

DAVE FUSSELL JR.
Duplin Wine Cellars – Rose Hill, NC

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Interviewer: Amy C. Evans, Southern Foodways Alliance
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[Begin David Fussell Jr. Interview]

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Amy Evans: This is Amy Evans on Monday, August 11, 2008. I'm in Rose Hill, North Carolina, home of Duplin Winery, and I'm here with Dave Fussell, Jr., part of the three generations of Duplin Winery here. And, David, if you wouldn't mind, please, stating your name and your occupation for the record?

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Dave Fussell, Jr: I'm Dave Fussell, Jr., and I am the President of Duplin Wine Cellars here in Rose Hill, North Carolina.

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AE: May I ask—also ask you to state your birth date for the record?

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DFJ: I was born August 18, 1967, so that makes me forty years old, but in another week I'll be forty-one.

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AE: Well, enjoy forty while you can [*Laughs*].

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DFJ: Well, I plan on it. [*Laughs*]

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AE: Okay. So could we start here, before we talk about the winery specifically, could you talk about your family's history in this area?

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DFJ: Okay. Well the Fussells have actually been here for a very long time. They came over from England—from Philadelphia and moved down in the 1700s. We kind of stick around here because nobody else will put up with in any other places, so it's a very prominent name here in Rose Hill. There are probably about, I would say 200 Fussells here in Rose Hill. My grandfather, well I remember my great-grandfather; they of course lived here with my great-grandmother. My great-grandmother happens to be second or third cousins to Winston Churchill, so that makes us kind of feel a little fancy. But we've been here for a long, long time and I—fortunately for me, I've grew up here in the country and really enjoy it and it's—it's a nice place to be.

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AE: All right. And then fade into the 1970s and [when] your family got into the wine business. Can you talk about what your family was doing for a living before that?

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DFJ: Okay, well, we'll go back to the '60s. In the 1960s my granddad was a big homebuilder here in the—in the county and in the area. He built most of the brick homes around Rose Hill and within Duplin County. My father [David Fussell Sr.] graduated from East Carolina University back in, I think maybe [nineteen]'61 or '62, and he became a school principal and he stayed in

the school business for many years. But he decided that he wanted to supplement his income and wanted to start farming on the side. He contacted the North Carolina Department of Agriculture and said, “What’s the best crop to plant?” And back then, it was a big winery out of New York paying \$350 per ton for our native Muscadine grapes. Well it takes four years for a vine to fully mature, so back in ’68, I think, we started growing Muscadine grapes about four miles from— from the winery here. And then [in] those four years the price fell from \$350 to \$125 a ton, and so we were stuck with a whole bunch of grapes. And we like to say that we’re Methodists because we couldn’t be Baptists; we had to get into the wine business and—and find a market for our grapes.

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The building that we’re in right here, this was the little warehouse for my—my grandfather’s construction business and they—he—he sold this—this building to my—my dad and uncle was in—in the wine business also early on. He sold it to—to them for \$70,000 and he—he’s ninety-five years old, still living, and he says, “Dave, whatever you do, do not loan your children any money; they’ll never pay you back.” He says that today they haven’t made a payment on that \$70-grand and now it’s about—worth about \$3.8 million. And so they—they, anyway, they converted this old building into—into a winery and started making wines out of their grapes and was lucky enough to—to sell it and eventually got some other growers to join in with him and we—we didn’t have any money back then, so we exchanged stock in our winery for—for the other growers’ grapes and—and they brought them in. And we—we used to have to stomp grapes by foot, and it was sort of a family affair and back then if your foot—if your foot wasn’t purple it meant you didn’t—meant you didn’t work very hard. So I always tried to have purple feet, and I thought it was cool back then when I was like five or six and I had the—the purplest feet in the neighborhoods.

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But anyway, we work really hard as a family and—and of course we—we’ve eventually— back then we had an old retired Baptist minister who—who whistled *How Great Thou Art* in the bottling room, and we did everything by hand. We—we used to be what they called a—a lick and stick operation where we’d—we’d have to lick a couple of labels or—or a certain label to put it on the bottle and that—that—that was—that was fun times back then. And my grandmother worked here and my Aunt Alice, she worked; and we used to love eating banana sandwiches with mayonnaise at lunch and we had a great time growing up in—in this building.

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AE: Now tell me your family’s names, your grandparents and—and your uncle also.

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DFJ: My—my granddad’s name is Daniel Jerome Fussell and that goes back to Winston Churchill. Winston’s mama was Jeannie Jerome, who happened to be from New York and—and so he was—they keep that name *Jerome* going along with the Fussell’s name and I have—I have an uncle—my uncle who—who my dad bought out in 1979, his name is Daniel Jerome, Jr. And then we have another guy working here part time while he’s going to East Carolina University; he is Daniel Jerome, III and we call him DJ. But my granddaddy is Daniel Jerome Fussell, Sr.; he’s still living. My mother—my grandmother was Elizabeth Baker Fussell and she was from a little town called Holly Springs, which is now a suburb of Raleigh, so it’s a big place. And of course on my mother side of the family my—Papa Carr and Mama Carr—and they both work

here, and Papa Carr actually made wine. This is my mom's folks; they—they both made homemade wine and sort of helped Daddy out a lot, too.

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My—my dad's name is David Geddie Fussell, Sr.; my mother's name is Ann Carr Fussell. They both worked here full-time up until about 1998, I think, and then finally they decided they would—they thought they would retire to the beach, but Daddy still comes in about three days a week and gets on me and tells me the place is not being run right and that kind of stuff. But I have two other brothers; of course, my name is David Getty Fussell, Jr., and my other two brothers are here in the winery working with us. One, the middle boy's name is Patrick Gibson Fussell; he's in charge of our vineyard. And we have John—Jonathan Doane Fussell, who is in charge of what we call our retail room and restaurant here that we're in visiting right now. He—he runs this place. And then plus we've got now though about 52 other folks with—with—that don't have a last name Fussell. Some of them are kin to us, but they work a lot harder and they're a lot smarter than the ones that have the last name Fussell.

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AE: Well what can you tell me about the winery in New York, when your father started growing grapes, that was that connection for the sale of the grapes, and do you know what the winery was and how they were using the—the Muscadine grapes?

