

# Winery brings world-famous grapes to local label

Will wonders never cease! The latest happening is the appearance in Crystal River of a brand new winery and wine shop, conveniently located across from the post office.

Copp Winery is the brainchild of Donna Copp. It is a winery because the proprietor creates 16 different proprietor's blends right there in her neat little store. And it is a shop because you can purchase any of these delightful labels right there by the glass or by the bottle, while nibbling on a bit of cheese and crackers.

The extraordinary thing about Donna's wide selection is that all of the grapes used to make the wines are purchased from either California or from Europe. In other words, they are the same kind of varietal grapes found in stores anywhere in the county, except these are created on the premises, with TLC, and they all come from the "Vinifera" grape family we know and love, including such favorites as chardonnay, merlot, pinot noir, shiraz, zinfandel, and cabernet sauvignon.

Donna Copp's winery is not unique

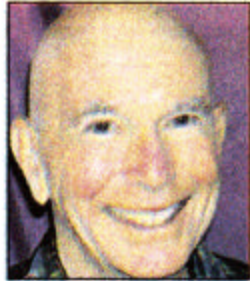
in this regard. There are many such enterprises across America — good people who are interested in creating wine without the land or the time to actually grow grapes.

A bit more about Donna and her husband Fran: the latter has worked for the past 14 years as an upper-level math teacher at Lecanto High School, while Donna is a graduate student teaching at the University of Florida, where she is completing a doctorate in criminology/sociology. Her dissertation deals with

binge drinking at colleges.

She became interested in winemaking three years ago, learning her trade the hard way, through courses on the Internet and by ongoing experimentation. Eventually the trial wines, she decided, were good enough to present to the public. She told me, "It was a long journey through chemistry." And in talking with Donna, it is clear she knows her stuff. Winemaking at this level is not for the faint of heart. It's not, as the saying goes, "rocket science," but you better do it right or you will be drinking colored water.

So she and Fran purchased the



Ron Drinkhouse  
**WINES  
& SUCH**



Special to the Chronicle

**New winery's proprietor creates 16 different blends in her little store.**

building across from the aforementioned post office in Crystal River, totally remodeled the building on their own, inside and out, and, lo and behold, a good-looking winemaking facility, complete with a handsome oak-shelved tasting room.

Because Donna buys all her wine juice from areas out of the state, by law she cannot label her products by

their varietal name. For example, her 100 percent chardonnay is called Great White; Vino Bianco is made from Italian verdicchio grapes; Farmhouse Red is fashioned from merlot; Belladonna is created with Sangiovese grapes, the same variety used in classic Italian Chianti; Grab A Cab is (you guessed it) 100 percent cabernet sauvignon, while Howl at

the Moon is a blend (Meritage) of cabernet syrah and zinfandel.

The labels are an explosion of pretty colors. Each is designed by Donna and many are pictures of places she has visited. For example Vino Bianco (Italian for white wine) features a picture of the coliseum in Rome.

I have tasted, with the exception of several fruit-added sweet wines, all of the Copp products, and find them to be each and every one "Very Good," that is, wine with special qualities.

It is truly a joy to meet a young person with the enterprise, the vital interest, and the willingness to be an entrepreneur.

For exact directions and hours of operation, call 564-WINE (9463). The Web site is at [www.coppwinery.com](http://www.coppwinery.com).

*Last week's query: It's true that less than 2 percent of Swiss wine leaves the country.*

*This week we ask: Does red wine have a higher lever of tannin than white?*

*Oak Ridge resident Ron Drinkhouse was a buyer and seller of wines in his native Connecticut. He welcomes inquiries, and can be reached via e-mail at [ronoct9@earthlink.net](mailto:ronoct9@earthlink.net) or via telephone at (352) 489-8952.*