

Press Release

Stone Cliff Winery and Star Brewery Welcome New Owners in Dubuque

The iconic Stone Cliff Winery, nestled in the historic Dubuque Star Brewery, is ushering in a new era with fresh ownership, ensuring its beloved craft wines and charming ambiance continue to delight locals and visitors alike.

Bob and Nan Smith founded the Stone Cliff Winery in the late 1990s on their farm near Durango before relocating to the Dubuque Star Brewery in 2007. After 17 successful years at the Port of Dubuque, the Smiths decided to retire from the winery business in 2024. Recognizing the importance of maintaining this cherished local venue, Bob approached Dave Fritz and Chad Walsh, owners of the Dubuque Star Brewery building, about acquiring the business. Their shared commitment to preserving the winery's legacy led to a seamless transition.

“The Port of Dubuque is our community's front door to the world,” said Rick Dickinson, President & CEO of the Greater Dubuque Development Corporation. “We are fortunate to have people like Dave Fritz and Chad Walsh continuing their solid track record of investment in Dubuque. The Star Brewery is an iconic landmark, and their confidence in our community's future is inspiring.”

New Owners, Rich Histories

Chad Walsh, previously the co-owner of EPIC Construction, led the historical reconstruction of the Star Brewery building and remains dedicated to preserving Dubuque's historic charm. Walsh continues working in real estate development and teaches in the Construction Management Department at UW-Platteville and previously restored the Potosi Brewery building.

Dave Fritz, CEO of TRICOR Insurance, brings extensive experience in brewery operations as the volunteer president of the Potosi Foundation. He has played a pivotal role in the success of the ABA National Brewery Museum and Potosi Brewing Company. Fritz also owns the Potosi Beverage Company, which specializes in contract manufacturing, packaging, and fulfillment.

Honoring a Legacy

“The sale of Stone Cliff Winery gives us an opportunity to reflect on treasured moments with loyal customers, newly married couples, and visitors discovering the charm of Dubuque,” said Jodi Bryson, General Manager and Event Coordinator at Stone Cliff. “The foundation that Bob and Nan built will support this next chapter. We're excited to work with Dave and Chad to continue making Stone Cliff a place of friendship, adventure, and fun. Stop in to celebrate a new era with us!”

What Stone Cliff Winery Offers

The winery remains a vibrant hub for locals and tourists, offering:

- **Unique Taproom:** Located in the original Dubuque Star Brewery Bar, featuring the beloved Stone Cliff wine collection crafted by lead winemaker Sarah Balk.
- **Dining Options:** Daily weekday lunches prepared by Chef Natalie Meyer and appetizers available at all hours.
- **Live Entertainment:** Free musical performances every Friday, Saturday, and Sunday in the tasting room or patio.
- **Event Space:** A charming event center perfect for weddings, bridal showers, corporate functions, and more.

To book your next event, contact Jodi Bryson at 563-583-6100 Ext 203 or jodi@stonecliffwinery.com.

Community Partnerships and Events

Tourism plays a vital role in the Tri-State area, and Stone Cliff Winery is proud to collaborate with the Potosi Brewing Company and the ABA National Brewery Museum. Additionally, the winery will co-host the Dubuque on Ice Brew Fest on February 22 at the Five Flags Center. Proceeds will support the ABA National Brewery Museum, Research For The Kids, and Albrecht Acres.

The new owners invite the public to experience the great selection of beverages and food while enjoying the historical ambiance of the 1898 Star Brewery building. For updates on events, new releases, and planning your visit, please visit www.stonecliffwinery.com or follow Stone Cliff Winery on Facebook and Instagram.
