

## Wine expertise helps duo take distributorship statewide

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The two point to Purple Feet's focus on serving smaller businesses, as well as its wine portfolio, as successful building blocks. Early on, the two decided to grow their business by focusing on gourmet grocery stores, fine wine stores and independent restaurants vs. chain-driven businesses. Bausch says they choose brands based on their own taste buds. Weyland developed a taste for wine in college and Bausch credits his grandmother for introducing him to the beverage.

"If it gets us excited, we tend to say 'yes,'" Bausch said.

Their preferences have steered them to "off-the-beaten-path" type wines, from places like South Africa and Australia. Those choices have attracted loyal customers such as Tom Vaughan, owner of Milwaukee's Downer Wine and Spirits, who has used Purple Feet since 1997.

"Chris and Mark have phenomenal palates," Vaughan said. "(Wine) portfolios like Chris and Mark's make us look better."

**Wine array** Purple Feet offers premium items that retail for \$1,000 as well as brands that retail for less than \$15 per bottle. It represents 81 suppliers for a total of 3,000 wines.

"We want to appeal to people who love wine but don't worship it," Bausch said.

A resurgence in wine consumption also has fueled growth. The market started rapidly growing, Bausch said, after a 1991 report on the television series, "60 Minutes," in which journalist Morley Safer talked about the "French Paradox." Safer described how despite their diets, the French had low instances of heart disease because of their wine consumption.

The new building in Pewaukee Woods North industrial park is built for that growth, which both expect to continue. Purple Feet will occupy 25,000 square feet of the 48,200-square-foot, multitenant building, which Brookfield's Briohn Building Corp. is constructing. The building offers more inventory space as well as a larger meeting room for sales reps. Purple Feet Holding Co., which Weyland and Bausch set up, will own a 10 percent interest in the \$2.7 million project. Briohn is the majority owner.

Beyond settling into their new building, Weyland said over the next five years he hopes to grow Purple Feet to \$9 million in revenue and add salespeople throughout growing areas, such as Milwaukee and Wausau. The two don't anticipate growing beyond Wisconsin, however, as it would require additional licensing. They also believe it would compromise their service.

"This is more than enough," Weyland said. "If you spread yourself that thin, things can start failing."