
EPISODE 8 SHEP ROUSE/ROCKBRIDGE WINERY



SPEAKERS

Fred Reno, Shep Rouse



Fred Reno 00:07

Shep it is a Pleasure to meet you, and I want to thank you in advance for taking the time to do this interview.



Shep 00:13

Fred I appreciate your, your patronage. It's great to have somebody come and help help you promote your one on one promote one's business. Indeed, he's correct. I'm probably the third longest tenured Virginia winemaker following Gabriele Rausse. A, who started in 76 with with the inception of Barboursville and then Jim Law, who started in 81. I didn't get here and start making wine until 86.



Fred Reno 00:43


But your your love for wine and and how you got into this business and really predates all that. So take me through the evolution of how you got excited about wine. How you ended up here in Virginia.




Shep 00:55


Yeah, that's it's an interesting story. Ostensibly, I got into it as a college student, you know, drinking alcohol was fun, legal. Well, maybe at some point, not legal, but we won't talk

about that. I went to Germany in the spring of 1974, with a German language class from Washington and Lee, where I attended college and was exposed to the great connection between culture and wine, doing a wine tasting in a beautiful historic cellar beneath the city of Wurzburg, Germany. lucky to have tasted the 1971 vintage which was one of the greatest of the 20th century in Germany. Then I went back to Germany in 76. After graduating from Washington, and Lee with a Fulbright scholarship, studying environmental science. Well, I quickly switch that over to studying wine, became a wine connoisseur traveled to different wine regions of Germany, learn a lot about wine. Interestingly, when I came back to the US after that, everything I knew about wine was in German.

 Fred Reno 02:07
Oh, wow.

 Shep 02:08
I had to relearn it in English. the crazy part is when I was nine, growing up in Williamsburg, I was looking for artifacts of the colonial times in a plowed cotton field, on Colonial Williamsburg property and found a wine bottle sealed dated 1718 which was the second oldest one that has been unearthed to date it was probably a Madeira a fortified wine of some some sort, because back then, yeah, they didn't have refrigerated shipping containers.

 Fred Reno 02:45
What happened to that bottle? Where is that bottle?

 02:47
Well, when Colonial William burg Auburn kume, their chief chief archaeologist found out that I had it. They were like, well, we're glad you found it. But we it really belongs to us. They gave me a plaster cast, unfortunately, it is something that I have no longer any idea where I think that's the that's the little spark that sort of got the whole thing going. But I was interested in environmental science. And my career goal was to do something that's artistic related to the land, I had a strong chemistry background. I was pre med for a while a geology major and wine was the natural answer it also finding this property in Raphine Rockbridge County right off of I 81, I 64 gave me the opportunity to have a viable business, but not live in the city or Northern Virginia, which I looked at but decided I

couldn't live there.



Fred Reno 03:49

I want to back up to the early part of your career. But you just said something led me to a question I have. So did you have a consultant you worked with when you here? Or did you just find this property on your own?



04:01

I studied Michael climatology and vineyard site selection for 15 years before I bought this I had a very good understanding mainly from looking at the sites in Germany where the great wines grow, how exposure, slope, relation to the bottom of the drainage and frost all related to the viability of vineyards. I also looked at apple orchards and peach orchards in Virginia. And those people knew because they had many, many, many years of time to evaluate sites. What kind of sites were good and this property has a beautiful SE exposure. It's high elevation. At the time I bought it I had a little trepidation about 2000 feet because that was higher than most vineyards in Virginia and I lived in Charlottesville we'd come over here and it would be t shirt weather in Charlottesville. freeze your tail off here. But anyway, I learned that it was self taught.



Fred Reno 05:06

Okay. Well that's, that's great. So I saw where you got your degree eno logy at UC Davis. So how'd you end up? You went to California. Tell me about that time in your career.



