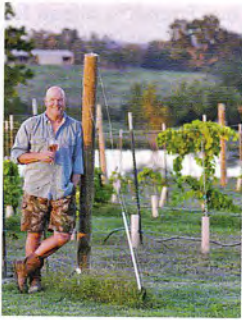


MONTGOMERY UNCORK'D

By: Billy S. Cox, Jr.



The Texas wine industry has continued to grow in recent years in spite of the recent economic downturn. We have more than 232 commercial wineries producing high quality wines, operating in the State of Texas. Two of those wineries, Retreat Hill Cellars and Cork

This! Winery, are located in downtown Montgomery along with an assortment of great boutiques, antique dealers and restaurants.

The overall state economic impact of the Texas wine industry is more than 1.7 BILLION dollars annually. Texans purchase more than 3 million gallons of wine each month and nearly every drop of wine produced in Texas is consumed in Texas. Commercial wineries in Texas produce about 2 million

gallons of wine even though there are only about 2,700 vineyard acres under cultivation, and not every acre is producing yet. There simply isn't enough Texas fruit to satisfy the current demand. If there is a drought, early bud break (February 7th in our Grimes County vineyard), a subsequent late freeze or very wet conditions at harvest, grape crops can be adversely affected.

Because of the high demand for Texas wine, wineries including Retreat Hill source grapes from Texas and other prime viticulture areas like California and Washington State. The grapes that eventually make it into one of our wine bottles are selected based on the growing climate and the desired varietal. For example, our Chardonnay fruit comes from a large vineyard near Ft. Stockton, Texas. The climate there is categorized as a "continental climate" which means the winters are cold, the summers are hot and the temperatures are cool on summer nights. The Burgundy region of France, which is well known for Chardonnay, has the same climate. As a result,

our Texas Chardonnay models a French-style Chardonnay in that it is crisp, fruit-forward and slight acidic.

Our Alamo Red Merlot, which recently won silver medal at the Dallas Morning News International Wine Competition, is produced in Texas from grapes sourced in the Lodi appellation of California. Just because the grapes were picked someplace else doesn't mean it's not Texas wine. Remember, it's just grape juice until the winemaker tests the fruit, adds yeast to start fermentation, manages the fermentation process, racks the wine, ages the wine and finally gets it in the bottle. While our white wines make from vineyard to bottle in about six months, it may take 2-3 years from the date of harvest to get our red wines in the bottle.

On weekends, visitors can walk the rows of the two-acre estate Blanc du Bois vineyard at Retreat Hill Winery and Vineyard and enjoy wine tasting or their favorite glass or bottle of wine inside the tank room. Retreat Hill Cellars, located in downtown Montgomery, houses our wine chemistry lab, blending and bottling facility and an upscale tasting room with plenty of seating. Visitors are welcome Wednesday through Saturday from 11 a.m. to 7 p.m. and Sunday, Noon to 6:00 p.m.

If you have questions, want to book a private wine event or just want to know more about Texas wine, come see us in downtown Montgomery at 14343 Liberty Street, one block north of SH 105, in the historic First State Bank building. You can always call us at 936.449.5285, email us at montgomeryuncorked@retreathill.com, visit our website at RetreatHill.com, LIKE us on Facebook at RetreatHill Wine or follow us on Twitter @RetreatHillWine. ♦

TWO GREAT WINERIES, ONE HISTORIC TOWN!

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