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Oregon Wine History Project™ Interview Transcript: Diana Lett

Diana Lett

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This interview was conducted with Diana Lett (**DL**) on July 9, 2010 at Eyrie Vineyards in McMinnville, Oregon. The primary interviewer was Jeff D. Peterson (**JDP**). Additional support provided by videographers Mark Pederson and Barrett Dahl. The duration of the interview is 49 minutes, 18 seconds.

[00:00] **JDP:** So today we are interviewing Diana Lett for the Oregon Wine History Project™. It's July ninth and we're here at Eyrie Vineyards to talk to her about the early days of wine. So why don't you start by telling me a little bit about yourself, and about how you came, wound up coming to Oregon with David [Lett]?

[00:24] **DL:** I was raised in the South, and I went to school in Dallas, Texas, University of Dallas. And just a few days after I finished my last term at the university, I got a job with Scott Foresman Publishing, which published college textbooks. I had been at work for about three days and I got a call from the head office in Chicago, and they said, We'd like to send you back to Chicago to attend the New Man's Conference, and learn all about the new books, and meet some of the people that work all around the country with Scott Foresman.

And so my friend who had helped me get the job said, "Well, while you're in Chicago—" Oh, I said, "First of all, what's the New Man's Conference?" And they said, It's all the new people that we've hired this past year or so and we're bringing them all into Chicago, so it will be eighteen men and you. Sounded fine, all the new men and me. I was a new man, also. So my friend Al Dolan said to me, "While you're there, make sure you meet Dave Lett. He's covering our Northwest Territory, but he's also—I think you'll really like him, and he's starting a winery in Oregon."

So I didn't know anything about wine, or anything like that, but the first person I met when I got to the New Man's Conference was David Lett. And we liked each other immediately, and, well, to make a long story short, we were married eight weeks later in Dallas. I flew out to Oregon and my wedding present was an L.L Bean rainsuit and a shovel. That first week we got busy transplanting the little baby plants that he had planted the year before, he had planted in 1965. We spent our honeymoon year, '66, '67, digging out all these little vines and transplanting them over to what would become the Eyrie Vineyards. That was my introduction. When I told my friends and my family that I was running off to an unknown place with an unknown man to do an unknown thing, I dropped a few jaws. And I look back on it now and I think, That was crazy.

[03:07] **JDP:** So how old were you about then?

[03:09] **DL:** I had just turned twenty-three, and David had just turned twenty-seven. He came to Oregon in the winter of 1965. After he had finished getting his—let's see, maybe we should back this up a little bit. I don't know if you have the story of how he got involved in all of this. Let me start off and back up on that. David went to the University of Utah. He was born in Chicago, but then his family moved to Utah, and had a little apple farm in Utah. Their farm was right at the

foot of the Wasatch Mountains, and he really enjoyed the whole natural splendor and being outside. They were very in touch with nature, they did a lot of hiking, and skiing, and all that sort of thing.

But his grandfather had been a doctor back in Chicago, and his family really wanted him to be a doctor, so he went to University of Utah and majored in medicine and philosophy, thinking that the medical schools would want somebody who was really well-rounded in the liberal arts as well as sciences. And then when he graduated, and made application to the medical schools that he wanted to go to, all of which were coincidentally nearby really good sailing areas, he found that most medical schools were not that interested in somebody that was that well-rounded. He decided then he would have a fall back position of going to dental school, but he was not terribly excited about that. But he went for an interview in San Francisco at Physicians and Surgeons College there in San Francisco. And while he was there, the Donner Pass to get back to Utah got snowed in so he couldn't go back. So he thought, I'm just going to go out to the Napa Valley and kind of see what's going on.

[05:30] And not much was going on in the Napa Valley at the time; there were only maybe two or three really good wineries and not many wineries at all, really. And he happened to go to Mayacamas for a visit. He went up to see Lee Stewart at Souverain Cellars, which was one of the other nice, small, premium wineries in the Napa Valley at that time.

And it was a cold, foggy day, and it was in January, and he came up the drive and he saw a young man out in the courtyard there rolling barrels around and rinsing them out and doing all that, so he engaged that young man in conversation and they talked about winemaking, and wine, and traveling all around the world, and all the wonderful people who are involved in the wine business.

