



The Vineyard at Grandview: A Developing Vineyard and Winery Success Story



It never ceases to amaze me how clever people are able to figure out how to design and develop a high quality vineyard. Many of them never spent a minute in a classroom studying vineyard site selection, design or development and the infinite details necessary to create a vineyard, yet, when I arrive on the scene and, wow, there it is – a beautiful vineyard! Most of the people I work with had very successful careers in other endeavors and have already honed their thinking abilities, they work hard and study, and find a way to apply their skills in an agricultural setting.

Recently I visited the Vineyard at Grandview in Mt Joy, just west of Lancaster, where Larry Kennel, a veterinarian and two of his sons-in-law have developed a very fine five-acre vineyard on a south slope with north-south rows amid the corn fields of Lancaster County. I could tell from a mile away that they did a great job. As I got closer and actually into the vineyard the level of detail and meticulous care became apparent, in the design, installation, development and maintenance of the vineyard into this, its third year. While the vineyard is still in its infancy, the potential shines like a beacon here.



It is designed like a Lucie Morton project, only a little wider spacing at 8 x 4. Dijon clones of Chardonnay planted on the lower, flatter field on deeper soils have perfect canopy configuration and can push a bigger crop. The fruit hung generously and proudly on the vines turning translucent green-brownish color that is an indicator of ripeness.



It's all trained to VSP with the fruit wire at 36" and canopy height to 7'. If you saw Scott you would know why it works - he looks like a strong forward in the NBA. The red varieties include ENTAV clones of Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Cabernet Franc and Petit Verdot. There is also some Pinot Noir which was a nursery error (see my article on vineyard problems). They are



planning to plant Albarino next year. The CS was particularly notable – shoot positioned perfectly upright, shoot spacing was ideal, canopy density of 1-1.5 leaf layers, lignified wood, and despite 2" of recent rains, no sign of lateral growth. The fruit will hang another 6-8 weeks but the canopies and clusters were all squeaky clean. Using a Lipco tunnel sprayer I did not see a single powdery or downy infection on leaves or fruit. Larry told me that had some fruit PM earlier because the canopy is so tall, the Lipco was missing some lower fruit but a nozzle adjustment rectified that problem. It goes to show with good equipment, proper calibration and a good spray program it is possible to keep a vineyard disease-free even in a difficult season. JB damage was minimal and they have sprayed 3x for grape berry moth.

A small amount of bird damage in the reds that were side netted and more in the Chardonnay that is protected by a single propane cannon. This style of netting permits even the tunnel sprayer to operate properly. To see such careful attention to bird protection by a new grower made me very happy. There have also been problems with crown gall, affected vines are pulled and replaced immediately. Along with the variety mix up these are nursery issues that conspire against even the most careful new grower like Larry.

The vines are perfectly trained with straight trunks guided by rolled-steel training stakes and headed at just the right place below the fruit wire. Larry said they used a lot of training tape to make sure the vines stayed right on the stake. Hedging is done with a mounted hedge trimmer on top and by hand on the sides. Rootstocks are Riparia Gloire for the red varieties on the steep slope and 101-14 for the Chardonnay. The CS vines on the bottom of the slope are notably more vigorous and will have to be managed accordingly and quite likely picked later but this is a minor concern. They can also divide the canopy or remove every other vine to get the vines into balance (see Jim Wolpert's presentation and the accompanying article). Vineyard floor management is cover crop on every row with a blended use of herbicide and grape hoe in the vine rows with hilling up in the winter.

Wine will be made at Allegro Vineyards this year and a winery is being constructed on the property. Jeff Zick from Waltz Vineyards has been consulting on the project and the same meticulous care that goes into the Waltz Vineyard is very evident here. It's all about closing the

knowledge gap and making as few early mistakes as possible by getting the right people to guide you through the hazards to achieve your goals. Larry wants to make the best wine his site can grow and he figured out how to get there. He knew he didn't know it all so he got together a team of people who had the knowledge and could apply it. The bottom line is that it is a ton of work and expense to develop a project of this quality. Scott and Steve provide a lot of the help in the vineyard. They started at a comfortable and manageable size and did it right.

I always say that I can taste the wine from a good vineyard site, even a piece of bare land. You can definitely taste the wine while walking through The Vineyard at Grandview.

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