



Photos by Robert Hammer

Local winery in the pink A big gamble pays off

By BILL GABOR Daily Collegian Staff Writer

Most wine drinkers recognize the names Rionite, Paul Masson and Inglenook...

While the wines such as Paul Masson have been bottled for more than 100 years...

Nittany Valley Winery, 724 S. Atherton St., is a family-owned and run operation...

When the Mebanes first began making wine in early Fall 1980, they had no previous experience in winemaking...

Last Winter they renovated the store, formerly a dairy, and began bottling their first vintage of wine last Spring.

Since then, the business has done very well and has already developed many regular customers...

Local winery hails the Nittany Lion

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The Nittany Lion has been immortalized on baby bottles, tote bags, T-shirts and keychains...

Several of the wines produced by Tom and Marina Mebanes, owners of the Nittany Valley Winery...

Larnes Du Lion is made of three varietals (the particular grape in the wine).

The three varietals in the Larnes Du Lion are: Seyval Blanc (dry), Vidal Blanc (dry) and Ravat (dry).

They said they have not tried to sell their wine in state liquor stores because it would be sold in State College stores...

Although their wine is not sold statewide and they don't have a lot of modern machinery, the Mebanes said they get a lot of satisfaction from winemaking.

The winemaking process starts with obtaining the grapes, Mrs. Mebane said.

Most of the grapes the Mebanes use in their wines come from Erie, although

'Being a smaller winery I feel we give more personal touch.'

—Marina Mebane

they also get some from Lancaster. The grapes come in one-ton bins and are put into a crusher that separates the grapes from the leaves and the stems.

Mrs. Mebane said they received six tons of grapes in their delivery and 18 tons in their second delivery.

After the grapes are crushed, they are put into a fermentation tank for storage, Mrs. Mebane said.

The fermentation process takes about four to five days for red wines and two weeks for white wines.

Next, the skins and pulp from the fermentation process go to a press where the juice is squeezed from them.

The Mebanes are experimenting with a process called centrifuging that they hope will speed up the clarification process and also increase the amount of wine produced per ton of grapes from 150 gallons to 250 gallons.

The larger wineries started out the same way we are starting out,

the smaller winery I feel we give the wine a more personal touch.'

Another wine the Mebanes sell is Coeur Du Lion, or heart of the lion, a semi-sweet red wine which contains 3 percent sugar.

The Mebanes have an apple wine made from an apple juice blend of tart apples, supplied by Harper Farms, 2191 W. Whitehall Road.

The farms cut up the apples into tiny pieces, then put the pulp into a hydraulic press that squeezes the pulp until it is dry.

The resulting juice is called cider, which is supplied to the winery.

Frank R. Johns, winemaker for the winery, said, "We don't have the proper equipment here to crush the apples. I'm not sure the wine press would do a very good job."

They hope to reduce the clarification process to where we would only have to rack once,

"Not many wineries use this process. During the centrifuge process, the wines pass through a centrifuge which spins very fast, he said.

"Last year we lost 10 percent of the wine in lees — the sediment in the bottom of the tank after the racking process," he said.

After the clarification process, the wine goes to cold stabilization, Johns said.

They cool the wine to about 20 degrees Fahrenheit and let it sit for a couple of weeks.

This is really cream of tartar sauce and some of the big wineries actually sell it," Johns said.

After the cold stabilization process, the wine is ready for bottling.

The second person puts the bottle on the corker and a pair of prongs pushes the cork into the bottle.

The third person puts on the capsules — the covering over the cork extending down the neck of the bottle.

The fourth person labels the bottles. The labels are put in a stack on a labeling machine where glue is heated to 300 degrees Fahrenheit.

The fifth person then boxes the bottles. "It usually takes us six hours to bottle the wine and we do about 2,000 bottles during this time," Mrs. Mebane said.

The Mebanes make their wine in a five-room building adjacent to a store.

Despite being small in size, Mrs. Mebane doesn't think there is any difference between the Nittany Valley Winery and the larger wineries.

The larger wineries started out the same way we are starting out,

the smaller winery I feel we give the wine a more personal touch.'

When the federal government cuts money given to the state, the state allocates less to the county and the county gives less to On Drugs, he said.

