

CHARLES COWART
Still Pond Winery – Arlington, GA

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Interviewer: John T. Edge, Southern Foodways Alliance
Transcription: Shelley Chance, ProDocs
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[Begin Still Pond Winery-Charles Cowart-1 Interview]

John T. Edge: All right; we're rolling. Today is August 26, 2008. I am in what town, Mr. Cowart?

00:00:09

Charles Cowart: You're--you're between Leery and Arlington in what's known as the Williamsburg community.

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JE: And I'm with Charles Cowart; Mr. Cowart if you would tell me your date of birth and we'll start with just a brief conversation?

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CC: Okay; the date of birth is December 10, 1952. Born and raised here on this piece of property.

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JE: And this piece of property is called Still Pond--is that the name?

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CC: Yeah; actually it's Still Pond. This property was actually a part of a very large cattle operation. It was a little over 10,000 acres and my father was the general manager for that. We--we basically raised cattle and some small feed crops, some grains and corns for silage and he was having a hard time keeping field hands 12-months out of the year. So we came up with this idea

about planting muscadine grapes on part of the property and all your hand-work, your pruning, your--your planting, that is done in the wintertime when he had excess labor. So that's sort of how we got started. Early '70s the owner of the--of the property, who was a multi-millionaire and owned land all over the world, passed away and his family began cashing out. And my father was able to buy the section of land that he had planted the grapes on with the idea of semi-retiring here. At that time it was about 50-acres of muscadines and he built a house here and moved out on the property and just started slowing growing from there.

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JE: And was there any family history of growing Muscadine(s) previous to that? Had his father before him grown them or--?

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CC: No; this--well everybody said you know we--well he had just totally lost every lick of sense he ever had but he had a contract with Canandaigua Winery in New York before he ever harvested the first crop and so this sort of added a little bit of justification to it, and we would mechanically--at that time mechanically harvest, and this was 38 years ago and we would mechanically harvest the fruit, put it in 55-gallon drums, put a lid on them and roll these drums in the back of a semi by hand and send them to North Carolina to an apple juice processor. They would crush the fruit there and then send the juice onto Canandaigua.

When my father got--when he became owner of the property they--the fresh market slowly started beginning to emerge and for many, many years were hand-picking about half the vineyard, grading, packing, and selling table grapes. The other half and what we didn't use for

fresh market was sold as whole fruit to wineries for them to produce their wines from. They--I know you're--you're looking at the history; they--the Still Pond where the place got its name from is--is here about 100-yards from the winery and it's a big spring fed pond. The legend was that there was a Confederate brandy still that made peach brandy there during the Civil War. I don't know how much truth is to that but I know when we were building a reservoir behind that for additional holding water we actually dug up peach pits. And I don't know--I never remember any peach trees here, so maybe so. But when I was growing up here there was two old bachelors that lived back here on these springs, always had a brand new--the biggest Studebaker that was ever made and they were very, very eccentric and never worked. So we--we knew they were making a lot of corn wine back here.

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And as--as--after we opened this winery we've had a number of people that grew up in the area stop by and visit and they all had the same tale that their father farmed somewhere along the sides of this property over the years and--and everybody had their own stump. And if you would put \$2 in this stump miraculously overnight it would turn into a pint of shine. And supposedly it was real good shine too.

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JE: And the gentlemen--the bachelor gentlemen who had their--what were their names?

00:05:01

CC: It was the Hunt brothers. It was--actually it was three of them; one stayed institutionalized most of the time. He would have bee--he would come home occasionally but wouldn't be able to stay too long. They'd always have to take him back, but--. It was Mr. Larry and Mr. Simon Hunt.

Mr. Larry was the--I guess he was the front man; he--the old house they lived in had no electricity, no running water, no indoor facilities, and--but he always dressed to a T with his little fedora on and his sport coat and his--his little tie. I guess Mr. Simon was the one that did all the work 'cause he always kept his sport coat on but he had his overalls on up under them, and carried a croaker sack that had--had a neck sling cut into it and an old single barrel shotgun everywhere he went. So I think he was the deliveryman and the collection man. And but they--they--they lived here for quite a number of years.

