



Curating Connections

ANACRÉON WINERY
EXTENDS A SEAT AT
THEIR FAMILY'S TABLE

PHOTO BY CAROLYN WELLS KRAMER

BY MICHELE FRANCISCO

The Aesop's Fable proverb "slow and steady wins the race" aptly describes the path patiently followed by Anacréon Winery owners Danell and Kipp Myers to arrive at where they are today. The couple always enjoyed wine, but after a 2008 trip to the Willamette Valley, they decided to pursue their passion in Oregon.

When asked why the Willamette Valley, Danell Myers said, "In our early visits to the area, we were inspired by the collaborative community; it was unlike any other wine region we had visited. We were drawn to the 'oneness' of the Valley, where each winery recommended the next as a place to visit."

However, raising their family in Utah remained a high priority, along with running their own business. Planning for a future move to the Willamette Valley, they monitored the wine region they had grown to love.

Searching online for the perfect vineyard property, they discovered

one in the Chehalem Mountains AVA planted with Pinot Noir. Watching from afar, month after month, the property sat on the market until one day, it disappeared. Fortunately, their estate agent learned it was still available if they wanted to buy it. They leaped at the opportunity and purchased Belle Colline Vineyard in 2016. With two children still in high school, the couple promised to remain in Utah through graduation, further delaying their dreams of studying wine.

After the kids earned their diplomas, the two pulled up stakes and realized their dream of living in wine country. But the Myers didn't stop there— they began studying wine in earnest.

"When we jumped into the 'Deep End' (eventually christening our Pinot Noir with the name), we felt it was important to immerse ourselves in the education and experiences needed to better maneuver in the wine world," shares Danell.

Believing great wines are made in the vineyard, the Myers learned to care for their own grapevines. She

continues, "Kipp completed the Viticulture Program at Washington State University, focusing on our vines. He dedicated himself to the book study and onsite vineyard education to understand the needs of our vineyard." Since purchasing the vineyard, they expanded their Pinot Noir plantings and added Chardonnay grapevines in 2017.

Learning the winemaking side of the process was also very important. Myers says, "I attended the Wine Studies Program at Chemeketa Community College, focusing on wine production. In addition, I worked harvest at Raptor Ridge Winery in 2019, expanding my 'hands-on' experience in the cellar. My time there, under Scott Shull and Shannon Gustafson, was meaningful and relevant to my wine education."

Never ones to avoid challenges, the Myers then went the extra mile. "Together, Kipp and I traveled to France and took courses at Burgundy Wine School in Beaune. We very much enjoyed expanding our knowledge base: the importance of vineyard

ABOVE: Anacréon Winery owners, Danell and Kipp Myers, enjoy time in their Chehalem Mountains estate vineyard. Their red 1947 Ford pickup is the winery mascot, perfect for photos and enjoyed by visiting guests. TOP RIGHT: Dining with Anacréon wines is at the center of the winery tasting experiences, offered twice daily at 11:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m. RIGHT: Anacréon Winery offers Chardonnay, Pinot Noir and a limited release Rosé.

sites, the aging of wines and the relevance of place," explains Danell.

Since embarking on their wine dream, the pair hope to inspire and set an example to their kids. Says Myers, "Kipp and I raised six children together, each with their own personality and life goals. We felt this was a beautiful opportunity to share our

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wine journey and prove how serious we were about our own goals." She continues, "We want our children to believe in themselves and pursue whatever path they dream of. Moving to Oregon and attending wine education programs demonstrates to them that it is never too late to chase what brings you joy."

Prior to their move, during numerous trips to Oregon, says Danell, "We met so many lovely winemakers and wine industry friends that branded our hearts. Many of these friends have become important mentors and sounding boards for our winemaking journey."