Shep 05:16

Yeah, I came back from Germany in November of 77. worked through into the summer of 78. living at my parents house in Williamsburg made enough money to buy a car. Good friends of mine who owned the Trellis restaurant in Williamsburg, convinced me that I had to get a Davis degree in winemaking. So I moved to California, established state residency and then working at two harvests three harvests two harvest before I went to Davis, I worked at 78 harvest at a crazy winery called Veedercrest.



Fred Reno 05:53

Oh, Veedercrest



05:55

and Al Baxter had bought grapes from some of the grape growers, Brice Jones in Sonoma County, and he bought grapes from the guy that own Winery Lake vineyard before it was sold Rene Di Rossa yep, there were a couple others Napa Valley. Anyway, I made wine there for the crush of 78. Then I worked in Forestville for Mark West vineyards on time 79 crush, and that job was the first job I'd had in my life that I hated. And that, that sealed, you know, sealed the wax that I had to not try to work my way up to get to winemaking position, but that I had to go to Davis and get a degree. So I started in the fall of 80 at Davis, and then I got out of Davis and work is enologist for Francis Mahoney at Carneros Creek for two years. Then I left to work to crush it. Chateau St. Jean under Dick Arrowood and Don van Staaveren actually Dick was backing out because he was starting his own winery. And Don Van Staaveren who is a great guy to work for his wife. I think it's still the winemaker. Well he's got some other stuff and then I work then I work with 75 crush. Excuse me the 85 crush at Schramsberg again, one of the iconic California wineries and I learned a lot about a whole cluster pressing for not just making sparkling wine but also pressing grapes to extract as little tannin as possible and color as possible. Then I made the move. We moved back here in the summer, late spring of 86. I took the job as winemaker for Montdomaine cellars south of Charlottesville. The facility is still used by Michael Shaps for his production.



Fred Reno 07:52

Hey, can I stop you there? Because I'm curious because this is a history lesson for me as much as it is for my audience. So what was it like in the early days at Moundtomaine here in Virginia, what was that like going on what was the Virginia wine scene like?



08:05

It was a great opportunity because the guys that invested in Montdomaine, Michael Bowles actually started the company planted his original vineyard in 78, overlooking route 20, south of Carter's bridge just south of Carter's bridge, with Chardonnay and Merlot. And he then talked he was a Pan Am airline pilot. He talked some upper middle class friends of his to invest and have their own vineyards . At that time, there was a good tax break for people in that income bracket to have that agricultural write off, right? So they all invested and in 1984 Montdomaine went from Mike Bowles sole proprietorship business to a I can't remember if it was a C Corp or a S corp, but it was incorporated. They hired a winemaker they hired a general manager and they hired a vineyard manager. Needless to say, that's a lot of payrolls. Yeah. Yeah. And that didn't work. But they hired me as a second winemaker and I started there at the end of June of 86. Eventually, the bank

came, came knocking on the door. And Dennis Horton leased the facility in 92, excuse me, started in 91. Alan Kinney was his consultant. We made his 91 wines at Montdomaine and then he ramped it up in 92. And I actually Alan, I made the first Virginia Viognier, his 92 and he continued leasing it. I left in the summer of 93.

F Fred Reno 10:00
But you had founded this place by then.

S Shep 10:02
Yeah, I was. And that was one of the issues that he used to give me a hard time because he goes, Yeah, you're working here, but you're thinking about your own business. I'm like, I'm sorry. Dream police can't control me. Not Not my ideal employer. So anyway, I worked for Felicia Rogen for six years as her winemaking consultant. And she was a delight to work for she's she was gracious. She gave me a beautiful print from the seventh century England of a wine Crier or who knows? Oaken croft. Oakencroft on Barracks road.

F Fred Reno 10:47
Yeah, okay.

S Shep 10:48
But in 99, I just decided that this was a full time job. And at that point, we had lived hand to mouth long enough. My wife was a nurse that we could start paying ourselves to, for our from our own business.

