# harvey steiman at large

## Two New Washington Wineries

**Hestia and Zero One take different routes**

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Two newish wineries in Washington that deliver outstanding wine at relatively moderate prices represent different ways of getting there. One left a big bank to take a chance on starting his own winery. The other parlayed 15 years selling others' wines into a smart-business wine venture.

Neither one involves planting a vineyard and growing grapes. Instead they're starting off slow by making a limited number of wines, getting their grapes from established growers. They both focus on a few wines and have an idea about how to establish an identity to us consumers.

Zero One caught my eye in the tasting room for the first time with The Wild Sky 2006 (92, $30), a Cabernet Sauvignon with polish and a deft balance to go along with its rich fruit character. When the followup 2007 did even better (93, $30) and the 2008 was in the same league (91, $30), I made it a point to catch up with them on this trip. We met at a steak house in Bellevue, near their offices. The wines are made at a custom crush facility at Wahluke Slope.

Thomas and Kristin Vogele, the husband-and-wife team behind Zero One Vintners, both had connections to the wine business even if they never actually made any juice before 2006. Thomas sold Gallo Wines in Europe, came home to Washington to represent Trinchero and later Robert Mondavi wines, and still manages sales in nine western states for Michael Mondavi's Folio Fine Wine Partners. Kristin is currently on leave from her job managing computer program development at IBM, but her sister and brother-in-law are involved with wineries in Walla Walla. Visiting them often in Walla Walla, they hatched the idea of making wines more to their taste than what they found elsewhere in Washington.

"I guess we have more of a European palate," Thomas said. "My family is from Switzerland, and that's what I started with. We saw Washington going toward an extracted, big style, and I come from a culture that values more elegance."

The other factor was price, especially since they preferred to make single-vineyard wines. "We didn't want to end up with a wine that had to cost $60, when we should be aiming for $30." They got Gordy Hill (who made the wines at Northstar) to work with them, and hit a home run with their first wine, Wild Sky 2006. They also make a red blend, called Sauce, at a little lower price, which is similarly supple, a blend of Bordeaux varieties and Syrah. The other varietal, Riesling, fashioned in a delicate, lightly sweet style and called Golden Delicious, also delivers good value at $13.

To get an idea of what's coming next, we sampled the 2010 Riesling and 2009 Wild Sky. The Riesling is refreshing, silky, with a sharp acid balance to push the finish and, yes, it tastes of apples, with floral and lime overtones. The 2009 Wild Sky has beautiful focus, pure blueberry and boysenberry fruit, hints of sandalwood and nutmeg on an open texture, and just enough of a tannic veil to liven it up.

The Vogeles are also planning a tasting room in Kirkland, where they live, not in Woodinville, where five dozen other wineries compete for attention. The next wine is likely to be a Sémillon-Sauvignon Blanc blend, something they think Washington does especially well. And of course, they will have to think of a clever name for it. And then, maybe a Syrah.

"We need to think methodically," said Kristin. "We're not the rich Boeing executive that decides to make wine in a second life. We would love to have a 100-acre vineyard of our own, but that's in the future."

**MEMBER COMMENTS:**

*Richard Moreland — Milford, MI —  August 21, 2011 9:43pm ET*
*Shhhhhh. Harvey, keep your voice down. I've been onto The Wild Sky since the first vintage. But it's distribution is so limited, I actually have to have a retailer in Washington ship it to me in Michigan. (is that even legal?) It's one of the best value Cabs on the market. I hate it when a Guy with a big megaphone like you, lets out my secret.*