

**DENNIS HORTON**  
**Horton Vineyards - Gordonsville, VA**

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Location: Horton Vineyards - Gordonsville, VA  
Interviewer: Amy C. Evans, Southern Foodways Alliance  
Transcription: Shelley Chance, ProDocs  
Length: 1 hour, 12 minutes  
Project: Southern Wine - Virginia

**[Begin Dennis Horton Interview]**

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**Amy Evans:** This is Amy Evans on Monday, June 16, 2008, for the Southern Foodways Alliance. I'm in Gordonsville, Virginia, at Horton Vineyards with Mr. Dennis Horton. And Mr. Horton, if I could get you to state your name and what you do for a living for the record, please?

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**Dennis Horton:** Dennis Horton and I am the proprietor of Horton Vineyards in Gordonsville, Virginia.

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**AE:** May I ask you to share your birth date for the record?

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**DH:** December 1, 1945.

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**AE:** All right. And you're from Missouri, is that correct—originally?

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**DH:** Missouri [*Pronounced Missouri-uh*] [*Laughs*]—people who don't—aren't from Missouri [*Pronounced Missouri-uh*] say it's Missouri [*Missour-ee*], but that's fine. It's not Mary-land either.

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**AE:** Point taken. So may I ask how you made your way to Virginia and when that was?

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**DH:** I ended up going to the University of Maryland after the United States Air Force and spent the rest of the time basically selling and working in the Washington Metropolitan area and in Virginia.

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**AE:** And so you came here and liked it and stayed, obviously.

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**DH:** Yes, my wife and I moved down here in 1977. And we started the vineyard, planting in 1989, which our initial planting was eight acres of Norton, five acres of Vidal Blanc and five acres of Cabernet Franc.

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**AE:** And now you and your wife, Sharon—correct?

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**DH:** Yes.

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**AE:** From what—some things that I've read and—and some folks that I've talked to, you had vines at your home to begin with, is that right? Were you growing for yourself, originally?

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**DH:** Yes. I was a—what they call a home winemaker for probably in the area of maybe thirty-five years—thirty years, and in most of the locations that we lived it was an extended period of time, I had put grapes in the ground. The grapes that I had planted at the present residence was, oh, just a little over a quarter-acre. It was two rows of Cabernet Sauvignon—or two rows of Cabernet Franc, one row of Merlot, and one row of Cabernet Sauvignon. And that was kind of the origin of our planting. After that, we leased sixty acres from Helen Marie Taylor, due to the fact that leasing land was more financially able than buying land. The main reason being, if you find a nice Virginia—or a vineyard site, it's not necessarily—has to be attached to 300 acres. And she had a very nice site, and she was willing to lease the land for twenty-five years with a twenty-five year option in five-year increments. And then that's when we started planting that in '89. We actually completed the planting there in 1991.

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**AE:** Now if I could go back to your—your home vineyard on a home scale and when you were a home winemaker, can I talk—can I ask you how you got into that originally and where that interest came from and then also how you—you found your vines?

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**DH:** Basically, I've always been interested in—and not only when I came to Virginia, but I had grapes in Maryland when we lived there and grapes when we came down. And just an astute interest in grape-growing and winemaking. And there weren't many places where you could buy grapes, and the ones that were in Virginia at the time were kind of a preponderance of Concord or Niagara—and that area. They—they weren't specifically wine grapes, more juice grapes than wine grapes. And then we—that's when we planted the Cabernet Franc, the Merlot, and the

Cabernet Sauvignon. And obviously, with the higher grade of fruit, you ended up with a higher grade of wine. And from there, when we planted the other section, as I said earlier, Norton was the first planting of eight acres. It was basically or is a native grape of Virginia. It was selected by Dr. Norton in, I think, about 1835, somewhere in that area, and was actually the backbone of the Virginia wine industry up until Prohibition.

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After Prohibition, California had really gotten online with *vitis vinifera* [**grape vines native to Europe and the Mediterranean**] and a lot of the wine-making and everything transferred from there from here to—to there and that’s where the center of grape-growing came in the United States, of which they still produce a preponderance of fruit in the United States.

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**AE:** Now when—and I’m just dipping back into your—your past as a home winemaker again. Did Sharon come to your marriage with an interest in wine, as well? Did she share that, or did y’all build on that together?

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**DH:** Sharon came from a farm community, okay, of which her profession was actually an RN [Registered Nurse]. She was a—a head of Labor/Delivery in a Washington hospital for—oh, I don’t know—twelve or thirteen years. And when we moved down here, she got out of the nursing business and wanted—we were getting—going to get back into something and that’s when we selected getting into a vineyard. It wasn’t a big transition from farming grain to farming grapes, okay; it’s just a matter of the tractor is a little bit different, and the product is a little bit different, but she used to run a twenty-four-foot Gleaner Combine, so a tractor wasn’t a whole lot

of problem [*Laughs*] to make the transition. And she was very astute in terms of her nursing career to be accurate, on time, in terms of which is very important in this area for spray programs. They have to be done; they have to be done within a certain window, and they have to be done successfully. So all those things came along with it.

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**AE:** Is she a native of Virginia?

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**DH:** No, she's a native of Missouri [*Pronounced Missouri-uh*].

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**AE:** So in—in Missouri [*Pronounced Missouri-uh*], did either of you in your formative years come up—or did you come up in families that had a winemaking tradition or communities that had a winemaking tradition?

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**DH:** The whole—the little town of Hermann, which I was born and raised, was basically a—almost eighty percent or ninety percent German heritage, at that time. In fact, I can remember when I was in grade school, many of the neighbors still stuck with their native language of German. And if you ran across somebody's yard, they would holler at you [*Speaking German*], which means get your dog out of here. [*Laughs*] But anyway—and they were—the Germans were astute Winemakers. In fact, prior to Prohibition, in Hermann was a winery called Stone Hill Winery, and at one time, I believe it was the second largest winery in the country. They were producing several millions of gallons of wine at that time. It was called Stone Hill Winery. And

that was regenerated by Jim Held in, I believe, about 1963. And they got back into the grape-growing business and winemaking business at that time.

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**AE:** Do you know what grapes they were using?

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**DH:** It started with the Norton, which is one of the key grapes to this day, but they've also energized some of their hybrids that they grow and have been very productive for them out there. And I think, at this time, they're probably doing somewhere in the area of 125 to 150,000 cases a year.

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**AE:** Now when you—when you first planted in 1989 and—and had eight acres of Norton, that was your largest acreage devoted to a grape and that happened to be Norton. What made you make that decision?

