

## Legendary Texas winemaker Kim McPherson partners with brother on new winery near Fredericksburg

Sibling winemakers Kim and Jon McPherson are collaborators, not rivals

By [Tina Danze](#)

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The Carter Creek Winery 2017 Grenache Rose and Sparkling Peach won awards in the 2020 San Francisco wine competition

There's no rivalry between brothers Kim and Jon McPherson, although both are pioneering winemakers with hundreds of awards, some from the same competitions.

Kim founded McPherson Cellars in Lubbock, and was recently nominated again for a James Beard Award. Jon has been Master Winemaker at South Coast Winery in Temecula, Calif., since 2003. Before that, he put nearby Culbertson Winery on the map for sparkling wines and helped

raise Southern California's profile as a wine region.

Both men grew up in the wine business: Their father, "Doc" McPherson, is dubbed the father of the modern Texas wine industry. Now Jon is delving into Texas winemaking too, with help from Kim at McPherson Cellars.

Jon is head winemaker for a newcomer to the Texas wine scene: Carter Creek Winery, Resort and Spa in Johnson City. Although the winery has been winning medals at competitions since 2017, its wines weren't released for sale until its tasting room and wine club debuted in November 2019. (The resort fully opens in April.) The wine tourism property is owned by Carter Hospitality Group, which owns South Coast Winery Resort and Spa, where Jon works. All of Carter Creek's wines are made at McPherson Cellars in Lubbock.

"Jon tells me what he wants to make, and I go out to the vineyards and buy extra fruit for him. It's like a custom crush, except I don't have extra tanks — it goes in our tanks," Kim says. "It's not something I'd do for just anybody. But I'd do that for my brother."



Jon and Kim McPherson with Carter Creek Winery

After entering 12 Carter Creek wines in the 2020 San Francisco Chronicle International Wine Competition, Jon recalls Kim saying “I hope you get a medal.” It turned out, Carter Creek won 11 medals at that competition.

Jon visits McPherson Cellars several times a year during the winemaking and is on site for bottling. “I work with my brother on the wines. He makes his [McPherson] wines in September and October, and I come in after he’s done and we work with what’s left and do blends,” Jon says. Like McPherson Cellars’ wines, all of Carter Creek’s wines have the Texas High Plains appellation.

Not all of Carter Creek’s wines are blends made with varietals that McPherson Cellars produces. Jon makes cabernet sauvignon with grapes from his late father’s Sagmor Vineyard. And as a nod to the Texas Hill Country’s German roots, he uses Texas-

grown riesling and gewurtztraminer to make Carter Creek’s Gloriosa, an off-dry Alsatian-style blend.

Jon has helped Kim out over the years, too. Because of his sparkling wine expertise, he finishes McPherson Cellars’ sparkling chenin blanc using the charmat method (secondary fermentation in glass-lined tanks). Kim returned the favor last year, supplying chenin blanc for Carter Creek’s Sparkling Peach, which won Double Gold in the “sparkling fruit” category at the 2020 San Francisco Chronicle International Wine Competition. The Carter Creek Grenache Rose 2017 also won a Double Gold award.

The brothers’ collaborations wouldn’t make sense if the two didn’t share a winemaking philosophy. “We both like that old world, very classic style. The trend in California is riper, bigger alcohol wines, but my brother and I aren’t fans of that style,” Jon says.

To deepen their knowledge of classic Mediterranean style wines, the McPherson brothers often travel together.

“We’re going to Italy in May. When we went to France, it was about researching and understanding the styles that we like,” Jon says. Kim cites other trip benefits. “We bring our wives, and eat and drink – and laugh so much. We just have fun,” he says.

It’s a matter of time before Carter Creek goes in a different direction than McPherson Cellars, by adding a Texas Hill Country appellation to its lineup. This spring, Carter Creek is planting its estate with two Pierce’s disease-resistant red clones. And in a few years, wines made with those grapes will be produced at Carter Creek Winery in Johnson City.