
RDV EPISODE 9 RUTGER de VINK

SPEAKERS

Fred Reno, Rutger, Josh Grainer

- F** Fred Reno 00:50
So good morning, Rutger. Josh, welcome. Thank you for having us.
- R** Rutger 00:55
Thank you Fred for coming up an visiting us.
- F** Fred Reno 00:57
Quick question. It's pretty simple. How does a former Marine pursue wine growing? I mean, what drove this? What was the vision behind us that drove you to this ultimate spot you're at?
- R** Rutger 01:10
It was kind of a, I get this question a lot. How did you end up becoming involved in the wine world, and I think it's kind of hard to do to say there's a direct correlation from the Marine Corps to viticulture to winemaking. But I think the thing that got me the most is in the Marine Corps was a way of life and it wasn't so much a job. But when I got out of the Marine Corps, I ended up going to I got my MBA went to the business world. And I quickly realized what a job is, you know, it was a way of life in the Marine Corps. And what I mean by a job as you were like nine to five, you're looking forward to the weekend, you're always

talking about your vacations. And in 2000, I said I needed a change, I need to work with my hands and get back to something passionate about. So I grew up in Europe, and I've always had wine on the table. Though I wanted something agricultural, and wine seemed appropriate. I actually got an opportunity to apprentice at Jim Law where Josh also worked. And okay, within the first week, I was like, I knew I found my calling working in the vineyard. And I think he hazed us a little bit by giving us the worst job ever. But I still loved it. And to me, the wine world is like the Marine Corps, it has become a passion. And it's more than just a job. It's not like, oh, I have work from nine to five, for sure. There are aspects I don't care as much for but overall, to me, it's something that I love doing every day.

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Fred Reno 02:40

I understand doing looking into this a little bit historically, when you started thinking about planting a vineyard, you were looking at California at that time, as well as I'm correct.

R

Rutger 02:48

Yeah, I wanted to be in a place where good wine was being made. But we could take it to the next level, California. And there we looked, Sonoma coast area. And there was how close so it was still consider periphery. Yeah, how close we are get to the ocean. The other place was Santa Barbara. I looked at the Santa Rita a AVA before it was established. Yeah. But there was something about Virginia like that. That captured me. And the two mentors I have is Luca at Barboursville and Jim Law at Linden.

F

Fred Reno 03:17

wow well, those are great mentors no question

R

Rutger 03:21

They really led the foundation we were talking about earlier, like do they set the foundation to me of what the potential could be a Virginia so they started in the 80s. And I felt like hey, with all the knowledge they have accumulated, we could help take Virginia to the next level.

F

Fred Reno 03:36

So now you're looking for appropriate land to develop a vineyard. I want to step back a

second. I'm curious, why did Bordeaux become your model as opposed to Burgundy or Spain or anything like that? I mean, it was Bordeaux. Why? Bordeaux as the model what drove that?

R

Rutger 03:54

That's a good question so, I'm a risk taker to a certain degree, you know, trying to do something exciting and kind of an unproven region at the time. And I still like I can't really say too loud, but I really like Cote Rotie and Hermitage the Syrah based wines are kind of probably, if people said what's the one I want you to take on the island, I probably would choose that wine in the sense that I think that captures the austerity or the structure of a Bordeaux but also the elegance and finesse of the Pinot Noir Burgundy so it's the best of both worlds. But what so nice and why I focused on Bordeaux is that there are four varieties and those varieties ripen and kind of their key milestones in the vineyard, important things are spread out. So you know, this is sometimes challenging weather that if you had all your eggs in one basket and said it has to ripen exactly this time with a single variety, you run the risk of if a big storm comes and I think with the Bordeaux varieties, it allows a little bit more moderating the risk. I think the other one too Fred is I think they adopt the Bordeaux varieties and adapt very well to different places. You know, we're not trying to make a Bordeaux wine. We're not trying to make it Napa Valley style why we're trying to make our own interpretation of what Cabernet does here. What Merlot does here, Cabernet Franc and Petit Verdot.

F

Fred Reno 05:18

This site here, originally planted to 16 acres Is that still the producing acreage?