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**DH:** That was basically a no-brainer. I mean there's not many states that have a native grape, okay, or a winemaking grape that originated in the states. And I thought it would behoove the marketing end of the stick to be able to deal with a grape that came from Virginia, made in Virginia, and produces a nice bottle of red wine. And it proved to be successful.

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**AE:** And you're, as far as I can tell, really known for bringing back the Norton grape in this area.

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**DH:** I was the first, if that's being known. [*Laughs*] Yes, I brought it back to the state. I actually got my cuttings from Stone Hill Winery in—back in Hermann. And I had them rooted up in New York and then planted in 1989.

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**AE:** Now when you say you had them rooted up in New York, can you describe that—what that—?

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**DH:** It's a—there's a couple of processes. First of all, being a native grape, it is not susceptible to Phylloxera, okay, which means that it can be rooted on its own rootstock. If it's *vitis vinifera*, it has to be grafted because, if it isn't, it'll die and because of Phylloxera, which is a little louse that gets down there and eats all the roots by the time the grapes come up. So by rooting, you take a four- or five-bud spur, and you bury two buds and leave several up on top, and it will root itself and then the bud will break, and you'll have a new growth on top. You allow that to happen for about a year and then you—when they go dormant, you pull them up, chill them down to about thirty-two to thirty-five degrees and come the following, spring you plant them. So in grafting, which is what you do with *vitis vinifera*, is you take a root stock from a native variety whether it's 3309 or Riparian or whatever it is, depending on your soil, and you'll take one bud, and you'll graft it to the top of that stick and put the other buds down in the ground for rooting.



That means that you have a—an American grape being able to take care of the—or the Phylloxera and yet you'll have a Cabernet Sauvignon or Chardonnay or Viognier or whatever you have planted—or bud you have put on top of it. So it eliminates the problem of Phylloxera, and it allows Vinifera to be grown in that type of soil.

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**AE:** So then is there a service in New York that—that roots the—the stock for you?

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**DH:** Yes, there—there are several. I mean there's quite a few. They either do grafting or rooting for you, and they pretty much specialize in it. I've been using Herman Hamburg for fifteen, sixteen, seventeen years—something like that. It's—he's done most of the work for me.

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**AE:** And can we talk about now the—the period in Virginia's winemaking history after Prohibition and then—then before—between Prohibition and the—the 1970s when there was really a resurgence of—of farm wineries cropping up and some government support in incidents to make that happen and kind of what those interim decades were like here in Virginia?

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**DH:** Getting back into the game or into the business in Virginia was kind of tough because (a) California had come online; (b) a lot of the vineyards had been—had been devastated in the—in this whole area (a) during the Civil War and—and during Prohibition it was just—the wine industry was nonexistent. It was shut down—what was left of the industry. There were some wineries that did get started back in the '70s and—but I don't think it really flourished until they

changed some of the laws in the '80s that enacted—the Farm Winery Act and so forth and so on to actually take it out of the commercial setting and put it into the agricultural setting. That seemed to spur a lot of Virginia wineries. Plus, there's been—there was a lot of technological changes that had transpired from the time they had really shut down the Virginia wine industry to the resurgence in that new spray programs were adapted. Grafting had been taken care of and a lot of other things to where it was possible to grow *vitis vinifera* in the—the state of Virginia. And I think that was actually the big surge that was done for a period of time.

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In the beginning, I think a lot of people looked at the market and said, “What are people buying?” and they figured that since that encompassed let's say sixty-five or seventy-five percent of the wine market, these are the grapes that will grow, which was like Cabernet, Pinot Noir, Riesling, Cabernet Sauvignon, and so forth. So rather than look at what could be grown extremely successful, they were looking at the market and what do the people buy. And that's what they planted, and that's what they grew. There's been a transition in the state of Virginia now; they're looking more toward the vineyard and what can we grow extremely successful to have a nationally and internationally competitive product, than what percentage of the market is that.

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When I planted—I was one of the first in the—the area or in that timeframe to start planting in Viognier and to plant other grapes that had not been planted, but I thought they were more suitable for a grape-growing area as Virginia was with the hot—humidity and so forth and so on. And some of them proved to be successful. It's not that everything I put in the ground did what it was supposed to do; some of them didn't. But Viognier was one, Tannat is another one, Petit Manseng is another one, and recently I introduced Pinotage, which is a South African grape

to the area, which is I think going to be very successful. So there's—there's been a huge transition from the '70s to the '80s to the '90s to the 2000s, and the grape varieties that are very successful or reasonably successful right now are varieties of people that have made the change with varieties.

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**AE:** And I understand, too, that you kind of ignored geographical characteristics of different grapes and will try anything, like for example the—the Georgian grape, the Russian grape, that you have here.

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**DH:** Well yeah, but there was a logic to that, too. I mean it wasn't that I just picked it out of the wild. Rkatsiteli, which is the grape, is an extremely late-budding white grape, which is what you just drove by—the six acres that you came in here. And if when you drive out you take a look, this is a pothole; it's not the prettiest vineyard site in the world, although the vineyard is extremely pretty. You're looking up at everything, which means it's a frost pocket. And I planted it because it was late, and by the time we get our late March or early April, mid-April frost, which we did this year, this particular of variety hadn't even broken bud, so there was no loss or no possibility of loss for that particular variety. So it had a reason for being planted. And one of the requirements of the Farm Winery Act in the state of Virginia is you have to have vineyards attached to your winery property. The rest of my vineyards are not here. That's six and there's a whole lot more. But so there was a reason for doing that, as well.

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Even with Norton over at the main vineyard, the section that it's in is a lower section. Again, Norton is an extremely late-budding variety, which means rarely, if ever, does it get damaged by frost. So there's more than one way of looking at a grape; (a) does it make a great bottle of wine; (b) will it survive; and (d) will you be able to harvest it [*Note: no "c" mentioned*]*—*I mean those are all kinds of things that you're going to need, and then you've also got to have an extreme concern for being able to compete in the—just extremely high competitive market. I mean go to the grocery store; it's not like there's a shortage of wine on the shelves, okay. [*Laughs*] And they've come from Italy, France, Portugal, Spain, Bulgaria, Romania, okay. So producing a commercially viable quality product at a reasonable or respectable price is very hard to do.

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**AE:** And speaking about competition, you talk about an international competition, but what about your—your United States competition and Napa Valley and California and the West Coast, and how Virginia has figured into that and how that's changing now?

