

Trumbull, Columbiana, Stark, Portage, Lorain and Erie counties.

There's a lot of opportunity for retail growth, Dan observes. He also expects business at the winery to continue to grow. It's become a destination for regulars from greater Youngstown as well as from Akron, Canton, Cleveland, Pittsburgh and western Pennsylvania, he says.

Other Ohio wineries help fuel the growth at Mastropiétro, Marianne adds, because "every winery has its own personality and people like to visit different ones."

"If one succeeds, they all succeed," her husband agrees.

"You can't succeed on your own," Marianne continues, and each new winery that opens helps the wine industry grow in Ohio."

There are about 150 wineries in Ohio, Dan estimates, and three of the newest have visited Mastropiétro to seek advice.

Considering the progress Mastropiétro has made since it opened, Marianne says, "I don't think people expect to see something like this. I don't think we ever expected this. Wow!"

Future additions, the partners say, will focus on expanding outdoor facilities so the winery can accommodate more weddings – there's about one wedding a week at the winery during the summer – and adding recreational venues such as bocce courts.

"I never knew this was here," says Sue Burns, a resident of Howland who visited the winery this summer for the first time. She and her husband, David Burns, hadn't heard of Mastropiétro until their good friends, Bill and Rose Petro of Canfield, invited them to visit the winery with them.

Sitting on the patio sharing a pitcher of sangria, the couples reminisced about how they first

met: the Petros set their friends up on a blind date. Six months later, David Burns recalls, he and his wife were engaged to be married. Now, they're preparing to celebrate their 25th anniversary. They also plan a return visit to the winery, now that they know about it.

Paul Matyi of Austintown also plans to return, and to introduce a few friends to the experience. Other friends of his are regulars but didn't invite him to join them until earlier this month. "I can't believe they didn't tell me about this before," he says in astonishment.

One of those friends, Dawn Polas of Youngstown, frequents Mastropiétro but hasn't yet brought her boyfriend. He's always had something else to do when she and Terri Barnes, another of her friends, visit the winery.

That hasn't stopped Polas from having a great time. She says she loves visiting Mastropiétro.

"I drove 350 miles to get here," says Ron Hatcher of Staunton, Va., a wide smile spreading across his face.

Staunton was visiting friends in the area when they suggested a visit to Mastropiétro Winery. "It's real pretty, a beautiful setting," he says, marveling that he never expected to discover such a gem of a winery in what was once an Ohio cornfield.

Mastropiétro Winery is open 4 to 9 p.m. Thursdays, 4 to 11 p.m. Fridays, 1 to 11 p.m. Saturdays and 1 to 5 p.m. Sundays. Live music is performed from 7 to 10 p.m. Fridays and Saturdays.

Mastropiétro Winery

Opened: May 2005

Founders: Dan, Marianne and Cathy Mastropiétro

Red Wines: cabernet, Grandpa's Best, syrah, merlot, sangiovese, zinfandel, Valley Red, chambourcin, dolce rosso, mastromiscela

White Wines: chardonnay, vidal blanc, white merlot, riesling, sauvignon blanc, sunset, dolce bianco

Specialty Wines: Frontenac port, Sweet One

Headquarters/Winery: Berlin Center, Ohio

Retailers: Mastropiétro Winery and TNT Drive Thru, Berlin Center; Chalet Premier, North Lima; Champion Beverage Tunnel, Warren; Giant Eagle in Poland, Liberty, Calcutta, East Liverpool and Ravenna; Jim's Party Shop, North Jackson; Kendrick's Corner, Salem; Struthers Beer, Wine & Spirits, Struthers; The Beverage House, Youngstown; 1 Stop Shop, Austintown; Wine Connection, Columbiana, among others

Restaurants: Nicolinni's Ristorante, Boardman; Roby Lee's, Newton Falls; The Fifth Season, Austintown; Rotelli Italian Grill & Bar in Austintown, Boardman and Liberty; Inner Circle Pizza, Canfield

Source: Mastropiétro Winery



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