

KOIN News AM Extra – Wine Wednesday Interview - TRANSCRIPT

Dave Specter, Winemaker, Bells Up Winery

August 23, 2023

<https://www.koin.com/video/wine-wednesday-bells-up-brings-classical-music-to-boutique-winemaking/8933065/>

Travis Teich, Co-Host, KOIN News AM Extra (00:07):

Well, welcome back here on this week's Wine Wednesday. So we're going to see how one winery in Newberg is pairing wine, not with food necessary. Maybe they are, but with classical music.

Emily Buriss, Co-Host, KOIN News AM Extra (00:19):

I like that.

Travis Teich, Co-Host, KOIN News AM Extra (00:19):

How cool is that?

Emily Buriss, Co-Host, KOIN News AM Extra (00:20):

It's a unique approach to composing a wine. Each wine Bells Up Winery matches the piece of classical music that it's named after. How Wild! Dave Specter is the winemaker and owner of Bells Up. He also happens to be a French horn player.

Travis Teich, Co-Host, KOIN News AM Extra (00:34):

Bells Up. There's connect. Makes sense. I see it now you

Dave Specter, Winemaker, Bells Up Winery (00:37):

Have to have a schtick. This is our, yeah,

Emily Buriss, Co-Host, KOIN News AM Extra (00:39):

No, I think this is very cool. So you've played French horn for decades?

Dave Specter, Winemaker, Bells Up Winery (00:43):

I played for 20 years.

Emily Buriss, Co-Host, KOIN News AM Extra (00:44):

Wow. And originally had a normal job, I guess, right? You were, I

Dave Specter, Winemaker, Bells Up Winery (00:50):

Guess as normal as any job

Emily Buriss, Co-Host, KOIN News AM Extra (00:51):

Doing tax stuff, right. So how did you go from that to a winemaker who pairs his wines with pieces of music?

Dave Specter, Winemaker, Bells Up Winery (00:58):

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Well, as you said, I was a tax lawyer for 10 years. My wife and I lived in Cincinnati, Ohio. I was also a French horn player for 20 years prior to that. And I kind of hit a point in my career where I was dead tired and fed up with just the daily grind. We had started making wine as a hobby back in 2006, and as most hobbies do with wine, it got out of control very quickly. But it was a visit to the Willamette Valley back in 2008 that sort of convinced us that we might be able to do this professionally. And so we started down that path soon after, and we now have a wonderful little 10 acre spot down in Newberg and been open since 2015. We are by appointment. We take one group at a time. We have no employees. So I'm the guy who makes the wine, drives the tractor, does the sales, and my wife Sara does the marketing and the scheduling. That's how we make it work.

Travis Teich, Co-Host, KOIN News AM Extra ([01:42](#)):

Sometimes people you hear by appointment and you're like, oh, come on. But a lot of times it's because it's a smaller operation and I'm sure that would help you when it's just you and your wife, the whole show.

Dave Specter, Winemaker, Bells Up Winery ([01:53](#)):

Absolutely right. The whole point that we want to do is to give people a chance to sit down and just get to know us. We want people to feel very comfortable, very homey. And I agree with you. Wine can oftentimes be so high brow and esoteric, and we just want to take that down. Wine is something to be enjoyed and shared, and it's one of those rare products that just brings people together. So we want people to be able to ask us anything. I tell people, there are no state secrets with what I do. I'll tell you everything. Ask those questions that you might be afraid to ask in front of a larger group of people, and we're going to talk to you wherever your level is. I don't care if you're brand new to wine, you've been having wine your entire life, we will be able to talk your language no matter where you are.

Travis Teich, Co-Host, KOIN News AM Extra ([02:33](#)):

Love that. Yeah, that's really neat.

Emily Buriss, Co-Host, KOIN News AM Extra ([02:34](#)):

So talk about how you tie things in with classical music then as well. I mean, you are literally composing your wines.

Dave Specter, Winemaker, Bells Up Winery ([02:40](#)):

Absolutely. So I don't have to tell the audience that there's 800 wineries now in the Willamette Valley, and one of the biggest things I think that we approach it with is saying, how do we get people to connect, and not just with us, but with each individual wine. And so leveraging my background, I came up with the idea of giving each of our wines a specific personality based on either a piece of music or a composer. Just something that really captured the feeling of what that wine was all about. Only other requirement is that it had to have a lot of great French horn parts in it.

([03:15](#)):

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Of all the wines on our list, I've played all. There's only one of them that I haven't played. But other than that, they all really capture that theme. And when folks are here, or excuse me, at the winery, I talk about what it is that drives that inspiration. Every wine I do has to have that specific feeling behind it. We have on our website, we have a Spotify playlist so that people can log in and kind of just get the feeling behind what it is that we're composing. That's so

Travis Teich, Co-Host, KOIN News AM Extra ([03:39](#)):

Fun. I don't know much admittedly about classical music, but I did talk one time with somebody from the Oregon Symphony and I learned in that short amount of time that people who play the French horn have just, they're a different breed. They're a different breed of a musical person. So with that in mind, how did you do this with the wine? What are some of the names and why did you choose these specific songs to go with these wines?

Dave Specter, Winemaker, Bells Up Winery ([04:02](#)):

Sure. So probably the best example is our sparkling wine, which is brand new for this year. It is called Joy after Beethoven's Night Symphony to Joy. Now, I don't expect most of the folks that come to know the majority of the pieces that I've named the wines after, but this is one that everybody's heard and it's a sparkling wine.

Emily Buriss, Co-Host, KOIN News AM Extra ([04:22](#)):

We were playing it into break earlier, that melody.

