

**NW ILLINOIS**

Economic Development

*Celebrating 16 Years in Business!***SPOTLIGHTING BUSINESSES IN
CARROLL AND JO DAVIESS COUNTIES**

Sit back, relax and...

Fergedaboudit Vineyard & Winery

HANOVER, ILLINOIS

Fergedaboudit Vineyard & Winery. And while the name says it all, once you visit, there's no way you'll ever "fergedaboudit." Their logo proudly reflects their motto and insists that you: *Sit back, relax and... Fergedaboudit.*

Tucked in the rolling countryside just a stone's throw from the cozy little town of Hanover, Illinois (population 863), lies a lush 25 year old vineyard built on a passionate dream and a love of wine.

Meet the Rosario and Sandra Bruno family, owners of Fergedaboudit Vineyard & Winery and a legacy in the making. Together with their two daughters, Veronica and Vicki; their husbands, James and Ben; and their children, ReAnna, Chandler, Brock and Adelena - *it is indeed a family affair.*

After years of making wine in the basement of his Chicago home with Italian friends and fellow wine enthusiasts, Rosario decided it was time to retire from his successful electrical contracting business in 1999 and to take his vision and wine craft to another level. As a result, he stumbled on a forgotten farm and its 46 acres of rolling hills and rich Northwestern Illinois soil, which he considered the perfect location. In 2000 and at 62 years of age, he planted his first Foch, Frontenac and Leon Millot vines.

"It was really meant to be something small, but we

just keep growing," said Vicki Bruno Olson, Fergedaboudit's co-owner and spokesperson. "For the first half of our time here it was an expensive hobby."

Fast forward through the last 25 years of Rosario's labor of love: the family's vineyard residence and wine cellar sprang from the meager one room beginnings and what Vicki says is a continuous work in progress. The tasting room celebrates its 12th year in July and a tented deck area, as well as a smaller private indoor space, has most recently been added for weddings, private parties, special events and a summer music series.

The property itself is breathtaking at every turn and visitors are able to walk the three acre vineyard and grounds freely - *pairing the vineyard's ambiance and wines.* The vineyard itself supports three acres of Midwestern hardy grapes: Marechal Foch, Leon Millot, Petite Pearl, St. Vincent, Marquette, Traminette, Frontenac, Geneva Red, Brianna, Frontenac Gris, Frontenac Blanc and New York.

Inventory stands proudly at approximately 14,000 to 18,000 bottles a year and offers a wide selection of over 25 wines to their estimated 300 visitors a week.



Photo by Henry Matthiessen III

"My father is very, very true to a chianti style dry red wine, but we have also expanded into sweet wines and semi-sweet wines to cater to everybody's pallets," Vicki noted.

As the business grew each family member carved out their niche in the vineyard workings, whether it be in harvesting and processing grapes to the bottling and front of the house duties. Vicki says her sister Veronica in particular is the one with the creative eye for decor and event details. Fourteen years ago Rosario began importing grape varieties from Lodi, California, and sometimes from Chili in South America. As a result this adds creatively and uniquely to their wine inventory. Sandra, ever present, reminds them all with her gentle advice to always "make it fun."

"Dad continues to inspect the grape quality and oversees the entire operation, but he has taught his family everything he knows about wine making and business to carry on his legacy," Vicki explained. "He had no idea at the time when he was getting grapes off the box cars back in Chicago that this would be the result," Vicki said.

"We're very proud of what we do here," Vicki added.

In addition, and very importantly, Vicki said the family is very appreciative of their extended family of approximately seven workers who make the business thrive - particularly since the vineyard is located in such a remote setting tucked off Blackjack Road.

"We couldn't continue to do what we do so successfully without

them," she said. "We are very lucky and fortunate to employ people from around the area."



As a result, one of the perks of working at Fergedaboudit is the open invitation to each employee working that day to join in their traditional weekly Saturday night family dinner after hours.

But who picks out the wine to serve at dinner when there are so many to choose from?

"We let my Dad pick," Vicki says with a grin.

When you come to Fergedaboudit Vineyard & Winery there's a 800-lb. gorilla often in the tasting room. How did the Brunos arrive at THAT name?

There's a combination of answers of course. According to Vicki, in Rosario's early Italian days growing up in Chicago, "Fergedaboudit" was usually the common answer and retort to any problem or concern.

"He wanted to name his winery after something that people would not forget," she said. "Hence, the name 'Fergedaboudit.'"

Contact Details

Fergedaboudit Vineyard & Winery

Address: 4595 W. Speer Road
Hanover, Illinois 61041

Phone: 815-591-2126

Website: www.fergedaboudit.com

Not Just a Vineyard and Winery . . .

Live Music

Visitors can expect to find free live music on Saturdays at the vineyard on a regular basis. However, they also hold special concert events throughout the summer highlighting special musical guests. The concert events give visitors package choices of special seating, dinner and wine and general lawn seating.

Event Center

The venue offers areas that are available for most any size group, depending on the occasion. There is a tent covered outdoor deck that will hold 80 guests (available May through October), as well as a private indoor space that accommodates up to 40 people. The property also sets the stage for unique outdoor events such as weddings.

Tasting Room

The Tasting Room is open year around, weather permitting:
Wednesday-Thursday: 11 a.m. - 5 p.m.
Friday: 11 a.m. - 5 p.m.
Saturday: 11 a.m. - 6 p.m.
(Friday and Saturday, July through Sept. extended hours are until 7 p.m.)
Sunday: 11 a.m. - 5 p.m.
Wine is available by the glass or by the bottle. Wine tastings start at \$8; and \$15 for wine flights.

Special Events

Special vineyard events are held throughout the year such as Yin Yoga with Wine, pizza making demonstrations and wine pairing and tastings.

Food

A variety of appetizers are available, as well as handmade wood-fire pizza.

Wine Club

Wine lovers enjoy exclusive selections of hand-crafted wine delivered quarterly directly to their home. Each membership tier has their own unique benefits.

