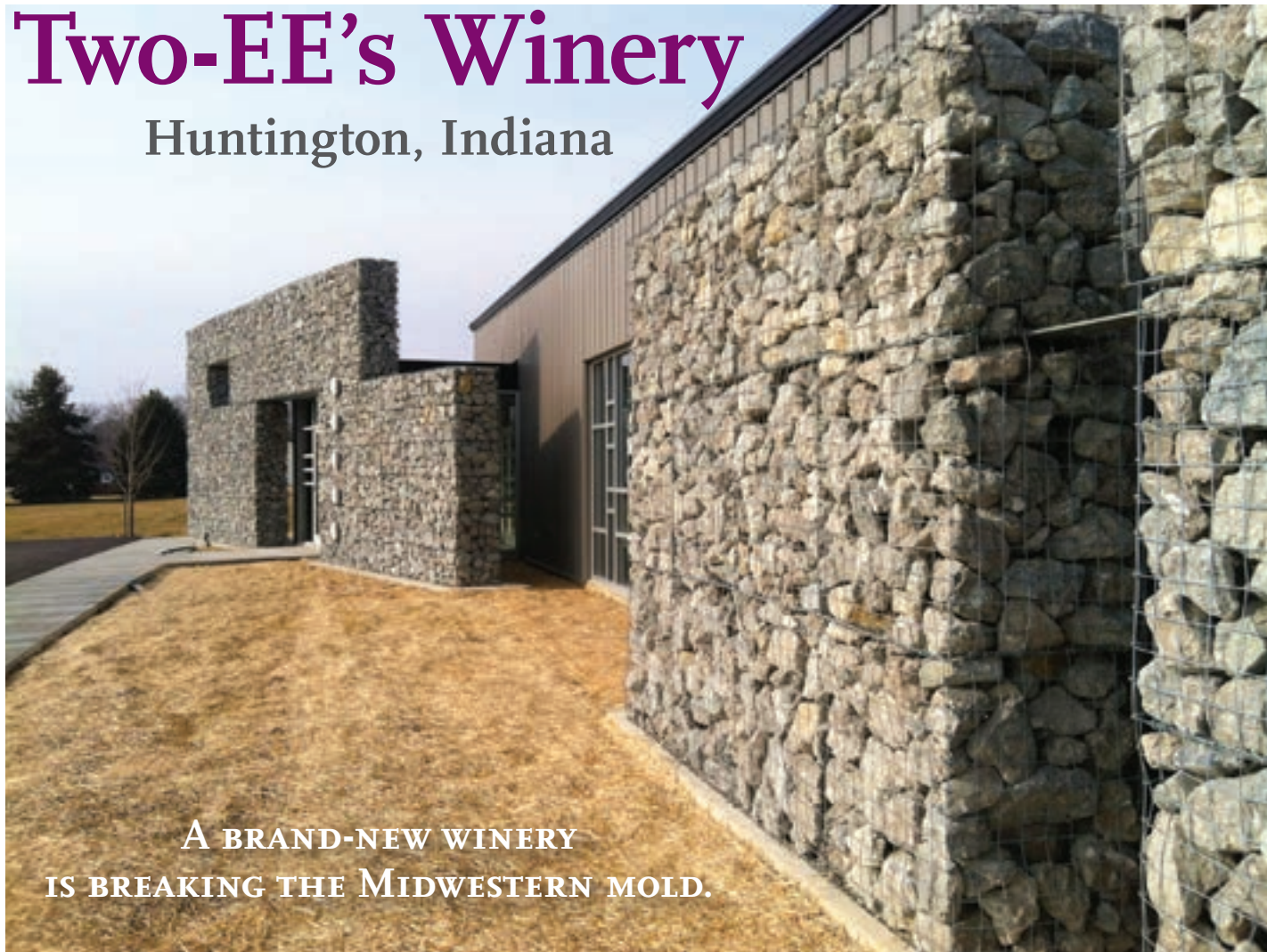


# Two-EE's Winery

Huntington, Indiana



A BRAND-NEW WINERY  
IS BREAKING THE MIDWESTERN MOLD.