And David said he felt like he just had a lightning bolt; that's what he wanted to do and he could use his science, and he could use his more liberal self and he could be involved with nature, and it all came together for him. And he came back home and told his parents, kind of like when I told my parents what I wanted to do. Because at that time there was absolutely no glamour, no cache, no history, no—Really, it just wasn't part of our culture at all to even be involved in wine, to even drink wine. So they were underwhelmed, for that as a career choice.

But he got a letter shortly after that from Lee Stewart, who was a very respected winemaker, offering him a job at Souverain to see if he wanted to do that. So his parents said, Well, David, if you really are serious about doing this, we'll help support you, but is there some place you can go and get a serious education in it? So he found out about the program at University of California at Davis, and he applied, and was accepted and so he attended Davis for two years, and I think he worked part time at Souverain and so forth. But he got his degree in Viticulture. He thought it would be, just from his personality, but then as he was studying about wine he realized that the wine that he liked was more natural, and was made from the vineyard. The vineyard should have the focus, rather than the manipulations you might do in the winery. So he decided to major in Viticulture and minor in Enology.

And while he was at Davis, they had the opportunity to do a lot of wine tasting in their classes, and they had the opportunity to taste a lot of good wines. And some of those wines were Pinot noir from Burgundy, and David just fell for Pinot noir. And that was another one of those pieces of—Jason [Lett] calls it the Cosmic Brick. But just this thing, everything just clicks into place and you know this is where you want to focus. And so Pinot noir became his baby.

And when he graduated from Davis January of '64 he went over to Europe for several months and went, kind of travelled right around the Northern part of France, and Alsace and Germany, and that area. And talked about Pinot noir and kind of related cool-weather, cool climate grapes. He did some research on weather and all that sort of thing, and then also there were some classmates at Davis that were influencing these decisions, they were all talking with each other, and so forth—specifically Charles Coury, was a good friend of David's. And he was very interested in climate, and David was very interested in Pinot noir. So they were jazzing each other up with talk and decided that—I think David said that there were three places that he was really interested in for Pinot noir. One of them would be the south island of New Zealand, and up in Northern Portugal, maybe, and in the United States would be Oregon.

[10:00] He had never been to Oregon, but he decided that he was going to try in the Willamette Valley. That looked like the best of all of those, for various reasons and so that's what set him on his course. So when he came back from Europe he got a bunch of cuttings together from down in California, from the University of California's ampelography—well, anyway, their collection of wine varieties from all over the world. And maybe they only had two or three vines from each type, but they were trying to collect a representative from every wine variety.

So he brought Pinot noir and he brought Chardonnay, primarily. And he also brought, like I think, maybe a hundred or so cuttings of Pinot Meunier, of Muscat Ottonel, of Pinot blanc and of Pinot gris, which was a variety that they grew in Alsace quite a bit. It had a lot of success in Alsace, but almost nobody else grew it, and it was definitely not grown in the United States, or in anywhere else in the New World, so he thought, Well if Pinot noir would do well in Oregon, those very closely related cousins of Pinot noir should do well too.

And so, a lot of it was experimental. Most of it was just hope. And no experience to back anything up. There was no wine industry at all to speak of in the Willamette Valley and certainly these varieties had not been grown here before. It was also interesting because very little emphasis, at least in the United States, had ever been placed on a specific variety and finding a specific climate that would evoke the most potential from that variety. And so that was a new thing. It was, "Oh I've got some land, it's pretty warm here, throw in this variety and that variety, it's what they used to grow in the old country where my folks were from," and that type of thing. So it wasn't—the science—I don't know if you want to call it the science or the art—at that time in the United States was pretty minimal and it was just right before an explosion in the whole thing.

[12:59] **JDP:** So he's literally coming up, he plants in Corvallis?

[13:04] **DL:** Well, he did. He came up here; he borrowed his uncle's horse trailer, and piled it full of all these three thousand vine cuttings and came up to the Willamette Valley. Oh, and

there's kind of a funny story. He came up here right after the big Christmas floods of 1964 so it was like the first or second week in January, so the entire Willamette Valley was flooded and the new interstate highway had just been completed, and so he was driving over this and there was water on all sides, and he was going, "Damn! They told me Oregon was wet, but this is really bad."