Travis Teich, Co-Host, KOIN News AM Extra ([04:26](#)):

Oh, thank you for that. I needed that. I needed that.

Dave Specter, Winemaker, Bells Up Winery ([04:29](#)):

And you know that one. I know that

Travis Teich, Co-Host, KOIN News AM Extra ([04:30](#)):

One. Even if you don't know it, you know it.

Dave Specter, Winemaker, Bells Up Winery ([04:32](#)):

Exactly. And it just sounds, it's the perfect name. It just captures, it's a sparkling, right. It just makes you feel good and happy. We carry that through every single wine that we do. And the nice thing about Joy too is it's made from a grape that is very, very unusual. In fact, we're the only ones in the lamb at Valley to have it. It's called Seyval Blanc . That's S E Y V A L. And it's a grape that you normally find in the Finger Lakes in Western New York.

Emily Buriss, Co-Host, KOIN News AM Extra ([04:56](#)):

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Oh, interesting.

Dave Specter, Winemaker, Bells Up Winery (04:57):

But we saw it in Ohio where we used to live Michigan. It grows really well in colder weather climates. So we knew it would do very well here. And it's just nice to have some varietals that other people don't have. The valley is full of Pinot noir, it's full of Chardonnay and that's all wonderful, but it's also nice to have some things that can grow here very well and just be a little bit different. Absolutely.

Emily Buriss, Co-Host, KOIN News AM Extra (05:17):

Always fun to spice it up a little bit. Can we, I'm so intrigued by these grapes. You've

Dave Specter, Winemaker, Bells Up Winery (05:21):

Got to get the pop.

Emily Buriss, Co-Host, KOIN News AM Extra (05:24):

There we go.

Travis Teich, Co-Host, KOIN News AM Extra (05:25):

There it is! The other sound of joy.

Emily Buriss, Co-Host, KOIN News AM Extra (05:27):

We should cue up the music to start right there, but that's so fun. So we talked about the fact that it's you and your wife running this operation. You produce about 600 cases a year, which is boutique Boutique wine to the max.

Dave Specter, Winemaker, Bells Up Winery (05:39):

We actually call it micro boutique. We're too small to be boutique.

Emily Buriss, Co-Host, KOIN News AM Extra (05:43):

Oh my gosh. Micro boutique. So does that give you just a different kind of intention and care with each wine?

Dave Specter, Winemaker, Bells Up Winery (05:50):

A hundred percent. The small scale really allows us to handcraft very specifically each wine. We can really get down to some of the really minute details, which means our quality can only get better and better as time goes on. We really have no interest in growing much beyond where we are. We like the idea that everybody that's ever bought our wines are people that we have met and we want to continue that. We really focus on more on building relationships with every customer that comes in. And the

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bigger you get, the further away you have to get from being that personal. So where we are is where we like to be. It's where our customers like us, so there's no reason to make any changes.

Travis Teich, Co-Host, KOIN News AM Extra ([06:26](#)):

Oh, that's awesome. That's awesome. This looks lovely

Emily Buriss, Co-Host, KOIN News AM Extra ([06:27](#)):

Here. You got to give this a little

Travis Teich, Co-Host, KOIN News AM Extra ([06:28](#)):

For a little snip.

Emily Buriss, Co-Host, KOIN News AM Extra ([06:29](#)):

Now I feel like I need to plan a trip to the Finger Lakes.

Travis Teich, Co-Host, KOIN News AM Extra ([06:32](#)):

That's most fun. I know you said you were in Newberg on a 10 acre lot. Where exactly are you at?

Dave Specter, Winemaker, Bells Up Winery ([06:37](#)):

So we are on Bell Road just up the hill from the Allison Hotel. We have a small little pole barn where we have our barrels, we do our tastings. We have this wonderful south facing view across the Willamette Valley, one of the best views in the region, hard to beat. And when the weather allows it, we do our tastings out on the back porch. And as I said, it's just me. So just nice and intimate and just relax and enjoy the wines.

Emily Buriss, Co-Host, KOIN News AM Extra ([07:04](#)):

That is. Okay. One more question. Dave, do you ever bring out the French horn during a tasting?

Dave Specter, Winemaker, Bells Up Winery ([07:10](#)):

I get asked this a lot and I have to say, you wouldn't want to hear me play anymore. In the days that I played, I played every day and my embrochure, all these muscles, they were in shape.

Emily Buriss, Co-Host, KOIN News AM Extra ([07:20](#)):

Shape. That embrochure is a little out of shape.

Dave Specter, Winemaker, Bells Up Winery ([07:21](#)):

Yeah, exactly. What does that even mean? It's all these muscles. It's a brass instrument. You have a mouthpiece and so kids on your lips, all these muscles need to be really strong in order to be able to

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project the right sounds interesting. And when you're playing every day, that happens. But then you get out of practice and then you have a family and a business. And so if you gave me six months and 30 minutes a day unchecked, I might be able to passively play. But I want to keep my customer base.

Travis Teich, Co-Host, KOIN News AM Extra ([07:49](#)):

That's fair.

Emily Buriss, Co-Host, KOIN News AM Extra ([07:50](#)):

We can stick to wine

Travis Teich, Co-Host, KOIN News AM Extra ([07:51](#)):

Days. We can. It's fun. Yeah. Oh, this was fun. Well, raising the glass to bells up. David, it was great to have you in here coming in. Thank you so much for having me. It's an honor to be here.

([07:58](#)):

Oh, glad you were.

Emily Buriss, Co-Host, KOIN News AM Extra ([07:59](#)):

And of course you got to make those appointments if you want to go taste and check it out. So for more information you can learn everything you need to know to plan your trip at bellswinery.com.