

Letter from Virginia

Hello from Virginia,

In 1999 I started at Brock in biology, and the next summer I was hired by the Malivoire winery in Beamsville. This changed my life. After my second summer at Malivoire I knew I wanted to work in the wine industry, so I started taking OEVI classes. I graduated with a BSc in biology in 2004, and a year later obtained my OEVI Certificate.

Working at Malivoire was a great opportunity where I was able to learn all aspects of the wine industry, moving up in the company from field laborer, to equipment operator, bottling line, processing, retail and cellar.

But shortly before I obtained my OEVI Certificate, my future wife Jessica took a job near Washington D.C. As a result, I looked for positions in the area and landed a job at Boxwood Winery in Middleburg, Virginia as the Cellar Master. Within a year I became the Winemaker/Vineyard Manager.

Boxwood Winery is one of the newest and most advanced wineries in Virginia both in terms of equipment and techniques.

The vineyard is the tightest spaced vineyard in Virginia, is cane pruned and the shoots are vertically positioned using moveable catch wires. Our mix of clones and rootstocks helps us produce some interesting wines and gain recognition for Boxwood and Virginia wines in general.

The winery is "gravity assist". We use lifts and conveyors to eliminate the need to pump grape solids and we use only whole berry and small batch fermentation in conjunction with pigeage (punching down) and delestage (rack and return) to produce wines with purity and finesse that express the vineyard well. The winery specializes in red wines only made from five Bordeaux grape varieties: Cabernet Sauvignon and Franc, Merlot, Petit Verdot and Malbec.

As Winemaker, I plan harvest labor and harvest timing, perform lab analysis, operate and maintain primary processing equipment, supervise sorting, prepare blending trials, manage the barrel program and fermentations, perform quality control, organize ordering of all materials, operate and maintain bottling line, and manage warehousing.

On the other hand, as Vineyard Manager, I manage all aspects of production, including managing spray program, labor planning and implementation, planning for vineyard expansion, and organizing all vineyard operations.

I live and work in rural Virginia where the Blue Ridge Mountains dominate the landscape. The area is steeped in history, as major events of both the Revolutionary War and the Civil War



occurred throughout the region. There are also many historic estates and scenic horse farms. Most of the land in surrounding counties is in agricultural easement and will never be developed. I can't really describe it – it's almost as beautiful as the Niagara Peninsula.

But I wouldn't be where I am today, or have advanced as quickly as I did, without the education I received at Brock. The depth of scientific knowledge and practical techniques has been a huge asset and allowed me to succeed. The mix of formal education and on-the-job experience at Malivoire, along with some hard work, allowed me to appreciate all aspects of winery production. I now have a solid foundation on which I will forever build.

Regards,

Adam McTaggart, Class of 2005