F Fred Reno 11:05
So I stopped consulting and we both started. So I know he picked this site because of variety of reasons. But I'm curious about the difference in why you chose Shenandoah Valley AVA as opposed to some of the others that you would have been looking at I'm sure like Central, you know, what's called Monticello now or Middleburg or anything of that nature. And then what's different about Shenandoah Valley in this AVA compared to some of the others here in Virginia,

S Shep 11:34
there's a number of differences elevation is the principal and most significant one. The

lowest sites in the Shenandoah Valley are up near Winchester, and they're pretty low 900 feet, Charlottesville, Monticello, mostly in the 500 foot range, which tends to lead to milder winters. But some of the sites on that side of the Blue Ridge get cold air pooling that can make the temperatures colder than we even get here how to cite an example February 5, 6th 1996 Scottsville Virginia which is down near the James off route 20 south of Montdomaine, Michael Shaps and Rapidan vineyards, which was started in 78 by Dr. Gearheart Guth, who employed the Joachim Hollerith from Geisenheim. Both of those vineyard sites had 20 below zero, which killed the vines. Yeah, flat out killed them, Oakencroft in Charlottesville at 550, 17 below. We only got to 5 below that night Even though we're at 1950 feet because the cold air doesn't pool here. Anyway, getting back to that, but we can't grow Merlot here it's too cold. This past spring, we had everybody got zapped by a frost the likes of which nobody's ever seen. It wasn't an inversion frost where the cold air settles over the night, displacing the warm air from the low areas. And you can mix that warm air with a helicopter or wind machines to mitigate frost damage. With that event, everything was cold and it was probably the most single most devastating frost we've seen in Virginia. In the spring, I got frosted at the top of my vineyard which had never happened before. But we didn't lose much we lost our Chardonnay and we lost a little tiny bit of our Chambourcin but much much else did well. And anyway getting back to that elevation one, soils two we are this area was called the breadbasket of the Confederacy. And it's because the soil is derived from limestone and it's a much richer and deeper soil. And it's very productive as a matter of fact the productivity of it makes it difficult to grow grapes because weed growth is and Vine growth is very strong. We have to deal with management of vigor much more than many of the soils on the in the Monticello appellation much of that is derived from Catocin Greenstone which is a well I won't get into too much tech

F

Fred Reno 14:18

well that's, I'm glad you brought that up because I'm wondering what that rock is in my backyard and now you just told me but it is.

S

Shep 14:25

well there are two rock formations that soils are derived from over in Charlottesville the rocks in the ragged mountains are called Lynchburg formation This is a deep ocean sandstone deposit that is pretty hard. That's why the ragged mountains are there because it hadn't weathered away. And the green stone which you see going up Afton Mountain on 64 that's a ocean floor basalt stuck rock Okay, and it's it's rich but it both of those produce heavy clay soils and that's heavy clay is is a big part. The difference in the calcium and this soil which is limestone based, this was all a sedimentary basin. We're all a bit shallow.

So you had coral reefs, lots of limestone. So it made for much richer soil. The other like said elevation and soil.

F Fred Reno 15:18
Climate has a climatic

S Shep 15:20
breeze this site is actually the eastern side of my property was picked as the best site for a wind machine for electrical generation in the county. And we get lots of wind, which in the summer, when you're growing grapes is a wonderful thing, because we get rain, we get lots of rain we get dew. And the wind helps dry that stuff out. It also makes it you know, I had a guy playing music in late August, called me from Richmond. He said the heat index from Richmond today is going to be 105. Should I even come up there to play and I said, hey, it's gonna be much cooler. It was not 88 degrees with breeze here.

F Fred Reno 16:02
That's the mountains of Virginia. I'm fascinated by another thing here. You work with Vinifera, French American hybrid and native grape. So you got the salad bowl here, if you will, of grape varieties talk to me about the differences in what you like about certain aspects of those different grape varieties

S Shep 16:25
Right well Fred, First off, I don't grow any American grapes other than a few Concord related varieties that just happen to get mixed in with the initial Vidal planting.