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And one story I'll never forget, as I said it was a cattle operation and we raised calves and calving time was--was always wintertime. And we were checking the pasture one morning adjacent to this--where the vineyard is now, and late December, early January, extremely cold, frost everywhere on the ground and there was a single tree out in the middle of the pasture. And I saw something under this tree, and when I got a little closer to it and it was Mr. Simon. He was leaned up against the tree and had his old shotgun propped up beside it, and there was actual frost on the front of his overalls. So you know we--we were sure he was dead; you know he had--that's as far as he had made it. And we pulled up by the tree and he--the eyes popped open and he said how about giving me a ride home buddy? But I guess he had just imbibed a little too much on the way home and had to--had to spend the rest of the night there. But they were quite colorful characters.

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JE: And when your father--tell me your father's name?

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CC: My father was Charlie Cowart.

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JE: And that's your son's name as well?

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CC: As well; my father was--was actually Charles Webb Cowart. Everybody called him Charlie and so I'm--I'm a junior and our youngest son is Charles P. Cowart and so we just--we alternate Charles and Charlie.

00:07:30

JE: And when he decided to start raising muscadine that was a bold thing to do in this neck of the woods?

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CC: Very much so. And as I said it was totally unheard of. There--there was no grapes of--of any kind planted around here, just what was growing wild in the woods and--but he saw a niche market there for this type of fruit and pursued it and we're very glad he did.

00:07:57

JE: Now when he began growing muscadine did he choose a particular variety? Did he work with the University of Georgia who helped him decide on variety and the like?

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CC: It was not a lot of information through the University of Georgia. Nobody else here in the state was doing it at that time. Got a lot of information out of the Carolinas mainly North Carolina; South Carolina had a few small vineyards going in it but that was--it was a lot of trial and error to begin with. They--the varieties that he started with came out of the experiment station in Griffin and they--they're the old tried and true--the Carlos, the Higgins, the Frye were the initial plantings here.

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JE: And was there anything particular about the climate of this--this corner of--of southwestern Georgia that was either good for growing muscadine or bad for growing muscadine?

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CC: The--apparently so; I mean we--we have abundant wild Muscadine(s) growing up and down the creek banks and in the low areas here. Our soil is a Tifton sandy loam type soil; we get a very, very good amount of--of summertime--we get a lot of hot days and of course that's--Muscadine(s) love hot, dry weather and we get a lot of hot, dry weather.

00:09:25

JE: Just--just not right now?

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CC: Just not right now. *[Laughs]*

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JE: Let's--let's talk a little bit about what's going on right now because I think that's--it is part of the story that you're--we're here in the--in the close of August. Your grapes are fat on the vine.

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CC: Yes; we--normally--our weather patterns have definitely changed. Ten years ago we wouldn't have even imagined picking a grape to go to a winery or to make wine out of before Labor Day. Here the last two or three years we're seeing those dates become--come sooner and sooner. Now we're looking mid to late--mid--the second or third week in August you know usually is--is when we're able to begin picking, when the sugars there and when--when the PH is right. We started picking last Monday which I believe was the 18th and got two good days in. We saw this storm heading our way so we shut down and cleaned out. We didn't want to be left here with juice in the tanks and the power out and which our power did go out and then it was out for two days. So that was probably the--the smartest thing we've done all year. **[Laughs]**

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But over this time we were--we were knocking on the door 14-inches in the last four days so we're wet. We're extremely wet; they--the fruit is--is very full of water. We're--we're seeing some damage starting to occur and we just need sunshine.

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JE: And you spoke about the beginnings of this with your father and the grape varieties that he was growing. What are ya'll growing now?