Danell continues, "Our winemakers, Thomas Savre and Kim Abrahams of Lingua Franca, along with Anna Matzinger, have immensely contributed to our success. Our 2020 and 2021 vintages, overseen by Thomas and Kim, have been a beautiful expression of both our site and personalities. Moving into our 2022 vintage, we are thrilled to partner with Anna, as she is very much aligned with the style and goals for our vineyard and wines."

"Over the last six months, Thomas and Anna worked side-by-side to transition our wines, all while maintaining our style and process. It has been quite a learning experience to observe two brilliant winemakers work in concert and share their processes. Really, it's a shining example of our wine community's collaborative nature," shares Danell.



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ANACRÉON WINERY
17571 NE Calkins Ln,
Newberg, OR 97132
(503) 530-8461
anacreonwinery.com

Currently, Anacréon wines are made at the Carlton Winemakers Studio while the Myers convert an existing 5000-square-foot barn into a production facility. While more space than they need, she says, "Our current production of fewer than 700 cases will only ever grow to 1200, yet our new facility will accommodate 4000 cases. Winemaking space is at a premium here so we intend to offer the additional space to our fellow winemakers. Kipp and I are all about building strong relationships with our peers and love being part of the community. We see this as another cooperative opportunity with wine artisans in the Valley."

When speaking with Danell, it's clear how those early visits to Oregon made a major impact on the couple and their vision for Anacréon Winery. Influenced by tasting wine in people's homes and gardens, Myers explains, "When we first traveled to the Willamette Valley, we visited wineries where we tasted in the winemaker/owner's kitchen or garden. This authentic and intimate experience was unlike any we had previously encountered. We were enamored with how personal and 'up close' they allowed us... and we kept coming back for more. Ultimately, this is what drew us to the Valley and prompted our dream of creating personal experiences surrounding food and wine."

Anacréon Winery hosts two tasting experiences, hosted by one or both Myers, with bookings scheduled at 11 a.m. and 2 p.m. Each allows guests an intimate wine tasting and food pairing opportunity. Explains Myers, "We have always loved wine and food experiences so visitors

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can choose between an Estate Tasting or Epicure Experience. The first is our current releases accompanied by local Briar Rose cheeses, hazelnuts and accompaniments. The second is a delicious 6-course pairing experience, combining food and wine at their finest."

She continues, "Kipp and I have a big family. With six children and their partners gathering around the table, delicious food and wine have always played an important role in our joy. When we gather around the table with our family and friends, it affords us an opportunity to connect and be seen." It makes sense that the Myers crafted their tastings to replicate what brings them happiness. "We have carried this idea forward by designing our wine tasting experiences as we have. We welcome our guests to sit awhile and enjoy the pleasure that food and wine offer us. Our Epicure Experience is designed for just that."

Myers elaborates on Anacréon's Epicure Experience, "We have partnered with Chef Dustin Joseph of Biscuit & Pickles Catering to bring our guests the per-

fect marriage of wine and food. People are searching for meaningful connections that combine family and friends with two hours of conversation and culinary delight. We have received such lovely feedback—the world needs more of these interactions. Kipp and I believe we found our sweet spot in intimate tasting experiences." She encourages people to arrive hungry and expect to leave full. Why not make it lunch?

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DANELL MYERS,
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Besides converting the barn, the couple has entered the final design planning phase of their new tasting house. "We hope to break ground by January and officially welcome guests by fall of 2023. We have designed the space with three tasting pods that welcome small groups or expand into larger ones, says Myers. "It will be intimate, yet can



open for togetherness in order to accommodate a larger group. Each pod will have access to the outdoors, providing our guests the chance to enjoy the organically-farmed vines just outside the walls. The covered, outside seating area will welcome all who wish to gather around the flowers or the fireplace."

Future plans may include what might be the Valley's first speakeasy. When asked the reason, Myers shares, "Kipp and I love a secret gathering space and believe our club members will, too. Members of our Anacréontic Society Wine Club will gain special access to our basement speakeasy, where they can reserve time to gather with their family and friends. Again, we hope to offer spaces that bring people together, where they can connect and forget their worries."

