

Maryland Vineyard Planting Loan Fund Recipient: Three Sisters Vines LLC



The number of Maryland wineries has been increasing over the past several years, but the number of wine grapes grown in the state has not been keeping up. Thus, when Vince and Tami Gesiskie decided to start a vineyard, it was because they knew there was a demand for Maryland-grown grapes.

“We started visiting local wineries in Montgomery County and became friends with them,” said Vince. “They told us they wanted to produce 100% of their wine from Maryland-grown grapes, but there weren’t enough

(grapes) for them.”

With this idea in mind, the family decided to begin their own vineyard. Living in Montgomery County, the family searched for land in the area to start their vineyard. However, they eventually found a 58-acre farm in Clear Spring (Washington County) that fit their needs. The Gesiskie’s three daughters, Ellie, Gracie, and Lily, chose its name, Three Sisters Vines. For them, the next step was to prepare the land and purchase grape vines. Vince heard about MARBIDCO from the Maryland Grape Growers Association and Mid-Atlantic Farm Credit.

Once receiving the Vineyard Planting Loan Fund, they were able to begin purchasing the vines they wanted. The Fund is designed to help meet the unique financing needs of Maryland landowners who want to plant fruit-bearing vines and trees.

“MARBIDCO was able to offer us better interest rates and payment schedules versus a regular bank. It also provided relevant contacts for us to utilize that a normal bank wouldn’t be able to offer,” said Ellie, their daughter, of MARBIDCO’s unique loan program.

Currently, the family has five acres of vines planted, with four different varieties of grapes, including chardonnay, merlot, cabernet franc, and gewürztraminer. They plan to prep an additional 18 to 20 acres for next year's vines and begin growing Petite Verdot as well. In the future, they plan to have a total of 40 acres of grape vines.

The family works together to run the vineyard. Ellie helps with the farm and figuring out the logistics of what the family needs to do. Tami helps by researching information about the vineyard's agronomy needs.

Vince also is restoring the 200-year-old farmhouse on the property, locally known as the 'three sisters house,' since it is one of three identical houses in the area. Vince says that the family has received a lot of insight and help from their neighbors and that they are grateful for the assistance they have received. The family plans to sell their grapes to other Maryland producers and wineries.

"I would like for us to build relationships with other Maryland vineyards and wineries, whether they are big family-run operations or small family-owned businesses," said Ellie.