

It's Their



Passion



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Wine. To some it is just an alcoholic drink, or simply represents a drink that has brought people together for centuries. However, if you asked the students in the viticulture and enology program at Texas Tech University, they would tell you it means something much more. It's their passion.

Spenser Igo, a senior horticulture major with a specialization in viticulture and enology, traveled all the way from Temecula, Calif., to join the program. He said he learned about the program through the Texas Tech Plant & Soil Science Department's website. After attending University of California Riverside for one year, Igo said it was time to move on and he wanted to go somewhere different and get out of California for a while. Throughout his life, Igo said he has always traveled down his own path.

"I like to start new things, and I like to be a part of new things," Igo said. "I figured if I came out to Texas Tech's new program, that would definitely be different."

The program started in the fall of 2009 and currently has 21 students pursuing the specialization in viticulture and enology. Texas Tech is the only school in Texas that offers a four-year program and graduate work as well.

Ed Hellman, one of the current professors in the program, said he is proud of where the program is at now. The program offers state-of-the-art facilities, wine labs and research fields. It also offers its students outstanding hands-on learning experiences. Whether students are interested in producing award-winning wines or growing superior grapes, the faculty and staff in the department are there to help.

Although the program has grown tremendously, Hellman said there are several things that need to be improved.

"We're one of the few viticulture and enology programs outside of the west or east coast," Hellman said.

"The Texas wine industry is expanding very rapidly and there is going to be job opportunities out there."

For now Hellman is going to focus on the scholarship and internship program.

"I've got a lot of my students in class now that want to do an internship this summer," Hellman said. "It is a vital thing and part of their learning experience is getting that practical experience and working in a winery."

Igo, who is currently doing an internship at McPherson Cellars in Lubbock, said he has learned a lot about the wine industry, as well as developed a strong passion for what he does.

"Wine making is always a learning process.

"I am incredibly passionate about the wine industry and I know this alone will take me a long way in my career."

Every year, no matter how smart you are, there is always something that is going to come in and effect the industry," Igo

said with a grin.

Katie Setterbo, a junior horticulture and turf-grass science major from Fredericksburg, Texas, specifically came to Texas Tech to join the viticulture and enology program. With no agricultural background or experience in the industry, Setterbo said she wasn't sure what she was getting herself into.

Setterbo, constantly sharing her contagious laugh, said she is fortunate to have found a program that she loves so much.. Although she may not know exactly what she wants to do next, her passion for what she is doing now will allow great things to come in her future.

"I am incredibly passionate about the wine industry and I know this alone will take me a long way in my career," Setterbo said. "I am so excited to take all of this knowledge I've gained in school and apply it in an actual work environment." Without a doubt, the students in the viticulture and enology program are passionate about what they are doing. They are doing what they love and that is true success in itself. **T**

