

West Side Wine Club August 2010

Next Meeting: Wednesday, August 18 at 7:00 p.m.

Place: Oak Knoll Winery

Agenda: To be determined, look for a separate e-mail closer to the meeting.

WSWC Website: <http://www.westsidewineclub.com/>

Message Board: <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/Westsidewineclub/>

Scheduled Meetings

January 8, 2010

Holiday Party/Awards Gala

January 20, 2010

Plan for the year

February 17, 2010

Bordeaux tasting

March 17 2010

Flaws & Faults & barrel samples, Trudy Kramer

April 21, 2010

Speaker; Karl Dinger, Terra Vina Winery

April 24th 2010

SakéOne tour

May Winery Tours

May 19, 2010

Speaker; Devin Stinger, Adamant Cellars

June 16, 2010

Other whites / Fruit Wine / Mead

July 18, 2010

Annual Picnic at Oak Knoll

August 18, 2010

?

September 15, 2010

Other Reds Tasting

October 20, 2010

Pinot Noir tasting

November 17, 2010

Pinot Gris/Viognier Tasting

December ?, 2010

Elections /Crush Talk

A few reminders:

- 1.) Please bring a bottle of wine to share and a glass to drink from.
- 2.) For all our protection, all members must sign a waiver every year. You can also pay 2010 dues at this time.
- 3.) Meetings begin at 7pm and end by 9pm. If you can get there a little early to help set up, please do, help ready to put away chairs and tables at the end.

Note: Waiver and score sheets can be obtained from our web site (above) under "Current News".

Annual Picnic July 18

Sunscreen was needed at the annual picnic held on the lawn at the home of Marge Vuylsteke next to Oak Knoll Winery. About thirty members attended. Craig & Mindy shared two 1985 Pinots (Oak Knoll and Shafer). Both had lost their berry flavor but still showed well.



Thanks

Thanks to Barb Thompson for carrying all of our wine entries down to the Oregon State Fair and then, later, bringing them back up to Portland after they cancelled the competition.

Thanks to Miriam Schnepf for, once again, gathering up club member wine entries at the picnic and delivering them to the Washington County Fair competition.

Thanks to Rick Kipper for doing the same and delivering them to Vancouver for the Clark County Fair competition.

Wine Related On the Web

The new 2010 Scott Fermentation Handbook is now available for download at <http://www.scottlab.com/default.aspx>



President's Musings



The dog days of August are barking, telling us to prepare for the upcoming harvest, which in many cases is less than 2 months from now. We are into a typical Oregon summer with only a few heat waves and no rain, so the grapes continue to ripen. Unfortunately, the "100 day cycle" from bloom to harvest can only be sped up so much. It looks like we will have a 2-3 week late harvest for pinot. Luckily, eastern Washington grapes are only 2 weeks behind and if they are late, the weather typically does not get nasty and cold until late October. Rumor has it that the pinot harvest will turn out all right because "this reminds me of *blah blah blah* year". Ah, growers are ever the optimists. Lest we forget, Burgundy prior to the last 20-30 years was frequently chaptalized. Climate change appears to have made both Burgundy and Oregon more hospitable climates for this grape. We will see if those warm spikes in September materialize... I am slowly preparing for crush, but with a variety of events in the summer, my grape decisions are still lagging. My main focus will be to build my winery in the garage. Unfortunately, my carboys of chardonnay have been subjected to warm temperatures which I am sure are not good for the wine. I had a local contractor bid on the project, but at \$4000.00 I decided to do it myself with the help of my brother. Fermenting in an area that is not climate controlled is OK in winter. I have found that cold is not such a problem when the wine is in the carboys after fermentation. It is the summer heat that causes the problem. Luckily for me, and maybe the vineyards, there have not been many really hot days. But my wine is still nowhere near cellar temperature. I can hardly wait until my new "cellar" is done.