So he came up here with his cuttings and he, you know, wasn't able to find any vineyard land right away. He wanted to take his time and find just the right spot. A real estate agent that he was talking to offered him a little plot of farm land he had down there in Corvallis to just use as a little nursery. A place where he could just plant them, and get them started rooting while he looked for a vineyard. So he planted those down there in Corvallis and that was the Willamette Valley's first Pinot noir, and Pinot gris, and Chardonnay, and all of that. So that was the first planting. And I think you've seen pictures of that, with the little shed, and the little rows of vines, and some of the rows were really crooked because he hadn't learned how to manage the tractor just so yet. He got a lot better at it.

So that was '65 that he planted those, and we met in the summer of 1966, and the same summer that we met, in fact within a two or three week period he met me, and he also found the plot of land that would become the Eyrie Vineyards. So it was a good year. It was a great summer. So we were married the first of October and we started transplanting, and we spent all that next year developing the first acreage. You know, getting things cleared, getting things planted. Getting started. And we planted the first five acres and got started.

[15:18] **JDP:** So, what were you thinking? You meet this guy, two months later you're married to him, the next thing you know you're planting—

[15:30] **DL:** The next morning we were at those baby vines. That's the first thing he said the morning after we were married, "Want to go see the vines?"

[15:40] **JDP:** And, was this exciting for you?

[15:44] **DL:** Oh, yes it was really exciting. It was just exciting first of all to come to Oregon. I grew up in the South. It was very beautiful down there where I lived, but to come to Oregon was just spectacular. It was still unsettled enough that you felt like there was still space for pioneering; it was new. I knew that we were doing something that was really interesting, and could really be wonderful. I didn't have any way of foreseeing what it would be like, or how it could happen and so forth, it was just the feeling of being on the threshold of something new, and also on the threshold of something very old. That had, this sounds corny, but it had enriched other cultures tremendously, and here was our opportunity to maybe do that here.

So it was definitely the feeling of being in on the ground floor of something that could become terrific. Our hopes were that we'd be able to make it work, and that the wines would be good and that we could support our family. Beyond that we didn't really have any vision right there at the first of how we could build a community, or what that was going to be like, you know, where it could lead. I don't think in our wildest dreams we thought it would happen so quickly. I think

what we just happened to be, and all of us, that started here in the '70s, we just happened to be on the cusp of something that was just ready to happen.

In our culture, in our ability to travel to Europe, to get involved with wine, in our maybe, the very time of pushing against so much technology and wanting to go back to something that was elemental, and beautiful, and traditional. And also people were beginning to get much more interested in doing things naturally. Well, not a lot of people were interested in it, we were interested in it. David had gotten completely carried away with Rachel Carson's book *Silent Spring*, which was published in 1963, I think. And he said he made a perfect pest of himself in classes because at that time the farming classes were, Here's a bug, here's how you kill it. He was always posing questions that made everybody wish that he would go to another classroom. But our first dedication was that we would try to do this as naturally as possible, and that was very unusual at that time.

[18:57] **JDP:** Well, and I have to say, even talking with different people from different wineries, not just with this different project, but over the last year, David really does sound like one of the first people to really be thinking about sustainable practices and sustainability. Others are mildly interested, some more than others, and now you've got the biodynamic movement, but back then—

[19:23] **DL:** This was pretty unusual. I think within the emerging hippie culture that happened just shortly after that, a lot of that emphasis was involved in that culture. But David with his scientific background and his university, he said he had to unlearn a lot that he learned about farming, and grape growing, and so forth to make it fit with what he wanted to do.

But we learned to relax, we didn't have to run out and kill every single thing the minute we saw something, we tried to keep a ground cover, we tried to keep the blackberries all around the vineyard, because things that lived on grapes also liked blackberries, so they would go over there, and not get on our vines. I'm not being very scientific about how I am expressing this right now, but the gist of it was, if you have a really diverse biological scene, your grape vines are not the only sitting ducks. It bothers me a lot that there's such a huge monoculture of grapes in the valley now, and it bothers me to see trees and everything pulled out, to have more vines, so I do worry about that, that we may have a new vulnerability.