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DFJ: Well back in the 1960s a large winery called Canandaigua Wine Company, which now is called Constellation Winery or Constellation Wine Group, and they happen to be the largest wine group in the world today, but back in the 1960s they just were really after getting some of our

native Muscadine grapes. And so they came down and they were offering a very good price, and so a lot of growers in—in North Carolina started growing grapes with the intention of selling it to Canandaigua for \$350 per ton. But, of course, with the law of economics, supply eventually became greater than demand, and so that drove the price down. Once that price fell down to—to \$125, none of these growers could—could even pick the grapes for that, so we got into the wine business. And we got about seven other good families to join in with us and—and exchanged stock for the grapes and a lot of the other—there were like sixty-four vineyards in North Carolina at that time, and only eight are here still today. But we—we grabbed those guys and started trying to market our—our Muscadine wines with—with the intention of just making the very best sweet, most fruitiest wine you could possibly make; and we're trying to make a wine that tastes just like you're up underneath the grapevine eating the grapes, and we still strive today to make that very same wine. We wanted to be known as making the best sweet wine in the world. And we—we try hard at it.

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AE: Well and—and tell me how that's going because I know, you know, with—with the international wine scene and—and Southern wine is really making headway on the international scene and *vinifera* [***vitis vinifera*, grape vines native to Europe and the Mediterranean**] is making, you know, a name for itself growing in the South on the international wine scene. And how does Muscadine fit into that, and how do you promote Southern sweet wines to a greater audience?

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DFJ: Well we—we—we, of course, started making wine back in 1972, and my granddaddy made a lot of money building homes. So we about broke him and actually, my—my father lost his house. And we—we—they—but the bank didn't want the winery back in the mid-'80s when we lost a lot of money; the—they—they said keep the—keep the winery going and just try to pay us whatever you can, but we want your house. So my granddaddy had to buy the house from the bank so—so I'd have a place to stay. But it was a big struggle up until 1996, and in 1996 they said—they came out on *60 Minutes* [television news program] and they said, "Drink a glass of red wine; it's good for you." Well that's about the best news a wine maker could ever here.

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So we came back and said, you know, "They—they're promoting red wine; let's—let's start focusing on red wines," and we started making some. And actually, we got a—a good break, a nice little Baptist school up the road, Campbell University, has got a great pharmaceutical school. And they came down and they said, "Dave, they're doing all kinds of tests on *vinifera* wines." You know, there are three different types of grapes grown in the world; there's *viscera vinifera* and those are grafted—or were grafted to our Muscadine—Southern Muscadine grapevines and—and they flourished over in Napa Valley and Robert Mondavi helped make those famous, Chardonnay, Merlot, Cabernet; those are native—those grapes are native to Europe. And then there's *vitas Lambrusco*, and if you're a Methodist like I am, and if you go and have communion in your church, you—you usually have a little Concord grape juice. That's—a concord is a Lambrusco grape, just like Lambrusco also has Niagara, Concord, Delaware, Catawba—these are all grapes that are native to the Northeastern part of the United States. And then we like to think, just like, you know, our Lord, you know, made Adam and said, "I can do a little bit better than that." And, of course, he made someone like you, a female, but we like to think that maybe he looked at those two grapes and said, "Let me try one more time,

and I think I can do better than that.” And—and, of course, we have our grapes here in the Southeastern part of the United States called Muscadine or *vitas rotunda folia*. *Vitas rotunda folia* is a very difficult name to—to say and us Southerners, we can make it really long at the end if we wanted to, but *vitas rotunda folia* grapes remind the earlier settlers of the Muscat grape and we made it a little longer and instead of Muscat we add a little extra syllable, *Muscadine*. And so all of our grapes are called Muscadine.

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Well Campbell University came down and let me—let us test these Muscadine wines because all these tests are on vinifera grapes, and we’re looking for this resveratrol [a powerful antioxidant found in Muscadine grapes]. So they came down and they got seven cases and went back, and a few weeks later they came back and they said they wanted seven more cases. And I’m saying, “What? Wait a minute. What are y’all doing, having a party up there?” And they wanted to carry some wine to Tuft’s University up in Boston. And they came back with some very positive results and showed that Muscadine wines had seven times more resveratrol in it than the other grapes that—that were grown in the world. And—and, of course, my dad said, “Is that good news?” And of course they said, “Oh, yes.” So our biggest state paper, *The N & O* [*The News & Observer*] came down and took some pictures of Dad and put—put my dad on the front page of the biggest paper in the state, smiling, holding a bottle of wine saying, “Not only do they taste good; they’re seven times more healthier.” And since that article in 1996, we’ve been able to sell every single bottle of wine we’ve made. They contribute Muscadine wines and the health benefits to our climate here in the eastern north of the United States. It’s kind of hot and humid during growing season, and it’s very different than Napa Valley. Heat and humidity supports a lot of fungal disease and, just as the good Lord produces—helps us produce natural antibodies whenever we’re sick, he has to help the grapes out a little bit, too. So the amount of stress put on

the grapes, they—the more stress, the more resveratrol compounds or antioxidants they produce, and so our climate puts a lot of stress on them and they had—had these antioxidants to survive our climate.

Like I said, we've—we've sold every single bottle of wine since then. Not only do we have our vineyard growing and the seven other growers growing grapes for us, we now have an additional 43 growers under contract growing grapes for us, and that makes about 51 vineyards that we pull from. We also get some grapes from your home state of—well not your home state but where you're living now, Mississippi, twenty miles south of Meridian. It's a little town called Quitman, Mississippi, and we get grapes from a man named Charlie Phillips down there, who owns about 150 acres—big vineyard. He grows some very, very delicious grapes and we want—we want to keep them delicious when we put them in the bottle.

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We produce, today, about 280,000 cases; that probably makes us about the biggest winery in the Southeastern United States. I think there are a couple wineries in New York a little bigger than us. We are very, very proud of—of our hard work; we're about the thirty-third largest wine group in—in the United States. But if you compare us into Gallo, which is the number one wine group in the United States, we go into them 893 times, so that—that kind of humbles you a little bit. So in order to compete with those folks, we—we have to—we have to bring out our Southern personalities and our—we just try to out-nice them, so—. But our wines are available in North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Florida, Tennessee, Virginia, West Virginia and Ohio. We'll be in Ohio this month soon, working our way to Mississippi.

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AE: So tell me about—I want to ask a little bit more about sourcing grapes, but I wonder if we could go back to when the winery started. And would you say there's a certain year that the winery really kicked off and when that—when that was?

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DFJ: Well it's kind of hard to say because, you know, they were making it on the side for a long, long time, and it really wasn't too legal back then but we—we really started going and putting our wines in the stores or—or finding a few stores in 1975. My mom drew—hand drew a label and we have a bottle over there in our—our display of our 1975 wines and so I'd say '75 was really when we just started marketing our wines legally.