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**DH:** Well, I think there was a time when the—let's just say we were the—what was it Rodney—whatever his name was—Rodney Dangerfield. We—we were—we kind of didn't get any respect. [*Laughs*] And it may have been the—there might have been a reason for it. They were using hybrids; they were not the most successful hybrids; they were using [*Marechal*] Foch and some other stuff. And the—the wine, I don't think at that time, it was really nationally or internationally competitive. I've done several tours in France. I've taken my wine there, and some of the people actually thought that I had exported the grapes from France and brought them

over, and that is anything but the truth, okay. So the respect came from the ability to, rather than making mediocre wine, making nationally competitive wines. Viognier, we can compete with probably any area of the country as well as any area of France; the same thing with Tannat and some of the other grapes. Uruguay makes a lot of Tannat and very successfully. And we can make a bottle every bit as good as they can—or better. And that's what it takes to be able to be successful. That's where the transformation came from being a—also ran—a Rodney Dangerfield-type of vineyard to being a nationally competitive wine-producing state, which I think Virginia is now doing. And which is given us recognition in California. California grows Viognier. I just sent 52,000 buds out to a grower out in California who is going to start growing Petit Manseng and kind o— it's going the other way rather than coming back here, which I think is where the respect actually comes from. And there's people in California and Napa Valley that now know Virginia grows grapes and knows that we grow them very successfully, so I think that's where the transformation came from. It came out of respect for what's happening to us in this part of the country, not because we just happen to be growing grapes.

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**AE:** And with Virginia's really rich history with wine and—and in Jamestown there being a law that so many vines had to be planted per acre, and Thomas Jefferson's history with wine and this rich area and the terroir of Virginia, is there—is there something that is different as far as—insofar as the marketplace and your consumer where you have to (a) fight to be recognized as a Virginia Winemaker, but then (b) fight to have these different varietals recognized? Is there any difference there?

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**DH:** Yeah, there is that's kind of the advantage of getting California into the act. California—no matter where you go in this—in the country—has a respect of being a wine-growing state, period, okay. And they're now getting involved in Viognier and Petit Manseng and Tannat and— and other grape varieties. So I see it as—as a fact that because they're doing that, they add credibility to those particular varieties, rather than going, “Oh, my God, whoever wants to grow Viognier?” They grow Viognier now. Now they make Cab Franc, okay, in lieu of Cabernet Sauvignon or with—along with Cabernet Sauvignon and they—they're doing it very successfully. But because of they're doing that, it adds credibility to the wine product and it adds credibility of the marketplace.

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**AE:** So tell me about Viognier. And you, also led that—that I don't—the word I want to use is—is escaping me but you planted Viognier here in Virginia, and you've been at the front—the forefront of the Viognier movement here.

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**DH:** Yeah, well it was—it was a grape that I had been—other grapes were planted. I had a test plot for a long, long time and still do. But it was one of the grapes that I was severely interested in, which is grown in the Northern Rhone and—and by one producer that has his own appellation, Chateau-Grillet, and in—in the Northern Rhone they were growing quite frankly—quite frequently but there was approximately 300 to 400 acres of vines of Viognier, I think, in the world at that time when I, John Alban and some other people were messing around with it. And I was—John was interested for the product; I was interested for the product and the fact that

I thought it would be able to tolerate our climate, of which it's been able to do in both cases. John did a very successful job in it around San Louis Obispo and—and we've been able to do it very successful with a product in our climate, which is one of the key things to having a successful wine industry is you don't have dynamic changes in your product. I mean one year it's not just extremely good, and then another year it's just extremely bad. You have an oscillating curve, which has peaks and it has some valleys, but the peaks are high, in terms of being a good grape or very good wine, and the valleys are low but not so low that it's a horrible wine or not palatable or not competitive in the marketplace.

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But every growing area has the same susceptibility. If you eat muskmelons or cantaloupes, whichever you want to call them, you'll find one year during the growing season it's got flavor and it's got—it's just a delicious product, and there will be other years when it doesn't have the product that—that other product has. And that happens with grapes consistently. And whether it be in Burgundy or it be in Bordeaux or it be in Napa Valley, every year is not created equal. Only in the—I guess the government is the only thing that said all men are created equal, and we know that's not true. **[Laughs]** So neither are grapes. Some grapes will produce more consistently in certain environments, and maybe in another environment they won't produce that consistently, so there is—that's what everybody else is really kind of catching onto in the state of Virginia. We can have a really great one, and then we can have one that's not so great, but it's definitely competitive in the marketplace. And when you can stay in that lateral area, that's when things are really going good for you, and that's when you can be competitive in the marketplace and make a good product for a good price—or at least within that range.

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**AE:** So let's talk about your vineyards now and your—your acreage is—is spread out, as you say, and you have different grapes in different areas. Can you talk about that relative to *terroir* [*the special characteristics recognized in a grape, as a result of geographical and environmental influence*] and how you had started describing earlier what that Georgian grape out front, how that plot is specific to that grape and how that—that idea is relevant to the rest of your—your vines here?

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**DH:** Hmm, well, to give you an idea, this altitude out here is about 475 feet above sea level and maybe even—maybe a little higher or maybe a little lower, but it's right in there. Most of my vineyards are planted at 600 or 600-plus feet. Okay, why does that make a difference? On a radiant night when cold air moves in and there's an open sky, all the heat that was generated by the earth rises, and it rises on a horizontal plane, so if you're down on the bottom, cold air is dropping into that hole, which is this hole and then warm air is rising. The really dangerous part of a radiant evening come springtime is probably between about 5:00 or 5:30 and 6:00 and 6:30 in the morning. And the temperature is dropping like a rock, and what happens is because the air is rising, what ends up happening is the higher elevations, okay, up to about 1,200 feet will continue to have that warm air. And then the sun comes up, and everything warms up, and by the time the cold air would have gotten there, it's already warmed up during the day. So your—it's like looking down in a valley on—and on any particular location and having a big radiant evening and then seeing frost patches down below. But you don't see them as it goes up the hill. Or you'll see it, actually, in a line where it actually stops. And that's where the frost got to, and everything above that wasn't frost. Plus the fact that a grapevine is pretty successful for several hours at twenty-eight degrees. I mean it can get down to twenty-eight and not damage a severe



amount of buds. Beyond that, it gets pretty dangerous; above that, you're pretty successful. So if you just have frost on the ground, it doesn't mean that there's actually damaged vines, so all those things—factors have to be taken into consideration.