[20:52] **JDP:** Yeah, it's interesting, I've had a couple incidences where I talked with British people who are here who call that blackberry thing that we would normally want to take out a *hedge*. And that's where you've got an amazing amount of biodiversity. That's quite an amazingly different picture that you get than—Well and even, I guess, biodynamic, right? Biodynamic meaning you don't use chemicals, and you don't do all this stuff, but it doesn't necessarily mean that you leave everything else in—

[21:37] **DL:** I think our basis was, we were trying to encourage a healthy ecology, a rich biodiversity in whatever was under our control. And in fact, that's why we named it the Eyrie Vineyard was because when we were first planting there was a big fir tree at the top of the vineyard and we noticed a pair of hawks kept going there, and then we could hear the little baby hawks and we thought it would maybe express what we wanted: that we wanted that to belong to

all of us, that it was everyone's nest, the eyrie, and the eyrie is a hawk's nest. So we named it Eyrie Vineyards. In my next life I'm going to name it something that's a little easier for people to pronounce and spell. I named it that. Now we have to spell it for everyone. And they always say, Is this Eerie Vineyards? [Laughing] Just at Halloween.

[22:52] **JDP:** So, what are some of—You talk about this sense of community, and it sounds like you've got Charles Coury, and David—

[23:03] **DL:** Yes. David came up here, then shortly after that Chuck and Shirley [Coury] came back from Europe, and they came up that summer and purchased property and started bringing up grape cuttings and so forth. So those two classmates were getting started, but there was very little else going on. Then maybe a year and a half later we got a call from a young, but very tall Dick Erath who said he was interested in maybe finding some property up in Oregon. I don't want to speak for Dick on what his emphases were, I'm assuming maybe they were in German wine varieties because he was from a German background, his father was German. But anyway, he came up here and settled near us.

And two or three years later the Blossers moved, and a few months after that, in fact, Susan Blosser said, "I would love for you to meet some friends we've made through another friend of ours in Portland who would like to meet you." And we said, Well, sure, who's that? And she said, "Well, the woman is an artist, she's currently the Artist in Residence at the Contemporary Arts Society¹," and she said, "I would like to take you up there to meet her." And so we met, and it was Ginny Adelsheim, and we immediately just liked each other right off the bat. And she's been my dearest friend for, oh god, forty years now, I guess. And so we became good friends with the Adelsheims, and they were just beginning to look for property.

At the same time David was still working for Scott Foresman, the publishing company and that's what we lived on. He traveled all through the Northwest, from San Francisco up to Alaska, and I had the opportunity before we started having children of traveling all over the North West with him, and that was a fabulous thing. But he was still selling textbooks all around this territory. And he came home one day and told me he had met a really interesting guy up at Portland Community College, and his name was Dick Ponzi. And they had moved up here and they were going to get involved in wine growing.

So our little community started to grow. We were all really busy, so we didn't have a whole lot of time to hang out with each other, but they did start to grow. One of the first projects that we all worked on was the land use. This is when David first began to get involved with land use. Which was a consuming passion for him, all the way until the end. But he and Bill Blosser, and Dave Adelsheim, I think those were the three main ones that got involved with the Yamhill County planning department. As you, in your interviews with Dave Adelsheim talked about, they convinced the planning department that the hills were not just trash land to be developed for subdivisions, they could potentially bring in a lot of benefit as vineyards- that they might be more valuable as vineyard property, but it took some fancy talking. And some Chinese water torture of drip, drip, drip. Just staying on it to get—but those hillsides were zoned as agricultural,

¹ Correction by Diana Lett: The Contemporary Crafts Gallery

rather than totally giving over to development. So I think that was a great gift that those people gave to Oregon.

[27:09] **JDP:** So, if you back up a bit, I think I've heard Jason tell this story, how David actually found the property where he was going to grow the grapes where you guys were going to plant. How is it that because he's doing the text—he's selling textbooks—

[27:27] **DL:** He was traveling all around the Willamette Valley, visiting different college campuses, and so he kept an auger in the back of the car, and when he saw a likely area, he'd hop out of the car, auger, take a soil sample, see how deep the soil was, see what type of soil it was, and so forth. That was one of his means of deciding where might be a good place. He had some monetary restrictions of course. Practically none. That was one thing I forgot to ask him before we got married, Do you have any money? No. I totally forgot.