The organization has three sources of funding: the University, the United Way and Centre County — all have reduced or kept funding the same, Stock said.

Stock added that \$12,000 has been cut from the On Drugs budget in the first cut back.

He started before the cuts with a staff consisting of a full-time director, a three-person coordinating staff that worked 16 hours a week, and an administrative staff that manned our 24-hour hotline," Stock said.

Before the cuts, everyone on the staff received medical benefits, and the administrative staff, which manned the hotline, received minimum wage plus incentives, Stock said.

After the cuts the full-time director had to be changed to a triple-coordinator system, where two of us work 30 hours a week and one of us works 15 hours a week.

"All benefits were cut from everybody, and the administrative staff incentives were also cut.

"They used to have five people here at a time, but after the cuts we have just two people and sometimes only one."

"We are treating water as fast as we can," Stock said, "and we're slowly sinking."

A \$1,500 grant from a private donor and other private donations have helped a little, but additional cuts could be disastrous, Stock said.

Strawberry Fields, an agency that deals with the mentally retarded, has been able to sustain its programs after the first round of federal cuts, but has not been able to expand its programs, said Diana Marshall, executive director.

"We have no new programs, and we had to cut our employees' fringe benefits," Marshall said.

The most important effect is the loss of a parent program coordinator position that was funded by CETA, Marshall said.

This coordinator helped parents of mentally retarded children adjust to community life and helped increase the quality of the child's life, she said.

If the second round of expected federal cuts comes through it would leave the agency in a "pretty grim state," she said.

"We would lose support services," Marshall said, "it would make it extremely difficult for us to compete for jobs for the mentally retarded."

Marshall said social security cuts could force many of the adult mentally retarded to fight for survival.

"They only get \$200 a month from social security and some have to pay a \$160 to \$180 a month for rent," Marshall said.

"They would be unable to eat, or buy lightbulbs or anything else."

"The cuts would leave many adults on their own in Centre County. They would be put out on the street or worse placed."

The Youth Services Bureau, an agency that helps youths find jobs, has suffered a \$10,288 cut in its budget, but has absorbed the cut without laying off staff and without cutting services, Director Norma Keller said.

Keller said any further significant cut backs would affect services to children and cause the loss of a staff position.

collegian notes

Interfraternity Council Dance Marathon applications for dancer sign-up are now available in the IRC office in 203-B HUB.

Phi Beta Lambda professional business fraternity will meet at 8:30 tonight in the HUB Assembly Hall.

Final interviews for student counselors will take place today in 224 HUB.

The Conversant Program is looking for American volunteers to meet with international students for a few hours each week.

The Pollock-Nittany Residence Hall Association will go caroling at 7:30 tonight. Meet in the Pollock Union Building Rec Room.

Eco-Action will have an information table today in the HUB basement to promote public awareness of a potential cutoff in U.S. funding for the United Nations Environment Program.

The Centre County National Organization For Women will meet for elections and a short presentation on the Equal Rights Amendment at 7:30 tonight at Schlow Library.

The Society of Women Engineers will meet at 7 tonight in the Kunkle Activities Lounge in Hammond Building for a Christmas celebration and general meeting.

Penn State Students for Life will sponsor Dr. Mildred Fay Jefferson speaking on human and civil rights at 8 tonight in the HUB Ballroom.

The Anthropology Club, A.P.E.S., will sponsor Karen Gottlieb lecturing on genetic demography on Sark Channel Islands at 8 tonight in the Anthropology Museum.

The East Hills Towers Resident Assistants are sponsoring an educational and developmental program at 8 tonight in 106 Fisher Hall.

The Penn State Amateur Radio Club is accepting Christmas radiograms from 9 to 4 on the ground floor of the HUB.

The Paul Robeson Cultural Center will sponsor Howard Hall, assistant professor of psychology, to conduct a workshop on Assertive Training for Minorities at 7:30 tonight in the Walnut Building Conference Room.

Free U will offer The Satisfying Vegetarian Cooking Course at 6 tonight in 207 S. Human Development.

Late applications for student counselor positions will be accepted until 5 p.m. Friday in the Student Assistance Center, 135 Boucke.

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Budget Squeeze: Area United Way groups tighten belts

The first wave of budget cuts has been coming in with a "trickling down" effect ever since, he added.

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