F Fred Reno 16:37
I thought Norton was considered a native

S Shep 16:39
No, it is it is but I don't grow it. Oh, I sorry. I purchased the grapes, okay. And I consider Norton to be the kind of grape you really need to grow at lower and much hotter temperatures that we have great in Missouri. I mean, they made it famous, as well as the Monticello Wine company in Charlottesville in the 1880s and 90s. And Norton is a totally different from the hybrids, I'll give you a good reason. You grow a ton. You get a

ton of Norton grapes and you fermented on the skins and then you press it off, you get 140 gallons to the ton at best, generally 135 Chambourcin, a red hybrid, which I grow and I love, you get 180 gallons to a ton, so the economics are significantly different. Morton produces a very jammy and strong wine, which I and many Bordeaux probably initiated connoisseurs find a little too, just too intense, too strong. Two things mitigate that one age, a 10 year old Norton turns the corner starts tasting like a delightful old red Bordeaux (interesting) The other thing that I do is I consider Norton to be more like making Norton to be more like making fruit wine than making grape wine. So I add usually ameliorate with about 15% water, because it's so strong and the acid is so severe that the amelioration solves both problems. Of course, you still need the sugar to have the alcohol and of course, if you're adding a lot of water, you got to add more sugar. And of course, you can carry that to a point is consumer fraud. But you know, I think everything Cause you know, this is one of the great things about my Davis education. It taught me to think outside the box gave me the basic science to understand the process. And then you know, you you ad lib from there.



Fred Reno 18:58

Well the Chambourcin to me. If you can take that sort of heavier spicy edge off the back end. It could be like a really nice Cru Beaujolais



Shep 19:09

Exactly. It and like a true Beaujolais chambourcin has is a high acid variety. Early pick Pinot Noir but more Napa Napa I guess it's Napa Gamay or what is the grape in Beaujolais?



Fred Reno 19:24

It's Gamay.



Shep 19:25

Yeah, it's pretty, you know, if it's picked early, it's got a good bit of acid and that part of France is cool. And yeah, so that's part of the spiel. I mean, to me, structure and wine is created by a combination of alcohol, acid and the tannins on the palate. You know, if you got too much tannin you don't want a lot of acid, it just it just is too. too intense.

F Fred Reno 19:56
Yeah, the intensity,

S Shep 19:57
but it's sort of like a Gevertztraminier is a good example of a wine needs some tannin
Gevertztraminier is not a high acid variety. It's a low acid variety so much like an IPA beer.
Bitterness from the fruit, adds body and fullness to it to fill out the palette and keep it
interesting. Well, hops do that in an IPA.

F Fred Reno 20:24
What is your if you have one what's your favorite varietal to grow and work with here and
produce wine?

S Shep 20:31
I have to stick with my roots Riesling. I grow Riesling here and it's actually the most
successful viniera I grow Pinot Noir and Chardonnay also, the Chardonnay got pretty
zapped by the frost this spring in the Pinot got hit by it. But Pinot Noir is very difficult to
grow and ripen in Virginia.

F Fred Reno 20:50
Oh Yeah I would think so. Yeah,

S Shep 20:51
I've made three vintages in 20 years that the grapes actually got, ripe? Otherwise, you
have to pick it because of rot. And you know, so you do because what do you want, I let
them just rot away and have nothing or you or you think outside the box and you make
something that's it's good, but it's not red, Pinot Noir,

F Fred Reno 21:13
Pinot Noir Blanc?

S Shep 21:14

Oh, yeah, that that can be one of the, you know, most spectacular wines that every wine you know, deserves attention. And, you know, it's I mean, I remember that. Mount Veeder, once in the 70s, made a Chenin Blanc. That was absolutely one of the best white wines I've ever had. It was fantastic. And you know that of course, the Vouvray's are pretty famous. It's not, it's not dealt, it's not made as real serious wine in from California much, but a little bit. You know, I think that Sacramento Delta area where they grow a lot of of Chenin Blanc,

F Fred Reno 21:53
exactly. So you have this under vine right now here Rockbridge Winery, 17, 18 acres,

S Shep 22:00
7 18 acres, and it the original planning in 89 was Vidall five acres. The next was three acres of chambourcin in 94, followed by an acre of Pinot Noir in 95 an acre and a half of Vignoles in 97 and two acres of traminette in 97. Then I planted one to two acres of Pinot Noir and an acre of Riesling in 99. And I also planted a little bit of Dechaunac, which is a red hybrid variety. I really planted that to be a tintuia, a variety coloring grape to put in Pinot Noir when it was too light. But after I did it and tried blends I just said I'm not. I'm not adulterating Pinot Noir with this stuff, because it changes the character too much.

