Nora’s Table Sold
Oregon Wine A-List winner Nora’s Table has been sold. Owners Kathy and Stu Watson recently announced the Hood River restaurant had been purchased by chef Roman Deingruber and his wife, Amy Kaefer. Ownership changed hands Feb. 7. Deingruber is a native of the Czech Republic, where he studied culinary arts. His experience includes nine years managing both Café Gitane and Bread Restaurant in New York. He then managed the kitchen of the well-regarded LA restaurant Gjelina, which Los Angeles Magazine named “One of the 99 Essential Restaurants in 2013. For more about Nora’s Table, please visit www.noratable.com.

CORRECTIONS
In the November 2014 article “Prescription for Pinot,” OWP printed that Dr. John Bergström graduated medical school from the Ponce School of Medicine; this is not true. He graduated from medical school and completed his residency at Oregon Health & Science University in Portland. In addition, his daughter, Kendall Bergström-delLanciottti, and son-in-law, Paul delLanciottti, are no longer involved in the family’s wine business.

In the 2015 Oregon Wine Almanac, the listing for Marshall Davis was accidentally placed in the wrong city. The correct address should be 233 W. Main Street, Carlton (inside The Horse Raid).

Archiving Oregon
LINFIELD CAPTURES STORY OF STATE’S WINE INDUSTRY

BY RACHEL WOODY & RICH SCHMIDT
When Linfield College founded the Oregon Wine History Archive (OWHA) in 2011, the scope of the project was unspecified. Linfield — in McMinnville, the heart of the Willamette Valley wine region — had forged connections with some of the area’s wine pioneers, and their collections were the catalyst to begin the archive.

In order to include the complete narrative of Oregon wine, the OWHA staff quickly realized they needed to venture beyond the Willamette Valley and seek collections and stories from the state’s grape-growing regions in the Umpqua, Rogue and Columbia valleys. OWHA staff worked with the Oregon Wine Board for what became a multi-year project traveling the state’s wine regions, meeting with people in the local wine industry, filming interviews and securing documents, photographs and artifacts to augment the Oregon wine story.

Umpqua Valley was the first region visited, and on the last day the staff squeezed in three interviews with area winemakers, one of whom was with John Bradley, the late owner of Bradley Vineyards. Bradley passed away not long after the OWHA interview, and the sudden loss of this Elkton-area pioneer emphasized the importance of capturing these winemakers’ stories.

Bradley’s interview encapsulates a number of themes in interviews across the regions, including area identity, how winemakers entered the industry and where they see it evolving. Bradley Vineyards is located in the Elkton AVA.

As Bradley explained, “Elkton is at the north end of the Umpqua Valley. We are the cooler part of the Umpqua Valley. We are unique unto ourselves, because we have this little coastal influence — this little gorge that runs out to the coast. I think that it’s great we get some recognition for that … We’re deserving of our own moment here, I think.”

As with many Oregon wine pioneers, Bradley entered grapegrowing from a completely different field: construction. While many, Bradley included, didn’t start with immediate wine industry knowledge, they all shared in the confidence that growing wine grapes in Oregon would work.

“It’s like the whole industry of so many people came from so many different walks of life … It’s all a bunch of independent people and it’s like they knew they were right — what they were doing, … You get up north [Willamette Valley] and you get the same thing. All the people, all the early-year people up there that are all very independent people from all walks of life, from all over the country come to Oregon to plant grapes.”

The fact that the number of Oregon wineries has increased dramatically in the last decade emphasizes the continued appeal to make Oregon wine.

Bradley, and others, have been quick to point out the hard work involved in the wine industry. Often winemakers are asked for advice from those interested in entering the industry, and frequently the winemakers’ answers are conservative and cautionary.

“It’s that whole romance thing, you know? … And when you’re out there at 5:30 in the morning spraying grapes, trying to keep powdery mildew at bay, you’re going ‘Yea, this is pretty romantic. It’s a lot of work and you can’t emphasize that enough to people who are saying ‘Oh, I think I’ll plant a vineyard.’ It is a lot of work.”

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LAURENT MONTALIEU
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Jacques Lardier, who came out of retirement because he wanted to take advantage of the opportunity at Resonance Vineyards.

They both seem to be very much attuned to the Oregon philosophy and eager to follow it. This is not surprising to me because the great Burgundy vignerons are accustomed to working in this same way. Small quantities, minimum handling, careful winemaking practices, barrel fermenting, barrel aging. It’s expensive, but it works beautifully.

**KK:** You dealt with the top Jackson Family Wines people when they came to look over Grand Crus Estates. What was that like?

**LM:** Barbara Banke came up from Santa Rosa. She was named chairman after her husband (Jake Jackson) died, and she made a point to personally evaluate the Grand Cru Estates purchase. Even though we worked mostly with the company’s COO, Hugh Reimers, on the details, Barbara seems quite excited about Jackson Family playing a role in Oregon.

**KK:** What have you seen over the years that makes you the most excited for the future of Oregon wine?

**LM:** Well, when I speak about wine, of course, I am referring primarily to Pinot Noir. And what I can say about that is how the sense of place is becoming more defined, and the challenges we have had in consistently making good wine are pretty much behind us now.

**KK:** You mean that you can overcome the obstacles even when Mother Nature isn’t so kind to us at harvest time?

**LM:** Exactly. Unless the weather is a total disaster at harvest — and it has only come close to that once or twice in all the years I have been here — there is no excuse for not making good wine every year.