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AE: Well and I'm glad you mentioned doing the—the non-legal production of wine because I wanted to talk about that, too, because I wonder how—what the learning curve was to making wine on a larger production scale and if that home wine making tradition, it surely helped along the way and how so?

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DFJ: Oh, yes. Well we were lucky—the business was because my dad was—we—we—I don't know if he's start as smart as he used to be, but I find that now he's even smarter than—than I thought he was back then; but he was a very smart dude, and he went to school for two years up in Ithaca, New York, trying to learn how to make wine. Also my—my mom's dad had a little homemade wine action going on where he—he supported some—some friends and acquaintances when we—we had the police chief on—on call and we were—we were good to

go. But also, North Carolina—before Prohibition, North Carolina was the leading wine state in the nation, and the best selling wine was called Virginia Dare Scuppernong; and it was named after, of course, Virginia Dare, who was the first American born in—in the States. And a man named Paul Garrett had five operating wineries here in North Carolina. He was the Gallo of the time. We did run into some old dudes. My dad—this is back in the ‘60s, and we found some guys that were—that were a little older that worked for Paul Garrett, and we got the original recipe for the Virginia Dare Scuppernong so we, of course, incorporated that recipe into the equipment that we—we now had and—and sort of changed that recipe over the years to—to fit now what we have. Of course we have some modern presses and we don’t—we don’t have to stomp the grapes any longer, but we—we incorporated all that into—into our winemaking techniques now.

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So, you know, a lot of studying in—in Ithaca, New York, by my dad. My—my granddad and—and others and they—actually, the others were the official samplers for what we were making, just to make sure we were doing a good job and that—armed with that Virginia Dare Scuppernong recipe we—we got into the business back in—in the 1970s.

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AE: Now with the—the production wines that you make here and started making here in the ‘70s and the home winemaking tradition, is there a taste difference would you say in—in homemade Muscadine and the produced Muscadine here at the winery?

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DFJ: Well we—we like to think that we're better than those, but now I've—I've found some good locally produced wines but, you know, I sampled wines when I was seven, eight, and nine years old, but I can't really remember how they taste. But I—I would say that we—we do a very good job on our end, and then there are also some growers—we had the ability because we're doing it for money to—to try to support cool fermentation temperatures, and we have some computerization now, which—which old homemade winemaker, he just digs a little hole and may put his vat down in the dirt to keep it cool. We have sophisticated refrigeration now and we—we use only stainless steel tanks, which really keep our wine cool and nice and—and we don't incorporate any off-tastes like you would have in some of the old wine makers wood kegs or wooden barrels. We try to keep our wine very clean and crisp and fruity; we—we want to get the grapes to come in and we want them to leave in a bottle tasting just like with all the fruit that they grow abroad it's just like the grape itself. And so we ferment our wines at sixty degrees and we—we—we keep our wine refrigerated up until it leaves our winery.

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And so we got a little bit of advantage over some of the old—old-timers but, you know, they—they like bringing their stuff up here and getting our approval or—or bringing a recipe. And I've asked for a few recipes, too, so we're working on a good blueberry wine now out of different little—you'll have to come back and talk about blueberries, but we're working on a blueberry wine right now that a guy in Bladen County brought us a recipe and it's—it's some good stuff.

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AE: Do you know where these recipes are coming from or how old they are or—or anything like that?

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DFJ: Well my dad started off making three wines; we made Scuppernong, using the Virginia Dare Scuppernong recipe, and then he, of course, came up with a Noble. We—we still make Noble today, but we couldn't call it—we don't call it Noble anymore because we couldn't sell it when it was named Noble but we—we've got a fancy name now [Carolina Burgundy Dry Muscadine], and it seems to sell a little better. And we made Carlos, which we still make today, and these were all—those two were my dad's recipe, along with my grandfather. But over time, we've had some—some other wine makers come in. You know, we've been in business for over 30 years now and we—we've gotten some really good wine makers to come in and work for us and—and then bigger wineries would—would hire them because they did such a good job here, and we couldn't afford to pay them the—the big paychecks that the big boys could pay them, but we would learn and glean information from those folks and—and slowly but surely, everything is—has changed. And you always have to be willing to make change because there's always somebody that wants to be better and we—we—than you and so you have to work very, very hard.

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Today we've got a wine maker; he—he likes to—a young fellow named Jason Bryan, who actually started working at the winery when he was thirteen years old, picking grapes and he—he always said throughout school that he wanted to come back and work at Duplin. And after college, he came back and he was—he was an assistant winemaker, and then he moved into that position about, I'd say, six years ago. And he likes to pretend—or not pretend—he's not pretending a bit, but he likes to say that since he's been on board, our sales have increased 2,253-percent. And—and they actually have, since the time he came onboard, so he's doing—he must

be doing something pretty good. But he's got a good taster and—and he—he knows what he's doing and equipment definitely has—has helped us in improving. We—we—if something new comes out, we're testing it, and we want to make sure that it can benefit us and if it can, can we afford it, and if we can afford it, then we're going—we're going to incorporate that into our wine making practices.

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AE: Uh-hmm. And y'all are known as—and call yourselves, too, the *World's Largest Muscadine*—

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DFJ: Winery.

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AE: —*Winery*. Thank you. And I wonder if, over the years, have you just gotten more demand for Muscadine wine or has—you've just—you've just been reaching a larger audience or how that works?

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DFJ: Well with the—with the health benefits in 1996 coming out, we played that violin as long as we could, and we still play it today. Muscadine grapes are the healthiest grapes in the world, and by word of mouth that news and that information has spread. We're trying to educate folks all the time. Of course, if you drove down from Raleigh, maybe you saw some of our billboards out on Interstate 40; so we've done extensive advertising on trying to get folks to come into our

winery and take a tour. We're very close to the coast here, so we get a lot of folks from—well, of course, North Carolina, driving down to the beach, Virginia, West Virginia, Ohio, a lot of visitors and tourists come down to Eastern North Carolina to visit our beautiful beaches. And we've got those billboards, and we've got brochures everywhere you can go, trying to get people to come in.

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Last year, I had 82,000 visitors come into this building here and take a tour of our winery, and we offer free sampling. And we—we try to show them a good time, and we try to build a relationship with a customer. If we can build a good relationship with someone and have a product or a wine that really, really tastes good, you can slowly but surely grow into become sort of what we are today. Now it's hard to hold on; it's a lot harder to get where we are. I mean it's a lot harder to stay where we are than it was to get where we were, but I think that over time we don't really know what we're doing that's very, you know, special or different than anybody else other than out-nice-ing them, and that is the—you know, making the best sweet wine and—and folks saying, “Hey, this wine is healthy!” that has created this demand and neighbors telling neighbors and—and I think the people like working with folks that are appreciate for business and—and tell you thank you for your business. And—and that's what we try to do.

