

"Ranch at the Canyons is a beautiful place, and when progress here stopped, we felt like ... we had the energy and ability to take it on. The important thing for us is to see what the ranch could be."

Patrick Ginn, new co-owner

Back from the brink, back in the tour



Colby Brown / Spokesman Staff

Monkey Face Vineyard at Ranch at the Canyons is one of the few vineyards on the High Desert. The ranch, which struggled through the recession, was purchased recently by new owners, and it participated in this summer's Central Oregon Builders Association Tour of Homes for the first time in five years.

Colby Brown Spokesman Staff

Without becoming envious of multimillion-dollar homes with exclusive views of Smith Rock State Park, one can easily say that news of Ranch at the Canyons being included in this year's Central Oregon Builders Association Tour of Homes is good news for all of Central Oregon.

It has been five years since Ranch at the Canyons last participated, and if confidence has returned in the high-end real estate market of Central Oregon, then it may be proof that the real estate market as a whole is improving.

"When people see that we're

growing, it might spark a new development or owners to sell their place or buy a new place, and that creates confidence," said Patrick Ginn, co-owner at Ranch at the Canyons, "which is very important because buying and selling land and real estate is very psychological; it's confidence driven. If they see this project being successful and they see Brasada Ranch is being successful, and Tetherow and Pronghorn, it's like, 'Oh, this is great — everything is going well.' It gets that confidence back. And let's face it — Central Oregon has had a little bit of a confidence issue in the past couple of years."



Patrick Ginn and Jeff Creagan on the patio of a newly built house at Ranch at the Canyons on July 11.

See **RANCH**, Page 6

Send us your story ideas: news@redmondspokesman.com or 541-548-2186

"I think where we're going as a ranch is developing the amenities to attract more buyers. There's an evolution going on because we're working with the developers to make this a better community. It was unsettling during the transition; there were a lot of questions. But the current developers have a positive attitude — they are involved here. They have invested their time here, and that has made us more comfortable."

Mike DeGennaro, one of the first homeowners to build a house at Ranch at the Canyons

Ranch

Continued from Page 1

The private community, bordered by the Crooked River on the west side of Smith Rock, has been whipsawed in recent years, having had a variation of almost a million dollars in the price for landholdings alone. More than \$30 million was invested in developing the community, but the whole ranch was put up for auction for less than \$3 million in November 2012. This is where Ginn and partner developer Jeff Creagan entered the scene. The developers, who are more acquainted with subdivisions in the Portland area than ranch estates in Terrebonne, paired up and purchased Ranch at the Canyons.

"We went from operating a subdivision, where there isn't a farm or vineyard, to the ranch, and the learning curve is very considerable," Ginn said. "We have three horses at the ranch; we have a farmer, tractors, a vineyard, ponds with fish. ... But I think we have a good grasp on what the ranch is and what it will be moving forward. We feel more confident than ever, as far as the direction and future of the ranch. But, of course, in the those first few months it was like, 'Oh, gosh, this is a lot.' We're not just selling lots; we are making sure this community is thriving."

They have been at work for a little more than a year and a half at the ranch and have made multiple improvements, the most important being the mindset at the ranch.

"Anytime you have a transition, you're always going to have some challenges" Ginn said. "You have to de-

velop trust with the current homeowners, who have been through a lot. Some of them have been a part of the project since 2005 and are very concerned about their investments, which is very natural. It has taken some time to build that trust, but for the most part everyone is pleased with where we're at."

Changing the atmosphere at the ranch from liquidation to cultivation has been the main goal for Ginn and Creagan. They are trying to return investment confidence to current homeowners through a design review process for future owners and changing the ownership of the ranch from single-lot ownership to a tenancy-in-common ownership structure, essentially meaning each homeowner owns $\frac{1}{60}$ of the ranch. Ginn and Creagan have also cut 14 lots from the original 60; most of the lots cut were on or near Coyote Butte. This is part of their support of conserving the natural beauty of the area, in which they also partner with Deschutes River Conservancy and other local nonprofits.

"I think where we're going as a ranch is developing the amenities to attract more buyers," said Mike DeGennaro, who was one of the first homeowners to build a house at the ranch in 2007. "There's an evolution going on because we're working with the developers to make this a better community. It was unsettling during the transition; there were a lot of questions. But the current developers have a positive attitude — they are involved here. They have invested their time here, and that has made us more comfortable."

Originally proposed as a destination resort in 1992,

Rimrock Resort was shot down by a state land-use law that prohibits destinations resorts within three miles of high-value cropland.

Original owners and developers Mick Humphreys and Jim Gardner changed their vision to a community of ranch homes, The Canyons Ranch, to consist of about 30 homes on 40-acre lots combined with about 500 acres of protected land. After zoning land for conservation with the Deschutes Basin Land Trust, Humphreys and Gardner changed the vision once more, making the lot sizes smaller, including community-irrigated farmland and increasing the number of houses to 60. They got the green light, and development started on what is now Ranch at the Canyons about 10 years ago. However, the ranch suffered during the recession, and it was put up for auction, bringing in Ginn and Creagan.

Improvements have taken place at the ranch's Monkey Face Vineyard, one of only a few working vineyards in Central Oregon, which had its best harvest last year of 8 tons. Monkey Face plans to bottle wine with hopes to sell it locally for the first time this year, through partnership with local wineries.

Ginn and Creagan just finished a home, which was displayed in the COBA tour of homes, and two more are in construction. There are 21 lots to be sold.

"We do a lot of projects, and we're business-minded, so there is a profit component," Ginn said. "There are other projects we could spend more time on and make more money, but at the end of the day, there are certain projects that capture your passion and your heart, and if you're doing it only for the money then

you're probably not going to be happy long term. For us, Ranch at the Canyons is a beautiful place, and when progress here stopped, we felt like we needed to do it and we had the energy and ability to take it on. The important thing for us is to see what the ranch could be."

The ranch qualifies as an agri-tourism site by county standards, which allows the ranch to sponsor six private events a year, most of which have been weddings.

"Certain aspects like the vineyard bring people out to the ranch, too," Creagan said. "We have a four-part vineyard series going right now, and people come to participate in each stage. The pruning class is next on the schedule. (But) It's not like, 'Hey, anybody, come out to the ranch and do whatever you want.' It's a private community."

For those interested in participating in the classes held at the vineyard, an ap-

pointment can be scheduled through the ranch office, Creagan said.

The ranch has joined the Redmond Chamber of Commerce. With two new landowners constructing homes and Ginn and Creagan having the confidence to prebuild a house, confidence appears to have returned to the ranch. The community's bounce back from the recession parallels the increased activity of development in surrounding Redmond and Bend communities.

"I think at the end of the day, whether that be five years from now or 10 years from now, we want to see the place fully built out and thriving," Creagan said. "The ranch won't look much different once it gets built out because there are only 20 more houses to build through the 1,700 acres here, but we just want to see it be a successful neighborhood."



The views from Ranch at the Canyons are spectacular; the Three Sisters can be seen from Monkey Face Vineyard at the ranch.

Photos by Colby Brown / Spokesman Staff

ABOUT RANCH AT THE CANYONS

- 1,700 acres
- Landholdings from 4 to 14 acres
- 600 acres of irrigated farmland
- 500 acres of permanently protected open space
- 13 private lakes stocked with trout, bass and other fish
- 7,000-square-foot Old Winery Clubhouse for homeowners
- 2 miles of exclusive Crooked River access