R

Rutger 05:24

It still is. Josh is trying to convince me to do a white wine

J

Josh Grainer 05:28

Yeah, we're subtly starting to poke in there. We're carving out little niches here and there. For the large part, it's still under 16,16 and a half acres now. And then we'll see it's, we're living in the world of minutiae. On this hill,

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Fred Reno 05:45

how did you find this site? who led you here? I mean, this is not like this is just off the off

ramp here and the highway or anything?

R

Rutger 05:54

it was, actually fortuitous in 2002. I, Jim Law invited me on a trip to go to Bordeaux, with a bunch of winemakers. And the first stop was at Cheval Blanc, and Cheval Blanc is one of the iconic wineries in Bordeaux, and the person who greets us is Kees van Leeuwen and Kees is a fellow Dutchman I started talking Dutch with him. And he is the was the vineyard consultant. But he also is really what you say an expert in terroir. And he studied you know, what makes a great vineyard? Why is Cheval Blanc so special? And I said, Hey, I was looking for vineyard trying to establish and he really helped me understand. It's not recipe, per se. But what makes a great vineyard site and kind of it had to do the key Crux for him was water holding capacity of soils. So I came back to Virginia started looking at saying hey, let's try and find a site that has low water holding capacity. So that would be a hillside that would be High Rock content, gravelly type of place, and what's great about the state of Virginia in every county you have the soil maps, they they outline. So this here is mostly on chestnut, and Tankerville, and it says not suitable for agriculture. That was a light bulb going off. And so yeah, that's how we kind of mapped up I knew I didn't want it to be between Charlottesville, you know, Northern Virginia route seven, kind of in that area in the foothills of the Blue Ridge Mountains. I thought that would be an ideal place. This farm wasn't for sale. But this was kind of an area that I passed from Middleburg where I was living to Linden, where it was a apprenticing And there was something small about this hillside that caught my eye. And

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Fred Reno 07:32

I mean, it's gorgeous. And it's really special spot, obviously, you know, clearly. So Josh, when did you enter the scene?

J

Josh Grainer 07:39

So I entered the scene in Virginia in 2005, 2006. So Rutger had already departed from Linden as an apprentice there. And I hounded Jim to kind of take his position. I was out living out west still working in the restaurant industry at the time but knew that wine was a my eventual goal. So I'm a Virginia native, as you had mentioned, I was very much aware of what was going on in the scene here, in terms of its up and coming status, and also looking at more of the periphery regions in the west from a different reason from Rutger in the sense that I didn't have a formal education in winemaking, so I couldn't just drop down in Napa Valley and find a job. So fortunately, winemaking is one of those crafts that still value the apprenticeship. Luca probably doesn't remember it. But I reached out to him.

And I reached out to Linden because I knew those guys were the quality guys in the region. Lo and behold, after hounding Jim for, I don't know, six or seven months, he has kind of this Eastern philosophy of sit on the porch until I invite you in, mentality he invited me in and so I joined on with him. And it was with the understanding that we would have a two to three year apprenticeship and then I would go on to contribute to the Virginia industry in another way. And at the end of the apprenticeship Rutger and I had fortunately gotten to meet because Jim did a wine dinner every week. These guys all got together and tasted the fine wines of the world. And I would finagle my way into those and get educated on what great wine was, and so we got to form a friendship. And then Jim encouraged me to, to look at RDV as it was opening in 2008,

- F** Fred Reno 09:21
you said something that I'm always surprised that people don't understand how it's important to taste really good wine. Oh, yeah. To really understand what the great Wines of the World is. You have to drink them.
- J** Josh Grainer 09:34
Yeah, absolutely.
- F** Fred Reno 09:35
It's not something just comes to you magically, you know
- J** Josh Grainer 09:38
I mean, it was a shock. I think I entered Linden talking about New Zealand Sauvignon Blancs and there's nothing against any of this and these really fruit driven Spanish Tempranillos and they started opening these magical wines of such high caliber. And I remember thinking there's something here, I don't like them right now. There's something here I need to learn. I didn't understand the earthy savory tones behind them. You're absolutely right to understand the structures and the profiles of those wines is such an important part.
- F** Fred Reno 10:07
Rutger one of the things that caught my attention when I came here a year ago and met you and saw this place, I think I said it to you in our little follow up note, I sent you, I get it. This is about being Grand Cru, that's my term for it and everything about it. And what I've

been impressed with is your attention to detail. Was that instilled into you as a kid as as something the Marines gave him a lot of people don't have attention to detail, okay? They just don't in especially in the world of business. And you it's so special when you see it, and I see it here. What drives that attention to detail?

