

Letter from Sonoma, California



Dear CCOVI friends,

My life didn't start in the grape and wine industry. I did my undergraduate in Economics at the University of Waterloo. But I wasn't sure what I wanted to do as a career. My dad, a retired Brock employee, told me about the new OEVI program at Brock.

It never crossed my mind that I could study winemaking until Brock started this program. I enrolled and loved it. An added bonus was walking the same halls as my father, who retired in 2008 as CCOVI's experiential learning/co-op program co-ordinator.

Upon graduation, I briefly worked in Niagara before moving to eastern Washington State to do a harvest at Columbia Crest. I then moved on to La Crema Winery in Sonoma County, California in 2001. The winery is recognized as a pioneer of intensely flavoured Chardonnay and Pinot Noir from a cool climate region.

This year, facing my 10th harvest, I was promoted to head winemaker.

As the winemaker, I work with a team that calls the picks in vineyards, decides blends for bottling and promotes the wines to consumers.

The job is exhilarating. There's science, there's art. There are a lot of elements to what I do. Whether I'm in the cellar or walking through the vineyards, my job changes constantly with the seasons.

Sonoma County is a beautiful place with fairly reliable cool foggy mornings and warm sunny days during the growing season. I tend to feel very spoiled in this regard. The people I work with have become like family and make it a little easier to be so far from home. My husband David, also a grad from the first OEVI class, works nearby at Laffort, a wine making supply company.

I found that my CCOVI degree was easily accepted at U.S. wineries. My current employer wanted someone with cool climate experience, and "they knew I had it". It's right in the name.

A CCOVI degree opens a lot of doors for people. This career is better than I ever hoped - I really do have a dream job.

Regards,

Elizabeth Grant-Douglas, Class of 2000