

## FEATURE

# Tier winery pours itself into community causes

By Mike Latona  
Staff writer

"Go, eat your bread with joy and drink your wine with a merry heart, because it is now that God favors your works," says Ecclesiastes 9:7.

Today the Finger Lakes supplies much of that wine for merry hearts. The region's vineyards are said to rival those of California and Europe.

To Domenic Carisetti and Patrice Demay, though, winemaking is more than a business — in fact, only recently have they begun selling wine to the public. It has also been a vehicle for making numerous contributions to church and community.

In December, their business, Chateau Renaissance Wine Cellars, donated a portion of its sales to Vincent House, a home for the dying, located at the former St. Joseph's Parish convent in Wayland.

In January, the winery kicked off a scholarship fund for a winemaking curriculum at Corning Community College that was developed by Carisetti and Demay. Carisetti said his business is donating \$10,000 to get the fund started.

Later in January, Chateau Renaissance hosted a fundraiser for the cap-



ital improvement campaign at St. Mary's Church in Bath, where Carisetti and Demay are both parishioners. And in February, the winery assisted in a fundraising activity to assist the St. Mary's youth group. The winery served a dessert from a cookbook the youth group produced, and offered the cookbook for sale. Proceeds went to the youth group.

"We are for profit. But because of the way we operate, we're mistaken for a nonprofit business," Carisetti remarked.

When Carisetti and Demay founded their business in May 1999 it was known as Anawim Wine Cellars. From the start they have employed adults on public assistance as well as people with disabilities, in conjunction with diocesan Catholic Charities and Arc of Steuben County.

Carisetti and Demay are both longtime winemakers in the Finger Lakes area. They started their business by producing altar wine, receiving endorsement from diocesan officials due to the public-service aspect of their operation. According to Carisetti, Anawim is used by approximately 75 Catholic parishes in the Rochester and Buffalo dioceses, as well as some Protestant churches. Carisetti terms Anawim "wine with a conscience — as close as possible to how it was

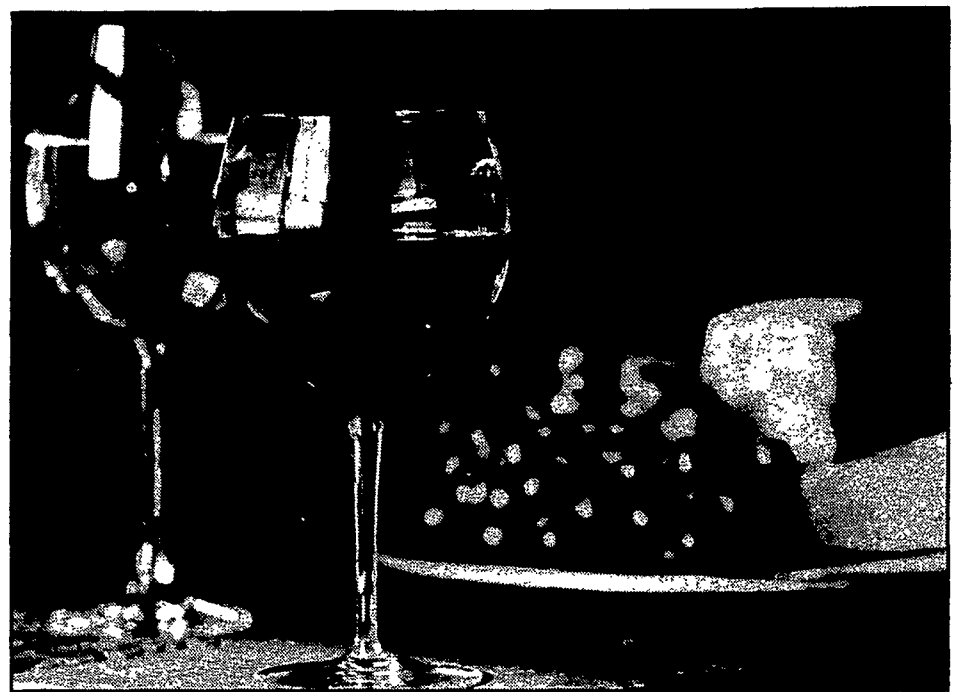


Photo illustration by Andrea Dixon/Staff photographer Housewares courtesy of Pottery Barn

made in the time of Christ."

Intent on becoming more profitable so they could increase their charitable efforts, Carisetti and Demay expanded late last year by moving to a new, 3,200-square-foot building between Bath and Hammondsport, about a mile from their original 900-square-foot facility. With the new name of Chateau Renaissance Wine Cellars, this marks the first time Carisetti and Demay have sold wine to the public. They have continued producing Anawim altar wine as well.

"Before, we would tell people that if you want our wine, you're going to have to go to church," Carisetti quipped.

Bishop Matthew H. Clark traveled to Chateau Renaissance in October to preside over its dedication, and the winery held its grand opening Dec. 2. Chateau Renaissance is open to the public seven days per week, offering 17 varieties of wine and champagne. The co-owners hope to add more people with special needs as the business grows, Demay said.

"We want to have people who need

help but also want to work," he remarked.

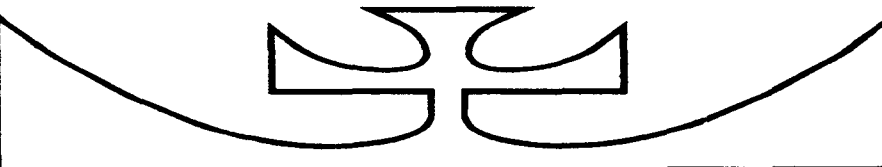
Carisetti said that Chateau Renaissance plans at least two fundraising activities per month. Demay said their focus is on small organizations whose needs aren't widely publicized. The co-owners emphasized that they hope their example will encourage more businesses to step up their charitable efforts.

"They've taken the approach right from the inception they want to give back to the community, and in my mind they've gone beyond that," said Don Evia, manager of sales and marketing for Arc of Steuben County.

"We're doing this because it feels like the right thing to do in our hearts," Demay said. "It feels good."

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**EDITORS' NOTE:** Chateau Renaissance Wine Cellars is open from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday through Saturday and noon to 6 p.m. on Sunday. Hours will expand during the summer. The winery is on Fish Hatchery Road, just off Route 54, between Bath and Hammondsport.



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