R

Rutger 10:44

Probably a combination of upbringing. And also the Marine Corps definitely, really added to it too. But to me, I think that's the key of fine wine is like people ask like, what what is it that makes RDV so special for sure this site, but it you know, the site you start with, and then it's our job as Josh and I working here is to maximize the site's potential. And it's not one thing you do, Fred, it's not like, okay, we just got now an optical sorter, is that going to make the difference? No, but it will add to it, the leaf pulling, we've kind of now just removed the laterals, and still really focus on leaving a leaf above the cluster so that it has kind of like a protective hat. And it's all these little details that we do that add to the maximizing the potential of the land. It's not just one thing. And I think that to me, is I tried to instill in our kids it's it's hard work. But to focus on the details is really important.

J

Josh Grainer 11:38

And to give Rutger credit. It's also the the team he's put together here. And there's a anywhere from our general vineyard crew who's been here for 15 years now each one of them and they can come to me and say, Hey, you need to go look at the fifth panel on the 11th row of Cabernet Franc in the XYZ block. There's something in that vine that needs attention, which is phenomenal, all the way up to everyone here on the hospitality team. We've all got this kind of culture of analist if you will, in terms of

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Fred Reno 12:09

well, you have to obviously you have a very impressive roster of consultants. How did this all develop. Eric Boissenot, is that correct?

R

Rutger 12:21

Eric Boissenot. So, but I'll take a step back. We started with a an American team from Napa, Daniel Roberts. I don't know if you know, but they call him Dr. Dirt Oh, yeah. So Daniel I so when I was looking in the Santa Barbara area, Jeff Newton, who manages over 1000 acres, and I think that's close to 3000 acres he manages and I said, Hey, we finally found the site. We settled on this one, to help develop it and kind of look into the potential who would you How would you or what are your next steps and he said, Oh, for surely go

with Daniel Roberts. And so Daniel Roberts, he had another person Alfred Cass, who was a soil scientist from South Africa. So they came out here and we dug 100 pits. That's how it started. And they put me in touch with then David Ramey who works with them. And Charles Thomas. He was the winemaker at Rudd

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Fred Reno 13:11

I know Charles Thomas and I do know David Ramey quite well.

R

Rutger 13:14

So they both open up doors there. But Virginia has rain during the growing season. To me that really kind of is a different mentality than that of Napa. It's just different. It's not one's better than the other but, when you talk to Napa, you really talk about water deficit, irrigation management, that kind of stuff while in Bordeaux is you know, with the rainfall, it's something like, how do you deal with that, and I think that we're more in line to that having rain during our growing season. We got very lucky and we opened the Kees van Leeuwen was a show blog opened up a huge amount of doors and in our first vintage was 2008 is actually interesting how we got Eric so 2008 Kees had helped me and other person, Jean-Phillippe Roty helped me and then we had a winemaker here who came for two years. She was a winemaker at Le Bon Pasteur and she helped us but none of them really took a paycheck, Fred, so I was like, how can we repay them? And they were all big runners and like, we want to run the New York Marathon. Well, we'll organize that. So we know I gave money to a charity so I could get all there were five of us who ran the race. It's run at the beginning of November every year and they said instead of flying direct to New York. We fly. This is our first vintage 2008 we fly through Virginia. We taste the wines. Your first vintage. So they came and we tasted the wines and the Jean-Phillippe said wow, this is something very special. I didn't realize the potential is all new. Let me send this to a friend of mine. Yeah, sure. And the friend was Eric Boissenot

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Fred Reno 14:47

Oh my gosh

R

Rutger 14:48

I got an email Two weeks later said Okay, do your blend for you. You have a wine of they call it a cru a growth you know, so very high and they couldn't believe that this was coming from the sample we sent from a three year old plant. He did the blend that year,



Josh Grainer 15:05

Eric flies so far under the radar, especially back then that I remember having to Google just exactly who he was



Rutger 15:13

no, his father was the one who was famous kind of, you know, Messer Boissenot was very it's not a very recognized name, it wasn't like Michele Roland or someone like that. And then in 2009 Josh, we did the harvest here at 2008 we did over at Linden. 2009 We did here and then on au Premier which is then that spring, April of 2010. We went with our samples of our 2009 vintage approach Eric at a lunch and you were there. When we showed our samples and said, this is our second vintage will you become our full time enologist He tasted and said, Yeah, you have something unique, that I want to be part of, and he's become part of our team.



