

Válka winery description and challenges

We are a small family winery currently managing approximately 11 hectares of vineyards, along with fields of apricots, cherries, and a wide surrounding area of our vineyards. The winery was founded by my parents shortly after the revolution around 1991, and they ran it for 30 years. My dad, as the main founder, has a passion for vineyards and nature, which is currently his main focus, and he takes care of the vineyards, the surrounding areas, and strives to do everything naturally and ecologically. This is because he was disgusted by the way the former collective farm operated under the previous regime and decided not to follow their methods.

Since the 1990s, my mom has been helping my dad. She was responsible for the so-called wine making process, which included wine „training“, tasting, production, and so on, while also handling administrative tasks, bureaucracy, and subsidies. Now, I am largely in charge of the winery with my almost-wife, Natalka. My job involves handling logistics, marketing, sales, customer care, cooking, wine making, planning, wooden furniture, house construction, and everything else that is necessary, with the help of my parents, Natalka, and three full-time employees.

My parents have been running the winery for the last 30 years in a way that I believe is unsustainable in the long term, which is why we decided to steer our direction slightly differently considering our size and the products we offer. However, we maintain an uncompromising policy on the quality of raw materials, ingredients, and so on, in which my parents, although they followed this direction, were not as strict as I am. In essence, if you want to make organic, natural wine, you must believe in it wholeheartedly and it needs to be deep within you, no matter what you are doing in your free time.

Of course, the biggest current problem is that my parents ran the winery in one way, and I want to run it somewhat differently, which also involves a slightly different target group, pricing policy, and corporate communication. This will take some time, so I am reconciled with the fact that it will take a while to attract a slightly different clientele, different customers, and a different product portfolio than we had for the past 30 years. This cannot be achieved overnight.

That is why we try to educate people as much as possible, using our Reels and other wine education materials because only through education can customers appreciate and understand what we do, why we do it, and also appreciate it financially for all the work involved.

Unfortunately, if a customer buys the cheapest wine at Penny, which I recently tasted and found to be of acceptable taste, I have nothing to offer that customer. They will never buy my wine because I can never reach that price, and their palate is completely dull.

Our vision for the winery over the next 30 years is to stabilize production, meaning we no longer want to disrupt the quantity. We aim to stabilize and optimize the entire production process, including the construction of a new hall, new production spaces with a view to maximizing capacity, and focusing more on experiences such as weddings, team-building events, and gradually developing a guesthouse or experiential accommodation. I want to have control over the entire production and experiential process for the customer because only then can I provide a 100% satisfactory experience.

Our goal is also to expand a bit outside our region because the market in South Moravia is somewhat saturated. Although statistics show that only one-third of the wine produced in Moravia is consumed in the Czech Republic, suggesting that we need to produce three times as much wine to cover our consumption, the reality is different. When you visit 10 different bars in Czech Republic, 9 out of 10 will tell you that they don't need a wine portfolio of Moravian wines. Only answer would be B2C or export.

A significant problem is that not everyone in the company shares the same dedication and enthusiasm for our business, which I view as a philosophy or even a religion in terms of how I want it to work. It's all within me, and things automatically happen because that's how I have it set within myself.

Because of this, I need to find a solution to ensure that all employees and everyone in the company share the same philosophy to their core, just like I do.

How should we approach the current problem of people starting to save money, and we can see it in many products that people are not spending as much on wine? On the other hand, I don't have a single free weekend because people want to go to tastings, parties, corporate events, and so on. The question is, are we perhaps too expensive for some groups? I can't

lower prices like everyone else is doing now, or even want to, because I won't reach a price that would be interesting for someone who is price-sensitive. Should I endure the pressure on the price at any cost and maintain it as long as my financial situation allows, or should I simply give in and lower the price and be done with it? The pressure on the price is immense, and I am still lowering my demands today, relying on people who see and appreciate it to simply endure and pay.

Can you try to evaluate our online marketing communication in some way to see if it actually seems good to you or if it seems too instructive or unpleasant? I would like to get feedback from people who are somewhat outside the industry. Our current target audience consists of customers who essentially know nothing about wine, and we are saddened that they don't know anything about it. We want to help them get into it a bit, and we will be their gateway because I won't easily persuade a customer who already knows about wine about anything, essentially.

If you have any questions feel free to ask them via my email vojta@vinarstvivalka.cz