



Seven Stones Winery Announces Sudden Passing of Owner/Winemaker George Hanson

Cawston, BC February 16, 2021 - The popular winery owner and winemaker of Seven Stones Winery died from a sudden heart attack in his home on the evening of Sunday, February 7th at the age of 63.

George Hanson was a well-loved member of the Similkameen community, having made an impact in the BC wine industry with his high quality red wines and vibrant personality. Making wine was his greatest passion and it showed in the quality of his product. He took great pride in his wines and making blends is where his creativity shined.

A Love of the Wine Industry

George first fell in love with the wine culture while visiting family in Australia. The family's neighbor had a vineyard and winery. After seeing a winemaker and winery owner's lifestyle first-hand, George realized it was one he'd love to have after he retired from the telephone industry in Yukon. This realization sparked a dream that motivated him to become dedicated to learning all he could about winemaking. As a quick and enthusiastic study, it didn't take long for George to go from amateur to professional vintner. Ten years later in 1999, George had the opportunity to live his dream when the telecommunications company offered him an attractive retirement package. George enthusiastically accepted and headed south.

After some research, George quickly realized that the terroir of the South Similkameen Valley was exceptional for growing grapes. It was only a few weeks after moving to Osoyoos that George found the land that would be the home of Seven Stones Estate Winery. As a wise businessman, adept at spotting an opportunity, George bought the property the moment he saw it. The realtor was literally pounding the "for sale" sign into the ground as George was passing by the property. So he pulled over and instantly made an offer on the property.

The vineyard, formerly a hay field, was planted in 2000 and the first vintage of wine was produced in 2003. It produces seven varieties of grapes.

George was often heard saying, *"I feel very fortunate to be living my dream where work seems somewhat like play."*

The Visionary Who Built Caves for His Wines

George knew that storing wine in the arid climate of the South Okanagan would be a challenge. So he wisely adapted what he learned about winemaking while on his travels to France, and built underground caves for his wines. Tucked away under seven feet of earth, the caves offer perfect conditions for the aging of wine; a

consistently cooler temperature of 10.5 degrees, a man-made fountain to maintain humidity, and classical music piped in 24/7. George maintained that the vibrational frequency of the aging of wine was similar to that of Baroque Chamber music. So playing the music to the wines facilitated their ideal aging and contributed to a higher quality product.

His Second Passion - Storytelling

George was an interesting character who loved to interact with the winery's patrons during their visits. He particularly loved hosting epic winemaker's dinners in the caves throughout the summer. These popular events would include great food, wine and George's stories of his experiences growing and making wine. He would also treat all the guests to a tour of the wine cellar where he'd share the details of how the caves were built.

"I love sharing the magic of this place and removing some of the mystery behind winemaking," said owner George Hanson.

A Well-loved Man Remembered

The outpouring of messages on social media since the public announcement of George's passing is proof of how well-loved and admired he was. The winery's Hundreds of shocked and grieving Seven Stones wine enthusiasts and friends left messages of condolences to his staff and family. Some even mentioned stories about their experiences with George and how he left a lasting impression on them.

He is survived by his life partner Winona, his son Christopher, his stepsons Colin and Rowan and his brother Terry and sister Ellie.

Due to COVID-19, there are no immediate plans for a public celebration of life.

The tasting room at Seven Stones is temporarily closed with plans of re-opening this spring. Until then, wines can still be ordered through the website.

www.sevenstones.ca

About Seven Stones Winery

Seven Stones Winery is an estate boutique winery located in the pristine Similkameen Valley. The wines are made in a French style that are very elegant and show the best of grape variety. The winery produces about 4200 cases from hand-picked grapes that are grown on site. The wines are barrel aged in underground caves to ensure that they receive consistent atmospheric conditions.

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Seven Stones Estate Winery

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