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AE: Uh-hmm. And speaking of the health benefits, did I see on your website that you also sell grape seed pills?

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DFJ: Yes. Back in [nineteen] '98 or so, you know, I told my—told you my dad sort of semi-retired. Well he started really looking into, you know, where do a lot of the—where—where can we benefit mostly from—from incorporating Muscadine grapes into our diet? And the seeds, all these universities including, well, Mississippi State, came out and—and did a lot of studies in on—on the grapes themselves and dissecting the grapes and where is—where can we benefit and—and the seeds showed tremendous promise. And so my dad started another little company that started separating the seeds after we removed all the good, delicious juice off the grapes, running the—the pulp and the skins and seeds through a seed separator and—and started extracting these seeds and—and freeze-drying, just like you freeze-dry coffee, started freeze-drying these grape seeds and—with the hope of preserving all the healthful benefits in the seeds. And then we've started selling these freeze-dried seeds to—I'll just call them nutri-ceutical companies, and they've incorporated these seeds into body lotions, shampoos. The extracts—they're trying to get an extract off of these seeds and facial creams for the antioxidant power and it's all-natural, so folks like, you know, this—this natural feel. But my—my—my dad and uncle also said, "Well let's—let's take the seeds one step further," and they started milling the—the ground seed and encapsulating and, of course, we put them in a bottle here and sell them under a nutri-grade label and it's all done in—in earth environment so it's packed oxygen free and—and many, many people have benefited from taking these grape seed capsules. It's all-natural. Half the folks who take it have a positive benefit from cholesterol levels being lowered to it's—these seeds are actually very good anti-inflammatory agents. And so a lot of folks with joints and—and knee pains, they've—they've taken those and—and they also know that, you know, there's no side benefits—no side—what do you—side effects; thank you—side effects from taking something natural.

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AE: Now you've had these scientists come in and tell you about all the health benefits of Muscadine. Are there any that you know of—folk beliefs or folk medicines or folklore related to the Muscadine in the area?

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DFJ: Well [*Laughs*] in the area, folks just like drinking it, so it gives them a good excuse to drink. And that might be one of the reasons we're—we're—our sales are increasing, too, or have increased because there is a good reason to have a glass of—of our Muscadine wines. But yeah, there—there are some tales of, you know, folks soaking their feet in—in the wine and I'm not going to do that because I'd rather drink it. My—my little brother says that there's one thing it doesn't do and that's grow hair because he's completely bald. But there—there—there are many, many, many folks who—who really look at our Muscadine wines and—and we have one guy who—who—who really believes that incorporating the Muscadine wine into his diet and also he jumped on with the grape seeds. He had some stage-four cancer in his—in his brain and miraculously, it—it is all gone; they couldn't operate anymore. And he has no cancer cells in his brain and—and this is all a part of it. Of course he incorporated a lot of other things, too, in his life and, you know, they say you're supposed to eat healthy and—and exercise and he's doing all these kinds of things and the Good Lord is working—working with this fellow and he's a miracle. But there—there—you know, we see all kinds of positive things happening, and we can't put it into print because the Federal government won't allow us to say, “Drink a glass of red wine. It's good for you,” in print. I can tell you, but if an ATF [Bureau of Alcohol Tobacco and

Firearms] agent listens to this, I might get in a little trouble, so don't let them visit your library.

[Laughs]

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AE: Well and speaking of other, you know, traditional uses of Muscadine and making wine and—and the byproducts of making wine, the whole pie and then the jams and jellies and things, y'all offer those here, too, do you not? Or maybe not the pies but the jams and jellies?

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DFJ: Well we do have grape hull pie.

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AE: Oh, you do?

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DFJ: Yes. We have a little bistro next door and that's our—that's our specialty on the dessert end. That, and the ballistic brownie. The ballistic brownie is packed with a lot more calories too, so we—. But the—the Muscadine, we—we have—when we got into the restaurant business we started thinking about, you know, what can we do? What can we use? We have a lot of—lot of stuff left over after we take all the juice out [of the grapes], and we've started looking into fruit spreads. We make a delicious Muscadine fruit spread today. We incorporate some—some of our juice now and make a great tasting Scuppernong jelly or Muscadine jelly. We've also taken some of our wines and incorporated those into some barbecue sauces. We have a chef, Chef Burt Fussell, who is a—a sixth or seventh cousin. He's—he's on down the line; he runs our restaurant

with—with his wife, Sarah, and after lunch he—he buses and cleans the tables and then he gets back into the kitchen and he starts bottling some of these jellies and jams up. But there's a lot of folks that—we've used them in fruit bars as a topping for—on your biscuit, of course. And there's—there's—someone made some—some salsa; I didn't really care for it as much as I did the tomato-based, but I ate it. And we've had, you know, all kinds of things come up and about. And next year we'll find something else new, I'm sure.

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AE: And now, as evidenced by your gift shop up front there, you have a great business and tourism coming through this part of North Carolina. Do you know—can you track your customers and—and find out where all they're coming from and what kind of popularity those things like, you know, Scuppernong jelly have in other places?

00:36:02

DFJ: Well if you take a look through—we're in North Carolina, of course—but if you walk through, you'll see some Ohio state plates and some Virginia book bags, and we sell all kinds of different gifts and we—we do try to do our best attracting. You know, today, everything is so sophisticated; you can get a zip code or ask for a zip code while you're at the cash register, and right away, we know what town you're from. We find that last year we had 82,000 visitors; that's an estimate, but we found that the majority of our visitors were in-state folks. And, of course, we're—we're a day-trip away from most major cities. I'll call them cities here in North Carolina. But also, North Carolina has such pristine and beautiful beaches and you can—you can either find what I call a fancy beach like Myrtle Beach, South Carolina, very close by, which is an hour and fifteen minutes down south from us, or you can find a family beach like Topsail

Island, which is a place that we go and spend a lot of our summer weekends at Topsail, and it's a nice family-oriented beach. But it's very competitive, as far as prices, and we find a lot of folks from Virginia love coming down and visiting our—our Eastern North Carolina. And it's not a bad trip from West Virginia, and if you don't mind driving about eleven hours, you can get from Columbus, Ohio, in a day. I've been to Columbus before in one day and made it back the next day, and that was pretty tough, so you need—you do need to spend a week down here before you make the trip back up. But there—there—I think there were over—I think that we estimated that there were over nine million tourists that visited our beaches this year, and we work very hard at trying to let them know that it—that it doesn't rain at Duplin Wine Cellars, when it's raining at the beach.