## JULIANNE WILL

**TWO-EE'S WINERY**  
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If Two-EE's Winery founder Eric Harris had a theme song, it would probably be Frank Sinatra's "My Way."

There are already a number of reputable wineries in Indiana. In fact, Harris, 28, worked at one of them—Satek Winery in Fremont—for two-and-a-half years, so the decision to start his own is not particularly remarkable in itself. But the way in which he is going about it challenges conventional wisdom.

Back in 2006, Harris was visiting his now-fiancée Emily Hart, 25, when her dad, Dennis, came upstairs from the basement with a carboy in hand. After learning more about his future

father-in-law's winemaking hobby, Harris joined in, starting that August with 300 pounds of Syrah they purchased from Larry Satek.

Harris ended up working for Satek while studying business at Indiana University-Purdue University Fort Wayne, Ind., and making his own wine on the side, as he and Dennis began to buy grapes from a grower near Clarksburg in Yolo County, Calif. For the first two years, their bottlings were strictly for personal use, but after Harris completed the winemaking certificate course at the University of California-Davis in 2011, he and Emily (who is currently Miss Indiana—she'll compete in the Miss USA pageant

Photos by Julianne Will



*Two-EE's tasting room.*

this summer in Las Vegas) partnered with his own father, Dave Harris, to turn his passion into a business.

Having completed construction on a 6,000-square-foot facility in January 2013, they'll continue to purchase grapes until their own vineyards, planted in May 2012, are producing. Their varieties of choice are far from standard fare: they're getting Aglianico, Dolcetto, Nebbiolo, Norton, Tannat, and Teroldego from California along with Catawba, Diamond, Traminette, Vignoles, and a Riesling-like variety yet to be named by the Alcohol and Tobacco Tax and Trade Bureau from Pennsylvania. This year, for the first time, Harris brought in some Durif, also from California. Again, he's doing it his way, using the Australian name for the

grape, though it's better known in the United States as Petite Sirah. "As you can see," he says, "we're trying to position ourselves in such a way that we're not selling the same stuff that you can get at most liquor stores. It's very difficult to find Teroldego, Aglianico—you have to seek them out."

Harris chose to focus on fruit-forward varietal wines "because these are unique varieties, arcane varieties, and if we were to blend them, it wouldn't be as interesting," he explains. "So when we make the wine, it's important to allow the fruit to express its individual qualities. That involves very minimal intervention. I know some people would disagree, but in the end, if it sells and people like it, that's what's important to me. Not that I have anything against Cabernet; it

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Two-EE's vineyards in winter (left), Traminette vines (above).

## OUTSTANDING RECENT RELEASES

<b>Aglianico</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>\$18</b>
Not quite opaque; reddish-purple in color, fading at the edge. The nose is spicy, with ripe cherries and a floral tinge; on the palate, robust cherry-juice flavors are softened by oaky vanilla. Thanks to its moderate acidity, this would be beautiful with a white pizza.		
<b>Chardonnay Late Harvest</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>\$25</b>
This botrytised wine, aged in French oak, shows coppery orange in the glass. Aromas of fresh-baked molasses cookies presage flavors of molasses, sweet honey, cream, caramel, and toffee, with the slightest hint of orange zest. Full bodied, viscous, and rich, it would be decadent over vanilla ice cream, though it's really dessert on its own.		
<b>Dolcetto</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>\$18</b>
In the glass, this wine is clear and bright, with a dark-plum color that lightens toward the edge. A rich, raisiny, plummy nose offers hints of dark chocolate, caramel, green pepper, and sweet leather, and the palate delivers on those promises. Great balance and a wonderful finish.		
<b>Tannat</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>\$18</b>
Opaque, dark purple at the center, brightening at the rim. This beautiful, glass-coating wine delivers aromas of cedar, tobacco, and oiled leather followed by full, rich flavors of tobacco, green pepper, oregano, and dark fruit. The finish is moderately long.		
<b>Traminette</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>\$16</b>
A clear, bright, pale-straw hue fades to clear at the rim. The perfumed nose is reminiscent of hyacinth; a palate of nectarine and stony mineral is marked by a not-unpleasant hint of petrol or rubber.		
<b>Vignoles</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>\$17</b>
Star-bright in the glass, this dry Vignoles displays a clear straw color. Fresh-strawberry and ripe-pear aromas precede flavors of orange, lemon, and mango.		

