

SUBSCRIBE TO UBJ

GET OUR WEEKLY EMAIL

Enter email address



UPSTATE BUSINESS JOURNAL | UBJ

FRONT PAGE

NEWS

SECTIONS

COMMUNITY

Search UBJ

10 week training for growth-oriented startups & existing entrepreneurs



www.emergeanderson.com



335-acre multimillion-dollar proposed development on Lake Keowee will feature vineyard and winery

TODAY

by Sherry Jackson

[Renderings provided by Chad Patterson, Patterson Visual]

Equus Club & Winery aims for 'social experience'



6

Like

Tweet

Share



"30 minutes on the Blood Mobile can truly change peoples' lives."

Click to hear my story.



Along the shores of Lake Keowee in Salem, S.C., a new idea is forming. Picture a 335-acre tract of land with a 40-acre vineyard and winery, a private, member-owned country club centered around wine, but also with culinary and equestrian elements. That's the vision Russ Gardiner is hoping to create.



Gardiner, former owner of one of the country's largest wine ad agencies in Sonoma County, Calif., and after that a college basketball coach and athletic administrator, hasn't slowed down since he "retired." For the past two years, he's been working on the Equus Club & Winery – putting together plans and investing his own money into a project he calls "a social experience centered around extraordinary wine and winemaking, delicious food and cooking and exquisite outdoor activities."

Club amenities

Plans, which were approved by Oconee County in November, call for a 15,000-square-foot clubhouse with a dining room, chef's kitchen, pool tables, card game tables, TVs and a library. An art gallery will feature Southern artists, and Gardiner plans to establish an artist-in-residence program as well. A summer concert series from May through September will include live jazz and other genres. Themed parties are also planned throughout the year.

EQUUS CLUB & WINERY PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT BUDGET	
• Land - 335 acres on Lake Keowee, Salem, S.C. (\$3,558/acre)	\$1,192,000
• Building construction	\$6,085,000
• Infrastructure - roads, parking lots, wells, etc.	\$1,055,000
• Winery equipment & first-year grape/bulk wine purchases	\$1,364,899
• Maintenance equipment & vehicles	\$340,000
• Vineyard planting & landscaping	\$1,838,576
• Furniture & fixtures	\$772,000
• Professional fees (legal, architectural, civil engineering, accounting, traffic engineering, developer's fee & building permits)	\$1,061,000
• Employee/contract labor, salaries & benefits	\$420,000
• Budget overrun	\$111,500

A fitness facility, polo field, bocce ball court, resort-style swimming pool, fire pits and outdoor sculpture garden are also planned. An equestrian center will include a 20,000-square-foot covered riding arena, along with access to more than 200 miles of riding trails through Jocassee Gorge State Park.

Gardiner intends to build 20 lake cottages to allow members to stay overnight at the club. Five boats, kayaks and canoes will be

The Latest from Twitter
Tweets from a list by Upstate Biz Journal

SC Business Review @SCBizReview 2.1m
N.C. Craft Brewers Conference shows state's beer industry growing deep and wide
buff.ly/1HKBR9Y
Show Summary

BREWERY 85 @Brewery85 44m
We are getting in the Christmas spirit. Tap room is open from 2 PM till 8 PM. Lots of cool stuff on tap!
pic.twitter.com/lc5ROPEx7t

allowance & misc. expenses.....	\$141,323
• 500 members X \$28,500 initiation fee.....	\$14,250,000

available for member use.
The on-site winery is
planned to have a wine
barrel room, wine tasting, a

culinary school and classroom areas.

The club is expected to be open on the weekends and for special events. During the week, the club and its facilities could be rented out for corporate events and retreats, Gardiner says. Extra revenue could then be donated to local charities, he said.

If all goes as planned, Gardiner expects construction to take about a year and hopes to open by New Year's Eve 2016.



Food and wine

Now for the wine. Initially, more than \$1 million worth of the best grapes from the Napa, Sonoma, Mendocino, Lane and Monterey wine regions will be sourced, Gardiner says. About 5-10 acres will be used initially for the vineyard on a south-facing hill, expandable to 40 acres. Once the soil is prepped for about a year, Gardiner expects the first harvest to take place in 2018 or 2019.

George Bursick, a world-acclaimed winemaker, has already signed on as Equus' director of winemaking. Dr. Tom Cottrell, founder of Cuvaison Winery and Cornell University's first associate professor of enology, will serve as a consulting winemaker.



*Wine bottle designs by Steven Butler,
Butler Design Group*

“We are sourcing the best grapes from the finest vineyards in California, plus we have designed a state-of-the-art winery to insure the highest quality of wine on a consistent basis,” Bursick said.