But anyway, he kept looking at the Dundee hills and thinking, oh God, they are situated so beautifully, they're just the right slope, they're just the right soils. They'd be perfect for viticulture, but they're just prime for development because they were just that far from Portland, and they were just because they were so beautifully rolling, and looking out, and had all this Southern exposure.

So he had looked at it several times and then finally this piece of property came up for sale, and it was the right price, and it was just sloped due south, and it was very gentle, and it had enough water in it, and everything was just right. So he said, "Okay, I'm just going to buy it and we'll deal with the development issue if we have to." So he was already alert to the danger that those hills would be subdivisions before any of us could turn around.

So when the Blossers bought property, they bought property right next to us, and Dick, just over the hill, Dick Erath, and then Dave and Ginny bought property over in the Chehalem Mountains. So it was in our interest to get on that property quickly, and make the point well. And I'm glad—I'm so grateful that we had enough time to so that people could get vineyards in, and develop it, and make wine, and show that this could happen.

[29:57] **JDP:** As I was talking with David Adelsheim, it also sounds like the time was right in Oregon because you've got Tom McCall and so many others that were saying, We need to have conversations that are purposeful about land use and sustainability as opposed to just letting—So many states, especially California—

[30:20] **DL:** —Just rampant development. Yes, the timing of everything was absolutely perfect. I think if it had been off five years one way or the other probably it would have been more difficult. But it was— this whole story has been a good combination of luck and pluck.

[30:44] **JDP:** So, what are some of the ways in which you—I have to say, there's a lot there compared with others with whom I've spoken, it seems like David is looking further down the road than a lot of people were. You know, that there are some people that are, you know, It seems like a good lifestyle so I'd like to just go and grow grapes. Where it seems like David is looking further down the road, and you know, like when we talk about the way you look at the

land for example. What are some ways you feel his views changed, or maybe became more fully developed? What are some ways in which you all, as you're going through this—What are the things that became more important to you, or your philosophy becomes a little bit more fully developed over the years?

[31:42] **DL:** I think the word I would use to describe David at that time was *intensely focused*, and he stayed focused. I think people would agree with that, who knew him. In the later years he was able to relax because he saw it had happened, it had unfolded as he dreamed, and he was—there was a richness for him in those last years of knowing that we made it; he had proved that Pinot noir could grow in the United States, he proved that the best Pinot noir could come from the Willamette Valley, he—It must have been a tremendous feeling to see all these hopes and dreams of a really young person. It happened. He didn't do it single-handedly; he knew that, by far. But it happened. We all made it happen.

And so, those last years he was much more relaxed and it was a thrill to him to see Jason come in and want to take over, and to also see all these other kids of our original families expressing interest. It's very fulfilling to think your child would want to do what you did, and carry that forward. It's not easy, but it's got to be very rewarding. I feel rewarded, but for David, you know, it was his dream, and to see that carried forward is wonderful.

[33:29] **JDP:** So you have those early years, and you have some experimentation that's going on, and I've heard really interesting stories from David Adelsheim, for example, who didn't really know he was supposed to weed in between to keep the cover, and I think Dick Erath where it didn't have water on it, around the place—

[33:59] **DL:** I remember that now. I'd forgotten he drilled quite a few wells, and none of us had any money, so that was—You could just hear the dollars just being pumped out. We had a lot of empathy.

[34:11] **JDP:** But I think another point too is that there was a lot of trial and error going on, and then there's that sort of vindication when—Can you talk about when Dave wins that award?

[34:29] **DL:** That was interesting. We got a—I'm trying to remember that first one. I think it was a phone call. We had a friend, Becky Wasserman, who lives in Burgundy, and she imported Burgundies into the States and brought some American wines back to France, very few. But she had come across our Pinot noir, it was a '75, so this must have been in '78, I think, that she took this wine back. And then there was a tasting in Paris called the Olympics of Wine. Well let's see, what was the grand title? The Olympiades of Wines of the World and it was put on by Gault-Millau, which was the French gourmet magazine, and it had a lot of clout. There was a lot of curiosity about bringing all these wines from three hundred different countries, I think—I mean three hundred wines from all kinds of different countries and tasting all different wine areas.

