TOP STORY EDITOR'S PICK









Orums pledge to support charity with wine from historic St. Helena vineyard

Jesse Duarte Jul 31, 2024 Updated 18 hrs ago 🔍 0 📃 2 min to read



ST. HELENA — The story of the Weinberger family is the stuff of a Hollywood movie:

Caren and Nick Orum, founders of the Arborum wine brand, walk in their historic Hidden Key vineyard.

and making a major charitable pledge.

met their \$1 million goal.

Submitted photo

Now Caren and Nick Orum are writing a new chapter in that saga, replanting part of

the Weinberger vineyards that had long lain fallow, restoring an olive tree orchard,

Wine, murder, and a resilient widow who became California's first female vintner.

The Orums, who have a background in investment banking, pledged to donate \$1 million and all net earnings from their wine sales to charities that support local vineyard workers and the environment. They announced Tuesday that they've already

environment where we are," Caren Orum said. The mighty Hannah Weinberger

"We're growing here and we live here, so we want to give here and support the

## of Spring Mountain.

John and Hannah Weinberger operated successful

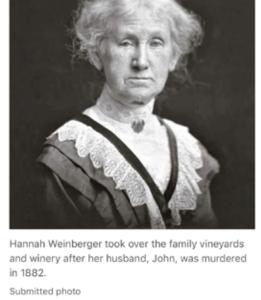
The Orums were inspired by the unusual history of their property on the eastern slope

John was shot and killed in a murder-suicide by a former employee who'd been making unwelcome advances toward the Weinbergers' daughter, Minnie. Undaunted, the 42-year-old Hannah Weinberger took over the business and ran it for 38 years, multiplying production by a factor of five and producing a Cabernet

vineyards and a winery north of St. Helena. In 1882,

Sauvignon that won a silver medal at the 1889 Paris Exposition. She also took over her husband's role as director of the Bank of St. Helena, another virtually unheard-of role for a woman of the time. Weinberger's success ended only when Prohibition took effect in 1920. She died in 1931 at age 90, having never

remarried.



Restoring the property The Weinberger properties have since been carved up among various owners, including William Cole

stone winery. But a 20-acre property where the Weinbergers had planted grapes and olive trees in the A map shows the Weinbergers' extensive vineyard holdings as of 1881, one year before John 1870s had been neglected until the Orums bought it in Weinberger was murdered and his wife Hannah took over the business. 2013. Submitted photo "We didn't know it had been vineyard before because it was so overgrown," Caren Orum said. "When we started clearing out the underbrush,

we found the terracing and we realized the olive trees were all in a row."

Vineyards, which operates the Weinbergers' original

They've cleared dense brush, revived the olive grove, planted three blocks of Cabernet Sauvignon, moved into a 1930s-era hunting cabin on the property, and hired vineyard manager Oscar Renteria and winemaker Andy Erickson.

The Orums named the 2.5-acre, organic-certified estate vineyard Hidden Key after one of their children found an old key in a large tree. One of the kids pulled out the key and, in an eerie coincidence, the tree split in half two days later.

The average slope is 26%, so the vines are hand-farmed.

On Aug. 20 they're introducing a 2021 Proprietary Red with Cabernet Sauvignon from Hidden Key and Cabernet Franc from Pritchard Hill, plus a 2021 Proprietary White with Sauvignon Musque, Sauvignon Blanc and Semillon



## from Coombsville. They eventually plan to produce an estate Cabernet Sauvignon. Pledging to give



local vineyard workers and the environment. All net earnings from wine sales will go to charity. They've donated to 10,000 Degrees (helping lowincome students go to college), the Napa Valley Farmworkers Foundation, Puertas Abiertas, Collective

The Orums named their brand Arborum, which evokes

committed to donate \$1 million to charities that support

their last name and their passion for nature. They've

Napa Valley's reforestation efforts, Shine Napa Valley (supporting youth mental health), Point Reyes National Seashore Association, Kiss the Ground (supporting regeneration and healthy soil) and

They also donate their time. Caren serves on several nonprofit boards and Nick spends every Thursday volunteering for a restorative justice program at San Quentin

Rehabilitation Center.

"It feels good to give," Caren Orum said.

Save the Redwoods League.

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