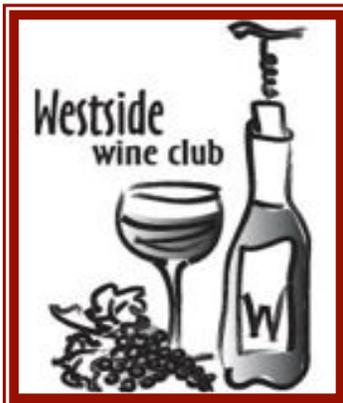


West Side Wine Club

December 2010

President's Musings



Scheduled Meetings

January 19, 2011

Crush talk

January 22, 2011

Holiday Party/Awards
Gala

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

Chardonnay Tasting

September 15, 2010

Other Reds Tasting

October 20, 2010

Pinot Noir tasting

November 17, 2010

Pinot Gris/Viognier

December 8, 2010

Planning, tours,

December Musings: Cold Land

November is both the bleakest and most beautiful month. The shortest day of the year has not arrived so that we can look forward to longer days, and we still have 3 months of winter to endure. But after the harvest (which was pretty bleak) we are welcomed into the relative warmth of the cellar to complete our work, and to the holidays to celebrate life. Last year's wine is getting ready to bottle, while this year's wine is just beginning its journey.

For the Westside Wine Making Club, our meetings match this cycle. We are putting away the old year and bringing in the new. This means that we need to think about our officers, who we will invite to our meetings, what tours we will undertake, etc... So our organizational meeting in December to assist us in this endeavor is coming quickly. In addition to the agenda items we will have plenty of time to socialize informally. This will be a great time to talk about your vision for this club and of course your wine.

Speaking of which this Thanksgiving I met Craig, Mindy and Don for a tour at Soter Vineyards. I had hoped to arrange a tour last year, but it fell through. Tony Soter and his assistant James lead an excellent tour. Both were very knowledgeable. Tony Soter has over 40 years of winemaking experience. Everyone at Soter was very hospitable and they seemed to really like the idea of having our wine club over for a tour. I can hardly wait to go back. And their wine is very good.

Don and I also went to another winery, Roco, which is the brainchild of Roland Soles, another great winemaker from Argyle. His pinot wines were fantastic, although immediate interest is in a tour at Argyle for sparkling wine.

So as you can see your club officers have been busy currying favor with extremely talented Vignerons. It's a tough job, but your board is very dedicated. We firmly believe that all tours should be vetted carefully, sometimes more than once, to assure a quality experience.

In January we have two awesome events, our wonderful holiday party at Portland Wine Storage- which you will hear more about later. We also will have "crush talk". Crush talk will be a round robin where our members talk about their last crush and how things are going. Did things turn out the way we hoped? If not, how did we cope? This ought to be a lot of fun and a great learning experience. But there will be much more including speakers, tastings, and other special events. So stay involved and enjoy the wine and camaraderie of your fellow club members.

HAPPY HOLIDAYS!

Jon Kahrs

President, WSWC

Some Wine Factoids

The general name for sugar enhancement is chaptalization, after Chaptal, Napoleon's minister of agriculture, who wrote a treatise on wine production.

Pinot Noir is called Spatburgunder in Germany.

Two Bordeaux areas that make 100% Merlot (no Cabernet Sauvignon) are Pomerol and St. Emilion.

The areas allowed to make Chianti are actually seven. The central one is allowed to use the name Chianti Classico for wines made by specified traditional methods with the correct grapes in the blend.

While Northern California produce the high quality wines of individual producers, most California wine is still made in the great Central Valley (a lot of jug wine!).

Blending is carried to a high art in the Rhône. For example, there are 13 allowed varieties used to make the red blends for Chateauf-neuf-du-pape.

A good website

Here is a site I plan to bookmark & visit often. Oregonwine.com is a privately owned and operated website that is published and managed by Yam Hill Publishing based in McMinnville. Veteran travel writer, author and journalist Jim Gullo is the Editor and Publisher. He says, "our goal is to make this website the number one source for news, features and travel information on all things related to Oregon's wines and wineries".