Over the years, the two have discovered their Belle Colline Vineyard is situated in a warm location, ripening grapes sooner

than others nearby. This proved to be a major advantage in 2020 when all their fruit was picked and safely inside the winery before the wildfires sent smoke blanketing the Valley for days on end.

The Myers' wine journey confirms that while frequently difficult, it's exciting to follow your dreams. Still a work in progress, future plans for Anacréon Winery will create even more opportunities to unite over wine. Dinners in their garden, including a special harvest dining experience, are coming soon.

Danell concludes with a sentiment appearing part of her and Kipp's DNA. "People are seeking meaningful interactions that promote joy and delight in their lives. When gathering with loved ones, we fill our cup that has been depleted by the daily grind. We want to offer spaces where people can connect, drink beautiful Oregon wine and eat delicious food together." 🍷

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our wine program and are eager to experience everything the Willamette Valley has to offer, and I would estimate 90% of our guests are interested in Oregon Pinot. Narrowing down the perfect bottle for each guest interaction is really a testament to how versatile Oregon Pinot can be. As the Lead Sommelier I take my time talking to each individual about their personal likes and what profile they are looking for, whether they are drawn to a specific AVA, cooler or warmer vintages, more terroir driven or fruit centric, older or more current vintage wines and price range. I can then narrow down to find them the perfect bottle.

What is the most interesting pairing you've encountered? A pairing that broke all the rules?

LS: I have always tried to be the outside of the box thinking, against the grain Chef and Som-

melier. The beautiful thing about food and wine is the endless possibilities. Just because you read it somewhere doesn't mean to have to follow it by the book. One pairing I did that surprised me the most was 2019 Pierce Riesling paired with our cilantro and lime juice marinated sturgeon with curried quinoa, cayenne aioli, braised mushrooms, and asparagus.

Your thoughts on Oregon wine? Favorites (varietal, brand and/or region)?

LS: Oregon wine is unique. Being the youngest growing Pinot Noir region, Oregon Pinot is often misunderstood or misinterpreted based on a preconceived idea of what the typicity of Burgundian Pinot has to offer and often that of California as well. We often get guests looking for that unique terroir that can usually only be found in Burgundy, they are often surprised when what they are tasting in their glass is completely different in both phenolic structure and aromas.

Oregon is quickly becoming one of the world's most renowned regions for growing world class Pinot Noir. With the umbrella AVA of the Willamette Valley, growers, wine makers, and Sommeliers alike all have a mutual understanding that Oregon Pinot has vastly different profiles based on not only where it is grown but who makes it, there is no one Oregon Pinot style. Oregon is too young as a whole to really delineate a specific typicity.

Oregon is my direct market, managing the largest Oregon wine list I have become very familiar with the different styles, and I can say without hesitation 2011 Adelsheim Quarter Mile Lane Pinot Noir is my favorite Oregon Pinot, one of the very first established vineyards planted in the early 70s, Oregon wine history resides within its roots. Elegant and structured with vivid acidity, I believe Quarter Mile is the purest expression and representation of Oregon Pinot. With an aroma unlike any other, this wine is brilliance in a glass.

Are you and Chef Chris planning any new projects or special events at the restaurant?

LS: The Joel Palmer House just finished our largest renovation in 25 years! Taking what was an old historic house built in the 1850s and transforming it into a modern, chic, lively environment whilst still keeping the small town, little hidden gem in Dayton Oregon wine country feeling. While we want to give our guests the highest level of service and serve delicious food, we want them to feel like they are "guests in our home."

Now that our focus on the renovation is over, chef Christopher and I are creating several special event dinners and events that will allow us to celebrate our new dining space during the winter months. Go to www.joel-palmerhouse.com for a current list of events and to stay updated on future events and follow us on Facebook and Instagram for behind the scenes fun. 🍷

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