F Fred Reno 22:54
is, is the Riesling you planted. Do you still have old vine out there? 20 plus year old that you're making wine from?

S Shep 23:00
Yeah, they're they're well yeah so they're 1999 so they're 21 years old.

F Fred Reno 23:06
So you must have seen some interesting evolution in the wine character as the vines got older and older, I would say.

S Shep 23:13
Yeah, but we don't see it as as much as California because we have to replant a lot because of winter injury. And in California ironically, I'm you know this but I think the 73

Stag's Leap that won the Bordeaux side of the Paris tasting that Steve Spurrier did was three year old vines. And the French just that just blew their whole theory of old wines. And there are different different conditions out there with with growing in that Mediterranean climate that completely changed all the rules, which is again You know why? You have to sort of think outside the box but until he did that tasting, you know, it's like nobody had a clue.

F

Fred Reno 23:58

Well, you also, you do a lot of events here. I see you got a whole music than you do here. That must be kind of fun.

S

Shep 24:07

It's it's a lot of fun. It's a little trying with COVID because of course, we were absolutely critical on making it be safe. And it's ironic that we had our best festival ever on Saturday, pre COVID or whatever we had an incredible we it didn't hurt that we opened the tap room and sold 200 pints of beer which was our initial soft opening for our brewery it brings people and people are desperate to go have stuff to do that they feel that they can do safely. And an outdoor venue at like at a winery or brewery is great. We can have to see what happens when it gets cold that we've got more space because this space we're in now is was just created this past winter.

F

Fred Reno 24:56

Well, it looks like you've been kind enough to do couple of bottles of wine here. Why don't we taste something?

S

Shep 25:02

Let's do. We'll, let's let's get let me go get a couple of wines from our current lineup. Okay, bring them in and then I'll open. Actually, I'll open these first. Okay. Okay, good. Fred

F

Fred Reno 25:16

will Shep is going over to the bar right now and he's gonna open up a couple bottles I saw he brought a vintage Norton, which I think was 2002 vintage, which should be fascinating because I don't know Norton very well. And having well aged wine from Virginia, something I've been wanting to taste for some time, it's going to be very educational. Well, we just got done doing a quite a tasting here with Shepherd tasting bar here. This

2002 Norton was a hell of a treat that wine is just beautiful. And gorgeous, gorgeous dessert wines here. Getting an education here today, folks. Well, Shep, I got a quick question for you. That sort of ties into all this. You've been here, producing well making wine here in Virginia for over 35 years. So you're a veteran, you've watched this wine scene here in Virginia grow. Part of what I'm trying to do with Podcast is get this message that I have about what's happening in Virginia, Nationally, to the audience that I have, and the people and the reach I have. And every time I've talked to people I know in the wine business over the last two or three years who know everything about wine that's in air quotes, I start talking about Virginia wine. And they looked at me kind of crazy, like, What are you talking about? And if I was in a situation with them where I could I would taste on some of these Virginia wines. And they go, Wow, I had no idea of the quality that's going on here in Virginia, But, what is it? What's been the impediment to Virginia, getting this message out on a national basis that hey, what's happening here in Virginia, because what I see here reminds me what I saw in Oregon, 30 years ago, where Oregon was right at that cusp, they were now making better quality wine or was getting some volume. And they managed to break through that barrier and get this really incredible presence for what they're doing. What is the impediment to Virginia wine that's holding them back to getting this national, your opinion, your experience? What do you think?

