

Three Oaks Winery

(Sixth in a series on Florida Farm Wineries)

Three Oaks Winery is located in Vernon Florida which is at the geographic center of Washington County, at 3348 Highway 79, just 12 miles south of I-10. Washington County was created in 1825, and was nearly twice the size of the State of Delaware, stretching all the way to the Gulf of Mexico. After a century of boundary shifts, the county, with over 382,000 acres of rolling hills covered in thick, stately pines and mixed hardwood forests, now covers a vast portion of the central Florida Panhandle. Ironically the county is totally dry. The Three Oaks Winery and vineyards are owned and operated by Byron and Lucretia Biddle

The vineyard was started in 1989 and planted with Conquistador grape vines which was a relatively new variety developed by UFL. The winery was bonded in 1996. Byron said he has always had an interest in wines and was talked into planting some conquistador vines by James Harris who was an assistant to John Mortenson at the University of Florida. Of the 12 acres of vineyard about 70% are Conquistador vines and the rest are Carlos. Because of the prohibition laws in Washington County these grapes are used to make low alcohol wines. Current production includes a dry, semi-



We are looking at the store and tasting room for the winery



Shown is the tasting bar inside of the store

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MARK YOUR CALENDER

- **FGGA Annual Conference & Meeting**
January 18-19, 2007
Hilton Hotel, Ocala
- **16th Annual Open House**
Friday November 10
10AM—5 PM
Saturday November 11
10 AM—5 PM
Sunday November 12
11AM—5 PM
Free Admission
Lakeridge Winery

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Conference and Meeting 2007 Pioneers in Viticulture

This is a conference that should not be missed. We will be privileged to hear and meet with some of the people who have had the most impact on Florida Viticulture.

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Presidents Message

Reflections

It is that time of the year when we reflect on the events of 2006. All in all I believe that we can say the year was a very good year.

We were finally spared nature's wrath with the absence of hurricanes or other disasters. Crop yields were good to outstanding and the prices for grapes were at record highs. The Wine Competition was a success. Hobbyist wine entries were at an all time high. I am especially gratified by the fact that so many people are interested in making wine. I believe that the FGGA has played a major role over the years in increasing the interest in winemaking. Two additional wineries opened their doors in 2006. Dave DeCasto opened Tangle Oaks Winery in Grandin and Frank Ascolillo finally open the doors of Pine Knoll Winery in Lecanto. Florida Estates Winery opened a second location in St Pete. Florida is, at present, an open state for shipping wine. In summary the year was outstanding and I hope 2007 will be as good or better than 2006.

May the New Year bring you good health happiness and prosperity.

See you in the vineyard

Bob Paulish, FGGA President

Grape Times December, 2006

EDITOR and PUBLISHER
Bob Paulish

Questions? Contact Susan Goolsby
386-329-0318 or admin@fgga.org

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Conference and Meeting 2007

Dr John Mortensen's contributions to viticulture in Florida are too numerous to mention. His research has resulted in release of nine bunch grape and two muscadine grape varieties.

Although not from Florida, Dr. Justin Morris's work on muscadine grapes at the University of Arkansas has added greatly to our understanding of grape growing in Florida. He has spoken at our conferences many time in the past.

And you cannot discuss winemaking without Dr Robert Bates's name being mentioned. He has worked with the FGGA for over 3 decades developing winemaking techniques using Florida grapes.

Our guest speaker for the conference will be Jim Trezise, President of the New York Wine and Grape Foundation. He is widely recognized as a leader in the American wine in-



Buddy, the Clydesdale mascot of the Ocala Hilton

dustry. He will discuss his influence in the development of the wine industry in New York what Florida can do to develop it's industry.

The popular Newcomer's Session will again be featured at the conference covering an introduction to grape growing from history to harvest. Another popular session at last year's conference was the wine tasting. A new improved version will be held on Friday.

If you have not done so as of yet, fill in the Registration forms and send them in as soon as possible. If you did not receive a conference brochure contact Susan Goolsby at the

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Three Oaks Winery

sweet and sweet offering of Conquistador. Three Oaks also offers a sweet white wine made from the Carlos grapes.

What makes Three Oaks unique, or as Byron



That's Byron in the vineyard showing the excellent production on the Conquistador vines

said "puts us on the map" is their Conquistador Tawny Port. About 200 bottles are produced in a year and are sold at \$68 a piece. This wine is not sold at the winery because of the county's restriction on al-



The winery itself is a separate building located behind the retail store

coholic beverages. In addition to the Florida wines, In addition to the Florida wines Three Oaks offers a dry, semi-dry and sweet Chardonnay and Merlot.

In total the winery produces about 3000 gallons



Shown is some of the equipment inside the winery

of wine a year

Tasting and tours are available year round Wednesday through Saturday 9:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. except in January when they are closed for vacation.

Phone:850-535-9463, Fax 850-535-6951, email lbiddle@digitalexp.com

BITS AND PIECES

Kudos to **Kellie Throop** the FGGA's resident news columnist. She had an article, *Wine a Bit*, published in the October 2006 issue of Florida Grower. She pointed out the fact that there is a grape industry in Florida and that it is profitable to plant a vineyard with assistance of the acreage incentive program. She invited everyone to visit a local winery. To quote from the end of the piece "Cheers".

**FGGA Annual
Conference and
Meeting**

JANUARY 18-19, 2007

Hilton Hotel, Ocala

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START A FARM BASED WINERY

38 miles west of St Augustine. Grape vineyard and peach orchard. Over 17 AC cleared. 3 AC vineyard three years old. 2 AC of Noble and 1AC of Carlos. 6" well & irrigation for 15 AC. 1 AC of peaches, 4 years old and over 6 AC of Costal Bermuda bordered by trees in a beautiful location. 3Br/2Ba D/W with well & septic. 25 x 60 insulated barn with tractor & equipment.

Call for details 1-386-649-0464



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