And Eyrie came in top 10 in the Pinot noir, and so Becky called and told us about it, and it was very exciting, of course, but she said—she called later and she said, “There is going to be a rematch. They are going to take the top Pinot noirs and Robert Drouhin, who was one of the head

negociants in Burgundy, would like to taste these wines against some of his best Pinot noirs, his best Burgundies.”

And so there was a challenge. And Gault-Millau was also sponsoring this challenge. And our '75 Pinot noir came in two-tenths of a point below the winning Drouhin Wine which was a 1959 Chambolle Musigny. Very big uproar in the wine and food world. And the, it would have been the Herald Tribune in Paris picked this story up and then it went all over the world. And there were articles all over the United States and the phone was ringing off the wall and you know, three days before we couldn't sell a bottle of Oregon wine, we couldn't give a bottle of Oregon wine away, and then there were people wanting to buy our entire output, and all the output of the entire state of Oregon.

So it just, basically what happened was it put the spotlight on Oregon, it put the spotlight on American Pinot noir, because they weren't making much Pinot noir in California at the time, believe it or not. So the spotlight was put on Oregon and they said, Oh, maybe they can grow wine here. Well, nobody even knew we were trying. It was a very small band of brothers. That is what really gave it the emphasis; that put gas in the dream, to push it forward.

[37:55] **JDP:** So what's it like dealing with that? It seems like it was quite a—You wake up to a pretty different world.

[38:03] **DL:** There was another lesson learned. A lot of hullabaloo, a lot of hullabaloo, and it went on for a couple of months. But then it got quiet, and then it was just back to work.

But we were beginning to get more visitors. One of our fabulous visitors that summer, Madame Bize-Leroy from Romanee-Conti in France, came here to this little pokey little winery. That was so exciting. And she liked the wines. And she was very complimentary, and we became wine friends. We became wine friends with the Drouhins. Very good friends with them. Veronique came and stayed with us for a harvest as well as stayed with Dave and Ginny and Lizzie Adelsheim, and spent time with the people at Bethel Heights.

And that next year Robert asked David Adelsheim and David Lett to help him find some property here in Oregon. He felt like it would give him an opportunity to be more free, and more expansive with what he could do with Pinot noir. And it would give Veronique a chance to blossom as a woman in the wine business. And it was exciting to him. He caught the Oregon fever too. So he came here with his incredible credentials. In 1987 he bought property here, we helped him find some property, it's right on our road, right up the hill from us. And that also gave another huge push for validating what we were doing.

And at the same time in 1987, several of the wine people, and several restaurant people and several community boosters and that sort of thing got together and we put on the very first International Pinot Noir celebration. Which wasn't a competition, it was a celebration of Pinot noir in whatever form it was made, whether it was champagne or table wine or whatever. Wherever it was made, we invited the winemakers and the wine lovers to come to the campus of Linfield College. And getting it on the campus at Linfield College is a story unto itself. But we held that first IPNC and it was a smashing success. And we sold every ticket. Couldn't believe it.

We sold five hundred tickets, at what we thought was a lot of money. A lot of the winemakers came, we had a chef from Burgundy who brought his whole entourage over here, and in the kitchen there at Linfield put together these fabulous meals. It was very exciting. The world was coming to Oregon, so that was a big deal.

[41:02] **JDP:** Well, it's interesting that you bring that up, because, actually, this project that we're doing, we have been talking with IPNC about doing the exhibit for them, but in the last couple of weeks confirmed through this new center we're helping to get set up, we're actually going to be doing another project, which is looking at the twenty-five year history of IPNC and we're doing an exhibit next year for that. So that's another thing we're trying to do, is trying to gather some stories looking specifically at IPNC, its interesting relationship with a Baptist College, that theoretically seems to be dry at times—

[41:45] **DL:** Well, there were a lot of fears of activity that might go on in the bushes. I'm sure that none of that activity has ever happened, with or without Pinot noir celebrations.

