



West Side Wine Club

December 2012

President's Musing's



Scheduled Meetings

January 12, 2013

Annual Gala

January 16, 2013

Crush Talk / planning

February 15, 2012

Bordeaux Tasting

March 21, 2012

Aroma Kit / Faults & Flaws

April 18, 2012

2011 Barrel / carboy
sample tasting

May 12, 2012

Tour, Johan Vineyards &
Winery

May 16, 2012

Speaker, Nicholas Keeler,
American Sales Manager
Tonnellerie Allary barrels

June 20, 2012

Speaker, Mike Hallock from
Carabella Winery

July 22, 2012

Annual Picnic, Oak Knoll

August 15, 2012

Other Whites Tasting

September 19, 2012

Other Reds Tasting

October 17, 2012

Pinot Noir Tasting

November 21, 2012

No meeting

December 5, 2012

Planning, Tours, Speakers,
Events, Elections. Pinot
Gris/Viognier Tasting

As I look out the window, the trees and scrubs are bare. Technically we are still in Fall but it looks like winter to me. In another two months the crocuses will bloom reminding us that the days will be getting longer again. One of the reasons I like wine making is that it reminds me of our roots in the earth. Our wine making is very seasonal. We pick in October and prepare the vineyard in the winter for the next year. I am already looking at my vines and thinking how I will prune them. We also celebrate our wine making and friendships at our annual winter gala to be held at Portland Wine Storage again this year. Keep any eye out for more, information.

Thanksgiving weekend is also a great time to go out and taste wine. I went with friends to Brickhouse, Ayres, Solena and Prive. A week before I went to a tasting at Crowley specifically for the Chardonnay which was #1 in Portland monthly for whites. His chardonnays were quiet good, especially the one based on clone 108 ---the clone we supposedly can't ripen. It was flavorful and silky with creaminess on the tongue. My first though was "Meursault!". The other chardonnay that Crowley made was from the Wente clone. Another "I doesn't ripen here" clone. This one was lighter and more ethereal -More Chablis than Montrachet-. It was also well crafted. I had tasted his chardonnay before and thought that his wine was one of the best as well. Nice to see my taste validated. I continue to focus on chardonnay as they are becoming more popular. Brickhouse also had a nice chardonnay although I did not like it as much as Crowley. I didn't get their chardonnay at first, but after a second try I could see that the bottle would age nicely. Tragically, most of us don't age chardonnay. One thing I have noticed is that the prices for chardonnay have skyrocketed. It used to be that you could get a very nice chardonnay for under \$30. That pricing seems to be gone.

The pinot noir we tried was good, but in most cases beyond us in price. \$50 pinot noir now seems to be normal for flagship wine. If people will pay for \$50 pinots -good for them. There is not a lot of money to made farming grapes. The lower end wines are now \$30 for the good wineries. Brickhouse had very light wines with subtle flavors. The wines were very smooth and I liked one of their pinots. Ayres was the wine with the best deals and ironically I found them far more accessible then the other wines. The wines were smooth with fine fruit. A tasting and bottle of wine came out to \$30. What a deal. Solena was a bit of a disappointment with high priced wines that were good but not \$50 good. We stopped by Prive and said high to Tina and Mark. Since our club tasted there Tina has added some eastern Washington grapes. Her Syrah came from two vineyards and was astonishingly good.

It will have been three years since I became president of the West Side Wine Making Club. I would like to think that, as an organization, we have really grown in those three years.

When I step down from the presidency on December 5th, we will elect a new President who will guide our club and generate new ways of thinking to help keep our club fresh. This holds true for all positions in our club. It is good to move our officers around to different positions to cross train so that we always have a deep bench. During my 3 years of service I have benefited a lot from the many people who have helped our club grow.

I would like to thank Ken and Barb for their hard work. Ken has been an invaluable asset to the club, producing a timely and interesting newsletter. This of course requires him to take notes at the meetings. Barb has had her hand in organizing our parties successfully and providing thoughtful advice at the meetings.

I would also like to thank Craig and Mindy Bush. As our tasting chair Craig has lead our tastings, while also providing us/me with his opinions and insights.

Information & Trivia

For anyone interested in entering the Newport Seafood & Wine Festival's amateur wine competition, the deadline for entering and submitting your wine is January 12th. In 2013 there is a limit of 75 entries total. See their website at <http://www.seafoodandwine.com>

Save the Date:
The annual West Side Wine Club Gala is set for Saturday, January 12, 2013 at Portland Wine Storage. Mark your calendars.

A quote from Greg Harrington, founder & winemaker of Gramercy Cellars: "Winemaking is 49% cleaning stuff, 49% moving heavy stuff and 2% drinking beer".

WRIGHT-ISMS

When I die, I'm leaving my body to science fiction.

I bought my brother some gift-wrap for Christmas. I took it to the Gift Wrap Department and told them to wrap it, but in a different print so he would know when to stop unwrapping.

One time the power went out in my house and I had to use the flash on my camera to see my way around. I made a sandwich and took fifty pictures of my face. The neighbors thought there was lightning in my house.