We know how to deal with difficulties that crop up in the vineyard and we can quickly identify problems in the winery and resolve them. Then, when we do have those outstanding years like 2012 and 2014, we are given the gift of being able to make truly great wine.

**KK:** You mentioned the recognition of distinctive AVAs. Do you think that will continue to evolve in Oregon?

**LM:** For sure. The Yamhill Valley is truly exceptional because we have so many different soil types, sites and favorable meso-climates, but I’m certain there are others we haven’t yet identified in places around the state.

The McMinnville AVA is only beginning to show its potential, and we are so glad to be a part of it with Hyland Vineyard. Other spots are already showing distinctive characteristics like Maysara, and Yamhill Valley Vineyards was one of the pioneers of the industry that proved the AVA’s potential even before it was designated. I can give you an example right now that I’m positive will qualify for an AVA designation. That is the area around Monmouth where we have already planted two vineyards, Domaine Loubetjac and Wildwood. We own 200 acres there, rolling hills, elevations for 300 to 600 feet. I’ve flown over in a helicopter, and I’d say the area has at least 1,000 acres with prime potential.

**KK:** Domaine Loubetjac?

**LM:** It’s the name of the little village in Bordeaux where I grew up.

**KK:** Do you ever get together with other winery people and talk about the future, kind of speculate on what things will be like years from now. Size? Popularity? Climate change?

**LM:** Not as such. But it sounds like an interesting idea. As for climate change, it seems apparent that something will happen over time, but I doubt it will have much effect on things until my grandchildren are grown.

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In just the 54 years since Richard Sommer planted Pinot Noir in Roseburg, the successful results from the hard work that Bradley and many others reference is evident. Oregon’s reputation for wine has grown. When speculating on Oregon wine industry’s potential for growth, Bradley describes conversations he and his family have had with people outside Oregon as an indication of further growth potential.

Almost the first thing they say is, ‘Oh, Oregon wines, Oregon Pinot Noir.’ It used to be ‘Oh, Oregon, where it rains all the time.’ But, you know, that’s really changed. So, given that people are so aware of Oregon wines and sort of anxious to taste them, to experience Oregon wines — I think that we’ve not seen the end of our growth ... People are looking for the Oregon wine experience, and I think we’re at a growth point, and I think it’s going to continue. I really do.

People traveling here seeking the “Oregon wine experience” is proof of the impressive role the industry plays in the state, both economically and culturally. It was not that long ago that the state boasted fewer than 20 wineries; now there are more than 500, with an economic impact in the billions of dollars.

The story of the rise is at the heart of the OWHA’s mission, and hearing firsthand accounts from pioneers like Bradley — who invested themselves early, when success was far from a given — demonstrates the uniqueness of the narrative, and the critical importance of collecting it.

As Bradley poignantly stated, “I hope it’s not too late to scramble around and get this history put together and sort it out and, you know, I’m sure it’s not, but it takes someone to do that.”

For Bradley, and for all people who make up the Oregon wine industry, the OWHA will continue to capture their stories — the stories of Oregon wine.

**SWEET CHEEKS
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Rieslings, Pinot Gris, a sweet wine called Rosy Cheeks, and a 2007 sparkling wine, Blanc De Noir, described as delicately creamy and brilliant.

With such wines along with a solid perch on the edge of the valley, Ramp and her cohorts have a good thing going. Ramp herself never dreamed she’d be planning events at a winery in her home state; she graduated from a fashion school in Los Angeles in 2010, before she hand-picked events at a winery in her home state and thanks to the wine industry — and her father — she and the other women enjoy a bit of local notoriety, too.

“In Eugene, a lot of people know about us,” she says, “It happens now that when I go to the store, people will say, ‘Oh, you’re one of the Sweet Cheeks girls!”

Of course, she has her grandfather, or maybe Charlie, to thank.

COLE’S COLUMN
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Rocks AVA — including explicit statements about the high-scoring, non-Pinot wines from that region, as well as the cross-border labeling issues that The Rocks AVA creates.

Oregon ignores Walla Walla Valley? Hardly. Maybe the shoe is on the other foot.

Andy Perdue at Great Northwest-Wines.com reports that Baron won’t be using The Rocks AVA on his wines from there. He wants to stay stolidly Washington, it seems. The Oregon wine presentations I delivered were scheduled to be given in Washington but had to be canceled for lack of interest; folks in the state apparently didn’t much care about Oregon — even if it was the home of their high repute “Washington” wines.

Whatever. Winegrapes know no borders, only people do. Winegrapes pay attention only to climate and soil, not Oregon and Washington — they grow best where the conditions are best for them to grow. If those conditions happen to be on the Oregon side of the Walla Walla Valley AVA, then why wouldn’t Oregon be proud to claim these wines as its own, even if they aren’t Pinot Noir? It just bolsters our claim to vinous greatness.

After all, an AVA by any other name would still taste as sweet.

BOB SCHERB
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resources we have. People who make, sell and enjoy wine must take a close look at the choices we make. If we grow too large too quickly, many decisions will be made that will be detrimental to the wine industry as a whole — and to where we live. I firmly believe we need to think carefully before we allow our industry to be monopolized by people who want to put quantity before quality. That is especially true for the very largest retailers, who will purchase any kind of wine as long as they can control price, productivity and access. That kind of thinking invites poor land management, over production and the use of pesticides that no one needs.