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When you have grapes like Viognier, Chardonnay, Pinot Grigio and several others, they are early budders, so if you have a frost period after a certain time and it gets down to twenty-eight, they're gone. Now you don't lose the vine because you've got three buds in a grape. You've got a primary, which actually has the fruit on it; the secondary, which will produce another shoot; and a tertiary, which will also produce another shoot. So even though you've lost a crop on a frost night, you get two other frosts, you can actually get through and still the vines will be able to maintain for the following—for the next season. So one year you may lose a percentage of the crop or you may lose all of the crop, but you never lose the vine—or rarely do you ever lose the vine.

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**AE:** And I understand in May of 2002 you had a really late frost, and was that the most devastating one so far?

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**DH:** Yeah. [*Laughs*]. I think the latest frost that we ever had was, I believe, up until that time and going back with all the records that they have, I think it was May 10th, okay. And I believe we actually got that frost on like the 19th, which was pretty much unheard of, and a lot of the grapes were out and a lot of the grapes didn't produce. And the only thing that we got were a lot of secondaries, which is—every now and then the tertiary or the secondary bud will produce

gapes. They're usually smaller clusters, and they usually end up taking longer to ripen because it's—everything has been—the growth period has been stunted at that point in time.

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**AE:** So how many vineyards do you have today around the area?

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**DH:** We've got one here. We've got sixty acres over at Berry Hill, and we've got about eighteen over at the house.

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**AE:** And what do you—what grape is prominent in your vineyards that you plant most of these days?

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**DH:** Oh, Viognier is, obviously p—we—we have about twenty-some acres of Viognier. We have about six acres of Petit Manseng. I think we're up to about eight or nine acres of Cabernet Franc. We still have about five acres of Vidal and then we have—we're about—up to about eleven or twelve acres of Norton, and then we have some Rkatsiteli, obviously, and then we have some Petit Verdot, which is only about a quarter acre; we use it for blending. And we also, oh—have Touriga Nacional, Tinta Cao, and Tannat, which is all over at the house.

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**AE:** And so I—I lost count and wasn't counting, actually, truth be told, but how many grapes is that relative to how many wines you make?

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**DH:** We actually have more varieties in wines than we do in the grapes. The—that—that—that came from a marketing situation. The preponderance of our market is within the state of Virginia, okay. If you're going to, for lack of a better word, try to make a living with—in selling wine in Virginia, unlike, I think, California, who can go out and get a national distributor and make a Chardonnay and a Cabernet Sauvignon and have the distributors put it in all fifty states, okay? Well if you get 1,000—1,000 cases out of each state, which is nothing extraordinary, okay, you go from—you can go from zero to 50,000 cases, okay, probably in a year or in a very short period of time. If your preponderance of your business is getting a share of the market in Virginia, your population has been obviously drastically reduced compared to—to the United States and then you're going to have to say, “Okay, we have white wine drinkers, we have red wine drinkers, we have sweet wine drinkers, we have fruit wine drinkers, we have—.” So in order to expand on that particular market, which is the preponderance of our market, if you make twenty or twenty-five or thirty different bottles of wine, you can address your wine to a lot of different product markets where people would be interested in it.

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Are they the wines that would internally impress people? Possibly. Possibly not. But there are also—there's a—marketing 101, page one, paragraph one and what you want to do is make products that the person on the other side of the counter wants to buy. And I not only believe in sincere winemaking, I also believe in sincere capitalism in that you have to have a product for the guy that you're selling to, whoever that individual happens to be or group of

individuals. So we've done very well with fruit wines. We've done very well with some of our sweeter products, so it helps you expand the market, increases your sales volume, and helps you do what you're supposed to do as a business and that's make a profit.

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**AE:** And the sweet wines, I understand you have nine or so different varieties, a blackberry, blueberry and—?

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**DH:** We have—in the fruit wines we have blackberry, raspberry, cherry, blueberry, pear, peach, cranberry and strawberry, okay, which as a total group ends up to be something like 6,000 cases, which is to us a considerable value in terms of staying in the marketplace. Do—would I like to make nothing but these kinds of wines? Yes, but then if you just make that kind of wine and you make one Cabernet and one Chardonnay and you're in the state of Virginia, you may not be in business, [*Laughs*] so that wouldn't be successful either.

00:34:02

**AE:** So what would you attribute their success to—the fruit wines? Would it be a price point or would it be familiarity, as far as people in this area coming up and making home—home wines?

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**DH:** Well it's kind of like—I think we all ought to send a check to Sutter Home. I don't know. They made the first semi-sweet or sweet, whichever one you want to call it—blush—and what did that do? That probably introduced millions and millions of people to the wine industry because it was very acceptable to almost everybody's palate. Now do they continue to drink that

through the rest of their life? I don't think so. There's a lot of people that start out blush, and then they end up going to whites and maybe with a little bit of residual sugar, and then all of the sudden they're drinking Chardonnay, and then from Chardonnay they kind of go to some of the dry reds and so forth and so on. So I think there's a—a progression of—of—of that—that kind of thing. It's kind of like with food. I don't think you grow up and go into a French restaurant and immediately order escargot, even if you do know what it is, okay. **[Laughs]** But your palate structure changes and your palate structure for food changes as the same—in the same manner. So you may have just been a peanut butter and jelly guy, and all of the sudden you're into escargot on the way onto—going down the—the scale—or up the scale, actually. So I think the same thing happens in wine. I don't think the people that started drinking Sutter Home necessarily ended up, although they may still drink it, but it's introduced just a ton of people to wine, okay, and I think that was the key thing that Sutter Home really did for the wine industry—not only this wine industry but also for California.

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**AE:** Are there any—many other Virginia wineries that are doing fruit wines or are you the only one?

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**DH:** There's some that do—oh, a few. I've—I've seen some other strawberry wines that are made, basically, into a dessert style, and we don't really do that. We make it into, again, depending on how you want to call it, we make it into a semi-dry or a semi-sweet variety and whereas it's very nice with food—also very nice without food, if you just happen to be sitting on the back porch.

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**AE:** Well let's talk about Norton again. I happened to taste it downstairs, and it was really lovely. I was really kind of blown away. But it—it was a really complex—complex taste there and I wonder if you could describe for me the characteristics of Norton and then your—your wine—I think what I had was 2004 Norton—and where that fits in the marketing and popularity of—of your wines here.