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CC: We're--we're still sticking with the--we love this Carlos. The Carlos is a very tough vine. During the fresh market days we were very, very heavy with Frye and it's--it's the big pretty sweet fruit; it's got eye appeal. The Frye for the bronze, the black Frye for the--for your darker fruit, but it's a very low-producer and we're looking for juice quantities now. We're looking at gallons per acre out and then--then market price on the fresh market. So over the years we've been steadily replacing the Frye which their lifespan we're finding here in South Georgia is about half of that of a Carlos vine. So we're--we're going back with Carlos. We're planting a lot of Noble.

The--the red muscadine wines are--are very, very popular. We're seeing more and more health information come out about them, especially the--the red wines, even though the bronze fruit, skins, and seeds are just as high but you get more in the red wine. So demand for that is definitely growing and we're also planting some Magnolia which lets us--they tend to ripen just ahead of the Carolos so we're trying to extend our season a little bit.

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JE: And as you, you know as this new consumer embraces muscadine as--for its health-giving qualities are you--what's the person--what's the profile of the person that's drinking this for pleasure? Is that changing?

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CC: Most definitely; I--when we opened here I would have assumed--and I did assume that our target market was going to be my age and above. And it's--it's--that's not the case. We're seeing 25 to--to 45 being our major market. These people are very health conscious; they're--they're

up-to-date on what's being published as far as health foods. They're--they're concerned about their diets and you know what I would classify as the beer drinkers now are the--the wine people. And one of the big things with us--so when--we were not wine people; we--we didn't drink a lot of wine, and I think that helped us here with our winery because we didn't know what wine was supposed to taste like. We wanted a wine that tasted good and--which is not hard to do with a muscadine. And we see everyday people come in here and they want a chardonnay or a merlot or a Cabernet and they leave with the sweetest bottle of wine we've got because they didn't realize that wine could taste like that. So--and we're appealing to the--to the non-wine drinker. We're giving them something that they can enjoy rather than something they can scrutinize.

00:14:15

JE: Is there a--so if that's the non-wine drinker who's discovering your wine is there a wine drinker who is you know--who is rediscovering their Southern roots and turning to muscadine too? Is there--is there that sort of consumer out there?

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CC: Yes; it is. We--we have a couple of distributors here in the State and one who had invited me to--to come ride with some of his salesman and I don't know if it was a setup or not, but they--the salesman took us into a restaurant in Savannah, Georgia. It was--it's a five-star restaurant that initially I would have said you know they're not interested in muscadine wine. And you know we said we have Muscadine wine and--and true, they were not interested in muscadine wine. They go to Germany and buy their wine, but he--he was gracious enough to sit down with us and--and it was amazing to see the expression on this sommelier's face as he was--he was tasting some of our wines and when we left he placed a nice order and we're on the menu in that

restaurant now. And it was--he was using some terms that I can't even remember to describe them but the--the--the wine connoisseurs so to speak are discovering this and they're--they're seeing the--the sweetness and the smoothness that is associated with muscadine and--and the--well to get back to our restaurant guy, he invited us back for dinner that night. And we did and--and he said I want to show you some of ours now and we drunk way too much riesling wine that night. But some of them were very comparable to--to what we had brought in there for him to try and that was--that was eye opening. The Europeans like sweet wines apparently, so we have gotten on the track of California wines that--and you know there's definitely a market there. Groceries they sell many, many, many more gallons of wine than we do but wines can taste different; they don't all have to taste the same.

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JE: And what was the name of that restaurant in Savannah?

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CC: It's Elizabeth's on 37th.

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JE: Sure; I know the restaurant. Let me push--.

[Begin Still Pond Winery-Charles Cowart-2 Interview]

00:00:01

JE: And I wanted to ask you about the picture behind you. That's your father?

