



“Moving towards a Chesapeake Wine Country”

shorevines report #1 2011.02.04

sponsored by the Upper Shore Regional Council

.....

Insights Shared at “What you need to know to Grow” program on vineyard and winery start-ups.

[get online presentations](#)

[contact info for speakers at end report](#)

On February 4, 2011 a group of area landowners gathered to hear regional experts share their knowledge and experiences in starting a vineyard and/or winery. While the profile of attendees varied from new farmers to early retirees there were a few who were considering the prospects of a new career. All were bonded by the quest to establish a successful vineyard and/or winery business.

One big question on the minds of those newly interested was does one operate only as a winery or a vineyard or both? On the Eastern Shore most wineries have a vineyard as well. “...there's a real positive to manning both...” said John Levenberg, winemaking consultant and the last speaker at the program. “You can't really make wine unless you walk the vineyard and actually experience the complex array of factors that affect a grapes taste.” A question on everyone's mind was, financially, how well can a winery do? Three years ago there were just three wineries on the shore, today there are 10 on the Eastern Shore with 2 more on their way. When we have more wineries in an area each one has the chance to increase sales...so stated shorevines pioneer, Al Cassinelli, who hosted the program at his vineyard and winery. “Look at the Frederick Wine Trail...a



Program hosted at Cassinelli's Vineyards & Winery
photo: loblolly.biz



Expert Presenters (l to r) Joe Fiola, Jennie Schmidt, Kevin Atticks photo: loblolly.biz



Winemaking and vineyard business consultant, John Levenberg photo: loblolly.biz



Al Cassinelli shares his vineyard experiences with potential new growers photo: loblolly.biz

shoreVines



grow grapes ~ a vital option for the upper shore

few years back a winery had the chance at achieving \$2,000 for weekend tasting sales that's skyrocketed to \$6,000 with the advent of a wine trail in that area and more wineries."

The Chesapeake Wine Trail is the Eastern Shore's newly established wine trail. For the Trail to be a success there is still needed additional grape growers to produce Maryland grown grapes for its wineries. Kevin Atticks, Executive Director, Maryland Wineries Association, underscored that there is a grape shortage in the state. Participants questioned how does one get to a quality harvest and survive the heavy upfront capital needed to make such an operation work.

On hand, were the sponsors of the program who presented an overview of supporting resources and tools, starting with Viticulture Specialist, Joe Fiola, Viticulture and Small Fruit Specialist from the University of Maryland. Joe pointed out that his work at the nearby Wye Institute test vineyards has resulted in a lot of good research on grape varieties that do well in the Eastern shore climate: Vidal blanc, Traminette, Chardonnay, Pinot Grigio, Russian Whites, Chambourcin, Merlot, Cabernet Franc, Petit Verdot and certain niche varieties like the Italian Barbera are some. Also key, is an understanding of the properties of the soil and how soil and topography can influence your vineyard's success. His big tip, start with soil that doesn't hold a lot of water. (note: The details of your property's soils can be reserached online at: <http://websoilsurvey.nrcs.usda.gov/>) Jennie Schmidt of Schmidt Vineyard Management Co. and President of the MD Grape Growers Association, echoed this advice. "Know your piece of ground well...the more you prep



Kevin Atticks, Executive Director, MD Wineries Ass. photo: loblolly.biz



Joe Fiola, PhD., Viticulture & Small Fruit Specialist University of Maryland photo: loblolly.biz



Jennie Schmidt, President MD Grape Growers Ass/ Owner Schmidt Vineyard Management Co. photo: loblolly.biz



Roy Crow (r) employs years of farming experience to prep vineyard soils photo: loblolly.biz

shoreVines



grow grapes ~ a vital option for the upper shore

your soil upfront before you put your vines in the ground the less trouble you will have managing your soil later. Make sure you can get your roots in as deep as possible." The program's final speaker, John Levenberg, who has been consulting in Long Island, NY and California and said that the Eastern Shore area has a real shot at making its mark as a new wine region. "The basics are here, the heat means you get really ripe flavors, but it is important to consider your marketing strategies and identify a unique point of difference upfront so you can plan accordingly."

In closing, Brandon Hoy, Vineyard Manager, Crow Farm, pointed out that "...we all have the tools and experts here to help us make the right moves but the biggest asset we all have in this room is each other. There's a tight knit and supportive group of shorevines pioneers who are out there now doing it, they are willing to share advice and past mistakes to help those of us who are just starting the curve. It couldn't be more productive." those of us who are just starting the curve. It couldn't be more productive."

"What you Need to Know to Grow" program presented by the Maryland Winery Association, the Maryland Grape Growers Association, the University of Maryland and the Upper Shore Regional Council. Get [online presentations](#); for more information on this report or to get hi-res photos contact [shorevines.com](#) or

Lotte Bowie
410-348-2120
info@loblolly.biz



Vineyard Manager Brandon Hoy (l) employed environmental practices to guide the development of the Crow Farm Vineyard photo: loblolly.biz

***Contact info** presenters /get presentations:
Al Cassinelli, Program Host Vineyard
cassinelliwinery@gmail.com
Joe Fiola, Ph.D. Viticulture/Small Fruit Specialist, UMD
jfiola@UMD.EDU
Jennie Schmidt, President MD Grape Growers Ass.
schmidtvineyardmgmt@gmail.com
Kevin Atticks, President MD Wineries Ass.
kevin@marylandwine.com
John Levenberg, Winemaker/Nueva Vista Consulting
johnirvinglevenberg@gmail.com
Roy Crow, Crow Vineyard, LLC
Brandon Hoy, Vineyard Manager
crowfarmmd@gmail.com