00:37:06

**DH:** It's—I think the—in the beginning, I think it was the insurgence of it being a Virginia wine, okay, or a Virginia grape. And we make it in a dry style. And in its young years, which 2004, even though it's 2008, it was—that's a young year. It has a lot of fruit content with it; it has a nice balance with it, and it's a very easy-drinking wine. After about ten years so, let's say, at 2014 [*Phone Rings*] you'll find that that wine will change a bit, in terms of it'll have more of Bordeaux flavor than it does a Norton flavor, okay. And it becomes a very age-able wine, so you've got a wine that you can release in a couple or three years, and then you also have a wine that can be aged. And I think that's part of the—the success of the product. It doesn't have to be fifteen years old to be able to be drunk; it can be drunk at a young age, and it can be drunk at an older age. So I think that's what has maintained the popularity of it, and Norton is somewhere between 2,000 and 2,400 cases of our production. And Cabernet Franc is, as well, and so is Viognier. So those—those are the—the core of your products, okay, with Tannat and so forth. But it's very unusual for people to come in and have a native American grape that doesn't taste like (a) alcoholic grape juice, which some of the American grapes have a tendency to do, especially the Lambrusco. And you—and you probably get that feeling because of that fact that

Niagara is the grape that makes Welch's grape juice, okay, and it carries all that flavor profile over into the wine, so it has a tendency to taste like semi-alcoholic grape juice, okay. Other grapes with *vitis vinifera* take on a completely different palate structure as they get older, okay, and can get older, so—. And we—that's what we make in Niagara, it's—why? People like it and people buy it, and I think that's probably what the automobile is having—the industry is having trouble with right now [*Laughs*]. They're making automobiles when nobody wants to buy them, so—so you've got to catch both of those—that market segment. [*Laughs*]

00:39:44

**AE:** Tell me about your late-bottled vintage Norton port that you—.

00:39:49

**DH:** That was, again, goes back in Virginia history. Virginia history was basically—they—they did drink a lot of sweet wine, and port was one of them, okay. And the—as—back in history when they were making Virginia wines, Virginia port was very popular with a winery out of Charlottesville, and it was a fortified wine. So we thought to take Norton and make a port out of it would be, again, duplicating the history of Virginia and also using the product in another marketplace. And it's been very successful, and Norton makes a very, very nice port. It's got a great fruit content, it's got a lot of flavor to it, and it ages extremely well.

00:40:45

**AE:** And I saw on your—your website, I think it was, the 1996 Norton Port sold out.

00:40:52

**DH:** Yeah. *[Laughs]* Good, that's what we're supposed to do. No, we actually do keep a library, okay, and we keep eight, ten, or twelve cases of each one of our vintages in reds and in Ports because they will age. And then we have a—an event where we have people in and we have our older vintages, and they have an opportunity to buy some and taste some, which is—we think is also educational to the consumer. A lot of consumers don't have the opportunity to have a kind of fifteen year-old Port, oaky. And if they do, it probably costs them about \$350, and they don't want to pay that so it's—has a tendency to help educate the—the wine drinker to something that he may not be able to afford or want to afford, at that point in time, but he gets an opportunity to taste it.

00:41:48

**AE:** Speaking of educating consumers, in your—your winery that you have here and your tasting room, I want to kind of segue into employees and—and whom you have working here and—and has it been difficult to try and find wine enthusiasts to be a part of your operation here and then also your hiring in the vineyards themselves?

00:42:08

**DH:** Well, we'll start with the vineyard. Actually, with all the political baloney that's going on I—we belong to the H-2A Program [*agricultural guest worker program*], and under that we basically have to hire every American that applies. And we do, of which there have been two, okay. And right now, I think I've got twenty-three hands in the vineyard. So without the Mexican market—and we bring them in from Mexico and we house them and we take care—and do all that stuff but there's—nobody wants to work for eight, ten, or thirteen dollars an hour working in the vineyard when they can flick—flip hamburgers for nine dollars. Okay. So we're



in competition with the hard job, versus an easy job that is three to five dollars less, and I think that's why a lot of people are flipping hamburgers.

00:43:14

**AE:** You have—I was telling you earlier that I was reading William Rowe's book, *Wandering through Virginia's Vineyards*, and he has a—a long chapter there about visiting Horton and— and working in the vineyards with some of your employees for months at a time, and there's some wonderful stories in there. But I wonder if you could talk a little bit about some of the people who have—who are Latino laborers who have been with you for a considerable time and keep coming back to you.

00:43:37

**DH:** Oh, I think out of the twenty-three we've probably got thirteen to fifteen that have been with us numbers of years. I mean I think several of them have been there thirteen, fourteen years, and some of them have been here seven, eight, and nine. And then there's always a small section of new guys because a lot of them have earned their money up here. They've gone back. They've got their little farm or whatever they have in Mexico, and they're getting older and they probably, for a lack of a better word, retire. They've paid for their farm and so forth. So there is a certain amount of turnover over a period of time, but we've been very successful in bringing back the same people that we've had for years. And I think that's good because they want to come to work, and we want them to come to work, so it's kind of a mutual benefiting society, if you want to look at it that way.

00:44:27

**AE:** And your wife, Sharon, is she still working in the vineyards every day?

00:44:32

**DH:** Uh-hmm, yes, Sharon is—we had—I had a vineyard manager that I had hired who was an absolute disaster, and I finally had to get her over there to help him, and then I had to get over there and we finally got everything straightened out and he decided to resign, which I think was a very good thing. And I put my wife in charge as an interim to coordinate things between me and what was going on because I also have another business. And she—I taught her everything I knew about growing grapes, and now she knows more than I know about growing grapes, okay. She tells me what I'm supposed to be doing. But it's—once you understand the windows that you have to deal with, the timeframes that you have to deal with, and the necessity of getting an inch of rain and the next day putting a spray on it, because most of your spray programs they're—they're—they don't get into the grapevine itself. They're actually protective on the—on the leaf itself, so as soon as an inch of rain hits it, you've lost your protection for that particular period of time. So you've got to get back in there as soon as possible.

00:45:43

The same thing with leaf pulling. If you leaf-pull too late, what you've done is the grape has gotten too close to *véraison* [**when the grapes change color**], and what you'll do is you'll get sunburned, okay. So you've got—there's a window that you've got X amount of weeks from the time that it got to this point to the time it got to that point to get those leaves off. So it's—you have to be fastidious. You have to be consistent, and you have to know what you're doing. So and she does a very successful job, which is part of the winemaking process because there's—in the winemaking process there's one key thing. It's like being a good chef. If he takes the best piece of beef, filet mignon, he can find, the best vegetables and the freshest vegetables he can

find, the only possibility that a chef has is to screw it up, okay. He can take his talents and make a beautiful dish for you, but he also has the opportunity to take all that beautiful stuff and screw it up. It also happens in winemaking, and the reciprocal of it is absolutely the truth, too. If you end up with rotten grapes, fungus grapes, so forth and so on, a good winemaker might be able to make it palatable, which means that you could get it down. He can't turn it into a world-class wine. World-class food makes world-class food; world-class grapes make world-class wine. And there's no way of getting around it.