Fred Reno 15:54

well man that's just awesome. That's absolutely fantastic. The wines themselves. Okay, Lost Mountain is your ultimate expression of the estate Rendezvous is, I guess the Right Bank blend, if you will. Are there are other wines that you produce here from the estate?



Rutger 16:14

Well, I'll go first and then Josh will add to it because this is something you know, we're really small, like, you know, 16 acres, you're like, oh, wow, that have all these different labels, we kind of have what I call two blended wines. Lost Mountain yes is our flagship wine. The base is typically Cabernet Sauvignon, it definitely is a wine with the intention of aging, it has a certain austerity and linearity that we're looking for when we do the blend. And then Rendezvous is also a blended wine with intention to be made. But it's a little bit more you can say Right Bank or you can say like a little bit more new world in the sense of approachable, fun, round hedonistic, the goal of that wine is to open it up at a little bit of early age and really enjoy it. So typically, uh, you know, especially in the latter years, it gets a third, a third, a third. So the third Cabernet Sauvignon, third Cabernet Franc and a third are Merlot. So it's not quite, you know,



Josh Grainer 17:06

Lost Mountain typically tends to be a very selected parcels from, quite frankly, usually the southern Southwestern slopes of the site. Whereas Rendezvous is more generally a whole

expression of the hillside. So our vineyards run from east to just to the southwest. And so we've got a lot more Merlot on the eastern slopes and that sort of stuff. So it's a little more whole picture of the hillside.

F

Fred Reno 17:31

You may or may not remember this when I was here in August of last year, I was fortunate enough, you invited me to the blind tasting you and your staff were doing that day. And I knew that your wine obviously had to be in there. And we knew there were Classified growth, Bordeaux mostly Right Bank if I recall, and you may or may or may not remember, I rated your wine Number one, and I had no idea what was in that tasting but really I had no idea, but it was to me that was the wine that had the best pedigree is really how I came away because tasting blind and the brown bag never lies. Okay, I learned that a long time ago. It just doesn't lie. But I'm always looking for what's the best pedigree? What is the best highest quality in this flight? You know? And then I pegged that. So I'm curious about the branding piece of this. How did you develop? And where did you come up with the names Lost Mountain and Rendezvous? I mean, what's the story behind that?

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Rutger 18:33

But just to finish the question that we have a third wine, and this is really what I would call like, typically, it's our second wine, okay. It's called a Friends and Family. And that kind of gets like when you cook, you have use half an onion for your dish, and then you have your leftover parts. That's what gets incorporated into Friends and Family. And that's kind of what I would say is truly a second wine what we have

F

Fred Reno 18:57

Well, I wouldn't downplay that wine, because I did have a bottle that it's about a month ago. And it was terrific. It's it may be your second wine, but it's a lot better than most people's first wine. Let's say that. The branding the naming of the particular wines

R

Rutger 19:17

when we first started, Is it funny that because we did we did we're celebrating our 10 year anniversary and we start retrospective. And you know, with Corona today we were doing it over Zoom. But we opened the 2008 and 2008 doesn't have Lost Mountain on the flagship wine. It was just the RDV and it's hard to think you know, we kind of used Bordeaux then as our model the like, Cheval Blanc it's just the Cheval Blanc the Gran Cru domain. And I don't know, one of my friends who was an advertisement agency in New

