

April 18, 2023

Napa County Planning Commissioners Brunzell, Dameron, Mazzotti, Phillips & Whitmer
1195 Third Street, Suite 210
Napa, CA 94559

Dear Commissioners,

I am writing on behalf of several neighbors of the Piazza del Dotto Winery to comment on its major modification request (#P18-00143). The neighbors have several areas of concern regarding the project, foremost the exceptionally large increases in annual visitation and marketing events, but also the impacts of outdoor hospitality spaces, traffic and parking issues, and groundwater availability.

Visitation and Marketing Increases. The applicant is asking to roughly double its current annual wine production, from 48,000 gallons per year (gpy) to 100,000 gpy. We understand one way the county evaluates the appropriate number of visitors and events is by comparing those numbers with approved wineries of a similar production size. However, as acknowledged in the Board Agenda Letter (pgs 3, 8, 9), the requested annual maximum visitation and the number of marketing events are significantly higher than other wineries with the same production capacity. This is clearly demonstrated by the Winery Comparison Tables produced by staff and contained in the Agenda Packet.

The current county application asks for information on the amount of wine produced at the winery over the last three reporting years. This information is critical to evaluating both the need for the proposed changes and the environmental baseline.

This information typically requested from current applicants will shed light on whether this is a production increase with visitation as an accessory use, or a visitor's center as the predominant use of the parcel, with wine production the accessory use. Unfortunately, we don't know how much wine Piazza del Dotto has actually produced over the last three years because the applicant submitted an older application packet, which did not require this historical production data. The current application forms *do* require this information. We therefore request a current form be completed so that a transparent and accurate comparison of proposed visitor numbers to actual production can be made.

The applicant has requested an additional 23 marketing events - 19 with up to 120 guests, and 4 with up to 400 guests. This more than quadruples the number of annual marketing events visitors, from 1,144 to 5,024, **a 340% increase.** Daily visitation would more than double annually, from 20,020 to 46,280, **a 131% increase.** Taken together, the total number of annual visitors would rise from 21,166 to 51,306, a 142 % increase, which, according to the Agenda Board Letter, is "higher than the average for both by-appointment and pre-WDO wineries." The number of proposed visitors is out of proportion with what is typically acceptable. What is the justification for this? We are concerned that if approved, the sheer number of visitors will create a

major new event center where wine production is accessory to marketing events - not vice versa - in the heart of the Agricultural Preserve.

Grape Source. A related question is where the grapes necessary to produce 52,000 gallons of additional wine will come from. A conservative estimate is that approximately 345 tons of grapes are needed to produce 52K gallons of wine. Our underlying concern here is that the request for expansion in production is being used to justify the increase in marketing and visitation numbers. Will the applicant actually be able to produce the fully permitted amount of wine on which the requested visitor numbers are based? This question arises from an email sent by the applicant's company on February 27 looking for bulk juice or grapes, a copy of which is attached. It begs the question: what if the applicant can produce only a percentage of its permitted wine - will visitor numbers decrease by an equal percentage?

Outdoor Hospitality Areas. The significant new outdoor tasting and entertainment areas being proposed - the rooftop of the new building, the new grotto, and cabanas on the upper patio and courtyard on the existing hospitality building - do not count against the 40% accessory/production (a/p) area ratio. (The Board of Supervisors was supposed to address this loophole several years ago but never did.) If these hospitality spaces *were* included, the a/p ratio would be unacceptably high. So, while it's not currently required to count the outdoor space, it speaks to the intensity of development of the parcel - and that marketing and hospitality are taking precedence over production of wine.

Lighting. Conditions of Approval (COA) No. 6.3 b. requires that "All exterior lighting, including landscape lighting, shall be shielded and directed downward, shall be located as low to the ground as possible, shall be the minimum necessary for security, safety, or operations; on timers; and shall incorporate the use of motion detection systems to the greatest extent possible." Currently, the winery building is lit near the roofline with a couple of rows of lights, all night long. Will the new lighting plan require the lights on this and other buildings to be turned off at night? And is the rooftop tasting area lighting going to be visible from offsite in the evenings? If so, it should be conditioned that this event space is shielded somehow so that its lighting is not visible to surrounding areas.

Amplified Music / Outdoor Speakers. The proposed project includes the use of outdoor speakers in multiple locations: the tasting room garden, new grotto, veranda and winery building second story terrace. Are outdoor speakers and amplified music currently allowed on an all day/everyday basis at wineries - or will this set a new precedent in the county? If approved, will every winery in the county now be able to ask to play outdoor amplified music?

