

BRETT'S TALES FROM THE PAST
NO. 6

“Oh, that is Going to Hurt”.

Denise used to drive a Toyota Sienna minivan and I would drive our 2000 Ford F-350 Super Duty (Big Red!). Often, we would have to exchange vehicles to haul our daughters to their various activities. Sometimes I would leave the winery early to pick up the kids at school and would need the van and Denise would drive the truck. Moving three daughters around Walla Walla needed choreography from the parents.

One day in the winter of 2017, Denise had the truck, and I was driving the van. Unfortunately, my winery Nitrogen cylinder ran out and I needed to swap it out at OXARC. I muscled the empty tank into the van and secured it so it would not roll around. At OXARC, I stupidly muscled the empty Nitrogen tank out of the van and heard a “POP”. I felt something give in my left shoulder and muttered “Oh that is going to hurt”.

I used to race triathlons and swim in college and at the YMCA here in Walla Walla. My freestyle stroke was decent, but I would occasionally have some pain in my left shoulder, probably because my stroke was not perfect. My shoulder was weakened and ready to give way.

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While lifting the Nitrogen tank I tore my rotator cuff and partially tore the bicep tendon in my left shoulder. I went for nine months before getting surgery as I had to wait to complete harvest. Thanks to Eddie B. for providing weekly pain-relieving massages and Dr. Wilwand for expertly putting Humpty Dumpty back together.

Recovery was awful. The pain over the first weekend was excessive. I am allergic to narcotics so I could take only ibuprofen & tylenol for the pain and reduce the inflammation with an ice bath that recirculated cold water through a pad covering my shoulder. Denise says I had so much inflammation I melted 10 pounds of ice daily during the first week.

My shoulder was immobilized for six weeks, and insurance allowed 10 physical therapy sessions. For the first four weeks I tried to sleep in a recliner chair. After that recovery was slow and I did not feel normal for a year. However, the show must go on in the wine business and I got right back to work after ditching the shoulder harness.

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