S

Shep 27:34

That's a hard question, Fred, we've seen since I got in the industry, as you said Oregon blossom. And Washington state as well. My daughter went to Withman college in Walla Walla, which you know, that region is wow, that gets a lot of high scores on their wines. Yet we haven't followed that trend. Part of it, I think, is climate control. We do have a maritime well continental climate. So we have winter injury issues here that limit where one can successfully grow grapes, year to year. The summer climate mandates, a lot of hand labor in the vineyard to produce healthy fruit. The bottom line is the production costs of grapes here are high and you know when you look at California, a lot of really high-end wineries are limiting their crops so much they are able to produce wine and grapes of the highest caliber. We have a hard time just getting healthy fruit to harvest and we don't get the kind of sugars and the concentration because we don't have a Mediterranean type climate. Now Oregon doesn't either. Why the difference between Oregon and Virginia? Well, Oregon really got I guess, sideways came out after Oregon got rolling, but that didn't hurt him. Pinot Noir and Pinot Noir has enjoyed a lot of growth and popularity. You know, I tried it I planted in 95 but I've struggled with it because it more than almost any other variety is rot susceptible. Just is hell to get really ripe.

F

Fred Reno 29:29

So Virginia needs a signature grape is what I'm hearing here a little bit whereas Oregon had the Pinot Noir, Napa Valley had the Cabernet Sauvignon. I'm big on Petit Manseng I know you don't produce any.

S Shep 29:44

But it does. It does as well under our climate conditions. As anything as a matter of fact this year has been hell to get any sugar and the Petit Mansengs have been about the only thing that I've been able to get over 22 brix. None of the Bordeaux reds. I mean, most of them, I don't think most of them are going to get picked at 20 brix this year that excessive amount of rain we had in August was tough.

F Fred Reno 30:11

One of the things a vintner said to me some time ago that stuck with me all this time. He said, Fred, listen to some of the best. Potential vineyards in Virginia, probably haven't even been planted yet. What do you think about that comment?

S Shep 30:26

It's true. I mean, it's true. I think, only 20% of vineyards in this state where the sites were picked because of ideal fit or cultural parameters being met, at least early on in the industry, what would happen is somebody who has money had a farm and they said, I want to grow grapes and start a winery. they didn't pick the site to do that. Dennis Horton, however, did and he he leased property in Orange County, from another guy who had a turkey business, but their relationship went south. They ended up dissolving it and he lost the vineyard but Honna Lee vineyard is which is one of the parts of that site that Dennis picked based on ideal qualities for viticulture.

F Fred Reno 31:15

Well, it does produce some incredible high quality grape. Yeah, exactly. Petit Manseng being one of them.

S Shep 31:20

Right, Well see that's I made Norton from that vineyard in '05 as a matter of fact, and so Touriga Nacional which is an interesting variety in Virginia it's doesn't seem to have really taken hold I think that Tannat has done a lot better. Really the question that the answer is not in yet on that whole on the whole issue, Fred because we can we see such vintage to

vintage variation. It's like Europe, although with climate change to hot is more often the norm in viticultural areas in Europe now than then too cold and wet. I mean, you know, there is champagne houses have all bought big holdings in England, because the climates change and they can grow Pinot Noir and Pinot Menuier and Chardonnay there and get the right parameters to make good quality sparkling. I wouldn't call it champagne, but you know, I call it methode champenoise some people call it method natural, like champenoise better. But again, back to Virginia. I honestly think for the growing conditions we have that the hybrids are the best suited grapes to grow here, but they aren't the best suited to sell expensive wine out of that's that's the double edged sword there. I've done it both ways. You know, I've done lots of hybrids hybrids have been a big part of my business from the get go. My original planning was five acres of Vidal, vinifera it just I pulled my hair out trying to grow it. You know, this year that vinifera was what got frosted the hybrids, barely, but then again, in 18, I lost all five acres of my vidal to rot. We had nine days of wet grapes, because there was a hurricane that set over North Carolina, and I wasn't gonna pick the vintage. Green, green, green, and oh well I had to eat it. But I still haven't answered your question. There have been some fantastic Bordeaux reds produced in Virginia. There have been some really nice Vigonier very nice. Well Chardonnays have fallen in disfavor. If you look at the Governor's Cup results for the last five years, there may have been 10 Chardonnays that got gold medals. I don't know whether that is because you know the judges have extensive tasting experience with Chardonnay from cooler Calif. California Coastal vineyards from Chablis from Burgundy, New Zealand, even Australia, because Australia has a lot of cooler growing regions. Not just the hotter ones. And then South Africa, as you mentioned, German Chardonnay That was great. The Germans are not the current generation German vintners don't have the chip on their shoulder that the older guys did they anything French was distasteful. I remember with going with German vintner who was like 70, and this was in the 70s. And he showed me the Bismarck statue up on the banks of the Rhine and told me I hate the French. But the younger vintners have gotten over that they'll grow Pinot Noir now they'll grow Chardonnay. They also make some hell up great, dry Rieslings. They've changed that But anyway, that I'm going way too far off the path.



