



▲ (L-R) Giuseppe Tropeano and Axa Cazenava with Silvio Di Gregorio at the Tremonte production facility in Chile

Partners in Wine

Three Local Wine Professionals Across the Industry

By Sidney Ulakovic

Despite our short growing season and unpretentious vibe, Thunder Bay is a place where folks in the business of fine wine can thrive. The city is home to wine connoisseurs from all different fields of the industry who prove that when it comes to wine, we've got great taste.

Silvio Di Gregorio

From a humble family farm in Abruzzo, Italy all the way to a commercial winery in the slopes of Mount Rekewa in Chile, a tradition of winemaking stretches across the globe and generations for one Thunder Bay local. "We were farmers in Italy, and we come here and we go into construction," says Silvio Di Gregorio, president of Northern Vintages and Tremonte Boutique Vineyard, with a laugh. "But there's always sort of a desire to get back to your roots."

That desire to get back to his family roots took Di Gregorio on a journey of global opportunities, deciding to launch Tremonte Winery in 2009 on an existing vineyard in Chile's fertile central valley. Di Gregorio and his business partners developed the vineyard over the years, expanding on the grape varieties and building a production facility on the property that can currently store up to two million litres of wine.

Di Gregorio's success in the wine industry inspired him to take on something more challenging: a vineyard right here in chilly Thunder Bay. "We actually did get a temporary license to put a winery here," he says. "And we started by creating a five-acre piece of land, fencing it in, and planting grapes, experimenting

with varieties that would survive the winter."

Working alongside the research department from the University of Saskatchewan, Di Gregorio says they developed varieties that were hardy enough to plant here. "They were at least surviving the winter, however, we weren't able to get the grapes to ripen," he says. Unpredictable frosts in the spring when plants were flowering combined with hungry wildlife made it challenging, and while Di Gregorio explains there are ways to combat this, the feasibility of navigating these challenges is limited. "One of the options that was recommended to us to keep the birds away was to put a cannon there and let a cannon go off every 20 minutes," he says. "Well, the neighbourhood would not be very happy."

While we may not see homegrown wine anytime soon, Di Gregorio says TBay wine lovers can still enjoy new things to come from Tremonte, with plans on the horizon to introduce a rosé and non-alcoholic option to their collection.

To read more about Tremonte Wine, visit their website tremonte.cl.





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