York said no you if you if you have these two wines, you really need to name your first wine you need to have two names. So Rendezvous. that's what RDV stands. For in French, so that was easy naming that wine. And that was already named the very beginning so then the flagship line, we decided Lost Mountain, because when you look on the geological map of this area, we are on these little Knolls of the foothills of the Blue Ridge Mountains. And it says Lost Mountain on them. But Joshua, tell a story about that. But to me, so I named them right. So we named in 2009. And we, one of the first critics who taste our wines was Jancis Robinson. And I sent her the 2009 vintage and it had the Lost Mountain on there. And she was good at saying, What's this? Now you're naming your flagship wine to Lost Mountain? And I explained yeah, you know, the reason behind it? And she said, Well, that's very marketing of you. And also, it's not quite, it's not that much of a mountain now would you say? It is a 200 gain foot in elevation. So I have to agree with her. Cuz it's funny, like, Josh did a little history on how this area did get the name Lost Mountain.

J Josh Grainer 21:04

Sure, And there's a couple other tales. And so I'm not quite sure which one is true, but I'm gonna tell you my favorite. So, Lost Mountain came to be known, theoretically, by George Washington. And what had happened was, when George Washington was surveying, he was still at his property in Mount Vernon, and he would travel back and forth through this exact region. At the time, it was owned by Lord Fairfax, which the vast majority of Virginia was; not that unique. But he fell in love with this particular region and offered to buy it from from him, including sky meadows, the surrounding areas, that sort of thing. He's known for being a meticulous note taker and, and having great records, especially with his cartography, and his surveying. And some some local guys have drawn maps of the region, and neglected to put these hills on that map. So the story goes, George Washington looked at it and goes, how did you lose a mountain? That's great Great. We're gonna go with that one.

F Fred Reno 22:03

No, I think I think that's absolutely great. topic of the day, of course, you've been here 10,15 years in Virginia, little longer Climate Change. Have you seen differences in budbreak? harvest? I mean, have you seen any change? I mean, it's been something that's subtle, or really hasn't been that significant.

R Rutger 22:28

So to me, they're getting a sense of 10 years in or you know, 15 years now, in the span of

agriculture is kind of, it's super short, right? So it'd be hard. It'd be unfair for me to say, and it's not true. They just say, Oh, I notice a warming trend that I haven't noticed. What I have noticed, though, is more extremes of events. For example, like this morning, we walk out and you couldn't really see the sun, you're like, well, what's going on? It's caused by fires on the west coast. That's pretty extreme, and that you wouldn't even think that that would have happened, you know, and then you look out on the we look at the radar, the weather. I mean, I think they're now like five tropical storms brewing in the Atlantic. And I think we're getting record amount of hurricanes this season. So you kind of are like, wow, these extreme kind of events. Mother's Day, this year, we had a frost event where we were fortunate being on a hill, but we just by half a degree, made it through unscathed, but it was so late to experience a frost. So to answer your question as far as for me it's not so much warming, per se, but just much more events, or extreme events when it rains that we can have a crazy storm that I didn't see when I started.

J

Josh Grainer 23:47

Yeah, I would. I would second that means scientifically, I'm looking at our data from and comparing it to 30 year averages and that sort of stuff for climate. And we are tracking slightly warmer most seasons now in the in the last 10 years than we have been in the 30 year averages. I fully agree with Rutger in certain sense of the unpredictability of weather patterns lately,

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Rutger 24:09

like this year in 2020, our growing season we did one of the two most driest seasons on record both months, June and July, and then followed by an August which was on probably the wettest on record, actually the amount of days. The days for surely were more rain days in the month.

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Fred Reno 24:27

Well I mean, I'm with you. Climate change is to me the extremes that we're seeing extremes a farmer has to contend with. Boy that's, that keeps you up at night. Yeah,

J

Josh Grainer 24:40

It does I mean, we ended up we both landed in Virginia for a certain reason to is that we liked the unpredictability or the challenge of our vintage variation. It's something we celebrate. That being said, a little bit of predictability in the farming atmosphere is always a good thing.

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Fred Reno 24:56

I asked Chris Hill, this question well over a year and a half ago and he gave me an interesting answer, but I'd love to get your take on it. So what is terroir in Virginia? mean to you? What do you think terroir is in Virginia's is there a terroir?

