

Industry publication honors SW Idaho's Cinder Winery

IBR STAFF REPORT



Wine Business Monthly in February published its seventh annual list of top U.S. wine companies. Cinder Winery, of Southwest Idaho, appears fifth among 10 Hot Small Brands of 2009 – a list that the publication said “includes some of today’s most exciting brands from small and medium-sized producers.”

The first list sought

to recognize wineries that produced less than 150,000 cases per year, had grown substantially over a short period and were not launched by corporate wineries. *Wine Business Monthly* said it did not have much interest in “cult wines,” either.

“We gravitate toward wineries and brands that represent market trends or innovation, that take a leadership position in their regions, or that make unusual varietals or unexpected wines,” the February 2010 article said.

Wine Business Monthly features Cinder’s award-winning 2008 Viognier. “We’ve been able to make wines with a nice crisp finish,” Cinder winemaker Melanie Krause told the publication. “We’re doing a lot of exploration about

what’s going to grow really well here. The two varieties I’m most psyched about are Viognier and Tempranillo. Syrah does well here too, but it does well in a lot of places.”

Cinder, part of the Snake River American Viticultural Area, was started in 2006 and is named for volcanic remnants found underneath Idaho vineyards, is owned by Krause and her husband, Joe Schnerr. Krause started her career as a vineyard technician and transitioned to winemaking, working as an enologist and then as assistant winemaker at Chateau St. Michelle’s Canoe Ridge Estate Winery before returning to her hometown of Boise.

Cinder is transitioning from wine to

winery. Cinder is becoming Cinder Winery.

For two years, Cinder has been producing wines at the Urban Winemakers Cooperative along with Syringa Winery and Vale Wine Co. Now that each label has enjoyed the support of the cooperative, the three labels are ready to strike out on their own, Cinder said in a release through Red Sky Public Relations. Cinder Winery will remain in the building that the Cooperative has occupied.

“We wish both Syringa and Vale Wine Co. continued success with their brands,” Schnerr said in the release. “Melanie and I are excited to continue our gradual growth while gaining a deeper understanding of the Snake River Valley.”

Wineries hope to end beer license requirement

By Brad Carlson
IDAHO BUSINESS REVIEW

Wineries in some cases must have beer licenses. The Idaho Grape Growers and Wine Producers Commission proposes amending a state law to do away with this requirement.

The Idaho Legislature’s Senate State Affairs Committee on Feb. 22 voted to have the proposal printed. The committee scheduled a full hearing Feb. 26 on Senate Bill 1379, amending the Kitchen and Table Wine Act, to decide whether to send it to the full Senate floor for a vote, committee secretary Deborah Riddle said.

The legislation removes the requirement for wineries to purchase a beer license to sell wine at retail or by the

drink off the winery’s licensed premises, the bill’s Statement of Purpose reads. A one-time cost of \$1,500 to the Alcohol Beverage Control unit of the Idaho State Police is expected if the legislation passes, a fiscal note attached to the bill text says.

Roger Batt, who is representing the Idaho Grape Growers and Wine Producers Commission, said the legislation removes the requirement for licensed wineries that wish to also sell wine by the drink from having to purchase a retail beer license to sell wine. The legislation would allow wineries an opportunity to sell wine by the drink and at retail off the licensed premises without having to have a retail beer license to do so, said Batt, who is with Association Management in Meridian.

“Requiring a beer license for wineries to sell wine makes no sense to the industry and also creates financial burdens to these tax-paying business owners,” he said. When wineries have to purchase a beer license to sell wine, they are treated like a bar or tavern in many city rules and regulations, “thus requiring the winery to pay \$200 or more for a permit they don’t need.”

Batt said the state Beer Act dates from about 1935, the state Winery Act from 1971, when Idaho had no wineries. A winery license applies to the premises. Wineries that want to sell wine at retail – by the bottle or case, for example – or by the drink must buy a separate retail wine license. They would still have to do this, but would not have to buy a beer license, if the Kitchen and Table Wine

Act passes, he said.

The state beer license costs \$50 per year. Municipalities also require a beer permit, but this likely would change if the legislation passes, he said.

These costs are an additional burden for wineries, which already pay federal and state excise taxes, state sales taxes and various employment taxes, Batt said. Recently, more winery operators want to cooperate and go to downtown corridors, and to sell wine by the drink, he said.

Coyotes Wine Bar, which opened in downtown Caldwell last fall, had to obtain beer licensing in conjunction with its winery tasting room, partner Ron Bitner said. The establishment is a venture of Vale Wine Co., Fujishin Family Cellars and Bitner Vineyards.