

**Date:** 9 dec 2017

**Winery:** Vidon Vineyards | Chehalem - Willamette Valley

**Owner/Winemaker:** Don Hagge

**Contact(s):** Carl Giavanti

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1. You've been described as a physicist, farmer, winemaker and innovator. What aspect(s) of your role as physicist helped prepare for your current role as farmer/winemaker? What motivates to take the road less travelled as an innovator?

*Since I grew up on a farm, the vineyard side is pretty much hard wired. The scientific approach and methodology, ingrained as an experimental physicist, is helpful in the winemaking process.*

2. You arrived to winemaking at an age most people are 'retiring.' In your physics career, Ernest Lawrence figures prominently as a mentor, both academically and professionally. Any such 'mentor'-type figures in winemaking that have helped/inspired you?

*Laurent Montalieu of Northwest Wines is the first winemaker I worked with but many winemakers in the local community have been inspirational.*

3. Talk about the innovations you've made as an artisan winemaker, such as implementing your own glass stopper bottling machine - anything else you've 'tinkered with' to improve production? Do your colleagues ever come to you for help with their stuff? Do you foresee ever going above your current ~2000 case yearly production?

*My approach to winemaking is to constantly search for ways to improve efficiency in the making the best possible wine from available grapes. Argon only is used for oxygen management; superior to Nitrogen. Occasionally I get questions from winemaker friends about how and why I do certain things. Since I make only Estate wines, production is limited to between 2000 and 2500 cases from my 12.5 acre vineyard.*

4. You purchased the land for what is now Vidon Vineyards in 1999, and built your home there in 2003 (hence the bee label.) In 2014, Vidon Vineyard became 100% estate-grown fruit. You've invested not just toil, but time and treasure ensuring LIVE and Salmon-Safe certification. Talk about what sustained you during this painstaking route towards sustainability and self-sufficiency? It's quite a commitment.

*The goal was always to make great wine from this land I purchased. This required continuous learning and improvement in both the viticulture and winemaking aspects. Although I now get a lot of satisfaction from sipping my wines, I know they could be better.*

5. Your vineyard boasts three soil types (Jory, Nekia and Willakenzie), southern exposures, and elevations ~400-500 ft. You've planted your 12.5 acres accordingly, with seven different varietals, including not just Chardonnay, Pinot Blanc, Pinot Gris, and Pinot Noir (Pommard, 115, & 777), but also Syrah, Tempranillo, and Viognier.

How do you approach blending and bottling to yield the flavor profiles you seek in the finished wine, with so many flavor profiles at play?

*Since all my Pinot Noir blocks are on Jory soil, the differences for each vintage is only because of the clones. My 3-Clones is a blend of 1/3 each of the single clones +/- 5% with 11 months in French oak. My Single Clones are not blended and are aged 18 months in oak. I don't blend the other varieties except for co-fermenting 3-5% Viognier with Syrah.*

As a farmer/physicist, what about each of these varietals alternately excites/frustrates you?

*Pinot noir is a finicky grape and it's difficult to keep the alcohol below 14% without watering – which I don't do.*

6. You enjoy the good fortune of enlisting Adelsheim's Chad Vargas to handle the vineyard labor and spraying, while you ride tractor for mowing and tilling. Can you tell readers a bit about that dynamic - with more and more influx of new vineyards into the valley, it seems this 'neighborly' approach to farming may be disappearing?

*Oregon will always have many small vineyards and wineries which is what makes it neighborly. We need and depend on each other in several ways. We work together to create great Oregon wines that are competitive in the larger market..*

7. What's next on your agenda for Vidon Vineyard? Do you ever foresee increasing your current ~2000 case yearly production levels?

*Not above what the vineyard will produce which is between 2000 and 2500 cases. Estate planning at my age is next!*

8. Anything else you'd care to share with readers about Vidon Vineyards?

*It has been a great journey! We started with a piece of land covered with stumps, rocks, scrub trees, poison oak and blackberries and turned it into a Boutique Winery on a Petite Vineyard that produces great wines.*

9. Finally, if your experience as a vineyard owner and winemaker has taught you anything, it's taught you...?

*Care for the land and it'll yield good fruit from which great wine can be made!*

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Thank you.