R

Rutger 25:14

It's a it's a, it's a great. you'd mentioned in the introduction that we're in the Middleburgh, AVA, typically, terroirs were trying to create something uniform around a place. And that's what the AVA is, you know. So, St. Emilion. And they tried to do the plateau with limestone, kind of a commonality. I think, you know, to just show the whole thing in all Virginia, it's too vast. There's too much variety overall.

F

Fred Reno 25:41

And what about the terroir here? Or what is determined or has been called the Middleburg AVA

R

Rutger 25:46

even that it's to its too of a broad thing? I think, though, what I think is an interesting question to think about is to me Virginia as a whole, though, I think produces wines that I would say are and I think this has something to do with terroir is somewhere between New World let's say California, let's use an old world let's say Bordeaux and with the Cabernet wines. So I mean by that is that we have the ripeness of California sometimes we have that fruit forwardness, that lushness. But at the same time, we have a minerality attention of freshness of the Old World. So we kind of are not only geographically between Napa and Bordeaux, but I think our wines stylistically also fall in between that and I think globally in Virginia like when I taste, Jim Laws Chardonnay, I think it falls also, you know, it's got kind of the freshness of Burgundy, but also a little at the same time a little bit ripeness of the Sonoma coast wines. So that to me is if you said Hey, tell me about terroir in Virginia, I would say that we fall in between those two, I don't know what your experience tasting wines Fred but it's it's not New World, you know, per se, but it's not the Old World either.

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Fred Reno 27:00

Two things we drink at home every day. It's either Virginia wine or cru Beaujolais. Those are basic go too's on a daily basis. I mean, Virginia wine has captured my palate, I can't

tell you the last time I had a bottle of California Wine, you know, the alcohol levels are so significant now that they detract for me. And that's what the beauty of Virginia for the most part to me is the level and the balance of the wine. as it relates to alcohol, and, and the fruit.

J Josh Grainer 27:30

I think it's also important to include the factor of humidity within our climate too. And for me that that's an attribute not like unlike Bordeaux or Loire, Burgundy that you would you would find in the sense that it equates to something else in the wine, California for its beautiful climate has this expression of fruit, fruit in fruit wrapped structure is what I expect from that terroir, when you start to factor in humidity, you start to factor in other and we call that minerality. We call that savoriness. We call that other characters than what we're talking about with just a jamyness. And I think that's an important factor in to Rutgers point we're a little bit warmer than those those climates I mentioned in France. So we do have that generosity behind the wine, but with the other character. And then when we start to talk about kind of the two separations between the state, I look at Charlottesville region, and it's got for some reason, when I talk about with red wines, they seem to ripen Merlot with much greater quality than we seem to ripen it up north. It doesn't make any sense, unless you start to look at the soils but up north, Cabernet is king for us. And I know that that factor is true at Linden vineyards as well. And so I think has to do with the water holding capacities and the profiles of the soil. So those are the two differences in the regions, I would say the two main growing regions of Virginia,

F Fred Reno 28:55

as a bit of a broader question that I've been thinking about since I've been here in Virginia. from your experience, why has Virginia not broken out on a national basis and even on a International basis, there's a recognition that something really special is happening, that there's a high level quality being produced, and that the trade and ultimately the consumer should be paying attention. And I continue to be astounded how this hasn't happened yet. What is held back in your opinion you Virginia from that next step?

R Rutger 29:33

It's a loaded question Fred I will so the my main thing is a good friend of mine, Mark Chien, who grew grapes in Oregon said that Virginia reminded him a lot about Oregon.

F Fred Reno 29:51

That's exactly what I've been saying. This reminds me where Oregon was 25 years ago.

R

Rutger 29:56

So what are the challenges are one of the challenges that Oregon had that we don't have? Oregon didn't have a marketplace so that Willamette Valley didn't have any consumers. So Virginia has the Charlottesville area the university and you know, it's a booming area. And then we have, you know, Washington DC and it's a you know, so we have a public that want to come out on the weekends and enjoy wine when Oregon started and you are a winemaker there. All of a sudden, you were forced from the get go to export your wines or compete with Burgundy compete with the best of Napa Sonoma coast. We don't have that it's almost to a certain. That's why I said, it's almost too easy to sell the wine here in Virginia

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Fred Reno 30:41

that that is brilliant. That is the best explanation I have received from anybody in close to two years. And it makes no I'm serious. It makes all the sense in the world. Oregon was forced to go on the road. And I remember those early road trips when they were out there when I was still in retail wine in DC, and the 83 vintage and all these things from Oregon. Yeah, they were forced, and they went as a troupe. And I think that's why Oregon for a large extent dominated really a lot of spots in Pinot Noir on wine lists around the country. Sure, no, I never put in that perspective, that is great. Thank you for breaking the code.