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CC: Yes; it is. That's my father and as I said he was the--the general manager for the cattle operation and was responsible for the initial plantings of the grapes. They--he passed away in '91 and at that time I was working for Caterpillar and--but had become--this was a family farm so to speak, and it was either do away with it and--and continue on or me come back. I was an only child, so the choice wasn't too hard. You know I wanted to come home. It's--it's a lot to be said for signing your own paycheck even though it's--might not be as much it was if somebody else was signing it. *[Laughs]* But I don't regret it at all; we were--we were--we're a whole family here now. Both of my sons work here. My youngest son is the winemaker; my oldest son is the vineyard manager.

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JE: Tell me their names.

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CC: Charlie--Charlie Cowart is our youngest and he's the winemaker and Jake--Jacob is our oldest son and he's our vineyard manager. He had worked briefly at Lake Ridge down in Clermont right after he got out of school and got him a lot of good experience there and was able to come home. When our youngest son left to go to school he made it real clear that when I get through with this nonsense you know I want a place to come back to, so that was the beginnings of the--the winery thoughts. At that time, you know we--we've got to do something here to create something and so right now--and my wife and I and my two sons and two daughters-in-law and my brand new--brand new grandchild are all right here within a stone's throw of each other.

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JE: And so ya'll have been growing muscadine since--?

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CC: The first vines I think were planted here in '68.

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JE: And the first harvest would have been?

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CC: '72, '73 would have been the first harvest.

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JE: And from '73 you sold grapes and juice to others but then what year did you first start making your own wine?

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CC: We started in 2003; we opened the doors on the winery here in 2003. And it is--that has been a very learning experience. We dealt with--with wineries for basically 40 years and the first batch of wine that we ever produced was I think 2,600 gallons back in one of these vats and it wouldn't have happened without the very good relationships that we had built up over the years with these winemakers. They've come and they've spent weekends with us; they've spent weeks with us. I've got Mama's phone number and girlfriend's phone number and you know--give us a call and let us know, and they have--they've really guided us. We tried to--to pick out the ones

that we liked their wine and take a piece of this one and a piece of that one and sort of put it together to come up with our unique wine that we produce here. And--and you know their advice was not so much as--as what to do but what not to do, you know don't--don't make this mistake.

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JE: Talk to me about one of those relationships, one in particular with a certain--with a certain winemaker or--that--that might be illustrative.

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CC: They--well one up in north Tennessee I guess made some of the best wine that I have ever tasted in my life and knew that we--we needed some of his advice. And he--I approached him about it and he said I'll make you a deal. He said you promise never to move to Tennessee and I'll tell you everything I know. And you said you've got a deal. So he has been you know invaluable to us. Another one not far from us--

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JE: What was the name of the guy in Tennessee?

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CC: Marty Hoover.

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JE: And their winery is?

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CC: It was Highland Manor. They--for their muscadine wine that he was producing from our juice and our fruit there for a while, they--they have a waiting list. They sign up all year long and every bottle that he made was sold once he got--got a cork in it. So I knew he had--had a good thing going there. Another winemaker here in the Florida Panhandle, Chautauqua Winery, George Cowie, has been invaluable as well; he's you know a dear friend. You know we can talk honestly between the two of us and--and he's always got a--a good answer for you. They are--he's been a lot of help, a tremendous amount of help to us.

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JE: It sounds like there's a fraternity of grape growers and winemakers within the South. It's fairly tight?

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CC: Yes; it sure is. If--if you commit and--and you're serious about it and you know we all know who's serious and who's not, and if--if you show those characteristics they'll all jump in there and--and help you with it. There's--there's some that are--you know they'll -- Gracious, you know look what he's getting for a bottle of wine. I want to get in the wine business. Let me find somebody to make my wine for me. Let me--let me find somebody to market it for me. You know they--they want the name only and think they're going to get rich, but I think George put it sort of in perspective; the winemaker in--in Defuniak, if you want to be a millionaire in the wine business you better start out as a billionaire.

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JE: And what--so if in 2003 you set out to make wine, what happened the first time you--you set out to make wine?