So, when's the picking crew arriving?

Next Meeting: Wednesday, December 8 at 7:00 p.m.

Place: Oak Knoll Winery

Agenda: Committee logistics; Gala plans; Events, tours, speakers for 2011; Members wines.

Snacks: Jon Kahrs, Thanks

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

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

A few reminders:

- 1.) Please bring a wine to share, A glass from which to taste. No score sheets needed this time.
- 2.) For all our protection, all members must sign a waiver every year. You can also pay 2011 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 and help 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".

November Meeting Minutes.

Please welcome new member Jon Gassaway.

Thanks Dana Blizzard for providing snacks.

Barb Stinger presented a list of options for our Holliday Gala. It was decided to hold the Gala on January 22 starting at 6:00 PM till whenever. We will again rent the Portland Wine Storage facility (same place as last year). It was decided to charge \$15 per head so we can cover all costs. Barb said the cost to have it catered would be \$30 to \$45 per head. After some discussion, it was decided to again have a pot luck with some major protein dishes supplied by a few members who will be reimbursed by the club. Pot luck dishes will be requested by alphabetical name. More information will follow by e-mail.

There was some discussion about the club dues. Presently we charge \$15 single and \$20 for a couple per calendar year. Mindy Bush suggested we charge \$15 per head eliminating the couples discount. We will wait to see how the bank account looks in January after Gala costs before deciding. Mindy also suggested that, at the present time, it is not the club's goal to accumulate funds other than just enough to meet yearly expenses.

The meeting on December 8 will include organizational subjects such as committee heads etc.

Craig Bush & Phil Bard conducted the tasting of member Pinot Gris and Viognier.

Three Pinot Gris wines were tasted. Results in order of tasting were:

- 1 - 2008 - Craig & Mindy Bush - 2nd place
- 2 - 2009 - Ken & Barb Stinger - 3rd place
- 3 - 2009 - Don Hoffard - 1st place

Five Viognier wines were tasted. Results in order of tasting were:

- 1 - 2009 - Barb Thompson - 5th place
- 2 - 2006 - Craig & Mindy Bush - 1st place
- 3 - 2008 - Barb Thompson - 2nd place
- 4 - 2009 - Jon Kahrs - 4th place
- 5 - 2009 - Don Hoffard - 3rd place

THE CONCEPT OF BALANCE IN WINE

This is a concept that on the surface seems very simple, but that turns out to be quite challenging. It is important to have some familiarity with what balance entails if you are to become a good wine taster.

Balance in wine refers to the interaction and harmony between two or more of the wine's constituents. By far the most straightforward balance is that between sugar and acidity. Not all wines, of course, have residual sugar, though all have some acidity. Sugar-acid balance is thus limited to wines that have interplay between these two elements.

There is no accurate formula for calculating the perfect acid-sugar balance in a wine, despite the fact that there are some people who advance that very notion. In its simplest sense, a wine that has a good acid-sugar balance tastes neither too sweet nor too acidic: the sugar exists in the right quantity for the acid, and vice versa.

By extension, a wine that is out of balance has either too much acid or too much sugar. There are plenty of off-dry-to-sweet white wines on the market that are more or less out of balance. A wine with too little sugar for its acid will taste harsh, sharp and acidic; the evolution of flavors in the mouth will be interrupted by the sensation of acidity. A wine with too much sugar will taste cloying, sugary and flabby, and will not refresh the palate.

Some wines have too much sugar and acid. They are often the result of a winemaker trying to balance a high acid with additions of sugar. These wines don't work, because the other elements of the wine, especially 'extract', don't match the sugar and acid. Experienced tasters often describe such wines as having a 'sweet-tart' character.

The balance between astringency (tannins) and acidity in red wines is of paramount importance. French enologist Emile Peynaud, in his book "The Taste of Wine", makes the following points:

- * The less tannic a wine is, the more acidity it can support.
- * The higher a red wine is in tannins, the lower should be its acidity.
- * The combination of high acid and high tannins make for the hardest and most astringent wines.
- * A wine tolerates acidity better when its alcohol content is higher.
- * A considerable amount of tannin is more acceptable if acidity is low and alcohol is high.