Fred Reno 34:39

I guess maybe the question doesn't have an answer right now. It's just a matter of time.



Shep 34:44

And the other thing that scares me is one of the predictions for climate change in the central Atlantic region is wetter wetter.



Fred Reno 34:53

Well, again, you described a scenario here of growing seasons that is similar to what Europe used to experiencing this variability and you know California's got variability now but it's not the time they want



Shep 35:06

but they get some results now they're getting fired



Fred Reno 35:11

three years in a row you know, and counting, it's hard to say



Shep 35:15

and and one other vintage that I want to point out to others my first three actually 86 Great white hot well great hot everything looked beautiful. We got a hurricane three days of rain. In the end of August. Yeah, we salvage the vintage it was my first vintage back here so tough 87 was totally Mediterranean summer. It did not rain any of vineyard, but Redlands which Timmy Rausse Gabriele's son now manages, which I got that. '01 heritage you tasted was from Bordeaux reds growing there. They picked the Chardonnay on the 12th of August. I was done with harvest by the Saturday of Labor Day weekend, my God at Montdomaine with riesling. It was hot, dry, but then it started raining. I remember a week and a half later Fifth Street, where it drops down where the stoplight is to go into now we're Wegmans and all. water was this deep Northern Virginia hadn't ripened yet. And they didn't pick and they had a disastrous vintage at 87 which Southern Virginia was hotter and we could get stuff. Got stuff done then 89. The year I planted my vidal couldn't ask for a better year to plan a vineyard because it rained all summer. Needless to say, we ended up buying some stuff from California. We bought this stuff called Express. I don't know if you've ever heard of Richard Carey. He owned a business in California. They concentrated red phenolics and color with his reverse osmosis process. And they sold us Express that you can put in your wine and darken it up. We bought that and put it in the 89 Merlot. Yeah, it salvaged it but it wasn't, wasn't anything to write home about.



Fred Reno 37:19

Well, we're deep in the weeds in chemistry here, folks. This is fascinating.

- S** Shep 37:23
Anyway, you know, I thought you might be a Jim Lawi Oh, yeah. Jim on I talked about getting together and collaborating and writing a book about the vintages of Virginia. We haven't done it yet. But I have also pretty good memory so I can remember I
- F** Fred Reno 37:39
see that I
- S** Shep 37:40
listened Shep off spent taking a lot of your time.
- F** Fred Reno 37:43
No, thank you for your time. You kidding me? This has been for me this is just continues to be educational and instructional. I'm impressed with the wines I tasted here today. And this whole place is a wonderful story. All I can say is thank you for your time
- S** Shep 37:59
should have gotten April to come up because she's our first beers have been just outstanding. And we realize as competitive as the beer market is. And the wine business if you don't come out from the starting gate with high quality product in this market, not good.
- F** Fred Reno 38:17
Well, the way I say it is you only get a chance to be new once. Correct. And that's all right. Yep. Thank you.
- S** Shep 38:24
Fred thank you.