The COA No 4.20 b. states the speakers would be used to play background music during visitation hours, from 7 a.m. to 6 p.m., and daytime events, from 11 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. Does visitation really start at 7 in the morning? Is there a more reasonable daily start time? The COA also states that outdoor music is not permitted for events beginning after 6 p.m. This implies that amplified music will not be allowed after 6 p.m. Is that correct?

We would like an explicit statement to that effect in the COA. How will the timing and amplification levels be enforced?

Noise. Event noise from the rooftop hospitality area is also a concern. Sound carries unexpectedly long distances in the Napa Valley, especially in the evening hours. Even a “quiet clean up” effectively creates noise and light. We ask that any rooftop activities end by 10 pm, including clean up.

Traffic. The county relied entirely on W-Trans’ 2020 Traffic Impact Study (TIS) to evaluate the increased traffic generated by the proposed project. We believe the TIS and the data on which its underlying assumptions are based are outdated, as are the resources used to generate its Tables (e.g., Caltrans’ vehicle count data, Collision History, Level of Service, etc.). Also, the TIS’s Hwy 29 Roadway Study, referenced on pg. 4, observed traffic for fifteen minutes. Is this considered an adequate time frame for monitoring traffic in an area? We believe a current traffic study should be performed to better address these important questions.

Parking. Both the W-Trans TIS and the county agree that the proposed parking supply is inadequate for the 23 new 120-person and 400-person events. The TIS states that, “It is understood that rideshare services and shuttles would be used to transport guests to winery events.” How do they know this - is it intuition or are there any records on which to base this assumption? With respect to the COA No. 4.3 requiring the applicant to shuttle guests to the 23 new events, who will ensure that an event-specific parking plan will be prepared for each and every event? And where will the shuttles park during events - in the town of Yountville or on Yount Mill Road? If so, is the Town of Yountville aware of this and do they approve? Will the shuttles park on the applicant’s adjacent property on Yount Mill Road? If so, is this a legal use of the property? Can they park on any county maintained streets?

Groundwater Management. We appreciate and agree with the Groundwater Demand Management Program requirements as outlined in the COA no. 6.15 a. 1-7.i., especially the immediate installation of a meter on the existing well, located on the eastern hillside above the cave, to measure all groundwater used on the project parcel. Given the location of the parcel within the GSA Subbasin, we also request that the condition of the aquifer in this area be monitored over time to ensure that it is recharging at the rate determined by the GSA, an estimated 0.3 af/yr. This could be accomplished with a program such as meter.me, which uses a depth gauge to report well levels on a realtime basis. This program graphs the status of the well level over time - and not just at a point in time. This is an important distinction in determining the health and recharge of the aquifer in that area over the course of the year(s).

Also, with regard to recharge, how do we know that irrigating with the treated wastewater will actually help recharge the aquifer? A study prepared by a soils engineer is needed to confirm this by analyzing:

- the soil profile - is the soil permeable?
- application rate and timing of water

- the location(s) where the treated wastewater will be applied, as there are watercourses on the property
- where will the treated wastewater be stored for later use? and
- are there sufficient vines and landscaped areas on site to accept 2.5 af of treated wastewater?

The applicant has offered to not plant 0.25 acres of new vineyard that is already permitted, another noted water saving feature. How will this be monitored or enforced?

We believe that all of these important questions deserve a robust discussion by the Planning Commissioners, staff and the public, and ask for a continuance to further evaluate the studies that have been submitted in support of the project.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Respectfully,

Mary Ann and David Moffitt
Laura and John Peters
Laura May Everett
Christian and Cherise Moueix
Kara Taddei
Ren Harris
Elizabeth Moffitt, MD

cc Brian Bordona, Interim Director of Planning, Building, and Environmental Services

From: Desiree Del Dotto <Desiree@deldottovineyards.com>

Subject: Looking for Bulk Juice and/or Grapes

Date: February 27, 2023 at 1:45:20 PM PST

Dear Vintners- We are looking for good quality bulk Cabernet from the 2021 and 2022 vintages. We would also be open to looking at other varietals if it is high quality. We would love to work direct and bypass any brokers if at all possible.

Please respond if you have anything available and we can arrange to get samples to my winemaking team.

We also are always in search for grapes and securing longer term grape contracts in Napa Valley. Please keep us in mind if you are looking to sell any fruit as well.

Thank you!

Desirée Del Dotto | Del Dotto Family Wineries | Chief Operating Officer – Marketing Director - Owner
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