

Wine marketing specialist visits local wineries

by Andy Comber

Dr. Johan Bruwer, a renowned wine marketing specialist from Australia brought some advice for strengthening the local wine industry, during a tour of the region, Jan. 24.



Dr. Johan Bruwer

"Networking is the key," said Dr. Bruwer, who has been heavily involved with several wine regions around the world, providing advice on branding issues, tourism, consumer behaviour and strategic business planning for wineries.

"Marketing an individual winery is not going to work. It is important to get more wineries on the market," said Dr. Bruwer, explaining some of the good business prac-

tics. "There is a lot of sharing of information, networking to promote the region and its wines," he said.

Dr. Bruwer toured the local wine region and agri-business industry, with stops at a couple of local wineries, including Sanson Estate Winery near McGregor and Viewpointe Estate Winery near Colchester.

"This is the event room," said John Fancsy, president of Viewpointe, speaking to Dr. Bruwer and other tour guests, at the construction site of the winery's new facilities, just east of the Village of Colchester, on the shore of Lake Erie.

"Great attention has been made to each building's purpose, its materials, and how all of the elements come together," said Fancsy, stating the goal of "creating a destination as well as the finest wine" at the multi-million dollar project.

Fancsy hopes to open the retail store at the new site in June 2006, with the event room, with its breathtaking vista of Lake Erie and sur-



Building a dream. President of Viewpointe Estate Winery, John Fancsy, pictured centre, describes plans for an event room, currently under construction, to a wine-interest group visiting the local winery, Jan. 24.

rounding lands, being readied by the Spring of 2007.

Viewpointe began harvesting Cabernet Franc, Cabernet Sauvignon and Merlot grapes at the end of October 2001, joining an array of quality wineries on Lake Erie's north shore. The region provides optimum conditions for the production of world-class wines.

Dr. Bruwer, who conducts seminars using the Australian wine industry as a good practice example, felt Essex County has a lot of potential for the international branding of its quality wines.

At a global level, Australia is now the fourth largest wine exporter with customers in more than 100 countries, including the U.K., United States, Canada, New Zealand, Ireland, Germany, Japan and Scandinavia. Australia's U.S. market has grown rapidly in recent years to about \$1 billion annually, taking 40 per cent of export production in 2004-2005.

As members of the Southwestern Ontario Vintners Association, local wineries have worked together, establishing and promoting the Essex County Wine Route. Located near the United States border, Essex County wineries also

hope to take advantage of the huge business and tourism dollars from Michigan and Ohio.

Through his influential career as a lecturer at Adelaide University, in Australia, Dr. Johan Bruwer has studied many facets of wine marketing and wine business management, completing more than 90 research projects. His wine industry consulting record includes several world wine countries, 21 wine regions and over 170 individual wine companies.

Several sponsors, including the Canadian Consulate General, County of Essex, City of Windsor, Douglas Marketing Group, Essex Community Futures Development Corporation, Viewpointe Estate Winery, Wayne County Community College District and the Westmont Hospitality Group, made Dr. Bruwer's visit to this region possible.

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Kingsville woman charged with Fraud

On January 27th, members of Kingsville OPP and the Essex County OPP Crime Unit executed a search warrant at a residence on Main St. West in Kingsville.

Alexis D'Marie Fortuna St. John, 52 years of age was arrested at the residence.

She has been charged with obtaining credit by fraud, forgery, uttering forged documents and possession of property obtained by crime.

She has been released from custody and will appear in Windsor Provincial court in late February.

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