

# Lamorinda OUR HOMES

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## The Art of Wine and Beer Making ... In the Garage

By Diane Claytor



*No room for a car in Bill Rose's Lafayette garage, filled with winemaking supplies.  
Photo Diane Claytor*

For most of us, the garage is where we store our car, old furniture and last year's holiday decorations. But a growing number of Lamorindans have found a much more pleasurable use for their garages: producing adult libations. There's even a word for this fun activity: "garagista."

Vehicles belonging to longtime Lafayette resident Bill Rose haven't seen the inside of his garage for many years. That space is taken up by his wine-making equipment. Several miles away, Lafayette residents Troy Feddersen and Milt Bruzzone use their garages to house everything they need for brewing beer. And in both cases, friends and neighbors reap the benefits.

Rose became interested in wine while living in France following his college graduation. Once he moved to Lafayette, he learned that his dentist was a home winemaker and looking for a helper. Rose quickly volunteered to become a "cellar rat" and learned about making wine. "It was pretty rudimentary. We used a six foot diameter redwood hot tub," Rose said. "When it leaked, we used dental wax to stop the leaks. We actually made some pretty decent wine." After several years, Rose and his wife, Beverly, decided they wanted to start making wine on their own. But they also realized they had much more to learn. They took classes in chemistry and winemaking techniques; they learned about grapes, where to get them and how to grow them. And then the fun began.

Rose, a retired sales executive, makes both white and red wines and describes himself as a "laissez-faire" winemaker. "I try not to get in the way of the normal process." He's made some excellent wines and admits to having some that weren't very good. "When wine isn't good, it's part of the mystery of winemaking. As someone once advised me, calm down and let the wine do its thing. Have a glass and relax," Rose stated.

He makes 75 to 100 cases of wine a year and does this for his own personal pleasure. "It's a great hobby," Rose proclaimed. "When I was younger, I had a Walter Mitty-type dream of being the next Robert Mondavi. I even looked to see if I could find five acres in Sonoma for a small vineyard. And then I studied the economics of it and realized that it just didn't make sense for me. So I decided not to ruin my hobby by putting dollar signs in front of it.

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