

Barnesville Couple Start Nordic Oaks Vineyards

By Michael Stein

Could Barnesville someday be the Napa Valley of the Midwest? Kai and Aubree Martinez may not have their sights set that high yet—but their purchase of land for a vineyard is a very good start. The Martinez’s are laying down roots for Nordic Oaks Vineyards, near Highway 9 and Old 52.

“We sort of caught the wine bug visiting Napa Valley in California a few years ago,” Aubree said. “Then we learned you could grow grapes in Minnesota. The more research we did, the more intrigued we were with the idea.”

Kai and Aubree planted their first grapevines at their Barnesville home about five years ago.

“The first batch of wine from those first plants was pretty awful,” Kai said. “I really didn’t have a good idea of what I was doing.”

They weren’t really expecting success in their first attempt, and since that first year, they’ve added variations to their small garden, and last year had three variations in nine plants. The grapes are specially bred to withstand Minnesota winters.

“The type of wine corresponds to the type of grape,” Kai said.

“I’ve been asked if we can produce a chardonnay or a cabernet. We can’t because those are types of grapes that won’t grow in this climate.”

According to the Minnesota Grape Growers Association, there are several wineries scattered throughout the state. The Martinez’s purchased 17 acres near the Dollar General and plan to plant 850 vines there in 2019.

“We’ve had the soil tested out there,” Aubree said. “We know what will grow in this soil, and that’s one of the biggest factors. The next step will be to put a shop up. We’re planning for five years to get the process down, which has a lot to do with a winery’s success. We want to produce a quality product the public will like.”

With a young family at home and both working full time, Kai and Aubree said they’ve been careful in putting a business plan together.

Based on what they’ve tried so far, the Martinez’s have ordered six types of vines for the first year.

“We’re definitely looking at expansion at some point,” Kai said. “We purchased all those



Aubree and Kai Martinez look forward to their first full year as vineyard owners. They will plant more than 800 grapevines on this acreage just northwest of the city.

acres for a reason.”

They’ll also be the only winery in this region. Others in the area include Richwood Winery in Callaway, MN., Red Trail Vineyards in Buffalo, ND, and Dakota Vines Vineyard and Winery in Colfax, ND.

Once established, grape vines can live to be more than a century. The first two to three years are crucial to establishing the root system of each vine.

Per vine, Aubree said, they expect to average about seven to 12 pounds of grapes, which will produce two to three bottles.

Once they’re up and running, the Martinez’s envision Nordic Oaks to be a gathering place for members of the community and visitors.

“Harvest time is usually late September,” Kai said. “Other vineyards often invite the public to come and be part of the de-stemming and crushing process. So I can see a gathering out there with a big ‘ol bonfire and making it a community event.”



Redbirds Baseball Provided A Respite For Local Folks

By Michael Stein

This is the centennial year of what is still considered the greatest scandal in baseball history: the “Black Sox Scandal.” Nine members of the Chicago White Sox, disgruntled by their stingy owner, allegedly conspired with gamblers to throw the 1919 World Series. We say “allegedly” because they were cleared by, but later tossed out of the game by the tough new Baseball Commissioner, “Judge” Kenesaw Landis.

Baseball across the country wasn’t terribly shaken by the scandal. Thousands of town teams thrived in the pre-Depression 1920s. Once young American men returned from fighting in World War II in 1945, life began to return to normal and those teams once again thrived.

Those post-war years were the glory days for local amateur baseball teams, such as the Barnesville Redbirds. Formed in 1947, this independent team played—and beat—some of the best teams in the area, including a few wins over the Northern League’s F-M Twins.

Games were generally played on Sunday afternoons, which allowed farm families to attend. For a couple of hours on the local ball diamond, fans could put their cares on hold and cheer on the hometown boys.

The new independent team played its first game Sunday, May 25, 1947. The day and the game was

set aside as Doc Cyr Day.

Doc Cyr began his baseball career before the turn of the century in the New York Giants system, playing alongside the legendary John McGraw, who went on to manage the Giants into the 1930s.

While attending medical school in Montreal, Cyr spent his summers umpiring games, and continued to do so until locating in Barnesville in the early 1900s. He participated in the game as a player and manager and always as an ardent fan and supporter of local baseball.

