

# Winery: Weisman plans to get prayer group involved in wine making process

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start the process and six weeks later you come back and, as Sharon puts it, 'rack the wine.' Plus, she has all of these wonderful granolas and jams. This is a secret that needs to get out."

Weisman attends a Bible study group with Nancy Goble, a previous customer also at the dinner.

"About six of us — we called ourselves the 'Good Time Gals' — we came here and sampled all kinds of wines," Goble said. "Then we had to decide which one we wanted to make. We chose a blackberry merlot. It was wonderful and so inexpensive. When you spread the cost between six people and you each get six bottles of wine, you can't buy it at CVS for that."

But she says it is more than the wine.

"The camaraderie, the fellowship, the fun in making it and then you get the wine with your own picture on the label, that's special," she said.

Weisman plans to get their prayer group involved.

"I plan to invite them over to see the beauty of the setting, as well as to experience the joy of making their own wine and having their own label," he said.

ArborShire began business officially in December 2009, but practically in June 2010.

"The original plan for phase three of our lives was to do a winery," Downhour said. "I have always been good at baking, so we decided that I would start the baked goods on the property we have owned pretty much all of our married lives, and when he retired in a couple of years he would do the winery."

They are still waiting for Steve to retire so the kits are an alternative to a full-out winery.



GEORGE DICKEN / Chronicle-Tribune

**SECURING THE HOSE** — The second stage of the wine kit requires transferring the partially fermented wine from the original bucket to a glass carboy. LaRea Slater secures the hose during the transfer of wine being made by her group, Our Small Towns Thinking Regionally. Make this image yours. Go to [www.chronicle-tribune.com](http://www.chronicle-tribune.com).

"We started with the artisan foods," Downhour said. "We call it a bakery, but it really isn't. I wanted to sell my granola. I wanted to start with a farmers' market because it would be great research. I went to a Minnetrista market to see it, and when I was ready I asked them about becoming a vendor. It depended on what I made. Fortunately they didn't have anyone vending granola. So they invited me."

She soon found that granola wasn't enough.

"I now do jams, trail mixes, breads and English muffins," she said. "I have developed relationships. Now some of my customers at the market come out here."

Downhour's business just keeps moving forward.

"I applied to become an Indiana Artisan last November," she said. "I submitted my gooseberry, strawberry and hot pepper jams and my crunch time granola toffee, which is my own recipe. I figured I would not be juried in at that time, but I thought they would tell me what I needed to do. But I was juried in with all four of my

products. Only 20 percent of the people who apply get in."

Indiana cites 230 artisans statewide, including art, food and wine. Only 48 food artisans are cited in the state.

"And I am one of them," Downhour said. "They promote one of a kind art and food creations. Their mission is to promote and assist small entrepreneurs in Indiana especially in the rural areas. I believe I am the first one in Blackford County. It is a great honor."

She also shared her advice for other entrepreneurs.

"Go for it. If you have a dream and a passion, go for it. And have a business plan. I was in a position that I could make one and it is amazing how close I have been able to stick to it. It has kept me focused. Our mission is getting people back to the table; leisurely dining and conversation with family and friends. Good food, good wine, good company — one of the delights of life."