[41:56] **JDP:** Well, this is the time for me to be diplomatically silent, I guess.

[42:00] **DL:** Well I'll just laugh and we all know what we mean. But, out of this IPNC celebration, which people took to calling Pinot noir camp, or Pinot Boot Camp or whatever, we did come up with the Oregon Pinot Camp and that's something that is also a huge success.

And it's part of our guerrilla marketing, I guess, that we've always had to do, since we're not California. We don't have these huge, mega budgets for advertising. Our wineries have developed a tradition of working together to market what we're doing. And to let the world kind of in on where Oregon is, what Pinot noir is all about, wine, Pinot noir in Oregon.

And so the fifty wineries—I think maybe we're at the tenth anniversary already, I think it was the tenth anniversary this year—fifty wineries go together, pool some money, invite two hundred fifty people around the country who are actually involved in direct sales of Oregon Pinot noir, and who want to learn about Oregon Pinot noir, and bring them out here for a weekend, it's Pinot Camp. And we have school busses, everybody's put in little groups, and given different colors to wear, and travel to all kinds of different winery seminars, tastings, really nice wine country dinners, looking out over the beautiful hills, and it's in June, so the sun is setting, and the long shadows, and it's—Unfortunately half the people then move to Oregon. We figure about 50 percent chance of getting them to go back to their market to sell wine; the other 50 percent move here to Oregon and get involved in the darn wine business. They should have to sign a “Do Not Compete” or something like that clause, “For five years I promise to stay and sell wine.”

[44:15] **JDP:** That is one of the things that does seem to be a hallmark of—This is a community, and there's an openness there, and we have friends who go to different wineries, and it's actually the exception that you find someone who won't be willing to just sit with you and talk with you about their wine, and very open, not secretive, and just kind of saying, This is what we enjoy doing. And I think the fact that it also extends across to other countries as well is pretty amazing. But that openness is really quite a feature of the wine industry in this area in general.

[45:00] **DL:** I think that's one of our genomes, I hope, that we've developed and passed along. I hope so.

[45:10] **JDP:** I think that's about all I have.

[45:12] **MP²:** One last question: so right along those lines, it seems like there's the art part of the wine, right, but there's the business side, and it seems to me, if I were starting a brand new business I wouldn't be encouraging other people to go into it, right? Because there's like, so often it seems like they have actually just established their competitors, and pretty openly.

[45:38] **DL:** Well we all tried to help each other get started. I think in the beginning it was—You definitely have to have some sort of mass to make. Now, on the one hand we felt crowded when Dick Erath came, you know, it's like, Oh no, it's not our Dundee hills anymore! But we also know if you have any business sense at all you know you have to have some sort of mass created to get some attention. And so—And plus, it was just lonely. We were thrilled to have other people who were interested in the same thing and who had kids the same age as our children, and to have somebody to start a little community with.

[46:32] **JDP:** And Jason has shown me a couple pictures too, where they are literally having meetings in Dick Erath's kitchen or something like that.

[46:40] **DL:** I know. I remember when we used to have meetings of the entire wine growing industry in our bathroom [Laughing], okay, dining room. We used to bring food, talk, make a few motions, and then eat, and drink some wine. The kids would play together, or we'd have a picnic or something.

And there were disagreements; there were definitely disagreements. And I will say that David had a strong personality, he had a strong vision of where he wanted to see it go. And one of those was that he wanted really high quality. We worked hard on forming some wine regulations that were the strictest in the country. I expect that you've talked with Dave Adelsheim, and he and David were prime movers, and David was pretty adamant about how he thought things should be, as far as quality and so forth. I think that's another genome that got inserted in there, if I'm using that term correctly.

[48:14] **JDP:** Are there any others that you—

[48:16] **DL:** Well, working co-operatively, focusing on quality, focusing on building community, and openness, protecting the land, doing it as sustainably as possible. I would say that a lot of those came from a very small nucleus of people and built out. And of helping our community. The Ponzis got very involved in Salud, and that auction, and lots of other things. They were also involved in land use. And we had a good group of intelligent people with good hearts, who worked hard together and separately. I'm proud of what we've accomplished. I'm stunned and I'm proud.

² Mark Pederson