

Dirty Laundry Vineyard has new Alberta owners

Dirty Laundry Vineyard changed the sheets this fall as Ron and Cher Watkins announced the sale of the winery to a group headed by Bob Campbell of Fort MacMurray, Alberta.

Cher and Ron had some soul-searching to do in 2005 when marketing whiz Bernie Hadley-Beauregard proposed the new branding for Scherzinger Vineyards, borrowing from a bit of Summerland's early history and the brothel that was allegedly housed above a chinese laundry in lower town on Okanagan Lake.

Bernie designed a logo depicting a steam iron sending up

voluptuous curls of steam, and the rest was history. Sales of the winery's trademark line of three Gewurztraminers as well as Riesling, Chardonnay and Pinot Noir, which continued the legacy of founders Edgar and Liz Scherzinger, soared and this summer the winery was sold out by mid summer.

Bob Campbell noted that the marketing was way ahead of production, and an immediate goal of the new ownership group is to remedy this. In addition to the grapes produced in their own 7 acres of vineyard, the winery purchased significant volumes of

additional grapes from other vineyards that will increase production in the 2006 vintage by two to three times.

Other significant new developments included naming former Peller Estates winemaker Philip Soo as head winemaker, joining a team that will include former owner Ron Watkins to ensure a continuation of the wine styles. Bob Campbell said that Dirty Laundry Vineyards will expand the volume of its range of three Gewurztraminers, Pinot Gris,

Chardonnay and Pinot Noir and will add a new Pinot Noir Rosé as well as a Merlot.

Expansion plans include increasing vineyard acreage to the range of 25 acres which will make the expanded operation more self sufficient.

Another key development was naming Judi Skinner, formerly of Noble Ridge Vineyards, as Operations Manager. Judi is a skilled viticulturist as well as having experience in virtually all winery operation including sales.

While Ron and Cher Watkins will continue to assist in the transition period, Cher said that they also looked forward to 'taking a breather' before deciding on their future activities, though they plan to continue to live in Summerland.

See www.dirtylaundry.ca.