00:38:18

And—and if they come in here, we're going to show them a good time and—and they can—they can visit and, hopefully, carry a bottle of wine back home with them, and—and eventually, they'll ask for it in a store and eventually, we'll get it in a store up wherever they live.

00:38:35

AE: And I wonder if—and I mean this in the best way—but if there's some kind of novelty attached to tourists coming through to Eastern North Carolina and getting Muscadine wine and Muscadine jelly because it's so localized and it's so Southern and it's so of this place, so is that part of the popularity, do you think?

00:38:56

DFJ: Oh, yes. I—you know we—we think about those things, too. And we—we I don't know; we—we look at things and say, “Okay, well, you know, these grapes can only grow in the southeastern United States. And so these grapes are not available, and these products that are made out of these grapes are not available in—in the northern states or the western states or anywhere else in the world right now.” I heard that China is trying to put in a lot of Muscadine grapes, though, actually right now. But that is a part of it, you know, something special that you can't find in—in your hometown or in your area and—and it only grows here. You know the people—the people talk about the—the Maryland crab cakes around here; everybody is talking about, you know, the crab cakes are the best and—and we want them to talk about Duplin wine just like they talk about the—the Maryland crab cakes or the Duke's mayonnaise. I don't know if y'all have—do y'all have Dukes? Okay. Well that's—you know, if you're a Southerner, you're going—you can drink RC Colas and you're going—you're going to use Duke's mayonnaise and—and you're going to drink Duplin Wine, we hope, and watch NASCAR and—and look at all the pretty girls. We like that, too. **[Laughs]**

00:40:18

AE: So how many wines do you actually produce here—different wines?

00:40:22

DFJ: Whew I think we make about twenty-eight different types. I've lost count. And they—some—some are—are—are slight different blends of—of two different grapes or three different grapes. We get in about twenty-one or twenty-two different Muscadine grapes, and it kind of really gets kind of hard to—to tell the difference between some of them, so I'm sure that we have some Scuppernongs mixed with the Carlos sometimes that we didn't mean to have but that—

that's kind of like vegetable soup in that the more things you put in vegetable soup, sometimes the better it tastes and—and so that's what—one of our tricks is to try to find a good balance of a different—bunch of different groups to go into some of our bottles and we—we think that so far those fifty-two folks that work with us, they've done an excellent job making a good wine and—and selling and building relationships with folks.

00:41:27

AE: So sourcing so many grapes, is it difficult to remain—the wines they produce—consistent at all?

00:41:34

DFJ: Yes, very different. And that's one of the reasons why we do not vintage-date our wines any longer. We get grapes from a lot of different places and, of course, now it's—it's good for us, too, because over here, just like in Mississippi, we—we're subject to hurricanes, and we're trying to dodge hurricane winds. We're also subject to late spring freezes and frosts, and we're trying to dodge those also. We know we're going to get hit in certain areas, but we wanted—we wanted to place our grapes in different areas just so, if we're hit in this place bad, then when we've got some grapes in another, that they're going to try to make up for it. But so we got grapes in different places, so each and every place that you have a—a vineyard you're going to have, you know—the climate is going to be different and the dirt and the soil is going to be different, and then the grower is going to be different because you're going to have some growers—the best fertilizer for a vine is the shadow of the grower, and we're going to find some growers they're in their vineyards all the time, and some of them may be on the golf course and just trying to count their money or the eggs before they hatch. But we—we—we—we have

different growers in different places, and then we also have, from year to year, different amounts of sunshine, rain, hot days, cool days, climates are changing all the—all the time. We're finding now that our climate, of course, is warm and—and so our—one of the problems that we're seeing is our grapevines are getting juiced up a little too early in the spring, and then we may have some kind of freeze come through in early April or so, after our grapevines think it's summertime. So we're trying to adapt and slowly learn, but it takes a while to get—get things changed. But right now, the climate is changing faster than—than we are, but one of the things that we do is we always keep a little bit of the previous year's wine on-hand in bulk to blend in—so we'll keep some of the 19—well we kept some of the 1999 Scuppernong, and after the 2000 Scuppernong was ready, we took a portion of the '99 and slowly bended it in into the 2000 to slowly change our tastes. We—one thing we want is for our customer not to notice a change, but there is a change and there actually is a change from—from bottle to bottle but we just hope it's so small that—that our—our friends and our customers, that they can't tell the difference. So we do some—some blending from year to year, and we also try to—we also try to teach our growers or—or educate our growers on—on the same and best growing techniques and try to do our best and we reward those guys who pay attention to—to the vines with the price.

00:44:47

And—and we know the good growers, and we know the bad growers, and the good growers are going to remain under contract. And we've got a few growers that we're going to have to tell, "Listen, you've got to do some improvement, or you'll have to find another place to sell your grapes next year."

00:45:04

AE: Uh-hmm. And speaking of—of climate and—and location and all, there’s a lot of talk in the wine world about *terroir* [*the special characteristics recognized in a grape, as a result of geographical and environmental influence*]. No?

00:45:13

DFJ: No, I don’t know.

00:45:17

AE: Okay, talking about just how you can taste in the wine where the grape came from and the earth and the climate and the soil and the—the natural elements—the geography, place surrounding the grape where it’s grown, that you can taste in the bottle. What is—what do you have to say about that?

00:45:30

DFJ: Well I sort of—you know, that’s a very fancy term and—and you can make something just as fancy as you possibly can—possibly make it, and if you grab a—a wine glass and you stick out your little pinkie, then that means that—I might have a hard time selling you a glass of wine, so we really just try to stay away from the specialties. Our wines, we—we just like we—we try not to make, you know, the—the old saying, I don’t know how made it famous, but I think it was like Paul Mason or somebody: “We will sell no wine until it’s time.” Well he was actually telling you a story, because if he had the opportunity to sell a bottle of wine, he was going to sell it because he—he wanted to make some money. And a lot of things that we could do here, we could have individual vineyard bottlings and—and that would actually drive the price up, because to keep something separate and in small lots that—that does draw the price up.

And—and the wine maker and the grower, they—they deserve money because of those things. But we—we really stay away from those things but you can—. And we find because of—before we do our blending, we find that one year, Mr. Daughtry’s grapes from Newton Grove, which is very close to Clinton where you stayed this—this—last night, we’ll find that his grapes taste so good and the wine that we make just using these grapes before blending is just—is just unbelievable. We’ll say, “Oh, this is the best wine we’ve ever made.” And then the next year someone like Jay Milam, which is a grower down in Burgaw, “Oh, well this is,” you know, “this was so much better than—than this vineyard.” So we think that even if you, you know, you have one vineyard growing each and every year, yes, once out of every ten years it’s going to be the best grapes you ever could—could find. But the other nine, we think that—that maybe it’s just the name that’s selling and the price tag that’s selling that vineyard because there—those vineyards are always subject to different climates and—and different vineyard managers sometimes and—and the age of the vine.

