

Made in the Mid-Willamette Valley: Willamette Valley Vineyards

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Company Name: Willamette Valley Vineyards

Contact: Caitlyn Kari

Address: 8800 Enchanted Way SE; Turner, OR 97392

Phone: (503) 588-9463

Website: www.WillametteValleyVineyards.com

Business Description: A local winery, we produce high-quality, sustainable Oregon pinot noir and other cool-climate varietals while serving as responsible stewards of the land.

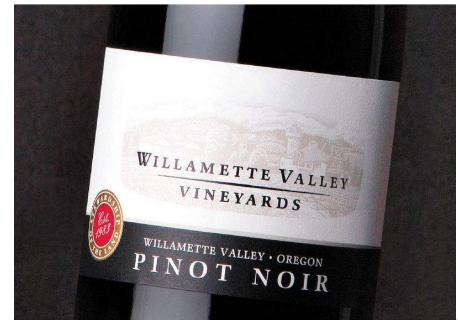
Employees: 130

Business Specialties: Delicious, sustainable, local wine.

Business History: Founded in 1983 by Jim Bernau, Willamette Valley Vineyards has grown to be recognized by Wine Enthusiast Magazine as one of "America's Great Pinot Noir Producers." Along with our first vintage release in 1989, we also became the first successful self-underwritten Regulation A Public Common Stock offering in the country. Today, the winery is owned by over 4,500 wine enthusiasts. In 1997, Jim was on the wine industry board that founded LIVE (Low Input Viticulture and Enology) creating vineyard-specific sustainable agriculture guidelines. Today all of our vineyards are farmed sustainably through LIVE, and we are the leading producer of Oregon Certified Sustainable Wine. In 2004, Jim was awarded the Founders' Award by his peers at the Oregon Winegrowers Association, and in 2007 Willamette Valley Vineyards was named "Hottest Small Brand" by Wine Business Monthly.

What is biggest advantage of doing business in the Mid-Willamette Valley: The people who live here are devoted to local, hand-crafted products. There is no better place to be dependent on a local market. Over 40 percent of all our wines are sold within 50 miles of the winery. Here wine enthusiasts come from all walks of life regardless of education or finances; it's a remarkably unique community.

Essential Business Philosophy: We're measured by how we do what we do, not just what we do. How we treat each other and the land around us is more important than what each of us



Special to the Statesman Journal

SEDCOR, the lead economic development agency for Marion and Polk counties, is pleased to offer you a glimpse of the multitude of products and services being manufactured and provided by local area companies. SEDCOR's membership is composed of more than 500 business and community leaders who support our mission to enhance and diversify the economy of the Mid-Willamette Valley.

does. That's the lens through which all business decisions must pass.

Best Way to Stay Competitive: To see the market through your customers' eyes.

What is most Challenging in Work: Getting enough sleep. Especially during harvest and crush.

Best Business Decision: Finding the right people for the opportunities and challenges that are in front of us.

Toughest Business Decision: Reducing staffing levels when after-tax income isn't there to support them.

What trends do you see Happening in your Industry: Sustainable agriculture has been around for a while now, and a lot of people are in the game. Now the most pressing thing is looking at our footprint. We were one of 14 Oregon wineries to announce that we had achieved carbon neutrality through the Oregon winery Carbon Neutral Challenge. We are looking closely at everything that we do, everything we consume and produce.

The big \$64,000 question is what are we going to do about the container — all that weight, and its transport to far away markets. Each individual winery and winegrape grower can do all the right things, but the industry as a whole must rally to answer this question, and directly address the biggest carbon footprint that we have as an industry.

One way in which we are attempting to address this is through a new product line, the Eco-Cask. Each 20-liter Eco-Cask holds the equivalent of 26 bottles of wine. Over its 10-year lifespan each Eco-Cask will replace 326 cases worth of traditionally packaged wine: bottles, labels, corks, tin caps, cardboard boxes, wooden pallets and the saran wrap used to secure it for transport. Not to mention the reduction in transportation weight.

For additional information contact SEDCOR at (503) 584-7303 or e-mail sappleby@sedcor.com.