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CC: We--we had good results. We were very fortunate, the good Lord was looking after us; he--he kept us from totally screwing everything up and we think we produced about 800 cases that year. Pretty much sold those out; we were able to--

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JE: Selling those retail here?

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CC: Selling those retail here; the state of Georgia is a three-tier system which is producer, distributor, and retailer. If you're classified as a Georgia farm winery with the turn-down of a State distributor you're allowed to distribute your own product. And initially we knew that there's not a distributor out there that's going to take the--the care to walk in with our bottle of wine in their--in their hand and talk about it the way that we would want him to talk about it. So we elected to self-distribute for three years. And we made some very, very good inroads in our local area which I would say is a 50-miles radius of us. And then it got to the point that you know we couldn't--we couldn't do both justice. We couldn't tend to our retail customers and tend to the vineyard and tend to the winery.

So we were noticed by a distributor here in south Georgia and their wine manager, I suppose would have been his title--had approached us on two different occasions wanting to take

over the distribution of this wine. The first time we told him no; you know we were satisfied with what we were doing and then I guess six--eight months later he came back. And--and with the--you know basically what would it take for us to sell your wine? And we--we told him and he said okay, let's do it; so that got us involved with distributors. That distributor has since moved up into the North Georgia area and then we were sort of handed to a southern distributor, who is Savannah Distributing and so Gusto carries--Gusto Brands carries our products in north Georgia; Savannah--Savannah Distributing takes care of us down here in south Georgia. And we're--we're pleased with--with what's happening there. It's--it's not an overnight by any form of the imagination; it--it takes time. It takes a lot of time and a lot of effort to--to get established.

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I mentioned while ago about the--the restaurant there in Savannah. And--and in those three days that I was there I went in more liquor stores than I guess I'd ever been in--in my life. And--and it was so obvious and I had never really thought about it but you immediately walk in the front door of this liquor store and you see an insignia, you see a color, you see the first letter of a name and you immediately recognize the--you know the Jack Daniel's the Old No. 7, the Crown, the blue color of the Crown, the red and the white of the Budweiser. You know all that jumps out at you. And then you turn toward the wine aisle and there is a dark deep tunnel with no distinction whatsoever. I mean you're totally on your own and the label may be pretty but you know what is it? And that's something that--that we're attacking here now through our marketing and whatever--whatever that is but we're--we're trying to differentiate ourselves and--and be a Georgia – a Southern -- product.

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JE: How do you set about doing that? What do you--what do you--?

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CC: Point of sales is about the only way that we can do it inside the liquor store. We're doing a--a large amount of advertising you know trying to--to get our name out there for people to remember our name. We--newspapers, magazines, radio, television, direct mail--we're very, very involved in all of that and still you know six years later we get people from our largest town which is Albany, 30-miles away that walk in the door and say I never knew you were here. And but we're--I don't know how to reach everybody but we're--we're certainly in the media. We're--we've just completed some point of sale materials that are--that hopefully are in every store that we're in now that directs them to--to the Still Pond section in that store that tells them that this is a muscadine wine and it is a Georgia grown product.

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JE: And that idea that Georgia grown product, does that resonate with the consumers that seek you out because it's not that easy to get here? [*Laughs*] I mean you're--you're down--you're how far out of Albany?

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CC: We're about 30-miles out of Albany. We did this thing sort of opposite. Most wineries build a winery and then plant a few vines and then buy fruit; of course we had the vineyard here. We now have 170-acres of vines and our biggest project here is processing--is harvesting and processing juice for other wineries. And so it wouldn't make sense for us to move the winery you know 30-miles away. So our winery is here, and you got to be looking for us to find us. You're not going to happen up on us, and some more good information that I got from--from another

winery was when we were talking about building this building and putting this facility in we were visiting wineries. We were going to Chateau Élan, we were going to Habersham, we were going to--to Lake Ridge, you know; they're--they're all on major thoroughfares. They're all in tourist towns and--and the people there were telling us location--location--location. And we knew you know that is just not going to happen here in southwest Georgia. And then we started making some rounds to some smaller wineries and one I guess he was just as far out in the woods as--as we are out in central Alabama and he thought--

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JE: Who was that?