I often find myself at dilemma when it comes to choosing grapes. I like making Pinot because I enjoy drinking it. I also like whites. I love viognier for its buoyant nose and a topical flavor, unfortunately my source is not happening this year. I used to be "ABC"- "Anything But Chardonnay". But I am contrarian by nature, so now that everyone is repeating the "ABC" mantra, I am starting to really enjoy good chardonnay. Everyone is doing "naked" chardonnays without barrels- so using a barrel is even more appealing. I have a Damy barrel that I used last year for chardonnay. I fermented the chard in this barrel for two months and can barely taste the oak. The lees absorb a lot of oak flavor. It is said that Damy barrels are used in 90% of the Meursaults. In my opinion it is a very subtle and perfect for chards. My barrel is dying for another crop of chardonnay, which I could probably keep in there for a substantially longer time. The idea of developing a neutral barrel for whites is very appealing. I think that the lack of barrel aging is one reason why amateur chardonnays do not have the depth or focus of French white Burgundies. We use chardonnay to ease the barrel for use in pinots or other red wines. We delegate our white wines to a second rank vis-à-vis our reds. The great tragedy in this is that chardonnay is truly one of the most impressive grapes if you treat it right. The taste has incredible depth and is said to reflect the wine maker even more than terrior (more so than pinot). You can make a rich "Montrachet" style or a crisp lean "Chablis" style. People who do a lot of wine say that in general, whites are more difficult. I think they are right. The grape pressing is harder, the timeframes are more rigid, the temperature control is more critical, and like most white wines the grape is unforgiving. Just a little bit of film mold and you can taste VA, ruining the whole batch. I thought our recent chardonnay tasting was exciting and hope more members explore this grape which is so underutilized in Oregon. But I have to admit, I could also really use that barrel for my pinot.

Whatever wine you decide to make this fall, have fun making it and enjoy it with friends.

Jon Kahrs, President
WSWC

•I received this e-mail from Miriam Schnepf regarding WSWC winners from the Washington County Fair just concluded:

Pinot Gris- 1st John Hooson; 2nd Don Hoffard.

Riesling- 1st **and** Best of Show white wine Don Hoffard; 2nd John Hooson.

Viognier- 2nd Barb Thompson.

Pinot Noir- 1st Barb Thompson; 2nd Don Robinson; 3rd Ken Stinger.

Cab Sauvignon- 1st Craig Bush; 2nd Mike Smolak; 3rd Ken Stinger.

Syrah- 1st Barb Thompson; 2nd Sammy Nachimuthu; 3rd Don Hoffard.

Bordeaux Blends- 1st **and** Best of show red wine Barb Thompson; 2nd Barb Thompson; 3rd John Hooson.

I did not see who won for best label.

I will be gone for the next meeting, but I will deliver the wines, scoring sheets and prize money to Marge before I leave. Remind everyone to pick up these things at the August 18th meeting!

thanks, Miriam

•A complete list of winners from The Clark County Fair is available at:

<http://baderbrewing.com/store/product.php?productid=23234&cat=406&page=1> WSWC winners are:

Pinot Noir- Blue- Ken Stinger, Don Robinson / Jon Kahrs; White- Jon Kahrs.

Barbera- Blue- Mike Smolak.

Pinot Gris- Blue- Ken Stinger.

Cabernet Sauvignon- Blue- Don Hoffard, Ken Stinger; White- Mike Smolak.

Dolcetto- Blue- Jon Kahrs.

Syrah- Blue- Rick Kipper; White- Sammy Nachimuthu.