00:47:17

The best winemakers I know in the world can't take a poor grade of—of fruit and turn it into a great bottle of wine. That's why they have sorting tables, and they pick out bad grapes and they do all these other things not only here, but in other places, so the quality of the fruit is imperative. To a chef, the quality of food is imperative to have a world-class meal. There's no other way of doing it.

00:47:40

**AE:** So world-class makes me think of your international effort, really, that you have here at Horton Vineyards with your Latino laborers and your European vines and—and grafting vines and all of that and what makes Norton—the Norton grape aside, what makes Horton Vineyards—wine from Horton Vineyards a Southern wine?

00:48:04

**DH:** I think it's absolutely a Southern wine and, of course, when we're—believe it or not, I know you're from Mississippi, but we are really south of the Mason-Dixon. [*Laughs*] Okay, Maryland guys, they're the ones that are in trouble. But yes, and—and I think some of the wine

style is made for Southern food as well because where are we? We're in Virginia, okay, so that has a tendency to change what food products people want to have with their wine or wine that they have with their food. They want to pair them up and they want to match them, so you can't take one away from the other, especially when the preponderance of wine that is drunk is drunk with food.

00:48:47

**AE:** Can you think of a pairing offhand that would be a—a—like an iconic Southern meal or your typical Southern meal that would—and a wine—one of your wines that would pair well with it?

00:48:54

**DH:** Oh, I—there's a great salmon dish, okay, that they make, and it pairs extremely well with Viognier. And the neat part about Viognier is it's—it's a grape that, even though it's white, it can take on a character meal like—like in salmon or something like that, which a lot of white wines won't be able to tolerate. They'll lose their character, and they'll get a little watery or a little thin. Viognier just rises to the occasion and says it doesn't really care because there's so much fruit and body there that it can go successful with something like that. And there's just a ton of things that people are doing with it. Good chefs do a great job with pairing food and wine with their dishes, and I think that the winemakers take a look at that and say, "Well, that's what kind of style of wine that we want to make for this market," and I think that happens.

00:49:51

**AE:** Do you have a lot of area restaurants that—that have Horton wines on the menu?

00:49:55

**DH:** Oh, yeah. Not only the—some, even in the Yankee town of Maryland or the state of Maryland, yeah. **[Laughs]** That—because it—that has a residual effect, too. When people have a wine in the tasting room and they go into a wine shop and they spot it and they can recognize it, it proliferates sales. The same thing within a restaurant. If a restaurant is serving it, and it's very good with the meal that they had and it was recommended, then it enhances the marketing effort, okay. So restaurants are always a good location to be in. And the only thing that I've ever—I always thought that what they do—do, though, with wine and, I guess, alcohol in general in restaurants is it's severely over-priced. To take a retail price and multiply it times two or three is really exorbitant when it comes to the product, and I think it has a tendency to turn some people off of wine as a product with their meal, which is too bad. They're buying it at wholesale. They could mark it up and have a corkage fee of ten or fifteen dollars and, in fact, there is a restaurant in, I believe, Baltimore, Maryland, and just—the place is called Cork's, and what he does is he sells his wine at the retail price, plus he charges whoever buys it a ten dollar corkage fee from him. So if it's a twenty-two-dollar bottle of wine in that restaurant, you only pay thirty-two. I think if the people—more restaurants did that they would sell a lot more wine. But they don't consult me. **[Laughs]**

00:51:44

**AE:** And I'm remembering, too, that you have an annual barbecue here. It's—tell me about that.

00:51:50

**DH:** Yes, that kind of got started a long, long time ago. I don't know whether this is the fifteenth or sixteenth. I don't know, it's quite a few. And it's one of those things that we do and it happened and it just—I wouldn't say got out of hand, but it's gotten to the point that we have to limit it. We have 550 guests; that's all the tickets that we sell. We have about fifty people on staff that day and it's—everybody has just an absolutely great time and they enjoy it. We enjoy doing it, and it's a very successful tool for marketing wine. So it does both: it—your customers come and they enjoy it and—as well as they—they walk away with product, too, and that's what you're trying to do. But it's—people can't really believe it, but we actually have a date that we release the tickets, which is February 1st, and they have always been gone before April 30th, okay. And on the 5th, we usually get orders from people who have—do busloads. “Give me thirty, give me forty, give me ten, give me twenty,” so they don't last very long.

00:53:11

**AE:** And the event is in July?

00:53:13

**DH:** July 12th this year, yeah. And it's—everybody enjoys it and what we just tell—we're still getting calls for—for pig roast tickets and we're out, and I mean and we have been out for months. So it—it's—and those are really good things and fun things because the people really enjoy it. The customers really enjoy it, and we enjoy doing it, which is—even makes it more fun.

00:53:39

**AE:** Now do you cook the pig yourself?

00:53:41

**DH:** Yes. And last year we had 550 people, and we cooked 800 pounds of hog.

00:53:52

**AE:** Are you cooking a whole hog or are you cooking butts or shoulders?

00:53:55

**DH:** Well, when you're cooking that much pork, you can't—we—we cook a whole hog in that we have hams, we have shoulders, we have loins, we have ribs, we have baby-back—we have everything, okay. But it—because of—if you're hooking—cooking a whole hog, and I have, it's really kind of screwed up because the—the hams will be undone, the ribs will be overdone and the loins—loins will be overcooked, okay, because of where the loin is and where the hams are and how thick they are. Whereas if you're doing hams on one cooker, and you're doing Boston butts on another one and you're doing—and then after you get all that done, you can come back and start doing ribs because they only take about fifteen or twenty minutes to do, anyway. You end up with a whole hog, but you don't end up with any of it not done, which is, I think, the customers appreciate that.

00:54:50

**AE:** So what wines do you serve at the barbecue?

00:54:53

**DH:** Anything they would like to have. *[Laughs]*. We actually have a tent that we set up for tasting and people come and taste, and they select what they want to have with their barbecue and we go from there.