Many Upstate residents don’t know that Oconee County was one of the largest grape- and wine-producing regions in the U.S. in the 1880s and 1890s, Gardiner said. “We have determined that the soil types and climate conditions in Oconee County are ideal for producing 13 different varietals of wine,” he said.

Members will receive two cases of wine each month, four winemaker dinners per year and ongoing winemaking classes.

“Members will be getting fantastic wines for a fraction of the cost,” Gardiner said. Each weekend will have a blending class and insights into wine production. “A lot of people never see how wine is made,” he said.



In its first year of operation, Gardiner says the vineyard will be the largest in South Carolina, producing 180,000 bottles of wine. Equus Club & Winery will be working in conjunction with Dr. Seth Cohen, director of the viticulture program at Appalachian State University in North Carolina, not only to ensure they are operating correctly, but also to allow students to use the vineyards and winery as a classroom.

You can’t have wine without food, right? Equus also plans to open a culinary center with a team of chefs who will conduct weekly cooking classes and create special menus throughout the year in addition to the

winemaker dinners. An on-site organic garden will provide fresh ingredients.

The all-inclusive membership will include unlimited food and wine for members while at the club.



Provided by Bill Dennis, Civil Design Team

The cost of membership

Gardiner is now seeking 500 equity members to buy in to the fully financed member club, organized as a 501(c)(7) tax-exempt social club. Members will pay an initiation fee of \$28,500, raising \$14.25 million, which will pay for the construction and initial costs. An additional 150 memberships will be established after the initial 500 to raise additional capital. Membership will be capped at 650 members. Ongoing membership fees of \$495 a month (beginning December 2016) will provide members (and their guests) an all-inclusive pass to all club amenities.

Long-range plans call for an additional 100-acre public winery, called Lake Keowee Winery.

“Its primary function will be to produce premium wine for tourism wine tastings,” Gardiner said.

Twenty additional lake cottages are slated to be built to allow tourists overnight stays, and a pavilion on the lake will serve as a wedding venue. The public winery will also have a culinary cooking school and special winemaking dinners.

ENGAGE

DEC 14 Information session:
The Equus Club & Winery at Lake Keowee

When: Monday, Dec. 14 from 6:30–8 p.m.

- 6:30–7 p.m.
Wine tasting & hors d'oeuvres
- 7–7:30 p.m.
Equus Club & Winery presentation
- 7:30–8 p.m.
Q&A and meet & greet with winemaker
George Bursick and Russ Gardiner

Where: Poinsett Club,
807 E. Washington St., Greenville

Cost: no charge

RSVP: Russ Gardiner, 864-248-0284.

Deadline for reservations: Sunday, Dec. 13

Call for information for other events
in Asheville and Seneca.

MEET OUR TEAM

 WEB BOYCE Vice President	 AL CANNON Managing Director	 MAURA COPSEY Vice President	 GARY DAVIS Managing Director
 RUSS MILLER Vice President	 BOB NACHMAN Managing Director	 BEN NORWOOD Managing Director	 JOHN PARROTT Managing Director

NACHMAN NORWOOD & PARROTT
WEALTH MANAGEMENT CONSULTANCY
Investment products and services are offered through Wells Fargo
Advisors Financial Network, LLC (WFAN), Member SIPC. Nachman
Norwood & Parrott is a separate entity from WFAN.

TAGS: Lake Keowee, SC, Salem, country club, culinary, equestrian, hospitality, vineyard, winery

« Travelers Rest to get supplements manufacturer with \$2.8M deal | Federal highway bill provides billions for South Carolina roads »

0 Comments Upstate Business Journal

Login

Recommend Share

Sort by Best



Start the discussion...

Be the first to comment

ALSO ON UPSTATE BUSINESS JOURNAL

WHAT'S THIS?

Construction workers, businesspeople and presidents – they've all had a ...

1 comment • 9 days ago



vicupstate – Tommy's Ham House is an institution and so it Tommy Stevenson. His work ethic is amazing.

Carson talks health care at Upstate Chamber Coalition summit

1 comment • 3 months ago



Vanessa – I agree with Mr. Carson and I'm glad he recognizes the unintended consequences of the ACA...especially ...

BREAKING: Greenville again misses out on federal TIGER grant

1 comment • a month ago



Susan Donkers – The AutoCASE tool and the Business Case Evaluator at www.impactinfrastructure.com could ...

Another wake-up call for South Carolina

2 comments • a month ago



jennylately – Until we can produce the candidates for these higher level positions via more rigorous K-12 standards, we ...

Subscribe

Add Disqus to your site

Privacy



GREENVILLEJOURNAL

TOWN MAGAZINE

Contact Us | UBJ Staff | Past Issues | Advertise | Submit | Privacy Policy

©2015 Community Journals Publishing Group. All Rights Reserved | PO Box 2266 Greenville, SC 29602 | (864) 679-1200