the names on the bottle may be recognizable to a wine novice, the tastes inside could delight a sommelier, said Fede.

"If you maximize every single step of the process of wine-making, then the end product will over-deliver," said Buonanno.

Specialty varietals of last year's syrah, zinfandel or Fede's current project of riesling are found only at their vineyard shop, a corner store in the Wickford village of North Kingstown.

So far, their experiments to land a varietally correct wine have paid off. Gooseneck wines can be found in 17 states and have landed on the wine lists of several restaurants. Wine Enthusiast rated Gooseneck's pinot noir, which is produced in Oregon, 90 points out of a possible 100 for the 2016 vintage.

While wine drinkers in Rhode Island continue to drink Gooseneck, Fede, who previously worked at Kenwood Vineyards in California, said he looks to continue to educate them on the possibilities.

"I think education goes hand in hand with wine," he said. "People are like sponges. The more you give them, the more they will absorb."

OWNERS: Liana Buonanno and Paul Fede

TYPE OF BUSINESS: Vineyard

LOCATION: 4 Brown St., North Kingstown

EMPLOYEES: 11 full time, four part time

YEAR ESTABLISHED: 2011

ANNUAL SALES: WND



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