

Joe Dobbles, founder and winemaker, Wine by Joe, Dundee, Oregon



My staff and I spend many dozens of hours per year discussing high-level winemaking theory, shop, methodologies, logistics, etc. I love this aspect of the business; a number of experienced heads around the table sharing ideas and varied experiences from around the globe and challenging each other. This is powerful and provides a great opportunity for all to learn, give value to the company, stretch the envelope and become better winemakers and business people. I look forward to reading *Wine Business Monthly* for the same reasons: tapping into the experiences of my peers for my own continual education and the broadening of horizons as a winemaker and businessman. My staff will vouch that I quite often hand out copies of articles from *WBM* which I find particularly valuable on winemaking, marketing, sales and direct-to-consumer efforts.

I recently enjoyed the article on concrete tanks. It looks like old technology is new and in vogue again. I have not yet tasted trials of concrete versus stainless ferments yet, but look forward to the opportunity with an open mind, but admittedly a little skepticism.

NAME AND TITLE: Joe Dobbles, president, founder and winemaker

WINERY NAME AND LOCATION: Dobbles Family Estate, Wine by Joe and Jovino; located in Dundee, Oregon, the heart of Oregon Pinot Noir country.

ANNUAL PRODUCTION: 2014 anticipated company branded bottlings: 57,000 cases; 2014 custom, bulk and proprietary volume: an additional 120,000 cases equivalent.

PLANTED ACRES: 179 acres of Pinot Noir, Pinot Blanc and Pinot Gris located in the Van Duzer Corridor west of Salem, Oregon within the Willamette Valley.

CAREER BACKGROUND: After graduating from Southern Oregon University with a B.S. degree in biology, I apprenticed in Germany at Weingut Erbhof Tesch for the 1985 harvest. I returned to Oregon in 1986 working two years for Elk Cove Vineyards in Gaston, Oregon as their assistant winemaker and general vineyard guy; planting, spraying and some sales work as well. In 1988-1989, I jumped at the opportunity to work for Domaine G. Roumier and Domaine des Comtes Lafon in Chambolle Musigny and Mersault Burgundy, France.

I then returned to Oregon for my first head winemaking position for Eola Hills Wine Cellars in Rickreal, Oregon. From 1990 to 1995 I was

winemaker and quasi general manager for Hinman Vineyards/Silvan Ridge Winery in Eugene, Oregon. My last W-4 position was as winemaker for Willamette Valley Vineyards in Turner, Oregon from 1996 to 2001. In 2002 I started my present company.

BIGGEST PROFESSIONAL CHALLENGE: My biggest professional challenge in the earlier years as a hired gun winemaker was the transition from “doer” to manager. In order for me to sleep (better) I was quickly forced to become a good manager, instructor and leader. The biggest professional challenge as an owner/winemaker has been much different. Up until two years ago, establishing an effective national sales team and force has been by far the most daunting and frustrating challenge coinciding with the overall management of precipitous growth and raising the bar of professionalism and discipline in all aspects of the company. Surrounding myself with highly motivated, long-term and empowered employees and procurement of additional financing has been the key to turning the corner.

VARIETALS WINERY IS KNOWN FOR: Pinot Noir, of course! We produce about eight different Dobbles Family Pinots per year from \$28 to \$100 per bottle. We also produce Oregon’s only Grenache Blanc which has garnered a lot of attention as it is “new” and exciting, rich, fruity and well-balanced with acidity.