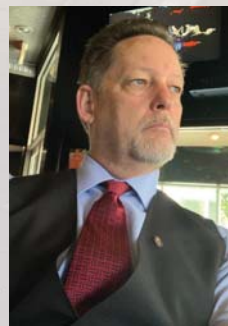


# On the Wine Trail

*Vines and Wines of the Delaware River Region*



By George Parkinson

**Three Hammers Winery**  
The Delaware River flows through four states and 419 miles from New York to the Delaware Bay. Once home to the

Lenape people, the river was originally named Lenapewihittuk. When Europeans arrived, it was renamed after Sir Thomas West, 3rd Baron De La Warr. Today the river is dotted with over 60 wine producers in New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and Delaware. They encompass all or parts of the Central Delaware Valley AVA, Warren Hills AVA, Cape May Peninsula AVA, Lehigh Valley AVA, and Outer Coastal Plains AVA.

Three Hammers Winery is roughly 40 miles northwest of the Delaware Water Gap and is presently the northernmost wine producer in the Delaware River area. A trip from Philadelphia is just over 2.5 hours and well worth the adventure. Nestled in a wooded area near Lake Teedyuskung, this 15-acre site is deep in history and wine. It is owned by Rob Kobrzynski and his wife Christine Pucciarello. Rob is a marketing executive, and Christine is a finance executive. In 2016, they left the corporate world and followed their passion into the wine industry with the purchase of a 200-year-old farmhouse.

The site was originally home to the Hammer brothers, of which there were three. The Hammers cleared the land, built the farmhouse, and worked felling trees for home building purposes. Restoration of the winery finished in May of 2018. The site houses a winery, tasting room, and production area in the renovated barn. The original farmhouse has been converted to a culinary center complete with kitchen, dining and reception area, and speakeasy-style lounge.

The patio of the farmhouse has a view overlooking the pond with an active water fountain and picnic grounds. The farmhouse is used for small tasting events by reservation only. Since the COVID-19 pandemic began, enclosed, lighted and heated igloos for group tastings were employed as well as a covered patio area and expansive open picnic grounds. A portion of the renovated barn is used for a tasting room and merchandise sales. "COVID-19 forced us to move guests outdoors," says Rob, "and we were blessed with moderate weather that cooperated. The tasting bar is strictly used for staging sales transactions at the moment."

Three Hammers presently sources its grapes from other growers. Initial investment was placed in an oak barrel program not usually undertaken by a winery of this size (3,000 cases). But, as Rob explains, "We wanted to produce world-class wines." As if renovating a residential site into a commercial facility wasn't hard enough, getting production off the ground meant using resources to buy stainless steel fermenters and premium French, American, and Hungarian oak barrels. This factor immediately reminded me of a quote from Californian Vintner August Sebastiani, who once said, "I could make more fine wine if I didn't have to grow the grapes". The reference was not lost on winemaker Hillary Gary. "It is a sad truth," says Gary. "While the passion for wine begins in the vineyard, not having to worry about pests and nature impacting fruit quality allows us to focus on making quality wine."

Rob credits winemakers Hillary Gary and Dave Kellstrom as being his most important assets in getting Three Hammers up and running. During my visit, our discussions covered the use of oak, yeast strains, fermentation methods, and the aging regimen. Making wines for consumer demand meant producing sweet and dry styles since tasting room visitors were seeking both styles.

I tasted four whites and four reds which were still aging in oak or stainless vessels: Pinot Gris, Riesling, Viognier and Gruener Veltliner, Pinot Noir, Barbera, Primitivo, and Syrah. I was also treated to a 2019 Tempranillo and a fortified Port style wine made from Tempranillo labeled Forge. The 2019 Forge was aged in Bourbon Whiskey Barrels for 15 months. The wines were all very well made, and my notes on each will follow.

The winery can accommodate up to 33 cars in the parking area, and the nearby Woodloch Resort has also been a great partner for the winery since its guests will sometimes venture in for a glass of wine. Three Hammers Winery is a place that visitors should visit more than once. The surroundings will make leaving difficult. Reservations are suggested for the igloo spaces. A wine club and direct wine sales through its online shop are available.

**You can learn more about Three Hammers Winery by visiting:**  
<http://www.threehammerswinery.com>



## The Wines We Tasted:

2020 Pinot Gris - straw yellow with aromas of quince, nectarine, and soft finishing acids

2020 Riesling - pale gold with multi-layered notes of white peach and honeysuckle

2020 Gruener Veltliner - green apple, mustard flower and citrus peel with a cloying finish

2020 Viognier - yellow gold and aromas of peach, nectarine, and cumquat

2019 Tempranillo - red black color with notes of earth, red currant, and cherry

2019 Forged - a balanced, elegant ruby black wine with aromas of fig, golden raisin, and butterscotch

2020 Pinot Noir - garnet red in color with cherry, currants, and aged cheese flavors

2020 Barbera - cranberry red with soft tannins and notes of cherry, cranberry, and cedar

2020 Primitivo - cherry red with aromas of red licorice, golden plum, and toast

2020 Syrah - black/red garnet color with aromas of satsuma plum, Bing cherry, and coffee

*George Parkinson is a member of the Court of Master Sommeliers Americas, studying for his Masters Certification. He is also a member of the WSET & Masters of Wine program based in the UK. George is a home wine maker and brewer with over 30 years experience in the hospitality and wine industries. He lives in Hilltown, PA with his wife and family.*

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