R

Rutger 31:19

But the thing is that I think that I mean, that's why we're we're we want to continue, like I said, to building on what the pioneers here did in the state. And our goal now is to take, you know, to prove to the world that high quality wine can be made here in Virginia. So yeah, you know, we have a tasting room, but it's, you know, open only by appointment. And it's very intimate and focused focus. But our goal also is to really go to New York City and get in the best restaurants there, go down to Florida in the best restaurants there, to showcase to the world, hey, we can make great wines here in Virginia. And that's kind of reflective a little bit of our price point too. Because to me, I think if you get it at the very high end and compete in the top tier of the wine industry, you really create kind of a name for the state versus your 40/ \$30 level wine it's great to make those wines and its great. But it's not really making a statement. I think when you start playing the ultra premium world, you make a statement for the state.

F

Fred Reno 32:19

The other thing that attracted me here, and I get it, you think big. And that's been my sort of thought about what has been missing in Virginia as a wine industry. They're not thinking big enough, as far as I'm concerned collectively about what could happen on a National, International stage. I had some vintners say we know we don't make that much wine, and to what you said they sell it all right, I said, but some of the greatest wines in the world, they make 1000 cases, and everybody in the world is clamoring for them. The limited amount is not a negative. But a lot of people think it's a negative, as opposed to it could be a positive, you've turned that Apple upside down and said, Hold on here a second. So there's no question. You're thinking big?

R

Rutger 33:03

No its a lot easier. You know, we see here now with the COVID, to sell our wines right out our door, and we're super grateful. Don't get me wrong for our wine club. And for our customers coming, you know, who live within 100 mile radius. But we work very hard to get on the wine list at Gramercy Tavern, get on the wine list at Daniel. And that to me really makes a statement to say, hey, this, this wine belongs with the best of the world. And I think that's how Virginia as a whole will capture the world or the wine world's attention,

F

Fred Reno 33:33

my thought. And I suggested this well over a year ago, and I got kind of pushed back a little bit. I think Virginia needs to have a live legitimate barrel auction. And I have done a couple of myself from the ground floor up. And I understand what has to take place, and the proximity to Chicago and New York and DC and Atlanta and everything. barrels don't have to be 20 cases, they can be five cases and most of these barrel auctions, they start as five cases. Okay. But I think something like that, which would bring national attention. You know, obviously in COVID, that isn't going to happen now anytime soon, but something of that magnitude would really, oh, let's pay attention here. The trade will come because it's unique, it's different. And then the press will come. That's how it starts. And I think an event of that magnitude well selected to represent Virginia would be something could really break through.

J

Josh Grainer 34:35

It's an interesting, I've never really thought about it.



Fred Reno 34:38

I mean you think about Oregon, when they started finally doing their Barrel Auction, that thing has taken off beyond anybody's wildest imagination. I mean, without Robert Mondavi and the Napa Valley Wine Auction, who knows what Napa would have looked like today? Right. And that was just 1981



Rutger 34:54

I think we're on a cusp, I think, Virginia, you know, with you, with you coming out of here and I'm getting your interest in there, I think that there's changing that we're definitely on the verge of something happening. There's new interest in it. There's, there's I know. It's an exciting time for Virginia.



Fred Reno 35:09

Well, Rutger I know your time is short. So you're gonna have to go and listen, this has been terrific. Josh.



Josh Grainer 35:17

Yeah, I've enjoyed it greatly.



Fred Reno 35:18

Thank you. I know the audience that I want to cultivate is really going to enjoy this and learn a lot. I certainly am just sitting here in the last half hour learn more than I knew before. So I'm really grateful for it. I'm learning every day here. So thank you.



Rutger 35:32

Thank you so much, Fred.