

9 questions with 7 Vines Vineyard's Janee Katz: Wine club, anyone?

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OUR PICKS: Things to Do > Restaurants & Food



Janee Katz of 7 Vines Vineyard in Dellwood. (Courtesy of 7 Vines)

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Things are taking root at 7 Vines Vineyard, the winery in Dellwood, near White Bear Lake and Mahtomedi. Janee Katz, vice president of operations, gave us the lowdown on her love for all things culinary, how the idea was planted for a vineyard on the former land of railroad magnate James J. Hill and what's to come.

What's your favorite childhood food or drink memory? Every single day when I got off the school bus, my mom would always have something baked, such as cookies or muffins, fresh out of the oven. I try to do that with my children now because it was such a profound memory for me as a child.

What did you want to be when you grew up? I wanted to be in broadcast journalism.

What was your first job in food and hospitality? Starting at age 16, I used to work at a golf course in the summers. I started out working at the snack bar then drove the beer and beverage cart. I loved interacting with people and working outside. I loved golf, too, so that helped.

How did you wind up in the food and hospitality business for good? I kind of fell into it with my parents owning 7 Vines. I went to the University of St. Thomas and received a degree in communication and marketing. I went on to do real estate. My parents, Ron and Arlie Peltier, purchased the land, formerly owned by James J. Hill, in 2010. They decided to start growing grapes on a portion of it, and the first vines were planted in 2012. My job was doing all of the administrative work and working with people who worked on the farming part of the vineyard. That position morphed into more of a business-development role.

What's the story behind the name 7 Vines? My father, Ron Peltier, played hockey growing up. After he graduated from Johnson High School on St. Paul's East Side, he played on the University of Minnesota Gophers team under legends Glen Sonmor, Lou Nanne and coach Herb Brooks. His jersey number was 7. He has seven grandchildren, whose names are etched on every bottle that we make. That number is really special to him.

How has the business grown? We planted the first vines in 2012, and today there are over 5,500 vines growing in the vineyard on 10 acres. The entire winery side encompasses a total of 27 acres. When the winery opened Oct. 8, 2017, we started with a tasting room but that has morphed into more of a wine bar feel. The idea is for people to come in and sit by the fire, try our wines, eat and relax. We offer 10 different wines in our wine bar right now. We've added a wine sommelier and have a taste experience, which includes tours of the vineyard, production side and tasting room.

We always knew we wanted to be a place for celebrations and it's been fun to see that transition of holding private parties and events such as weddings and anniversaries. We have over 60 weddings on most Fridays and Saturdays this summer and fall. Since we are closed for weddings, we're trying to create opportunities for the public to enjoy our facility during the weeknights. We're hosting more events during the weekday such as snowshoeing and yoga. This summer, we're going to start a bocce ball league.

What's your favorite wine on your menu? My favorite is our cuvee, which is our sparkling white wine. I love that it combines two of our grape varieties — Frontenac Gris and Frontenac Blanc. It has beautiful notes of mango and citrus. For our weddings here we give the couple a

cuvée for their engagement — it's so celebratory.

If you had to eat or drink only five things for the rest of your life, what would they be? I've definitely grown a major affection for wine. I love homemade lasagna. I love caprese salad fresh in the summer. I love a good hamburger — not fancy at all. My absolute favorite thing to eat is a doughnut fresh from the bakery.

What's next? We continue to add new and fun ideas. We're still in the midst of developing our wine club. We'd like to partner with local restaurants and get our wine out there in other venues.

7 VINES VINEYARD

- **Where:** 101 Highway 96 E., Dellwood
- **For more information:** 651-478-6300; <https://www.7vinesvineyard.com>

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