

# Crossing Vineyards, Winery A Family Endeavor

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"They have been very generous with me."

Some of Tom Jr.'s education was gathered as he spent three years in California on unrelated projects and jobs.

He came home from California with savings and asked his parents for five acres. Soon, however, "they were not only a part of it but into it — really into it," he said. "Before I knew it, Dad was out there plowing."

The waving green plants are testament to what hard work, research, and planning can do, according to Tom Carroll Sr.

"If novices can have the

level of success that we have had, farmers are going to have a much bigger leg up with their knowledge" and understanding of the soil, he said.

"This is the hardest thing I've ever done in my life," said Tom Carroll Sr. "If we can do this, for farmers that know the soil and equipment, this is a home run.

"We have the utmost respect for farmers now," he said. "I'm proud to be called a farmer. We have such love for farming now, for the farmers we know.

"We may be the new breed of farmers (using computers, the weather station, and other technology), but I would be so proud to be called a farmer.

"We feel that what we're trying to do here could be used as a model and can convince others that "they can do it with limited agriculture experience," said Tom Jr..

"There's no fancy equipment," said Tom Jr., who purchased all the necessary equipment online.

Weeding, pest control, training, and trellising vines require a lot of "hands-on attention," which proved to be too much for one person.

Jaime "JJ" Juarez joined the vineyard staff a full-time employee. The assistant vineyard manager is also quickly becoming an assistant winemaking manager.

Crossing Winery is process-

ing grapes from two or three other area growers for 2002 and 2003 and is planning to start integrating fruit from their own vineyards.

## What's In The Soil

A focus of growing good grapes starts with "what is in your soil," said Tom Jr.

He began the process with a local extension agent to help him draft a program for weed control. "It all started with analyzing soil and checking soil structure and type," he said.

A backhoe's holes, dug in several places to measure soil structure in several areas, revealed the beneath-the-soil secrets of makeup of the proposed vineyard.

Soil samples began two

years prior to planting. Ameliorating the soil to get the proper pH with lime was followed by the process of subsoiling, moldboard plowing, and disking the field.

Discovering that their soil hosted Penn silt loam type helped Tom Jr. decide which rootstocks to order. Too vigorous, and the vines will be too abundant and prevent the grapes from getting enough sunlight. Too weak, and production will not be up to potential.

They decided to cultivate an assortment of American varieties, French hybrids, and vinifera plants. Although

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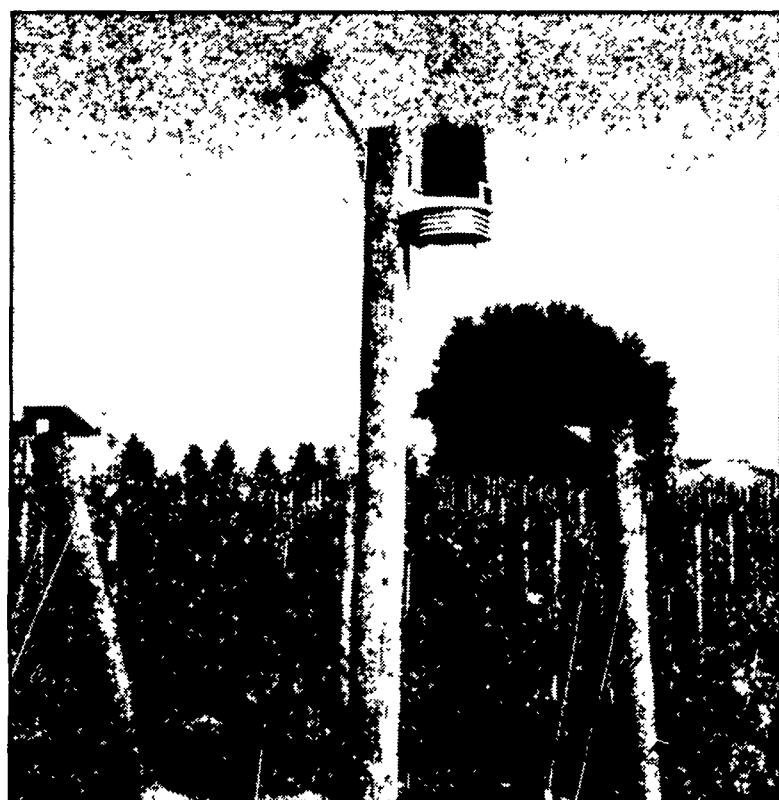
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WHAT TO DEPEND ON. MASSEY FERGUSON



A weather station reads and records a host of temperature, sun, and rainfall data. "The problems that a vineyard will encounter are very site-specific," said Chris. "What might be right for a grower up the road might not be right for you. You must know your microclimate."



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