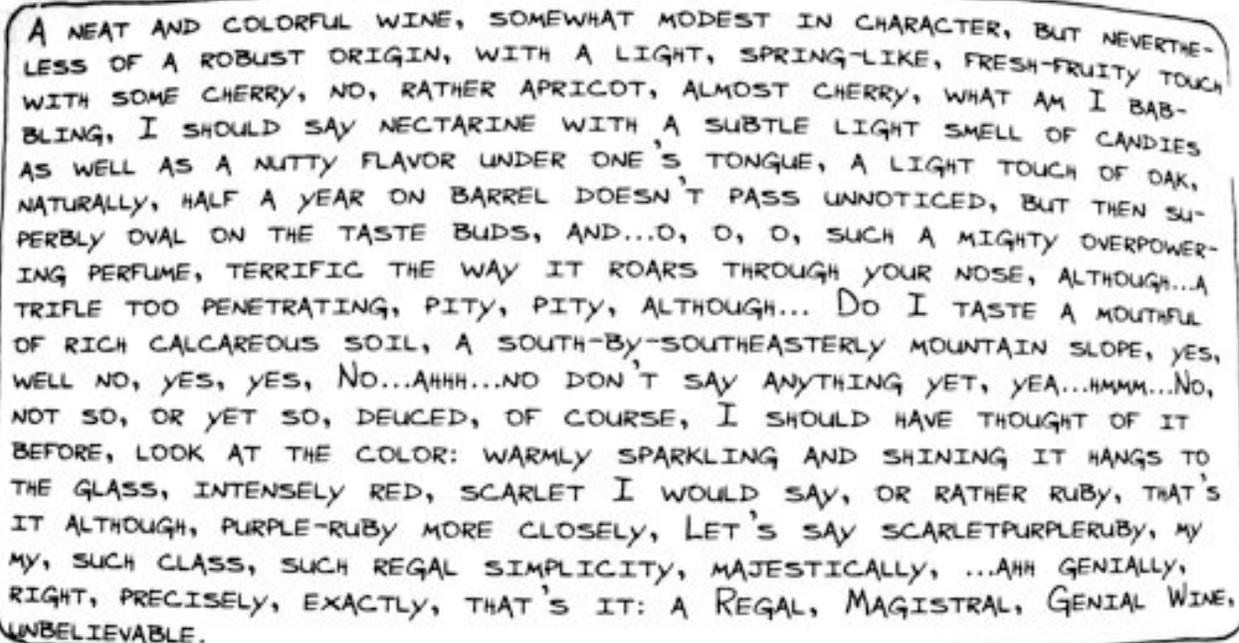
Chardonnay- Blue- Mike Smolak.

Sangiovese- Red- Rick Kipper; White- John Hooson.

Merlot- White- Sripriya Subramanian.

Congratulations to WSWC members for an outstanding showing. WSWC dominates again.

The next time you have trouble describing a wine, try this one:



A NEAT AND COLORFUL WINE, SOMEWHAT MODEST IN CHARACTER, BUT NEVERTHE-
LESS OF A ROBUST ORIGIN, WITH A LIGHT, SPRING-LIKE, FRESH-FRUITY TOUCH
WITH SOME CHERRY, NO, RATHER APRICOT, ALMOST CHERRY, WHAT AM I BAB-
BLING, I SHOULD SAY NECTARINE WITH A SUBTLE LIGHT SMELL OF CANDIES
AS WELL AS A NUTTY FLAVOR UNDER ONE'S TONGUE, A LIGHT TOUCH OF OAK,
NATURALLY, HALF A YEAR ON BARREL DOESN'T PASS UNNOTICED, BUT THEN SU-
PERBLY OVAL ON THE TASTE BUDS, AND...O, O, O, SUCH A MIGHTY OVERPOWER-
ING PERFUME, TERRIFIC THE WAY IT ROARS THROUGH YOUR NOSE, ALTHOUGH...A
TRIFLE TOO PENETRATING, PITY, PITY, ALTHOUGH... DO I TASTE A MOUTHFUL
OF RICH CALCAREOUS SOIL, A SOUTH-BY-SOUTHEASTERLY MOUNTAIN SLOPE, YES,
WELL NO, YES, YES, NO...AHHH...NO DON'T SAY ANYTHING YET, YEA...HMMM...NO,
NOT SO, OR YET SO, DEUCED, OF COURSE, I SHOULD HAVE THOUGHT OF IT
BEFORE, LOOK AT THE COLOR: WARMLY SPARKLING AND SHINING IT HANGS TO
THE GLASS, INTENSELY RED, SCARLET I WOULD SAY, OR RATHER RUBY, THAT'S
IT ALTHOUGH, PURPLE-RUBY MORE CLOSELY, LET'S SAY SCARLETPURPLERUBY, MY
MY, SUCH CLASS, SUCH REGAL SIMPLICITY, MAJESTICALLY, ...AHH GENIALLY,
RIGHT, PRECISELY, EXACTLY, THAT'S IT: A REGAL, MAGISTRAL, GENIAL WINE,
UNBELIEVABLE.

Naturalness in wine: how much manipulation is acceptable?

Wine can be made naturally. It almost makes itself. At its most simple, the process of making wine involves harvesting grapes, sticking them into a vat, crushing them a bit and letting them ferment. When fermentation is complete, separate out the solid matter from the liquid, and you have wine.