Another important balance is that between alcohol on the one hand, and acidity and astringency on the other. This is obviously most relevant to red wines. Too little alcohol will cause the acidity and astringency to dominate, making the wine harsh and thin. Too little acid and astringency will cause a wine to taste overly soft, heavy and flabby, with the spirit quality of the alcohol playing too much of a role.

These concepts find very useful application during the barrel aging of red wines. It is often found that a young Pinot, for example, tastes vaguely out of balance with regard to alcohol, acid and tannins. Small additions of acid to a laboratory sample seem to improve the wine. But what it really needs is more time in barrel, to pick up some tannin from the oak. After eight months or so the low acid becomes not only acceptable but also desirable.

In some wines, notably those from Alsace, there is interplay between small amounts of sweetness and bitterness. Remove the sugar, and the bitterness becomes too apparent; remove the bitterness, and the sweetness (exacerbated by low acid and high alcohol) will play too much of a role in the finish. Alsatian wines in some ways redefine the concept of balance.

Flavor intensity, sometimes referred to as extract, exists in balance with sweetness. Good late harvest wines, as well as sweet fortified wines, have an enormous amount of extract to give the wine interest. This is how such wines can be almost syrupy sweet while still managing to finish dry - a seemingly contradictory situation. These wines also have lots of astringency to aid in this effect. Australian wine tasters refer to the flavor intensity that balances sweet wines as 'lusciousness'.

Other aspects of wines that exist in balance are oak vs. fruit and age vs. youth. As you can imagine these are almost entirely in the realm of subjective response; some tasters love very oaky wines, while others would call the same wines horribly unbalanced. Whole nations can exhibit a preference for one character over another - in Great Britain, for example, there has traditionally been a strong leaning toward wines with extreme bottle age. To these drinkers a wine showing any fruit a flavor is one that needs more cellaring.

The temperature at which a wine is served can have a dramatic effect on the balance of its various elements. Low temperatures make tannins seem much more apparent - try chilling a full-bodied red wine down sometime to demonstrate this to yourself. Most people find that wine tastes less acidic at a low temperature. Sweet wines taste sweeter at higher temperatures, and by extension slightly sweet wines, served cold, will generally be perceived as dry.



High temperatures tend to make the alcohol in wine more apparent. This can be a problem with red wines drunk in the summertime - the alcohol, being very volatile, will spoil both the nose and the palate of the wine.



Varietal of the month

Pinot gris is a white wine grape variety of the species *Vitis vinifera*. Thought to be a mutant clone of the Pinot noir grape, it normally has a grayish-blue fruit, accounting for its name ("*gris*" meaning "grey" in French) but the grape can have a brownish pink to black and even white appearance. The word "Pinot", which means "pinecone" in French, could have been given to it because the grapes grow in small pinecone-shaped clusters. The wines produced from this grape also vary in color from a deep golden yellow to copper and even a light shade of pink, and it is one of the more popular grapes for orange wine. The clone of Pinot Gris grown in Italy is known as Pinot Grigio.

Pinot Gris has been known from the Middle Ages in the Burgundy region, where it was probably called Fromenteau. It spread from Burgundy, along with Pinot noir, arriving in Switzerland by 1300. The grape was reportedly a favorite of the Emperor Charles IV, who had cuttings imported to Hungary by Cistercian monks: the brothers planted the vines on the slopes of Badacsony bordering Lake Balaton in 1375. The vine soon after developed the name *Szürkebarát* meaning "grey monk." In 1711, a German merchant, named Johann Seger Ruland discovered a grape growing wild in the fields of the Palatinate. The subsequent wine he produced became known as *Ruländer* and the vine was later discovered to be Pinot gris.

Until the 18th and 19th century, the grape was a popular planting in Burgundy and Champagne but poor yields and unreliable crops caused the grape to fall out of favor in those areas. The same fate nearly occurred in Germany, but vine breeders in the early 20th century were able to develop clonal varieties that would produce a more consistent and reliable crop.

