



A New Winery On The Horizon

New vineyards roll along the beautiful hills beside Vasco Road and Walnut Boulevard, a lovely sight for travelers and a symbol of hope and survival for agriculture in East County.

Ron Nunn, the patriarch of a family that has been farming in Brentwood since 1880, owns the vineyards. The family is commonly associated with Nunn Better U-pick cherries which attract agricultural tourists from all over the Bay Area.

With the local growth that has boomed over recent decades, this business step is yet another chance to evolve, find better ways to market the family's products and stay relevant in a community growing with rooftops.

"I've always been interested in

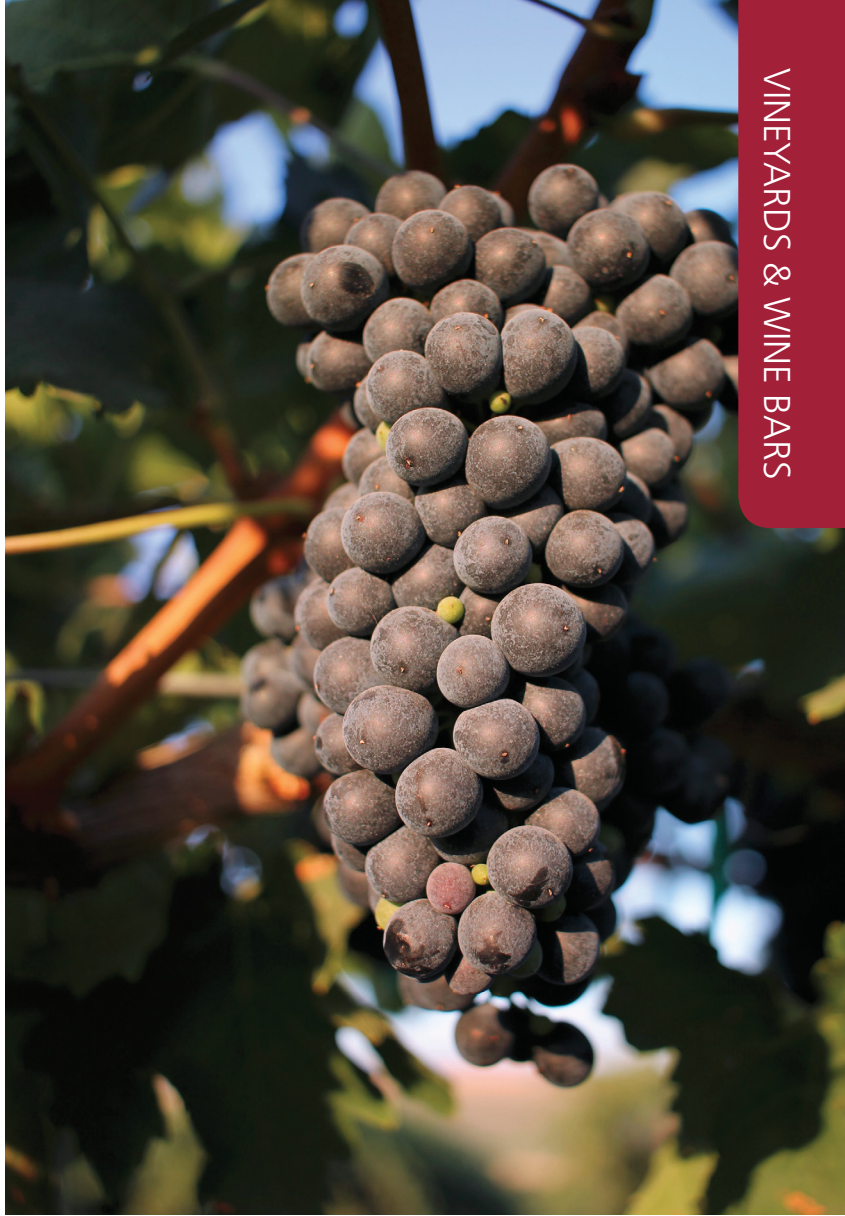
grapes," said Ron, who acquired the Orchard and Vine property about 10 years ago and aspires to open his winery in the fall. "About 30 years ago, I planted table grapes near my house. Since then, those vines have been pulled and replaced with olive trees, but that doesn't mean I stopped thinking about grapes. About 20 years ago, I began trying to buy land that would be suitable for wine grapes."

The land nurturing the wine grapes spans just over 400 acres, with 5 acres slated for three commercial-use buildings – a winery, a wine bar and a farm market. It is also blossoming with other Nunn Better fruits, such as olives and cherries, which may be ready for U-pick in the spring, but the Nunn

will still continue to grow and sell cherries at their large, Sellers Road location. The olives will contribute to the reserves for their Nunn Better Olive Oil, a culinary product they have been making for 20 years, and will eventually be sold at the Orchard and Vine farm market.

The winery and its companion buildings will all have an agricultural appeal, with architectural designs that reflect traditional American barns, and one of the buildings will be used as an event barn to accommodate weddings, galas and other important community events.

"Orchard and Vine is truly Ron's vision," said Kelli Nunn, Ron's niece. "It's something that he's wanted to



The Nunns have been farming in Brentwood since 1880, but the latest in their agricultural endeavors is a winery, which is scheduled to open this fall.

do for years, and he got me on board with the project about a year and a half ago. Quite a few other family members are involved as well.”

Currently, 10 tons of the Nunns’ grapes slated for various wines are stored as juice at a custom-crush facility in Lodi, where it will likely be bottled in order to be ready for the big day. A master winemaker has been appointed to oversee the process, but the Nunns hope to begin bottling their own wine once they’re up and running, in addition to showcasing and selling their wines in their new tasting room.

“We look forward to featuring our wine onsite at winemaker dinners, educational wine classes, weddings and special events,” said Kelli. “We would like to become a custom crush facility; in other words, we’d like to

make and bottle other growers’ wines. We look forward to being a part of Brentwood’s winemaking community and helping to increase interest and draw visitors to enjoy all the wines of the area.”

Orchard and Vine’s next planting will feature white grapes, adding white wines to the lineup, which currently includes seven different reds. Six of those seven – petit verdot, petite sirah, cabernet, merlot, grenache and mourvedre – will be bottled next fall. The red Teroldego grape is part of their most recent planting, it will be a few years before those grapes are ready for wine.

As the vineyards have grown over recent years in preparation for the hopeful winery opening, the Nunns have sold their grapes to such winemakers as Orin Swift, Sebastiani,

Artesa, Hahn and Gallo, and the plan is to continue to do so.

“There are so many grapevines out there, there’s no way we could bottle them all – that’s not the intent,” Kelli said.

The final steps of turning this dream into a true reality will hinge on the approval of the county in the spring, architectural approvals and licensing by the Alcoholic Beverage Control and Tobacco Tax and Trade Bureau, but the family believes everything will move quickly once things are in order. Once they are, the winery, farm market and wine bar will offer residents and tourists alike the chance to explore the property, pick cherries, sample wine and soak up the agricultural history with deep roots in Brentwood. 