Brotherhood Winery located in Hudson Valley at 100 Brotherhood Plaza Dr. in Washingtonville, NY is the oldest winery in America. In 1839 the winery was established by the Jaques family who first began selling their wine to Jesse and Edward Emerson who were vinters as well. When the Emersons started purchasing the wines from the Jaques family they originally used it to help create a new wine by adding to a blend of wine that came from an organization called the Brotherhood of the New Life. After doing much business with the Jaques family, the Emerson bought the winery and renamed it the Brotherhood Winery. In 1921 around the beginning of prohibition Mr. Louis Farrell bought the winery from the Emersons and strictly sold wine for religious organizations. In 1933 around the end of prohibition Mr. Farrell and his wife took the winery to a new level. He started creating tours of the facility and other events to bring knowledge of the winery and the vast history in which it was founded upon. Finally in 1987 the winery was purchased by Mr. Cesar Baeza who is a master blender and wine educator as well as some of his partners. In 1999 the winery suffered a fire that nearly destroyed the entire facility. Years later after the winery lost much profits and business Mr. Baeza came into a partnership with some families in Chile. Now that Mr. Baeza has joined this partnership they began a transformation of the winery. Today the winery is still in the rebuilding phase but most of the buildings have been restored.

Vanessa Baez and I started our journey to Brotherhood winery on an early Tuesday morning. It was pretty brisk drive from Brooklyn, NY. When we arrived to the winery it was very quiet and very empty. We found our way to the main area and we purchased our tour and tasting for ten dollars. Our tour guy was named Kevin. He started out our tour with telling us about himself and his love of wine and the winery. He explained that the reason he worked there was due to his love and wanting to gain as much knowledge as he can about the wine. Kevin started by showing us the building that was a part of the winery. He informed us of the Mansion that was there and how it was built and was occupied by the founders the Jaques family. He explained how it was newly renovated but currently remains unoccupied. Another beautiful building he introduced us to was the Grand hall. This interior of the building was severely damaged in the fire in 1999. Today this hall has been completely restored and now hosts many of their wedding ceremonies and most events that are done in the winery. Outside of the hall is a beautiful patio area for outdoor weddings.

Kevin proceeded to take us to the factory where the wines are bottled. We weren’t allowed to go inside but there was a clear view from the large windows. He explained how the machine does the bottling and labeling and the men are there to just make sure the machines are moving smoothly. While we were there we witnessed a bottle break in the machine and amazing how quickly the men in the factory cleaned it up and hosed down the machine.

Our last tour of the facility was in the ground cellars. This area housed all the old barrels that were once in use. Kevin told us that the barrels ranged from 20 to 200 gallons. He continued to explain that they don’t really have a vineyard but have a demo area where grow grapes but they do have a small patch of land that currently have vines that are in hibernation. He said these small vines are only used today for demonstrations on how the grapes grow and their stages. He did say however they were looking into either purchasing a vineyard of their own or trying to grow one in that area. So Vanessa and I asked where they purchased their grapes now and he explained that the grapes are harvested in a Greendale Farm in Hudson valley some of the most common grapes there are Riesling, Pinot Noir and Chardonnay. He said that the soil in Greendale is the perfect type to make the varietal grapes because it is mineral rich and lacks depth. We were told that the grapes are fermented and aged in oak barrels and held in the very cellar that we were in. The cellar area was beautiful and throughout the year they host many events down there such as, private parties, and dinners. They even have times where they open the barrels and allow guests to drink from them.

Something that I was very surprised about was that they made champagne. I inquired about how could they call it champagne and he explained that as long as it was made using the “methode champenoise” that it can be bottled and labeled champagne. Down in the cellar they had an entire area with bottled champagne and there were a few broken bottles on the floor and a little champagne as well. He explained that sometimes the pressure in the bottles was so great that they just exploded, and with that he gave us an explanation of disgorging and riddling.

The tour was very informative and smooth. Kevin then explained that now we were going to go taste some of the wines. When purchasing the tasting you have an option of varietal flight which is dryer wines or the traditional flight which is sweeter wines but we were able to taste each other’s wines as well so we had a full experience. The wines I had the pleasure of tasting were:

Brotherhood winery Chardonnay 2011 this wine was a golden color, had an aroma of pears. It has a medium body, with a long finish and good acidity. The flavor was very fruity with a taste of pineapple and pears.

Brotherhood winery Riesling 2012 this wine was my favorite. Kevin told us that this wine is served in the white house and is one of their most popular wines. The Riesling is light yellow color and floral aroma. The taste was delicious. It had a long finish that was very clean. Had a nice delicate floral flavor and you tasted the hints of lime immediately. it didn’t linger long on the palate.

Brotherhood Winery Merlot 2011 was the next wine. I didn’t really enjoy the flavor of this wine. It was kind of rich in purple color. The aroma was like an unriped fruit. The flavors were fruity but also tasted like spices. Had a medium finish with a bit more acidity.

Brotherhood Winery Cabernet Sauvignon 2011. A deep purple color and a cherry aroma. Had a very ripe fruity taste and bold in lingering flavor. By the taste you can tell there are layers to the flavor.

Finally the last wine from my area was a Blanc de blancs sparkling wine. 100% chardonnay. Very dry but well balanced. This wine was name the best sparkler in Hudson valley in 2008. It does have a nice after taste. Lingers for a bit but then it dries.

The wines that were on the Traditional flight were:

Brotherhood New York Ste Ruby Port-is a sweet rich heavy bodied dessert wine with a fruity taste. Has a ruby-red color to it.

Carpe Diem Moscato-made from Muscat grapes. Lightly bubbly wine with a smooth fruit taste and floral aroma. Light yellow coloring with light bubbles.

Rosario-blend of concord and niagra grapes. Has a fruit grape juice taste. Dark red in color with a concord smell.

May Wine-light pink color. Very strong strawberry smell and taste. Sweet and refreshing.

Senor sangria Red home recipe that is created by Brotherhood. Made from Chilean Merlot with fruity tastes of citrus and berries. Fruit forward smell and dark red in color.

Laura Chierchia

Professor Sexton

Wine and Beverage Management

Winery Report

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