Researchers at the University of California, Davis, have determined that Pinot gris has a remarkably similar DNA profile to Pinot noir and that the color difference is derived from a genetic mutation that occurred centuries ago. The leaves and the vines of both grapes are so similar that the coloration difference is the only thing that tells them apart.

Around 2005, Pinot gris was enjoying increasing popularity in the marketplace, especially in its Pinot Grigio incarnation and similar New World varietal wines.

A major grape in Alsace, grown on 13.9% of the region's vineyard surface in 2006, the Pinot gris wine produced here are markedly different from Pinot gris found elsewhere. The cool climate of Alsace and warm volcanic soils are particularly well suited for Pinot gris, with its dry autumns allowing plenty of time for the grapes to hang on the vines, often resulting in wines of very powerful flavors.

Pinot gris was first introduced into Australia in 1832 in the collection of grapes brought by James Busby. In Victoria, wines from the grape are labeled both Pinot gris and Pinot grigio, depending on the sweetness of wine with the drier wines being labeled Pinot Grigio.

In Italy, where the grape is known as Pinot grigio, plantings can be found in the Lombardy region around Oltrepo Pavese and in Alto Adige, Italy's northern most wine region. The grape is also prominent in the Friuli-Venezia Giulia region.

In New Zealand Pinot gris is grown in both the North (Martinborough, Hawkes Bay, Gisborne) and South Islands (Central Otago, Nelson, Marlborough, Waipara), with 1,501 Ha producing as of 2009. This is over a 100% increase since 2006. In 2007 Pinot Gris overtook Riesling as the third most planted white variety after Sauvignon blanc and Chardonnay. Half of all plantings are in Canterbury and Marlborough, with the wine developing a "rich, flinty, fruit-laden character".

David Lett, from Eyrie Vineyards, planted the first American Pinot gris vines in Oregon in 1966. Hoping to increase sales, Lett started to graft Riesling vines to Pinot gris in 1981. The grape originally had difficulties finding a sustainable market until Lett began marketing the wine to salmon traders as a good match to the fish. The wine's popularity still only increased slightly until the mid -1990s when well-capitalized larger producers entered the picture with enough volume to warrant expensive marketing campaigns. In 1991, King Estate Winery was founded with a mission to produce enough high quality Oregon Pinot gris to develop a sustainable national market for the wine; they are credited with bringing the Pinot gris grape varietal into national consciousness in the U.S. Today they are the world's leading producer of premium Pinot gris and farm the world's largest contiguous organic vineyard that contains over 300 acres of Pinot Gris grapes.

The grape grows best in cool climates, and matures relatively early with high sugar levels. This can lead to either a sweeter wine, or, if fermented to dryness, a wine high in alcohol. Clusters of Pinot gris may have a variety of colors in the vine. These clusters can range from bluish grey to light pinkish brown. The grapes grow in small clusters and upon ripening, often display a pinkish-gray hue, although the colors can vary from blue-gray to pinkish-brown. Pinot gris is often blended with Pinot noir to enrich and lighten the Pinot noir's flavor.

Wines made from the Pinot gris vary greatly and are dependent on the region and wine making style they are from. Alsatian Pinot gris are medium to full bodied wines with a rich, somewhat floral bouquet. They tend to be spicy in comparisons with other Pinot gris. While most Pinot gris is meant to be consumed early, Alsatian Pinot gris can age well. German Pinot gris is more full-bodied with a balance of acidity and slight sweetness. In Oregon the wines are medium bodied with a yellow to copper-pink color and aromas of pear, apple, and/or melon. In California, the Pinot gris is lighter bodied with a crisp, refreshing taste with some pepper and arugula notes. The Pinot grigio style of Italy is a light-bodied; often lean wine that is light in color with sometimes-spritzly flavors that can be crisp and acidic. Although this wine can be very sweet, it will begin to lose its acidity when it is nearly ripe.



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@frontier.com

- 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, rkipper@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** mowntnwmn@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