

Our journey creating Privé Vineyard & Winery

In the spring of 1995 and living in Portland, we set out to find a more wholesome place to raise our young family. Mark owned a third generation hardware store, specializing in lawn and garden (incorporating his love of horticulture) and I was in community banking. We found ourselves in the typical "rat race" and were looking for a way to create a retreat from our busy world. We wanted our kids to benefit from a rural setting and knew it would be great if we could as a family, work with Mother Nature in a small hobby vineyard. We had no idea of what was ahead.

In July of 1995, we purchased our little slice of heaven. It included just under four acres total, a late 60's ranch style home and a two acre hobby vineyard that was planted in 1980. Although it had been let go both inside and out, we were excited to jump in and revive it. We employed a vineyard manager for the first year to instruct us in the basic care of a vineyard, then Mark took charge. As a family, we tended to the vineyards seasonal needs in the evenings and weekends, it was as romantic as any Hollywood version of a vineyard life. We sold our grapes to a local winemaker and shared the profits with our children. Each year, Mark and I marveled at how every decision and the timing of such in the vineyard correlated to the quality of the wine. In 1999, we had our grapes grafted to a Pinot Noir clone that we felt was superior, Pommard or UCD 4. Suddenly, the French term *terrior* had true meaning for us. Our petite, Burgundy sized vineyard included all that a vintner could ask for, south-west facing, Jory soil (red clay), centered at the 500 foot elevation and with a microclimate that provided unique characteristics to our two separate blocks, just 100 feet apart. The following year, we were honored that the esteemed Patricia Green chose to purchase our grapes. Meantime, I entered the winemaking program at the NW Viticulture Center as we explored the idea of adding a winery to our venture. We had tended so meticulously to each vine, it felt important to see the grapes through the final phase of their journey. After the first class, I fell in love with the art of crafting Pinot Noir and we subsequently launched our boutique winery in 2001, making 250 cases from the two estate blocks that we call Le nord and Le sud (the north and south in French). Again, we had no idea of what was ahead.

By 2003, we received the first of some important accolades that helped to launch our business. From then on, we were able to sell our estate wines entirely on futures (pre-ordered while still in barrel) to our growing wine club. In the following years, we both plunged in full time purchasing additional grapes and increased our annual production to 1,000 cases adding two additional Pinot Noirs, a Syrah and a Pinot Port. With the addition of an old-world brick oven overlooking the vineyard, we added a couple of fun summer events for our club members to enjoy gourmet pizza with our newest wine, a premium Bordeaux style blend. From the beginning, our intention has been to provide our guests with a memorable and extraordinary experience that provides the story of our passion behind every bottle.

Twenty one years later, we still marvel at how life mysteriously unfolds and allows dreams to become a reality. It is time for us to pass the baton to someone with their own dreams of a beautiful life in a vineyard and winery, who will bring fresh ideas, energy and their own unique passion to this special place we call Privé Vineyard.