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CC: Morgan Creek; you know he told us--said hey you be the destination. You know don't--don't let those come in and--and tell you that. And you know as our friendship grew with Chautauqua and--and George you know I posed that question to him and they are--you pull off an exit ramp of I-10 and you turn in their driveway. And you--you may not be able to put this on here but all he says--you don't want those; they just pee on the floor and steal the toilet paper.

[Laughs]

00:14:04

He said you--you need to build a base and he said everybody that passes by here is saving their money on their way to Biloxi or they're coming home broke. We're not making our living from this interstate. And but you know location has a lot to do with it; you know Habersham there in Helen get a lot of visitors every year. And they're--they're doing great with that up there. Chateau Elan, they've created their own place there and it's absolutely beautiful.

We can't do that; you know it's just economically not feasible for us to do it and--but we--when we see a car coming we know they're coming to see us [*Laughs*] and it's a good possibility he's coming here to buy wine.

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JE: And you mentioned that a big part of y'all's business is processing grapes and selling the juice to other wineries. Is that--?

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CC: Right; for a number of years as I said we were fresh marketing and then what we had leftover and the male varieties which were mainly Carlos at that time we were selling whole fruit to these wineries. And mid-'90s it began to really resonate with us that you know this--this labor thing is going to be a thing of the past here before long. It was getting harder and harder to come by pickers, graders, packers; federal and state laws were--were coming into effect as--as to how we were going to house them, how we were going to transport them, and it was a--a large liability that--that we were undertaking every year. There's been a couple of seasons here that the crew leaders left with more money than--than we were left with and we were taking all the risks. So we were seeing a steady growth in the demand for wine fruit, so we knew that was the direction we wanted to go into but we had to add some value. The fresh market was what was paying the bills and this wine fruit was sort of--we were looking at it as fertilizer money.

Now days fertilizer money would be pretty good money but at that time it was a--whatever we can get out of it. So basically we just went to our winery customers and said what can we do to make this product worth more to you? They all gave us a good long list but they

were all saying the same thing. The harvest time is late August, September, the hottest part of the--the summer. This fruit was riding from one to three days going to where it was going. The quality was not what it could have been.

There was some fermentation beginning; there was some heat breakdown. The wineries were buying by the whole ton of--of whole fruit; they didn't know what they were getting. The juice yields on a ton of fruit will vary year in and year out; may get 135-gallons this year and may get 150-gallons next year depending on what kind of season we had. They're--these-- anything stainless steel now is--costs a ton of money; they want to utilize it to the fullest and they don't want to pour any juice down the drain. The--the make-ups, the sugar, the acid, the PH--all very important in making wine but that too varies with our growing season. And last but not least they told us you know we love the wine but we hate dealing with this fruit. They--their equipment was--was aimed at thin-skinned, lightly seeded to no seeded grape and the muscadine is everything but.

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So what we do now, we mechanically harvest. As we're harvesting, we're crushing and we're pressing. Typically we're four to five hours from the time that it comes off of that vine; it's in one of our tanks--38, 39, 40-degrees, almost in an instant cool-down of that saving the flavors, the aromas. There's no fermentation going on; you've got good fresh, clean juice there. The--we're--we're able to tell the winemaker now all right; you know the good Lord is going to sort of give us what we're going to get every year. But he knows what's coming. We can tell him the PH; we can tell him acid levels; we can tell him the brix. And he knows what he wants to do with it when this stuff shows up. As most of the wineries that are still buying some of the whole fruit or they have vineyards of their own, this is harvest time for them as well so they're very

busy. We don't have to schedule around their press times. We can do it when we can do it-- ideally when the fruit is ready to be picked or when the ground dries off enough to pick them. **[Laughs]** But and when our product gets to their door now you know they hook a hose to the back of this tanker truck and turn on a pump and they're not dealing eight to 10 more hours with--with the processing of this fruit.

