

YOUR VINE OR MINE



Alex and Penny Schebal had dreams of opening a retail wine establishment where individuals or groups could come in and make their own wine, and where they also could sell some of their own private label wine as well as wine-making supplies. They came to the Small Business Development Center in 2007 to speak with counselor Cathy Walsh on how to turn that dream into reality.

They needed assistance in determining the

appropriate financing to purchase the building they had in mind, a historic structure in downtown Painesville. Cathy Walsh met with them to go over the project and discussed a number of options. She continued to keep tabs on their progress and they eventually opened their establishment in 2008.

The nature of their business has evolved with each passing year. Instead of focusing on the retail aspect as originally planned, they quickly discovered that what their client base really wanted was a place to hang out, relax and have a good glass of wine. Although still selling their wine by the bottle in a retail format, they have utilized more of their space as a gathering place.



To augment their wine service, they added appetizers to provide their growing, loyal customer base with something to eat. As the demand for food grew, so did their food offerings. They added pizzas, sandwiches, soups and recently different varieties of gourmet macaroni and cheese to their food menu. With these changes came a need for more food preparation area and more staff. They repurposed their space to add to their kitchen facilities and currently employ three full-time and two part-time staff members.

Their wine-making service continues to be a hit and they see many customers coming to them to

create wines for their own use and for special events such as weddings, birthdays, Christmas and bridal showers. In the summer of 2012 they added seasonal outdoor patio seating to their business and have added weekend entertainment. Growth plans for the future include even more of an expanded kitchen facility and an expanded wine-making area.



They give part of the credit for their steadily growing business to the city of Painesville for all the support and encouragement they have provided. They also appreciate the direction provided by the SBDC and the practical directions and steps they provided in helping them get started.

Alex and Penny advise anyone thinking of going into business of utilizing the free services in their community. "You have to decide that failure is not an option," says Penny. "If you never quit, you'll never fail."

Alex adds, "It's not easy...you do work hard...paperwork and everything else involved in running your business is not easy. No job is too big or too small. You have to be prepared to do it all."