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Florida Wine & Grape Growers Association Newsletter

Summer 2018

Message from the FWGGA President:

Greetings fellow grape growers, winemakers, and wine enthusiasts!

Summertime is in full swing and we are hopeful for a quiet hurricane season. The FWGGA board of directors has been busily trying to grow the association and ensure that members benefit from being a part of the organization.

We believe that our offering of the Annual Conference is a significant benefit, providing education, networking and fellowship. We have listened to your comments and suggestions and hope the 2019 conference meets your expectations. The new venue is in downtown Deland, recently voted top "Main Street USA" and is a popular destination (see the West Volusia Tourism brochure enclosed). The meeting location will be The Table, just a couple blocks from the new Courtyard by Marriott. See the announcement in this newsletter for additional information, and mark your calendar so you don't miss the early registration discounts.

Also, we are searching for interested person(s) to assume duties associated with the organization, coordination and management of the annual Florida State Fair International Wine and Juice Competition in Tampa. Please review the Request for Services and help us find qualified folks to take over the fine work Bob and Bonnie Jean Paulish have been doing with the competition for the past 30 years.

Finally, please consider becoming more involved with the FWGGA by seeking an officer position or by volunteering in other ways. Don't hesitate to contact us with your ideas and suggestions.

Best Regards,

JR Newbold, III

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FWGGA Contact Info: 904-471-1063 admin@fgga.org

Mailing Address: P.O. Box 840256, St. Augustine, Florida 32080

Address for Package Delivery: 138 Seagrove Main Street, St. Augustine FL 32080

Meet Our Winemaker

Ken Tarsitano

FLAGLER BEACHFRONT WINERY

What is your background that got you into winemaking?

If it bubbled, bottled, pickled or brewed, I learned from my grandfather in his home basement the old Italian way. I had no idea that later in life I'd end up making wine on the beach. One day, I gave up my budding advertising career and bought my great grandfather's vacant dairy farm. Taking a job as a grape research assistant and understudying with some of the old grape growers and winemakers in the area, I began to develop my own style and flavor. As my reputation as a winemaker and grape grower grew, I was given opportunities to teach viticulture and winemaking at the college level, judge wine competitions and consult others in organic grape growing. Sometimes the dream finds you as much as you find the dream!

Where do you draw inspiration from when developing your wines?

Making wine is part agriculture, part science, part art and part luck. Like an artist, I use my winemaking tools, grape growing experience and wine knowledge to unlock the potential of a grape over time. I draw inspiration from the farmer that grew the grapes, the micro climate of the terroir and the particular type of grape varietal. The best part of our winery is that I get the opportunity to work with grapes grown all over the country.

If any one person in the world could walk in and try your wine, who would it be?

I wish my grandfather had a chance to walk through my doors. We shared similar dreams, just lived in different generations. Every bottle of wine I open, I can almost hear him say, "That a boy."

What is the most challenging task in your winemaking process?

Bottling! Not that it is difficult, but once the wine is in the bottle, there is no going back!

What is YOUR go-to wine of choice?

I get asked this question a lot. It is a difficult one to address because there are over 5,000 different wine grapes and countless ways to make and blend them. Red, white, sweet or dry, I drink them all! Right now, I love drinking our Petit Verdot with an extra thick cut porterhouse steak topped with blue cheese. Though I am a red wine drinker at heart, I can't think of a better way to end the day than sharing a glass of our Elation on the patio with my wife.

Ken Tarsitano:

- 20 years in the wine and grape industry
- Flagler Beachfront Winery, Owner/Winemaker, 2012 - present
- Tarsitano Winery & Vineyard, Owner/Winemaker/ Vineyard Manager, 1998 - present
- Adjunct Professor, Kent State University, Viticulture/Enology, 2008 - 2012
- Vineyard Consultant and Lecturer, certified organic grape production, 2001 - present
- Wine Judge, AWS and State Fairs since 1998

Flagler Beachfront Winery

611 N Oceanshore Blvd., Flagler Beach • 386-693-4950 • www.flaglerbeachfrontwinery.com