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JE: And how widely distributed is that juice? What's the extent like the northern and--?

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CC: We would go as far north as Virginia; we go into the Carolinas, Alabama, Georgia, Florida, Arkansas from time to time.

00:19:38

JE: And where does that put ya'll in the ranks of muscadine juice sellers on the market? Are y'all--ya'll are a fairly big player in that, yes?

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CC: Yes; I think so John. I think we're one of the major suppliers in--in this area.

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JE: And--and what does that translate to in--in terms of gallons of--of juice?

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CC: Typically we will harvest 120,000 to 130,000 gallons of juice and we need 18,000 to 20,000 for us; the rest goes to other wineries.

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JE: And is there one winery that's the--that is your biggest customer or--?

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CC: It varies from year to year. A lot of them will stock up when they have tank space and then the other ones will--will back off a little bit depending on you know what's happening in their regions. But not so that we have you know one big--big guy up there that sucks it all up from us.

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JE: You don't want a Wal-Mart situation?

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CC: Oh right; oh absolutely no. We sold them fresh fruit and we don't ever want to do any of that again.

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JE: Why not? It drove down the price or--?

00:20:47

CC: Oh gracious yes; to deal with them for 12 months and they know more about your business than you do. And they totally control you. We're more aimed at the smaller wineries, sort of the mom and pop that make their living from them that will take 5,000--500 gallons worth of juice at

the time and they depend on us. And we--we certainly don't want to let them down. You know that's how they make their living and that's how they keep their families fed and--and housed and they depend on us year in and year out for good quality product and we certainly want to deliver to them.

00:21:28

JE: Let's take another break real quick.

[Begin Still Pond Winer-Charles Cowart-3 Interview]

00:00:00

CC: You want all my trade secrets?

00:00:05

JE: So you said when you started--?

00:00:08

CC: When we started thinking about this winery you know in talking with--with other winemakers you know we were--we were looking you know--give me something, give--give me something to start with or something we can learn from and--and they said you got to--there's one book you've got to have. You've got to have this book. And the author of it is--and it's a little ironic but it's Richard P. Vine, *Process and Controls*; everything you need to know is in that book and everything that--that--a whole lot more that you don't need to know is in there but--but you've got to have this book.

00:00:47

So--of course it's out of print, and I went on eBay or what--found it on the Internet; it's always handy, you know. There it is right there; I think I paid \$300-bucks for this book.

00:01:05

JE: Truly?

00:01:05

CC: Truly--truly; I did. And it has been invaluable. Several years--well a couple years after that I was cleaning out some--some stuff down at the old shop and going through some of my father's stuff and picked up some piles and low and behold there was the book laying there in this box. And I opened it up and there was a little inscription in the front that said *good luck, Charlie--Richard P. Vine*. So you know it--it was in the thoughts if it wasn't in the works, you know. He--he--this had been sort of kicking around in his mind long before we ever discovered it, so--.

00:01:46

JE: And did--did he make wine at all?

00:01:51

CC: Not at all; not at all--tried some in the old crocks on the back porch that we used for salad dressing mostly.

00:02:02

JE: And but that's a picture of him with--with--what year would that have been?

00:02:07

CC: That would have been early '70s I'm sure.

00:02:13

JE: He looks proud--he looks proud of his grapes.

00:02:15

CC: Oh yeah; he had some nice vines and that's an old Mecca Harvester there. We--we still got it; that's our backup machine now but it--it--the paint was still on it, so that--that meant it was fairly new. And it was I think a '72 model, so--.

00:02:34

JE: And to the left of that there's some documents. What are those?

00:02:37

CC: Well that's my grandfather had a hardware store in Leery which is our nearest town about five-miles away and this is Depression era coupons that you know you would have to have that coupon in order to go into the store and buy that product. So that--that's what those are.

[End Still Pond Winery-Charles Cowart 1 through 3]