

NEWSPAPERS OF ENTERTAINERS entering the food, clothing or beverage business is typically met with skepticism. But fans of singer Maynard James Keenan's can rest assured of his best intentions. The frontman for Tool, A Perfect Circle and Puscifer got into the wine business in 2004 and has since become a pioneer with his vineyard partner Eric Glomski making wine in the Arizona's northern Verde Valley. A recent documentary, *Blood Into Wine*, captures the trials and tribulations of Keenan's Caduceus Cellars during the past couple of years as it strives to produce wines that compare to world's finest. After much hard work, Keenan and Glomski have succeeded—though each season brings new challenges. We caught up with the singer between shows on Tool's recent U.S. tour.

What's been the general response to Caduceus wines?

Generally speaking, they end up shining fairly well. But most important, they're not worse than the other wines. They don't show up as being completely, "Oh, this is obviously from somewhere else other than California or Europe." And if you look at some of our prices, compared to other wines that have been doing similar things to what we're doing, we're actually cheaper.

Though winemaking takes a lot of labor, it also takes a lot of patience. Would you describe yourself as a patient person?

In some ways, but in most ways not. This is definitely a lesson in discipline.

As a singer, you keep the meanings of your lyrics obscure and ambiguous. As a winemaker, you often have to be hyper specific about the process. Does that juxtaposition offer anything to you?

In the process of winemaking and the chemistry, you try to get out of the way to let the wine express itself, let the place [where the grapes were grown] express itself. I don't need to understand all the nuances of why it's different from other places and be able to list them. Led Zeppelin just has to know how to play Led Zeppelin songs—they don't have to know how to play Queen songs.

For the most part, people drinking a specific wine will never visit where it was actually produced.

Yeah, they generally tend to rely on somebody else's assessment of what [walking around the vineyard] was like and hear their story. As a wine critic or a wine writer, it's really important to be articulate about your experiences in that place. When you're watching Anthony Bourdain do his thing from across the world, he's a good storyteller. You have to rely on

those people if you can't make it out to that place.

If music serves as a catharsis, what does viticulture do for you?

In general, just where it comes from—as far as our history—it's been a grounding process. In the books, *The Small-Mart Revolution* or *The Omnivore's Dilemma*, they describe a globalized economy and a globalized reliance on things you have no control over. And [when that eventually] falls apart, [it will become apparent that] people have forgotten how to do things for themselves. A vineyard offers somebody that grounding but it also reorients you to paying attention to your own destiny.

Would you ever consider promoting your wine on one of your bands' tours?

Puscifer and the wine making process are almost kind of integral. Initially, I wanted to

keep the wine separate as much as possible—we were actually pouring wines fairly anonymously just to get people to understand that [Caduceus is] standing on its own two feet. But now it's established that we're on to something here, I think it's OK to combine the

two. I think it makes more sense with Puscifer. It's such a multifaceted project that on the last two Puscifer tours we actually did a wine class prior to a show.

One of your biggest goals is to make a wine entirely by yourself. When do you see that happening?

Hopefully, this year. I'll have some assistance and guidance, but as far as the winemaking process, I'll definitely be out of the nest sooner rather than later.

Maynard James Keenan was interviewed by Josh Baron. For more of the interview, please visit www.relix.com.

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