

Wine Notes: Edward Sellers Vineyards and Wines

Wine Notes: Small winery has big plans

Having worked in the real estate and health care industries, Ed Sellers now runs a boutique winery and a 10-acre vineyard along Highway 46 West

*By Janis Switzer
Special to The Tribune*

One of the newest tasting rooms in downtown Paso Robles is Edward Sellers Vineyards and Wines. Opened four months ago in the recently rebuilt Mastagni Building on Park and 12th streets, the chic tasting room is yet another sign of the town's transformation from a ranching post to a wine country destination.

"We looked at the downtown area," owner Ed Sellers said, "and thought it was just going to grow and grow and grow."

Recent arrival

Sellers, 51, didn't know of Paso Robles until four years ago, when he traveled from Orange County to visit an old college roommate.

"I came up to see him one weekend and just fell in love with the area," Sellers remembered. "Then six months later, I bought the



TRIBUNE PHOTO BY JAYSON MELLOM

Edward and Dani Sellers in their tasting room in the recently rebuilt Mastagni Building in downtown Paso Robles. They hope to open a 27,000-square-foot tasting room on their vineyard by spring 2009.

EDWARDSSELLERS

Tasting room: 1220 Park St. in Paso Robles

Owners: Edward and Dani Sellers

Winemaker: Amy Butler

Cases produced: 5,000 in 2006 Tasting room hours:

Thursday through Monday, 12 to 7 p.m.

property on (Highway) 46 West, and three months after that I hired Amy Butler as my winemaker.”

Phone number: 239-8915 Web site:

www.edwardsellers.com

Three months later, he was buying grapes from

Westside vineyards and on his way to making his first 2004 vintage wines.

The property he bought on Highway 46 West includes 28 acres, 10 of which he has planted vines. He is working with Pults & Associates' architect Tim Woodle on the plans for his new winery and tasting room, and Sellers has plans for a bed and breakfast that will allow visitors to fully appreciate the wine-making experience.

Previous careers

This is a marked departure from Sellers' previous career. He left Arizona State University without a degree to start in commercial real estate. After selling office buildings in Orange County, he entered the health care industry by starting his own company and then moved to Chicago.

After expanding his home respiratory care company to five other cities, with 120 employees, Sellers found himself flying 120,000 miles a

year to manage the business.

"I used to leave Sunday night, come home Thursday night, every week, and it just ran me into the ground," he said.

When a national health care company offered him a buyout in 2002, he took it.

Sellers returned to Orange County and started reinvesting in real estate. That's when he met his wife, Dani, a local real estate agent with First Team Estates.

She sold him a house, and they started dating shortly thereafter. The couple married in Italy this summer and still lives in Orange County because of her work. But they drive back and forth almost every weekend and plan to move to the area soon.

"I really see this as the next little Healdsburg," Sellers said. Healdsburg is a wine country destination in Sonoma County that has been transformed from a little town to a ritzy place with four-star hotels, upscale restaurants and stylish tasting rooms.

Sellers bought his property in 2004, and has already seen the changes that he was expecting.

"It boggles my mind how quickly it's grown and how downtown has already changed," he said.

Sellers opened his downtown tasting room in April.

"I just thought it would be a good thing for us to be part of it, and it gives us a chance to get more exposure in the area before the winery and tasting room are up," he said.

If all goes according to plan, the 27,000-square-foot winery will open in spring 2009, and the bed-and-breakfast inn will follow two years later.

Getting noticed

In the meantime, Edward Sellers wines are receiving positive recognition. The 2004 Syrah recently earned 91 points from the Wine Spectator, and the San Francisco Chronicle named the same wine one of its top 100 wines of 2006.

With a focus on the Châteauneuf-du-Pape-style wines from the Rhône Valley of France, Sellers buys Rhône grapes from a dozen different Paso-area growers (mostly on the Westside). He relies on Butler, a self-described perfectionist, to make the wines with a minimal interference from him.

"What's fun about being in a start-up," Butler explained, "is that you can create the style."

With production of 2,500 cases their first year and 5,000 last year, Edward Sellers is considered a "boutique winery," and he plans to never grow beyond 10,000 cases. Until the new winery is open, he will continue to make wine at Denner Vineyards.

Sellers is amazed at how he has been embraced by the local wine community. "

Everybody works together here, and everyone helps each other," Sellers said, "and that's fabulous!"

[Login](#) | [Click here to become a registered user](#)

Recent Comments

Be the first to post a comment using the form below

Post Your Comment

You must [log in](#) to post comments.