



A Toast to Coke

Lubbock was a booming town in the mid-20's and Coca-Cola ® took advantage of the growth and opened its factory doors in 1930. The factory functioned for many years but eventually decided to sell the building to B&M Vending Company which was a local distributor of manufactured goods. It wasn't until 2008 that a local entrepreneur would take this historical site at 1615 Texas Avenue and make it an incredible and inspiring business in Lubbock's Depot District. The corkscrew has now become the tool of choice at this location.

Not many Lubbock natives know that the modern and stylistic building McPherson Cellars calls home has been bottling for more than 80 years. The charm and edge is what caught winemaker Kim McPherson's eye and led to the creation of the unique winery that still remains the only one within city limits. Images are displayed between the event center and tank room that take you back to the booming 30's of Lubbock.

Winemaking is more than just a hobby for the McPherson family it's a tradition. The McPherson's have been a pioneering family in grape growing and wine making in Texas for more than 40 years.

Kim's father, Dr. Clinton A. "Doc" McPherson, is considered one of the fathers of the modern Texas wine industry. In 1976, "Doc", a chemistry professor at Texas Tech University, and Bob Reed founded Llano Estacado Winery in Lubbock, one of the first post-prohibition Texas wineries. Kim's mother, Clara,

while a professor in Texas Tech's Department of Food Science, established the university's hotel and restaurant management degree program.

"I was basically led directly to the viticulture production world by my father, who is a big somebody in the wine world," said winemaker, Kim McPherson.

Kim graduated from Texas Tech with a degree in food nutrition science and then completed the enology and viticulture program at the University of California at Davis. He worked in sunny Napa Valley before returning to Lubbock as a winemaker for Llano Estacado in 1979 until 1985 and for Cap-Rock Winery from 1990 until 2007, where he also made the McPherson

Cellars label.

By 1998, both Kim and his father were inducted into the "Who's Who in Wine and Food in Texas" Hall of Fame. The McPherson label, as well as other labels of Kim's have won more than 400 medals in state, national and international competitions including the prestigious San Francisco International Wine Festival.

"I am always thinking about styles of wine and how I can make those styles based on the grapes we grow in Texas," Kim said.

Kim believes in "planting to the land" which is why his focus is on Rhone, Italian and Spanish varietals. All of these varietals thrive in the west Texas climate, with its warm days and cool nights. Sangiovese, Grenache, Syrah, Mourvedre, Viognier, and Cabernet Sauvignon mostly compose the fruit portfolio. These

"Winemaking is both art and science, but more art."

wines are sourced primarily from the Texas High Plains—including “Doc’s” 21-acre Sagmore Vineyard acquired in 1967.

In 2013 Kim released two new wines, a Dry Muscat and Dry Chenin Blanc. His first Tempranillo blend was released in 2011, La Herencia. A second McPherson label, Hook, Line & Sinker, was released in early 2009 and is made up of white and red, both blends, Blush Rose and Sweet Red.

“Some years you have to work hard to sculpt grapes into beautiful wines, and some years there’s incredible fruit to make it easy. Winemaking is both art and science, but more art,” said Kim with a smile glowing across his face.

The McPherson Cellars label needed a modern and unique location to call home to match its significant flavors and flare of Italian and Spanish varietals. The historical building downtown was very large and met all the needs of a newly made label in Lubbock County.

“I wanted to be in the city and I wanted to be downtown. When the laws changed to allow that, I knew where I wanted to be, and when this building came up, I knew it was it. It was an incredible location,” Kim said.

Considering the large square footage, an event center was created to draw more than wine drinkers to this perfect location in the entertainment district.

The event center portion of the winery has been a host to various events such as weddings, birthdays, receptions, and even conferences. All of the art displayed throughout the winery is local and portrays native west Texas living. The centerpiece of the room is the unique fountain paying homage to the history of the building by the coke bottles that are proudly displayed throughout the design.

When asked to give advice to beginners in the winemaking profession, Kim came back with a pretty logical, straight-forward answer that doesn’t leave anyone guessing.

“It’s simple. You’ve got to be able to think quick. And you have to be objective about the

wine you’re making. If it’s not good when you put it in the barrel, chances are it’s not going to get any better. You’ve got to be creative about what to do with what you have,” snickered Kim, as he grinned widely.

Visitors, friends and family can truly see that Kim McPherson is living out his dream and is as happy as he can be. All of his employees love working with him and consider it an honor even if they want to strangle him on certain days.

“Working for Kim and McPherson’s in general has been one of the best decisions ever. Most operation managers have the same job day in and day out but I get to deal with different situations on a daily basis and I love every minute of it,” Emily Simpson, operations manager, said as she swirled her wine.

Although the Coca-Cola’s® time in the entertainment district came to an end, there is no end in sight for McPherson Cellars. Lubbock is now a booming town in the wine industry and it is said that the South Plains may become the next Napa Valley. Kim McPherson and his peers will be ready and willing when that day comes. **T**

Brandy Brooks
Lampasas, Texas



“Kim with father “Doc” McPherson.

