

MINNEAPOLIS/ST. PAUL BUSINESS JOURNAL

HomeServices' Ron Peltier already built a real estate empire — now he sets his sights on wine

bizjournals.com/twincities/news/2019/02/28/homeservices-ron-peltier-already-built-a-real.html

By Alex Van Abbema – Staff writer, Minneapolis / St. Paul Business Journal
Feb 28, 2019, 12:42pm CST



Outside of his work with the homeownership service provider, Peltier said he's invested over \$8 million to build out 7 Vines Vineyard, a winery in Dellwood.

Peltier and his wife, Arlie, purchased in 2010 a 188-acre estate once owned by the

daughter and granddaughter of James J. Hill. Peltier had seen the booming growth of microbreweries throughout Minnesota and the rest of the country and became fascinated with the wine business. He felt it was underserved in the Twin Cities.

"I wanted to do something that would be lasting and ecofriendly," Peltier said. He worked with the University of Minnesota to find vines that could survive the cold Minnesota winters. The first vines were planted in 2012 and there are now over 5,500 vines growing on a 10-acre space.

He recruited Brian Forbes, who worked as an interim winemaker for the university and has held various winemaking roles in France and California. 7 Vines now produces seven varietals of wine, including four Frontenac varieties, two Marquette varieties, and a Minnesota sparkling wine.

Peltier said he doesn't have enough supply to ramp up production for wholesale operations, but may eventually make the wine available to local restaurants and clubs. He estimates 7 Vines manufactured about 2,500 cases of wine last year, selling them directly through the winery and online.

"It's a serious undertaking — we're clearly not producing Kool-Aid," Peltier said.

Beyond its wine production, Peltier opened the winery as an event space in October 2017. It includes a wine bar and space for wine-tasting events. Peltier said the space has hosted over 70 weddings and private events.

It's had some high-profile attention — Peltier hosted VIP events at the space last year during the Super Bowl, and NFL Commissioner Roger Goodell stopped by for a dinner.

Peltier estimates that the buildout of the winery, and planting the vines, has cost him more than \$8 million. He plans to eventually pass operation and ownership of 7 Vines on to his seven grandchildren.

"It's built to last," Peltier said. "By the time my grandchildren are adults, we'll have a serious, recognized winery with great wines."