00:48:14

As the—as the vine ages and it gets a little less fertile, and we find that sometimes that’s very good and the less grapes the fruitier the grape is going to be and—but sometimes we also find that the older the vine and the less grapes means that the nutrition values and—and the grapes aren't grown as healthy as—or the vine is not going to produce the nutrients that it needed or find the—the water and supplies and feed the grapes like they ought to. So everything just changes.

00:48:52

AE: Now and do I understand that your Hatteras Red is with—would that be considered your most traditional Muscadine wine?

00:49:00

DFJ: Yes. Well we—Hatteras Red is a little blend of a James grape, and it also has a little Noble and we also put a little white grape in it, just slightly, called Carlos; and Hatteras Red in North Carolina is the third best selling wine. We have a big food chain—grocery chain here called Food Lion, and Hatteras Red is the best selling wine in Food Lion. It's very sweet; it's picked very late in the season. The longer a grape sits on the vine, the sweeter it gets, and so our Hatteras Red grapes are some of the last grapes that we get in. This year we'll make somewhere close to 45,000 cases of—well, bar no hurricanes—about 45,000 cases of Hatteras Red and it is—it's just—I can't tell you it's like my—my granddaddy used to make but it's as close as it can get without the bare feet.

00:50:07

AE: And I want to ask you about some of your other names of your wines and your labeling and marketing and whatnot, because it seems also very regional and localized with featuring artists and—and specific locales throughout North Carolina. Can you talk about that?

00:50:24

DFJ: Okay, well one of the things that we did back in 1996 is we said, “Okay, let's—let's upgrade our package.” And here in North Carolina we—we have several lighthouses but one of the most popular lighthouses on—in the Eastern United States is the Cape Hatteras lighthouse. So my mom said, “Let's—let's incorporate this lighthouse in our labels.” And, you know, we were just trying to focus on selling wines back then just to folks here in North Carolina. So [my mother said], “Let's incorporate this Hatteras lighthouse, and people will look at the label and

say, ‘Oh, this is from North Carolina, let’s try.’” So we incorporated that lighthouse and—and that sort of became our logo and—and then in 1996 we—Turning Leaf Chardonnay, and it had a label that had a little leaf hanging down at the bottom kind of cut out, and we thought that was really neat. So I said, you know, “I don’t want just a straight label anymore. I want it to have something jutting out.” So we tried to make this lighthouse stand up at the top of our label and worked on that forever, but it never would come off the label machine correctly. It kept on tearing, so we kept thinking and thinking and thinking and eventually, we came up with having a lighthouse and a seagull. And this seagull, the wing it comes off the side, the—the right-hand side of our label and that—that really just sort of competed there and we no longer had a straight label. It was—you know, we had a little break in our label, so we had a little different looking package. And—and then we started—we really we—we do have, you know, traditional names for Scuppernong grape, I mean for Muscadine grapes. The Scuppernong Magnolia is a white Muscadine grape. Carlos is a—a white. And we—we—we—but a lot of folks don’t really know, you know, what these names mean, especially if you’re coming down from Ohio. And so we started incorporating some other names and just flying off the top, you know. Let’s—let’s make it sound a little cooler. And we named just—just this past year, Brice’s Creek. And my—my mom’s mom was Jessie Brice Carr, and there’s a little Brice’s Creek here in North Carolina and we—we—so we are trying to tie in some stories, you know, and this is named after—after my Mama Carr, Jessie Brice, and this is Brice’s Creek. And it’s a nice little sweet white.

00:53:12

We have some vineyards growing in Sampson and Sampson County, which is just the—the county next door to us, and it has a river running through called Black River. And we have some vineyards actually nestled up next to the Black River and we—we have a wine called Black River Red, and we incorporate a lot of those James and Noble grapes off of those

vineyards off of the Black River into that—into those—into that bottle. But we come up with things that, you know—and I made a wine and came up with a label myself called Baldhead Red, and you remember earlier I said my brother doesn't have any hair, well neither does the other one, and I named it after those two. But I've repented since then, because since then my hair started falling out, and I'm like man I shouldn't have picked on bald folks but anyway—. Now I'm—and now I'm—I got a terrible receding hairline and—but Baldhead Red is—is named after my brothers Jonathan and Pat and—and all the other baldheaded men around the winery. And—and the first label that I drew—I like drawing; I drew our initial label, well the '96 label with the seagull and the—and the Hatteras lighthouse. And this one I had a silhouette—I think the word is silhouette—of three heads and one had hair and two didn't, and it was actually me and my two brothers on there, but Mama didn't like that too much so we—we ended up putting the Baldhead Island lighthouse on that label and just, you know, to please her and—and not make any trouble I guess with my sister-in-laws.

00:55:00

AE: And tell me about the Real Red that's part of the Shrimp Festival that you do.

00:55:05

DFJ: Oh, yes. Yes, we have a lot of little festivals around our area but one is in Sneads Ferry, and it was just this past weekend, and it's the Shrimp Festival, where we—where they're celebrating their—their shrimp heritage. A lot of shrimp come off of the Coastal North Carolina, and they have a big festival. And a few years ago, I'm going to say about seven or eight, you know time flies now; but about seven or eight years ago, their festival committee approached my little brother, Jonathan, and said, "Listen, we'd love to make a—a—a wine to help us celebrate,

you know, our festivities.” And we came out with a—a totally different wine that we use with a different blend of—of grapes and—and they—they’ve had a local artist from the area or—or they also have had competitions and we’ve held competitions, too, for some of our labels but they—they’ve held competitions and had artists come up with a new design, and they make up their names. We’ve had Real Red and—and if you’ve seen the label, we’ve got a reel from a rod and reel on the label with some red fishing line on there, and it’s a pretty neat looking label. And we’ve had Shrimply Red, and then we’ve had names of some shrimp boats, *Bubba’s*. I think Bubba Red was—was one of them and it was named after one of our local shrimp boats there.

