

Tagaris Winery
844 Tulip Lane
Richland, WA 99352
509.628.0020
Fax 509.628.0375
www.tagariswines.com

Tagaris Family History

A statue of Emanuel Tagaris stands in a tiny village in Greece just a short drive up a winding canyon road from the village of Tholo where the Tagaris family descendants still live. Nearly a thousand years and 26 generations ago, Emanuel Tagaris was the Commander in Chief of the Greek Army during the Byzantine Era. Emanuel's reputation was felt far and wide, moving the King of Greece to arrange for the Commander to marry his niece, Athena, so that he the Commander would be a member of the Royal Family.

Emanuel encouraged his new family to plant its first vineyards and started the family tradition of winemaking in the 1300's. The family continued to reside in Tholo for the next 700 years through the Ottoman Era when the Turks overthrew the Greeks. During the battles, the family sent its women and children into hiding in the Poloponese, returning to their homeland near Tholo, Greece, when it was safe to resume the tending of the vineyards and the making of wine.

Michael Taggares' grandfather, Pete, left Greece to find his fortune in the Americas when he was 18 years old. At Ellis Island, as with many immigrant families, the family name "Tagaris" was misspelled as "Taggares;" and in honor of his ancestry, Michael Taggares named his winery to represent the historic spelling of the family name.

Grampa Pete made his living in America as a cook on the railroads and crossed the United States by rail. While passing through the area of Prosser, WA, Pete was moved so strongly by the resemblance of the land to his homeland in Greece that he left the railroad and established a home in Prosser. He married and raised a family of two sons, Pete, Jr., and Stanley, and two daughters, Virginia and Florence, on the Prosser homestead where Virginia and Florence reside today, growing apples, grapes and other crops.

At the time of his passing, Grampa Pete owned the local car dealership, the hardware store, a grocery store, a bank, a potato processing plant and majority interest in Sunny Jim Jams; and he farmed over a thousand acres, including grapes. He made his own wines and stored them in the family root cellar in wooden casks which now reside in the new Tagaris Winery.

Grampa Pete's oldest son, Pete, Jr., established himself as the largest farming operation in the State of Washington, based in Othello, and one of the largest producers of French fries in the United States. Pete's family, sons Pete III and Michael, and daughter Kathy, grew up in Othello and each moved in separate directions as they became adults. Pete III held the rushing record at the University of Washington three years running, and Kathy established K.T. Kitchens producing pizza for Costco.

Michael presently farms 1,400 acres, 1.5 million Fuji apple trees and 700 acres of wine grapes in the newly recognized Wahluke AVA with 18 varieties, including Petit Verdot, Malbec, Counoise, Mouvedre, Granache and Tempranillo, forecasting exciting new wines for Tagaris Winery.