



## The Man Behind the Vines

By Sierra Wright

For this newsletter we're going to take a deeper look at the man behind The Pines. I think it's about time you get to know viticulturalist and owner, Lonnie Wright on a more personal level. 'A View from the Vineyard' will return in our next newsletter. So let the grilling begin...

**Where are you from?**

Plymouth, Indiana

**Did you always know you wanted to be a grape farmer?**

No. I wanted to coach basketball and teach. [In college] I majored in Social Studies and History and received a Bachelor of Science in Secondary Education.

**What brought you out West?**

I was traveling with a friend after college. We left in a '65 Ford Fairlane and worked our way across country. When we found someplace we wanted to stay we'd stop to work, make some more money and go on to the next place.

**How did you get into grapes?**

I was working at a farm in WA that was bought

by what is now Columbia Crest. They began planting vineyards and I was hired on as one of the foremen to plant its first 2,000 acres. I managed a 650 acre area and ran Columbia Crest's first harvest.

**How did you hear about the Old Vine Zinfandel?**

In 1982, I heard that a cherry farmer was going to renovate an old vineyard in The Dalles, Ore. I was looking for an opportunity to get involved in a vineyard project from the ground floor, so I showed up at 7 am Monday. He had a crew of six contracted to do the work and was standing there with a UC Davis textbook open to the page of pruning. Three of the crew quit the first day. The remaining three and I worked to bring the vineyard back.

**In what kind of shape were the grapes?**

The vines had been totally abandoned for about 20 years. There

-See "Wright" pg. 2

### *Upcoming Events:*

#### **3 Rivers Vintner's Dinner**

Thurs. March 8th 7:00 pm

Reservations: 541-386-8883

#### **White Wine Release Party**

The Pines Tasting Room

Sat. March 10th 12-7 pm

Live music 2-5 pm

#### **The Resort @ the Mountain Vintner's Dinner**

Sat. March 24th 7:00 pm

Reservations: 503-622-3101

#### **Columbia Gorge Hotel Vintner's Dinner**

Fri. April 6th 6:30 pm

Reservations: 503-622-3101

#### **First Friday's in Hood River**

The Pines Tasting Room

Each month's 1st friday 5-8

#### **Gorge Wine Merchants**

Wine Tasting

Bingen, WA

Thurs. April 12th 5-8 pm

For more information please visit our website at

[www.thepinesvineyard.com](http://www.thepinesvineyard.com)





-“Wright” continued from pg. 1  
 was nothing out there but weeds and some bushes and two or three shoots alive per plant. The shoots were only about 2-3 inches long. We pruned them up and I drove 2x2 stakes by the plants and spent the rest of that summer training the plants up the stakes. Later, I put in a drip irrigation system and wire.

**When was the first Old Vine Zin harvest?**

We had a crop of grapes on the plants in 1983; but the birds carried them all off. That’s when I first found out that birds will eat every grape out there. The first harvest we actually took grapes to a winery was in 1984 to Cliff Blanchette at Hood



River Vineyards. In 1985 Cliff Blanchette entered the Zinfandel in the Oregon State Fair, which was unheard of in the Northwest. He took a bronze medal and attracted Peter Rosback [our current winemaker] to our vineyard.

**Ok, set the record straight. What does ‘The Pines 1852’ refer to?**

In 1926 a dairy was built here called ‘The Pines Dairy’ which ran until 1941. 1852 is the year that the original settlers applied for their donation land claim to carve the homestead out of the Oregon Territory.

**Did you have to overcome any obstacles to start The Pines 1852?**

I felt like being able to buy this place was a HUGE obstacle. <chuckles> And it’s been one obstacle after another, but it’s getting better. It’s been a labor of love.

**Have you always enjoyed wine?**

I tried it out some but I wasn’t into wine. When I worked for Columbia Crest I started to pay more attention.

**Do you have a favorite wine?**

I would have to pick The Pines Old Vine Zinfandel as my favorite. Those grapes and me have been through a lot together. I

-See “Wright” pg. 4

*Basic Risotto*

**Shopping list:**

- 1 cup Arborio Rice
- 1 large onion chopped
- 3/4 cup The Pines Pinot Gris
- 2.5 cups chicken broth
- 2 tbl. butter
- 2 tbl. olive oil
- 2 tbl. heavy cream

**Let’s get started:**

- 1) Heat the Olive Oil in large saucepan. In the meantime, begin heating the chicken broth in another saucepan.
- 2) Sweat the onions in the oil.
- 3) Add the rice to the onion. Gently stir with a wooden or plastic spoon (metal will break the rice) until the rice is lightly toasted.
- 4) Gently stir in the Pinot Gris. Let the rice absorb the liquid.
- 5) Gradually add in chicken broth, letting the rice absorb the liquid before adding another ladle full. Continue this step until all the liquid is absorbed
- 6) Stir in butter, cream and parmesan cheese. Salt and Pepper to taste. Serve hot with a glass of Pinot Gris.

Optional: Add vegetables (mushrooms or peas and herbs are my favorite) to this risotto for more flavor and texture.

# The Pines Copper Club

*It's our copper club one year anniversary! Being a Pines Copper Club member has benefits not available to the general public. These benefits include, but are not limited to the following:*

- No Joining Fee
- 4 bottles of wine shipped 3 times per year
- Discounted rates for special events
- Member-only parties
- 20% off all wine purchases
- Complimentary wine tasting at The Pines



**Shipment Dates (during the weeks of):**

Jan. 10th

April 10th

Sept. 10th

Estimated Wine Cost per year: \$300

**The April. 10th wine shipment will Include:**  
TBD



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Please cut along the line and send us your information in order to join The Pines Copper Club  
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Name \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

**Billing Information:**

Credit Card Number \_\_\_\_\_

Credit Card Type:  Visa  Mastercard

Expiration Date \_\_\_\_\_

Check box if you will pick up shipment (saves shipping costs)

• Your credit card will be automatically billed during the week of the shipment date.



-“Wright” continued from pg. 2  
think the wine’s awfully good too.

**Do you have anything up your sleeve with The Pines?**

Oh yeah, I always try to have something up my sleeve. <Grins> I’ve got to stay ahead of my daughter on this. I’d like to do a few more events at the farm. I’m looking very seriously at a new vineyard planting. I’d also like to put together an indoor events site at The Pines Estate. I’ll probably be working on this place for the rest of my life.

**Where do you want to be in five years?**

I guess in 5 years I’d like to be semi-retired. I guess retirement for

me would be to have the ability to go south for Dec.-Jan. maybe even Feb. The ultimate retirement would be if I’m not running harvest in Sept-Oct. <chuckles> Right now I don’t see that happening for a while.

**Now the million dollar question: If you were stranded on a deserted island what 3 objects would you bring (no people)?**

Well how many cases of Old Vine do I get to bring? Does one case count as one item?

You guys all have iPods these days, I don’t know how to run those, but maybe I could get a crash course in



iPods before I get stranded? Otherwise I’ll need a stereo that doesn’t need electricity; fully equipped with my jazz and blues collection.

And a box of matches. I’ve watched Survivor enough times to know that you have to have fire.

*The Pines 1852*  
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***What’s Inside:***

Upcoming Events.....pg 1  
Man Behind the Vine.....pg 1, 2, 4  
Simple Risotto.....pg 2  
The Pines Copper Club.....pg 3

