

Vino in the Valley is Open "That's Amore!"



"That's amore!" sang Vino in the Valley host Larry Brenner (center) with his happy guests at the opening of this unique dining experience in Pierce County. Photo by Paul J. Seeling.

By Paul J. Seeling- Sun-Argus Gateway Publishing

MAIDEN ROCK- With a sparkling wineglass raised in a toast, Vino in the Valley host Larry Brenner, thanked everyone for coming to his new unique outdoor dining experience on its opening night last Thursday, May 31, 2007. After the toast of thanks Larry explained that a part of the dining tradition they will be following as you stimulate your senses at Vino in the Valley is to sing along as in Napoli, where love is king, when boy meets girl here's what they say, "When the moon hits your eye like a big pizza pie, That's amore..." with the end of each chorus of the song after singing "That's amore" the guests raise there glasses in a toast and take a little sip before singing the next verse of this fun song.

It was an absolutely beautiful sun lit evening to sit in the Vino's delightful new open air pavilion overlooking the newly planted vineyard and enjoy the company of friends and family while dining on a sumptuous meal and listening to the pleasant acoustic sounds of local artists Emily Huppert on standup bass and vocals, and Tim Casswell on guitar and slide guitar.

Being the very first night of operation for the Vino in the Valley, owner Larry Brenner dealt with a few "hiccups" that few if any in attendance seemed to notice or care about. The new kitchen has a hood fan ventilation system that wasn't working properly and didn't pass inspection for the operation of the kitchen, so in lieu of a meal

of pasta, which will be the standard fare for the Thursday night outings at Vino in the Valley, Larry and his marvelous staff served up a large slice of brick oven baked pizza as the main course. There were four varieties of pizza to choose from and each was delicious.

To begin the dining experience each table was served fresh home baked richly crusted bread with Brischetta toppings, and a glass of private label wine was offered as one of the beverage selections. Over pleasant conversation one can relax and enjoy the million dollar views of the Rush River Valley and the vineyard. Gourmet notchos were served as the tasty appetizer before the pizza slice was served. Capping off this fine meal was a slice of a sinfully delicious chocolate desert that was topped with fresh raspberries, blackberries and strawberries, beyond yum!

Over one hundred guests of young and old, couples and families were served on this inaugural Thursday evening at Vino in the Valley and all appeared to be having a great time at this unique dining experience. The service was first rate and the guests enjoyed the attention of their host who stopped at every table to insure that their meal and service were meeting their expectations. Brenner thanked them for coming, shared toasts for birthday and anniversary celebrations and even had a dance with one lucky gal.

Even the boorish attempts of disgruntled neighbors who tried to vandalize the evening

with distant fireworks and other loutish behavior went unheeded by the guests who had picked a beautiful summer evening to "stimulate all their senses," with good friends, good food and good wine.

It was nice to experience this new business venture of agricultural tourism, which has put thirteen employees to work to the benefit of the economy in Pierce County. In addition to dinning at the open-air pavilion, there is a gift shop that is offering Vino in the Valley private label wine selections and handcrafted pottery. Ingrid Bjerstedt Rogers was there with her ingridware Pottery with special Vino in the Valley pieces along with other selections of her fine artistic works at reasonable prices.

The Pierce County Land Management Committee should feel good about their sound judgment in granting the permit requests to advance this worthy business enterprise. This is a venture that should be good for the county.

Vino Valley is also hosting the El Paso Farmers Market where Larry's good neighbors will be offering their produce, eggs, honey and crafts. There were some beautiful wood cravings available on this first night.

If you have a special occasion coming up or want to take that favorite someone, or have the family out for a nice time, consider spending a Thursday evening at Vino in the Valley, "That's amore!"