Doc Cyr threw out the opening ball to Mayor Mork at Oliver Park and officially opened the first game of the first season for the Redbirds in the new Red River League. Admission to the game was announced at 40 cents for adults.

Despite overcast skies and scattered showers, about 250 fans turned out that Sunday afternoon in 1947 to honor Doc Cyr and watch Barnesville nose out Downer 6-5 in their league opener.

The Record-Review reported that “Doc arrived at the local diamond at 2:25 declaring his arm was in great shape. After a few warm-up tosses in the bull-pen Doc was greeted by Mayor Mork who acted as master of ceremonies in a brief ceremony in which Doc was presented with an engraved Sheaffer lifetime pen and pencil set.”

After saying a few words to the

crowd, the good doctor strolled to the mound and tossed a perfect strike to Mayor Mork and officially opened the Red River League for the 1947 season.

Barnesville made the day complete with an exciting 6-5 win over Downer.

The next game of the 1947 season against the Sabin Independents was a true barn-burner. Down 7-0, Barnesville roared back in the sixth seventh innings to tie things up. After nine, the teams were tied 8-8. Both scored three runs in the 10th, but Barnesville sealed a win in the 11th with eight runs and headed

home with a satisfying 19-11 win.

The season moved forward with both league and non-league games. The Redbirds’ final home tilt was an error-filled 14-8 win over Pelican Rapids. Wayne Hagman led the local attack with a home run, triple and single in five trips to the plate. Wayne McEvers and Ev Reed shared the mound duties with “Mac” getting the win.

The last league game played July 27 was a 5-4 win over Dilworth to boost the locals to an 8-2 record in

the Red River League and a spot in the playoffs, which they opened August 17 with a 6-2 win, sparked by Elton Klug’s three hits, over Comstock.

The Redbirds playoff finale with a “dreaded band of Moorhead Red Soxers” on August 21 was a battle of sharp pitching, poor fielding and an anticlimactic finish. McEvers pitched well, but five Barnesville errors made the difference in Moorhead’s 5-4 win. The game was halted after seven frames because of

darkness, which made the loss even more difficult to swallow.

The league champion that year received 40 percent of the “jackpot,” which was built up throughout the season with each team contributing 10 percent of its gate receipts. By finishing runners up in the playoffs, Barnesville received 30 percent of the jackpot. The third- and fourth-place teams, Sabin and Comstock, each received 15 percent. There is no record of what the final jackpot turned out to be.

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BARNESVILLE RECORD-REVIEW										
Covering The News In The Barnesville Community For 115 Years.										
Barnesville (8)										
Bredemeier, 1b	...	5	2	1	12	1				
Seefeldt, lf	...	4	0	2	0	0				
W. McEvers, 3b	...	4	1	1	4	3				
J. McEvers, ss	...	5	0	1	1	4				
Hagman, p	...	4	0	0	3	3				
Hoffner, c	...	4	0	1	4	0				
Ducharme, 2b	...	4	1	1	3	2				
Klug, cf	...	3	1	0	0	0				
Soliah, rf	...	4	1	1	0	0				
Totals	...	37	6	8	27	13				
Downer (5)										
Lein, ss	...	5	1	1	2	3				
Halverson, 2b, 3b	...	5	0	2	1	1				
Roesch, 1b	...	5	0	0	11	0				
Desing, 3b, c	...	5	1	1	2	6				
F. Lamb, cf	...	4	1	2	1	0				
M. Lamb, rf	...	4	0	0	0	0				
Austin, lf	...	3	0	0	1	1				
Wilkinson, c, 2b	...	4	1	2	5	0				
Kordean, p	...	3	1	0	1	4				
Totals	...	38	5	8	24	15				
Score by innings:										
Downer	...	001-010-120								
Barnesville	...	001-113-00x								
Summary: Runs batted in: Bredemeier 2, Seefeldt, Hoffner, Soliah, Lein, Halverson 2, F. Lamb, Wilkinson, Doubles—Bredemeier, Halverson, Desing. Triple — Halverson. Double play—Kordean to Desing to Roesch. Stolen bases—Bredemeier 4, Hagman 4. Walks—Off Kordean 2, Hagman 4. Umpires—Desing and Solum. Time—2:10.										



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