00:55:04

**AE:** Is there anything you would recommend to go with barbecue?

00:55:04

**DH:** Oh, I think Norton is great with barbecue, okay, and it—it's—Norton is great with barbecue. It's great with—especially at the age it is right now. Spicy sausages, okay—anything like that—spicy Italian food. It—in my world, it can replace Chianti for being on a spaghetti dish. I mean it's—it's got a lot of flavor to it, it's got a lot of—and it can handle the spices.

00:55:34

**AE:** Now as far as barbecue in Virginia is concerned, is the—the barbecue that you do here, is that just kind of a personal style of something, or is there kind of some way that you could describe Virginia barbecue as a whole?

00:55:48

**DH:** I would—yeah, it's actually what we do is we—we give them two different kinds of sauce, which we actually warm up and everything. One of them is kind of a spicy sauce, and the other one is kind of a sweetish sauce, so—and one is kind of vinegar-based, and one is pretty much tomato-based. And but they could—what they have in them is they actually have water troughs in the cookers, and it's a smoking process. We start it about two o'clock in the morning, and we started feeding at about 11:30 or 12:00, and there were a lot of people who didn't realize it, but when you smoke something or cook something for that long with smoke, you actually get pink on the outside of the—the ribs [*Phone Rings*] or outside of the meat, and I think the first one—the first one we ever had people said, “My God, this pork is not done.” Well it was done clean to



the bone, but it's—it's brown in the middle, but it's pink on the outside, and that comes from smoke. So once people started to realize that that's what happens, and then they can pick the sauce that they want to have with it.

00:56:52

**AE:** What kind of wood do you use?

00:56:54

**DH:** We actually use oak charcoal, but it's in charcoal style. I mean it's not the little briquettes, okay. So we get it the same place every year, and it works real well.

00:57:11

**AE:** So back to the wine, if I could ask you: you held a Virginia Wineries Association meeting here today. Can you tell me a little bit about that organization?

00:57:22

**DH:** It's the organization that a preponderance of the wine people or the wine growers or the—none of them are actually growers—wine—wineries in the state belong to and we try to do a lot of things. We try to enhance our market; we try to do what we can to aid our members, in terms of markets, in terms of market knowledge, in terms of a lot of things, and it's been really successful. There is—as in any organization, you've got a certain group of people that have this attitude and a certain group of people that have that attitude and you can't—in any organization, unless other people know a lot more than I do, it's hard to make everybody happy about everything. But it's great to be successful with almost everybody, okay, and that's what we really

try to do. We try to support the wine industry and all of its members just as best we can, and we've been doing a very good job of it so far.

00:58:32

**AE:** And tell me about helping each other out. This may not be exactly along those lines, but you don't have a bottling facility here, is that—is that still correct?

00:58:41

**DH:** Correct, mainly because I'm kind of a financial guy. We—the bottling line that we would need to support my production and bottle it in a reasonable timeframe would cost me somewhere between \$300,000 and \$350,000, and we actually use it four weeks a year. That's not a very good expenditure of your funds, okay. The guy who comes in and does the bottling for me has got a \$350,000—\$375,000 rig and he charges me—\$1.75 or \$2.00, whatever it is a case, and I pay by the case. So wine goes in, cases come out, and he goes away. Why is that an advantage? I don't have to maintain a bottling line. If you left it set idle for—for lack of a better word—nine months, ten months, you'd probably have trouble with it because all the little O-rings would dry out that hadn't been used. In fact, one time when I was out at Mondovi's place, they had a new bottling line that they had put in, completely dehumidified—everything was the right temperature and everything—extremely professional. But they actually ran it in three shifts. They ran it Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday; they shut it down Sunday, cleaned it up and got it ready for Monday again. And they did three shifts in each day. So they got complete dollar value out of the product that they—in that case they were talking about a couple of million dollar bottling line but it was used for—virtually twenty-four, seven. I mean they ran it every day, except for the day that they cleaned, and they were working to do

that. If you could do that, I would buy a bottling line, so you'd have to have the capacity to do that. Otherwise, it's more reasonable to pay for the cases that are bottled and stay away from a bottling line, and you don't have to commit 2,400 or 3,000 square feet to a bottling line.

01:00:56

**AE:** It's this—the gentleman that you use, is he one of the only ones in the area that does that? Because I'm wondering about scheduling and if other—other wineries are—are needing him and how that works out.

01:01:06

**DH:** It—there is—Joe—I think there's three now that are actually doing bottling. Joe has done all mine, and he's kind of picked and chose the ones that he wants to do, and the other people are kind of picking up the periphery. So he comes in here, usually—I think he'll be in here tonight, and he'll be bottling Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday—whatever and he likes to be able to do that. I mean the last time he was here, he came in on Tuesday and he left on Friday, so he kind of picks and chooses his customers, and it's an advantage to him. For example, if we're bottling up 2,000 cases of Chardonnay, okay, he doesn't have to change his line. He doesn't have to change anything, and he can just keep on running, because if you change bottles, you have to change—take two hours to get the—the machine ready. If you go from reds to whites, he's got to clean it out and do something else, so it's an easier operation for him to be able to have a continuous run, versus somebody who is doing 300 cases of this and 200 cases of that and 150 cases of this. You're—there are stars that feed the bottle through the line, and if the bottle changes you've got to change all the stars, okay. And so Joe has been able to pick and choose his customers and

he's—can spend—can actually charge less and make more because he's at one place for a long period of time.

01:02:42

**AE:** So in the twenty-, twenty-five-year history of wine in Virginia, would you say that there's a single thing that has maybe changed the most or—or helped the most to boost the industry?

01:02:54

**DH:** Yes. I think we're—we're getting better at choosing the right grapes. and I think we're getting better at making good wine, both things which are important, which I think has brought us—we can't be on a national scale. You have to understand something. I mean California still produces ninety percent of the wine in the United States, okay. The rest of us are screwing around with the other ten percent, okay. **[Laughs]** But at least it's giving us national recognition, if not in terms of just sheer volume, it's—in terms of quality that we—we've gained a respect. But I think there's a winery in all fifty states now. I believe. At least the lower forty-eight. I don't know whether anybody could grow—God couldn't grow grapes in Alaska, I don't think. I don't think that's even possible. **[Laughs]** But the other states, they do have a winery in each one of them. So I think Virginia has been able to excel in what it's done with grapes, and I think it's been able to excel with what it's done with its wine products, which is what I think several years ago *Wine Spectator* [magazine] said probably—other than California—one of the forefront states in the Union.

01:04:10

New York and Long Island has got a great product that they're developing out there, and some of the other states are getting into it, so I think there will be—it's a competitive market and

you have to have a great product or a good product to be able to compete in it, or else you're not going to be successful.