But winemakers almost always add things to their wine. There are several reasons for this, some of them better than others, and this leads to a thorny question that's at the heart of many of the most passionate debates in winemaking circles: just how much manipulation is acceptable?

1. Anything goes Should a wine be judged purely on how it tastes? Is drinking wine just a sensory experience? Some people argue that this is the case. If it is, then there are no real reasons to prohibit additives. The answer is in the glass, and if there are ways of making wine taste 'better', then they should be allowed. The weakness of this position is that the grapes aren't just seen as the raw materials that act as a starting point in the manufacturing process. Grapes have a connection to the soil, to the vineyard they are from. Part of the appeal of wine is that it is a 'natural' product rich in culture, and its image will suffer if absolutely anything is allowed.

2. Add nothing This is an extreme position for one reason – SO₂. Sulfur dioxide (SO₂) is intrinsic to winemaking because it's hard to make good quality wine without it: it plays a vital role as an antioxidant and also as a microbicide preventing the growth of harmful bacteria and rogue yeasts. It is added during winemaking and at bottling. Some winemakers bravely attempt to make SO₂-free wines for the sake of naturalness or for health reasons, but it needs to be borne in mind that SO₂ is produced naturally during fermentation in non-negligible amounts anyway.

3. Add as little as possible This is a laudable position, for the reason mentioned earlier that wine is perceived as a natural product, and this is part of its appeal. A sensible winemaking policy is only to add something if not adding it is going to compromise wine quality, and then only add as little as possible. The effect of any additions can be maximized by smart use and good winemaking practice. Acid additions might be needed in warm climates, because high pH compromises wine quality and reduces the effectiveness of any SO₂ that is added.

This raises the question of other sorts of wine manipulation. For centuries oak barrels have been used to make wine, and the use of them is uncontroversial partly because they are traditional. The use of new oak barrels certainly would count as an additive manipulation because they contribute important flavor components to the wine. Intelligent barrel use is a vital component of the winemaking process for the majority of fine wines, and it's hard to imagine doing without them altogether. But consider what might happen if they'd never been used for wine and someone tried introducing them now: there'd likely be a bit of an outcry. So, is it hypocritical to allow barrel use but exclude newer high-tech manipulations?

4. The in-between position The final position would be using some manipulations but not those that could be considered as 'cheating'. Where should the line be drawn? A strong argument could be made for not using manipulations such as non-traditional chemical flavorings but using other techniques if they choose to use them. I can't imagine anyone seriously arguing that fruit flavorings or non-wine fruits can be used and the substance still be labeled as wine. On the other hand, this more relaxed view would permit reverse osmosis and micro-oxygenation. They are, like other technologies, merely tools, and tools can be used well or they can be used badly. What counts is how well the tools are used, not whether they are used or not.

Summary

The various means for manipulating wines are just tools: as such they can be used wisely, used badly, or not employed at all. Whether or not the use of these tools is justified is a decision for the individual winemaker. Would you rather have a flawed natural wine, when a simple manipulation would have eliminated the fault? What is 'flawed' in the context of a wine?

The danger with too much technology is that it gives winemakers too many tools to tweak their wines. All wines begin to taste alike, and variations in vintage and terroir expression are diminished.

“And Now for something completely different”, a little politics.

(thanks to Monty Python)

(At the risk of straying from our club purpose)

On the Federal level:

States Rights vs. Interstate Commerce

When the 21st Amendment to the Constitution repealed Prohibition, it gave the individual states the right to regulate and control the distribution and consumption of alcoholic beverages within their borders. What resulted was the so-called “Three-Tier System” in which the product flows from the producer to a distributor, to a retailer, to the consumer. The consumer is at the end of the line. He must buy from the retailer, who must buy from the wholesaler, who buys from the producer. The whole system is based on volume. At the peak of the mountain is the wholesaler. Volume is the key to profits and small volume costs more to process than large volume.

While the retailer would like to service his customer’s desires, he can’t get the product because the wholesaler is reluctant to deal in small volume special orders. The consumer’s only hope is to deal directly with the producer if he can afford to travel to the producer to claim the order and provide private transportation to move the product to his home.

Enter the reciprocal shipping laws that permit the consumer to deal directly with the producer when both states subscribe to the reciprocity. So far, 37 states and the District of Columbia have reciprocal shipping agreements. Under this type of arrangement, the wholesalers and retailers are the potential losers.