00:56:54

But we also do some contests here with some of our local artists to design a label, and that Evening Tide, which is a bottle of wine that you were holding when I walked up, that was designed by a—a man—that picture was drawn by a fellow outside of Raleigh, and for every bottle of that wine, we had a little contest; and for every bottle of wine that we—we donate one dollar to the Children’s Miracle Network. And so we—we tied all that in together and tried to get our name in the news and—and we had our sales director, he was on with the telethon, the local telethon on the—on the local channel here. And I think we raised about—we auctioned off the first bottle and it went for \$4,000, and so that money went to the Children’s Miracle Network. But we’ve got a lot of folks that work in the winery that do a lot of things throughout the community and church, and we’re really proud of the folks that work here.

00:58:01

AE: And what has the winery meant to the community at large, do you think, over the years?

00:58:06

DFJ: Well, you drove into Rose Hill, and it's not very big. We've got two stoplights and we're—we're actually—well Rose Hill is not only the home of the world's largest Muscadine winery; it happens—happens to be the home of the world's largest frying pan. And back in the 1960s, man, we had the biggest poultry jubilee, and it celebrated our chicken heritage. And the Jaycees here in town in the '60s, I think it may have been—it may be the Lion's Club, they decided they were going to start having a celebration—a jubilee. And we had a big parade and—and they built the world's largest frying pan, and it can cook 280 whole chickens at one time, and that's a lot of bird. But they would have big parades, and Pat Boone was the emcee of the—one time of the Poultry Jubilee Queen—what do you call it? Contest? Pageant? The pageant, yeah, the—the pageant. And we had a Poultry Jubilee Queen, the Poultry Queen, and he came down at emceed that thing, and we thought we were fancy.

00:59:26

But we—we have a lot of chickens; a lot of folks are farmers around this area. We also are heavy in the pork production. The number one employer in our area is—is the House of Raeford and Nash Johnson family. And then the Murphy family employs also a great deal of folks in their pork producing business and pork growing business. And then we, ourselves, we're the third largest business in our area here. We—we only have fifty-two folks but we—we still feel like we have definitely contributed to—to the area simply by—we draw in you know eighty-plus thousand visitors, and those folks have to get gas, too, and we don't have the gas stations here. And we spend a lot of money with our local businesses, and I think that about half the folks in Rose Hill are—are proud to have us and they'll—they'll always come back to say, “Dave, I was in New York and somebody found out I was from Rose Hill, and they said, ‘Oh yeah, don't they make Duplin Muscadine there?’” And that makes me feel really good, you know. So and they go off all over and say, “You're making Rose Hill famous.” And—and then—and then, of

course, some folks are kind of upset that we're making Rose Hill famous because we're making it like—they feel like we're making it the bootleg capital of the South because—. And—and we—when I was little and even to this day I'm—I'm told I'm going to hell a lot. And I was tough back then because I was eight years old and riding on the bus and little Johnny would come up, “Dave, you're going to hell.” I said, “What are you talking about?” He said, “My mama and daddy said you and your whole family are going to hell for making wine.” And I didn't like that too much, so we—we got in a lot of fights, and I was a tough little dude back then. But when I got to high school, I found out I really wasn't as tough as I thought I was.

[Laughs]

01:01:41

And—but yeah, half the folks are proud of us, we think, and the other half probably wish we weren't here.

01:01:46

AE: **[Laughs]** Well what do you say to the people outside of North Carolina who (a) aren't really aware that there is a wine making industry in North Carolina and—or (b) are not familiar with the really long history and tradition of Muscadine wine making in North Carolina?

01:02:02

DFJ: Well, first I want to—if they're ever in the neighborhood, I want them to come by and see us. If they come by and visit, we're going to promise them that they'll meet some friendly people, and we promise that our efforts into making something that tastes just like the grapevine—we're 110-percent. You know, we try very hard. They may not like the wine, but we're going to try hard to get them to like it.

01:02:35

But one of the things that I want to say is, you know, we—we have a—a proud, a bunch of proud folks here, and we've got a special grape that only—and we're so lucky—that it only grows here in the southeastern United States, and we're going to use what the Good Lord gave us to the best of our ability. And if you want to discover something special and something unique and you want to discover the best sweet wine in the world, you—you call us on the telephone and we'll ship it to you by UPS, or you can come to Rose Hill and take a tour of our place and—and we'd love to build a relationship with them.

01:03:22

AE: And we've been talking for a long time now, and we haven't talked about the Mother Vine yet. Let's talk about that.

01:03:25

DFJ: The Mother Vine. We have talked for a while, but this is a very good subject. The Mother Vine is the world's oldest living grapevine, and it is reputed to be over 480 years old, and that girl is still producing grapes. It is located on Roanoke Island in a little town called Manteo, and Roanoke Island, of course everybody is, I hope, familiar with the Lost Colony, Sir Walter Raleigh's group that came over, and now they're missing. The Virginia Dare was born over there on Roanoke Island. They say that Sir Walter Raleigh's colonists actually ate grapes off of this—this vine and in the 1800s a winery called the Mother Vineyard Winery opened up in Manteo and incorporated that vine and several other in—several other of these vines that were growing in this area into his winemaking. Of course, over time, the other vines died out or were pulled up, and this one remains.

01:04:53

So there's a lot of great history there. And about four years ago, a North Carolina Senator, Fountain Odon approached my dad and said, you know, "We need to try to preserve this heritage and this vine. What can we do?" And they came up with the idea of trying to get some direct cuttings from this grapevine and trying to propagate the vines and setting out a vineyard. Well they went out and got 1,000 vines, and that would make about five acres of grapes. But after a whole summer of struggling, only sixty-two of those grapevines survived. So I guess Old Girl, she just really doesn't want anything else to happen to her. But we got sixty vines, and they planted them out in our vineyard, which is four miles east of her, and we call it the Little Mother Vine Vineyard. And we, just this past year, were able to get our first crop off of those vines, and we've got just a few small amount of grapes; and we took those grapes, and we made a Mother Vine Wine out of the Scuppernong, the original Scuppernong grapevine direct cuttings. All of our Scuppernongs are actually descendants of this vine, but from the 1800s, you know, we've had several different generations of cuttings come from—from this vine, but this—these—these Mother Vine Wine came from a direct cutting from this vine, so we—we think that's pretty, pretty neat also.

01:06:46

But the—the Mother Vine, if you're ever out there, there is a sign that says—it's a brown state sign with a little arrow that says "The Mother Vine." Be careful, though; it's on private property now, and you probably need to ask for permission. I wish that—that the state could buy the man's house and tear it down and just have the vine there. Scuppernong is the official fruit of—of North Carolina. And it's because of that Fountain Odom. He—he incorporated that law in several years ago. But it's a special—special vine and we hope that—I hope that it will last many, many, many more years.