01:04:30

**AE:** Do you think there's anything about the personality of the winemakers here in Virginia? I say that because Barbara Ensrud's book, *American Wineries*, from the [nineteen]'80s mentioned in there—there was a passage mentioning that winemakers in Virginia had to be stubborn and visionary at the very same time to—to start vines here in—in this area.

01:04:52

**DH:** Visionary, I don't know that we were either. If we were visionary, that was exceptional because we were probably stupid because we didn't know what we were getting into. **[Laughs]** No, I think there were—there are people here that have really taken the job seriously, taken their position seriously, have made the transitions that have to be made to be able to grow the grapes that we have to—that we should have and to make wine out of them. And for all extensive purposes that—although fifteen, twenty, twenty-five years seems like a very long period of time, Jesus, Bordeaux [France] has been doing it for 400-and-some-odd years, you know. And then—and Robert Parker says vineyard—or Virginia wine is not quite up to Bordeaux at this point in time. Well, Jesus Christ, give us—give us fifty years, okay. You gave them 400 before you started getting critical so—. But I think we made the transition pretty quickly, and I think the products in the nearer future or in the future out of Virginia are going to be very, very good—exceptionally good. We've done well in national competitions from San Diego to San Francisco, as it stands now, and I think that kind of speaks for itself.

01:06:06

**AE:** And tell me about the future. Are you going to be adding a lot more grapes, or are you going to be perfecting what you already have?

01:06:13

**DH:** *[Laughs]* I don't know. You know, that's—that's a decision my wife and I are—are toying with right now. Do we continue to grow? Do we continue to do this and do—if we do, how big do we get? And those are questions that we have to answer. We're both sixty-two years old, and when I started this, I was a lot younger than that *[Laughs]*, so, if nothing else, you had a lot more piss and vinegar—you did then than you do now, so those—those decisions, I think, are going to be made very—in the very near future.

01:06:46

**AE:** Do you have children who might be interested in—in working in the—?

01:06:51

**DH:** My daughter isn't. She's actually a lawyer—an RN and a lawyer—and maybe my granddaughter, you know. She just turned fourteen a couple of days ago. Maybe she'll be interested in it. She's shown more interest in it so far, so that's a possibility. And I—I never did have a crystal ball and was able to foresee the future. You just got to try to live through it.

*[Laughs]* But it—yeah, and I think the Virginia wine industry is really going to be something at—at some point in time. We've—we've made a mark so far, and I think in the period of time, the twenty-five years that we've been at it, as compared to the European world, it's been at it for a long time and has had more practice on what do you plant where and which grapes go where. I think that we'll be very successful in the industry.

01:07:44

**AE:** You were talking about 400 years of—of Bordeaux and I was reminded of the banner on your sign out front about the Jamestown commemorative wines and—tell me about that.

01:07:52

**DH:** Well we—I just thought it would be a good opportunity. There was the 400th anniversary of Jamestown, and we put together some bottles of wine. I don't know, it was 1,200 cases of each, I believe, of a white, a red, and a—we made a Port. And we put them in nice little squatty bottles, which were used in those days. In fact, in the old days, they looked more like whisky bottles than they did wine bottles. But anyway—and it was—we put together very good products. I mean they weren't just thrown together. And they were very—it was very receptive. People have—bought them. People loved them and we're not going to continue it because I don't think the 401st year will go off very well, **[Laughs]** but it was—you've got to be able to you know—it's like what—they used to have a saying about when you go to a lawyer, take your head with you. When you—when you get into marketing, you've got to take your head with you, too, and you've got to be able to see something and not find out that it was there before it's over, because you, you know, you've got to strike while the iron is there. And but it was very successful. We did very well with it, yes.

01:09:08

**AE:** And tell me about your personal relationship with wine and if you have something that you make here that's a particular favorite.

01:09:16

**DH:** Well, I'm extremely thrilled with the Viognier, and I'm extremely thrilled with the Petit Manseng but, basically, I'm a red wine drinker. [*Phone Rings*] I can find one of my red wines to have with fish, okay, mainly the Cotes d' Orange which is a Grenache-based wine, and it's lighter in flavor and goes very well with fish. I think the old days where white wine was for fish and chicken and so forth, some white wines go extremely well with—with some meat dishes, so it's—it's—I think there's a little bit more flexibility than if you—if you order white wine with—with meat, a meat dish you were absolutely off of our gourd and I don't think that's true anymore. I think you can take a nice red and have it with a chicken dish, and you can take a nice white and have it with a meat dish—not that chicken is not meat, but it's not red.

01:10:14

**AE:** Tell me quickly about the Cotes d' Orange.

01:10:17

**DH:** It's—I've gotten—some of the varieties that I make—and they're—they're Rhone varieties, okay, and we couldn't call it Côtes du Rhône because that's—you're going to get put in jail for that, or at least the French will put you in jail. So you have to have—and we had a hard stretch getting Cotes d'Orange put on the label. I mean I fought TTB [Tax and Trade Bureau] or—which was ATF [Bureau of Alcohol Tobacco and Firearms] at that time—tooth and nail that they said I'm trying to show that I'm making French wine. And I said, "I'm not trying to do that at all." And I had to write a letter to the state that we were not trying to duplicate or be French in style or whatever. And we finally got it through, and it's a Rhone style of wine, pretty—closer to Châteauneuf-du-Pape than it is the northern part of Rhone, where the Syrahs and so forth and so



forth Cotes du Rhotes are made, which is Syrah. But it's—it's a delightful bottle of wine and it sells, so those are key things that add to the ingredients of success.

01:11:23

**AE:** And we're in Orange County, hence the Orange?

01:11:26

**DH:** Yes, from the hills of Orange. That's what Côtes du Rhône—or Cotes d'Orange means. But it's a nice product.

01:11:33

**AE:** All right, well we've spent a good amount of time here talking about you and your wine. I've enjoyed every moment. Is there something that I haven't asked you that you might like to make sure to add to our conversation here or a final word?

01:11:45

**DH:** Oh, a final word, yeah. I think what I just said would be actually my final word. I think this is a new beginning here. We've come a long way, but we've got a long way to go, and I think that the people that are getting into—still getting into the industry are tenacious enough and are astute enough to be able to carry us from here on. I can't (a) do it forever, and other people are doing it, so Virginia will have a wine industry.

01:12:14

**AE:** Well thank you very much, Mr. Horton, for your time. I appreciate it.

01:12:17

**DH:** You're welcome, young lady.

01:12:18

**[End Dennis Horton Interview]**