In an effort to impede the loss of business brought on by direct shipping, wholesalers and retailers have introduced a bill in Congress that would essentially make it impossible for alcoholic beverages to be shipped directly from the producer to the consumer.

Rep. Bill Delahunt of Massachusetts introduced the bill, H.R. 5034, but the leaders of the Congressional Wine Caucus and Speaker of the House, Nancy Pelosi, as well as several wine groups including Wine Institutes- Wine America, Specialty Wine Retailers Assn., California Wine Institute, Oregon Winegrowers Assn., and the American Wine Society oppose it.

It is interesting to note that the acronym for the bill titled the “Comprehensive Alcohol Regulatory Effectiveness Act” of 2010 or the “CARE Act”.

On the State level:

As most of you know, the Oregon Department of Justice has interpreted Oregon law as not allowing home winemakers and beer makers to consume their products outside of the home. This interpretation also leaves us unable to legally hold competitions, bring homebrew to meetings and share our hobby with others. The Oregon State Fair and the Willamette Valley Amateur Winemaker Society have already cancelled their competitions for this year. There doesn’t appear to be any immediate remedy except to change the law during the next legislative session to be compatible with existing Federal law. I have read, in a couple news articles, that the OLCC does not intend to actively enforce this interpretation.

We received this letter from Denny Conn of the American Homebrewer’s Association:

I’m a member of the Cascade brewers Society in Eugene. In addition, I’m on the Governing Committee of the AHA. I’m also one of the organizers of a committee to get the law changed. We’ve been at work on it for a couple months now, with the support of the AHA which has dealt with several laws of this type. We’re also in contact with the guys in WA who recently got their law like this changed. What I’d like to say is things are well under way to get the law changed once the legislature convenes in Jan. 2011. At this point, we have a couple state legislators on board and draft language is being prepared. Angry letters to legislators or the OLCC will be counter productive at this point. We need to come off as the good guys, not angry jerks. We will have a website up at oregonhomebrewersalliance.org soon that will provide updates on the situation. As the legislative session gets closer, we’ll be sending out Action Alerts to let people know what they can do. As egregious as the situation seems, it can and is being corrected. We’d like everyone to support the Oregon Home Brewer’s Alliance and our efforts on this law.

West Side Wine Club Leadership Team – 2010

President: **Jon Kahrs** jekahrs@aol.com

- Set agenda for the year
- Establish leadership team
- Assure that objectives for the year are met
- Set up and run meetings

Treasurer: **Bill Spiller** nrac@msn.com

- Collect dues and fees, update membership list with secretary
- Pay bills

Secretary: **Ken and Barb Stinger** kbstinger@verizon.net

- Communicate regularly about club activities and issues
- Monthly newsletter on first Wednesday
- Prepare meeting agenda
- Keep updated list of members, nametags and other data
- Club message board invitations

Chairperson of Education: **Craig Bush** pnoir1@verizon.net

- Arrange speakers for our meetings

Chairs for Tastings: **Craig Bush** pnoir1@verizon.net

- Conduct club tastings
- Review and improve club tasting procedures

Chairs of Winery Tours: **Mike Smolak** SmolakM@DimensionResources.com

- Select wineries to visit
- Arrange tours
- Cover logistics (food and money)
- Winery Tour 1
- Winery Tour 2

Web Content Editor: **Rick Kipper** kips@lycos.com, rckipper@bpa.gov

Webmaster: **David Ladd**

Chairs of Group Purchases **Sammy Nachimuthu** murugasamy_nachimuthu@yahoo.com

The chairperson makes the arrangements to purchase, collect, and distribute.

- Chandler Reach Vineyard – **Sammy Nachimuthu** murugasamy_nachimuthu@yahoo.com
- Del Rio Vineyard – **Craig Bush** pnoir1@verizon.net
- Supplies – These should be passed to the President for distribution

Chairwoman of Competitions: **Miriam Schnepf** mowtnwmn@mac.com

- Work with Washington County Fair staff
- Encourage club participation in County Fair
- President will be the contact for the Oregon State Fair.

Chairs for Social Events: **Barbara Stinger and Sammy Nachimuthu**

- Awards Gala/Holiday Party