01:07:27

AE: Is it making some good wine?

01:07:29

DFJ: Oh, I'll let you sample some. I think it tastes very good.

01:07:36

AE: So in the greater scheme of things of being a North Carolinian and a North Carolina winery and producing wine made from a native North Carolina grape and then now this Mother Vine and the history behind that, can you kind of wrap your head around what it means to be in the wine industry in a place like this and—and that history and tradition you have behind what you do?

01:07:58

DFJ: Well, you know, I'm not—I'm not smart enough to put words into it. I can tell you that—that I, personally, feel lucky. I personally feel like I am working at something that—that may be—if my son, when he grows up, if he—not—see, if he's smart enough, maybe he'll be a lawyer or a doctor but maybe, you know, someone else like one of my nephews or something could—could come into our business. We feel like, you know, we—we—we're very proud of our family, but we try to be humble about it, and we know that there are a lot of wineries since us that—that have come up in North Carolina. We were the—we're the oldest and when—when started the wine business, there was another winery called Deerfield, and the fellow died of cancer, and he was out of business by [nineteen] '74. But since we've opened up in North

Carolina, there have been seventy-two other wineries opened up. So we feel like we're sort of laying the groundwork here for—for the Muscadine grape and Muscadine wineries and we think that if we do a good job and if people sample our wines, they'll say, you know, "Muscadine wines are—are pretty good." And, you know, we have to set the stage because we're the ones out there in the stores. The other seventy-two, only a few are out in our stores, so we—we have to set a good example for all the others, too, and we feel like we're doing that. And every now and then, we'll catch them snooping around, though, so we don't really like that too much. But we—we keep the gates locked to those other folks.

01:09:54

AE: And this may be—I might be stepping into something I don't want or really mean to, but in North Carolina, with there being so many wineries now and some doing the traditional Muscadine wine but a lot doing *vinifera* these days, is there some competition there or is—or are those two camps kind of running parallel, doing different things?

01:10:14

DFJ: Well I mean, we think for a while there was not, but over the past few years most of these *vinifera* growers and wineries have gotten into the Muscadine grape growing business also. We sell 280,000 cases, and the next winery is Biltmore [Estate] and—the next largest winery is Biltmore Estate Winery, which is the most visited winery in the world. Over 275,000 visitors toured that place. We are going to sell about 280,000 cases and Biltmore will sell about 140,000 cases. So they look at us and say, you know, "Muscadine wines sell." And no matter what you do, you want to stay in business.

01:11:00

We did find early on there was a lot of bad-mouthing going on; a lot of folks stuck their little pinky up and said, “We want,” you know—one of them kind of makes me a little ill that opened up a winery because he’s one of the most famous guys we have in North Carolina that’s in the wine business now and he said, “We want to show—we’re going to open a winery that makes *vinifera* wines because we want to show people—the people—that North Carolina can make something better than that sickly Scuppernong junk.” And today he’s in the Muscadine wine business too, and swears he didn’t say that. And I said, “Well, it’s in the paper and—but we’re—we’re finding that competition is growing and we—we are competitive against each other. We’re—we’re competitive against each other for, you know, state supported funds, if there are some, especially with the agricultural side of growing grapes, researching how can we grow a better Muscadine grape and they’re trying to grow a better *vinifera* grape, and we’re competing against the same funds there. But now we’re finding out that those folks are also getting in the Muscadine business, so now they’re—they’re not only competing against funds but also competing against us on the shelf and we—. You know, also, I think that that has helped us a great deal, too, because we know that those folks are after us, and we want to make sure that we’re—we don’t want to get beat, so we’re going to outwork them and we’re going to out-nice them.

01:12:35

AE: So what would you say is the future of Duplin Winery?

01:12:37

DFJ: I hope that we stay in business. We are developing new markets as—as we grow. We—we, of course, have to always forecast four years ahead what are we going to sell because it takes

four years for a vine to fully mature, so we're—we're setting grape vineyards out now. We set out this past year about sixty-two acres, so we're planning on growing because I've got to buy those grapes from those guys. We would like to one day, I think, sell wines throughout the world but, you know, we—but we don't want to sacrifice our quality, and so we're growing slowly and folks listening to this, you know, if you're listening to it ten years from now in 2018, we may be in Mississippi by then but—but I don't know. But I promise you we're working hard at trying to get there. I think that we look—our future is bright, as long as we continue to have bright folks working here at the winery, and so we've got to retain those guys, the ones that come in here, those ladies that come in here and bust their butts for us, we've—we've got to make sure that they—they get paid well and want to stay here. So we've got to treat them fair, and that's our goal, to be—be fair to our folks and to make the best—. I think I've said that before, make the best tasting sweet wine in the world. That's it.

01:14:20

AE: What does your ninety-five-year-old grandfather have to say about all this?

01:14:24

DFJ: Many times he comes in here and he says, “Bad management, bad management.” I told him I was going to freeze-dry him just like dad freeze dries those grape seeds. I'm going to put him in a rocking chair when he dies and have a little tape recorder back there with him rocking saying, “Bad management, bad management.” But you know, he—he's seen a lot, not only in the wine business, but he's seen a lot as—in the world and he—he is amazed, and I think we all are kind of shocked and don't really know how did we get here. People ask us all the time, and they think I'm lying; but I'm telling the truth; I don't know. We just work hard, and we try to be nice,

and it just happens to be something about the right timing. And those—I'm not talking about my family but those fifty-two people that work here—the right people. I just happen to be the man with the last name Fussell who comes to work and says, “Thank you” and “Here’s your paycheck” and then they’re—they’re the ones who run the show. Those guys—those men and ladies—they—they really mean—. I better not be telling them because I hope nobody hears this that is in the wine business. They’ll come try to hire them out from under me but they—they work hard and that’s—that’s what—that’s what business is all about, putting a group, a team together that can play together and work hard together and that’s what we—. Fortunately, right now we have, I think, one of the best, not just wineries, but one of the best companies in the Eastern United States.

01:16:22

AE: That says something. Well I appreciate you sitting with me here for so long, Dave; it’s been a pleasure. I’m wondering if there’s anything that I haven't asked you or you haven't managed to touch on in the course of our conversation that you want to make sure to add.

01:16:33

DFJ: Well first, I want to thank you for making the trip down here and including us. We’re—we’re honored. I think that we want to make sure that folks that are listening know that our door is always open and—and if anybody is listening that does drink our wines, we appreciate the business.

01:16:58

AE: All right, Dave. Well thank you so much. I appreciate it.

01:17:01

DFJ: Thank you.

01:17:01

[End David Fussell Jr. Interview]