generally makes great wines. But why try to compete in such a cutthroat market when we have the opportunity to sell a product that is almost exclusive to us?"

Hart put her interior-design degree to use in construction of the new winery, working with the architects on the production area, tasting room, and retail shop to create a "very clean" look, she says. "It carries back to what Eric wants to do with the wine—he wants it to be very simple and let the grapes do the talking. I think that's how our design is, too."

Two-EE's sits on 40 acres of rolling hills and woodlands; its first planting on three-fourths of an acre consists of 384 vines—two rows each of Bläufrankisch, Brianna, Diamond, Grüner Veltliner, Norton, Traminette, and Valvin Muscat. In March, a grape currently called NY9503010 (it's scheduled to get a name from the TTB in the spring) will go in; Harris calls it "the most *vinifera*-esque red hybrid I've ever come across." He also plans to plant Golden Muscat, Vignoles, and more Diamond, Grüner, and Traminette; he and Hart have cleared another 3 acres at the top of a hill for planting next year. And they're investigating the lease of nearby farmland for yet more plantings, so they can preserve the trees on their own property to provide ambiance for its outdoor patio and performance space. "I can see a lot of people bringing a blanket and a pic-



*Two-EE's owners Emily Hart and Eric Harris.*

nic and just sitting on the hill and relaxing outside on nice days," Hart says.

Harris is determined to go his own way when it comes to vineyard management as well. "In this part of the country, everybody says you've got to go with high cordon for lower labor costs," he says. "But we're employing vertical-shoot positioning, which is how about 90% of the vines are grown and trained in the West. I'll probably never hear the end of this from the viticulturists and the growers who have hundreds of acres of high-cordon vines, but I've personally witnessed VSP working much better than high cordon here in Indiana. It's more work, and you may have to spray more often and be in your vineyard more. But the potential advantages to vertical training are more effective spray, better airflow through the vineyard, and less likelihood that birds will go after the crop, because they would be exposed to predation. After all, what are we doing here if not growing our own grapes for ultimate control over quality? I want to do the best that we can with what we've got. And I'll be the first guy to admit it if I'm wrong."

In the winery, Harris is using stainless-steel fermentation for all his whites, and he's installed a glycol cooling system for the press as well as the tanks. "If we're able to keep them cool all the way through processing and fermentation to

bottling," he says, "it will help maintain a more fruity wine." For the reds, he employs cool fermentation in egg-shaped tanks, explaining that "the more heat you apply, the more generic fruit flavor you get; the cooler the fermentation, the less bitter your wine will be." For aging, he's starting with all new barrels—75% French and Hungarian, 25% American—to be reused thereafter. He plans to put the Norton in 100% American barrels, however, to highlight its American heritage. "Oak isn't necessarily going to be subdued to the extent that you won't notice it in our wines," he says, "but its purpose is more for microoxygenation than flavor."

Two-EE's is also working on a Port-style apple wine with fruit from Doud Orchard in Denver, Ind., to be aged in Old Fitzgerald bourbon barrels from Heaven Hill Distilleries in Louisville, Ky. In another five years, Harris hopes to expand into brewing; he's been making beer with a friend for a couple of years in preparation for broadening the winery's appeal. "I'd just like to be able to have some beer for those guys who might be shuffling their feet around the tasting room," he says. "That's wishful thinking, but I don't want to squander my dreams either." No doubt he'll do it his way. 🍷