Mindy assisted our club by developing graphic posters and helping us out with the parties and picnics. -- and providing us with her scintillating conversation.

Mike Smolak was in charge of tours and was our very successful education chair this last year -- He also provided insightful comments and was a source of common sense when I needed it.

Sammy Nachimuthu led us through these 3 years as our Chair of Group Buys and expanded our portfolio of vineyards in eastern Washington.

Jack Seigendall brought his enthusiasm as tour organizer this last year. Scott Nelson "brought it" as treasurer while Phil Bard did a sterling job as the associate Tasting Chair. Thanks to Rick Kipper for his work in updating the website. I also wanted to thank our former Presidents, Dana Blizzard and Don Robinson for their assistance and insights. Also I would like to thank everyone who drove to eastern Washington to pick up grapes. This MUSE is too short to write all the names and I have a crappy memory anyway, but thanks to everyone. We made wine and had a great time. If I missed you, don't take it personally. Consider the source. J

Thanks to everyone for a great three years, and when we choose a new president, let's help make their tenure a great success.

Jon Kahrs, President, WSWC



The next meeting is scheduled Wednesday, December 5 at 7:00 p.m. at Oak Knoll.

- **Agenda : Election of officers, planning & member wines tasting and critique of Pinot Gris/Viognier.**
- **Snacks: This will be another potluck; bring a small snack to share.**
- **Place: At Oak Knoll Winery**
 - 1.) Please bring two glasses for tasting wines.
 - 2.) Waivers will be present at the meeting. If you have not previously signed a waiver for, please do so at the meeting.
 - 3.) The meeting will begin at 7pm and end by 9pm. If you can get there a little early to help set up, please help to put away chairs and tables at the end.

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

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

Club Elections:

We are requesting that all members seriously consider running for one of the Board positions or a committee chair position. You can also nominate someone else for one of these offices, with their permission of coarse. If nothing else, consider helping on one of the committees.

Please reply to kbstinger@frontier.com or jekahrs@aol.com with your nominations soon so we can put a slate together for distribution in advance of the December meeting.

- The Board positions* are:
- President
- Treasurer
- Secretary

- The committee chairs* are:
- Tastings
- Winery & Vineyard tours
- Group purchases
- Competitions
- Education
- Social events

So far Scott Nelson has expressed a willingness to stay on as Treasurer & Ken Stinger would stay on as Secretary if so desired. Jonathan Brown said he would like to serve on the group purchases committee. Jon Kahrs promises to work on the web site & Facebook pages.

WSU Research Gives Brett a Chill

Combination of temperature and sulfur dioxide shuts down unwanted yeast in wine. by Peter Mitham

Researchers at Washington State University are giving *Brettanomyces* the cold shoulder with new research that studies how temperature and sulfur dioxide impact the organism, and how the combination of the two help control its development in wine.

Brettanomyces bruxellensis—the yeast commonly known as Brett—is a scourge of wineries. While the yeast may be naturally present in vineyards, it can produce compounds that impart earthy, barnyard characters to wine.

Most winemakers want to shut the door against its establishment in wineries. Clean equipment helps avoid Brett, but established populations often are controlled by chilling fermenting wine and adding sulfur dioxide to prevent spoilage.

Working with Dr. Charles Edwards of the Washington State University/University of Idaho School of Food Science in Pullman, doctoral student Jesse Zuehlke wanted to know whether winemakers really needed the oft-recommended dose of 0.4 to 0.6 milligrams per liter of sulfur dioxide to control Brett during aging.

"There is a growing trend in winemaking now, it seems, to try and use lower amounts of sulfur dioxide," Zuehlke said. "Part of that comes from health concerns, part of it comes from environmental concerns, and part of it is just that's how the trend is going right now."

The research was part of a larger project investigating the relationship between temperature and sulfur dioxide in the control of Brett during wine aging. To maintain effective control of Brett, Zuehlke wanted to know if lower temperatures could maximize the effect of a reduced dose of sulfur dioxide.

Zuehlke set about investigating the correlation between the two elements, which often occur together as part of the winemaking process. "Winemakers know that it reduces the likelihood of spoilage by yeast and bacteria, but no one's really looked at it and tried to quantify exactly how much it reduces the likelihood of spoilage," he told Wines & Vines.

The experiment

Zuehlke took three strains of *B. bruxellensis* originally isolated from commercial Washington wineries and subjected them to four different temperatures —10°, 15°, 18°, and 22°C. The molecular form of sulfur dioxide was added at rates of zero, 0.2, 0.5, and 1.1 milligrams per liter.

Just one of the three yeast strains was able to survive at 10°C (about 50°F), and this strain was controlled by just 0.2 milligrams per liter of molecular sulfur dioxide — or, half the minimally recommended dose (full results will be documented in a paper Zuehlke is submitting next month for publication.)

"You have a lot of different attributes of the food or the environment that will alone do a little bit to limit the growth of a yeast or bacteria," Zuehlke said. "By putting all of those together you create a lot of small hurdles that completely stop the growth of what you're looking at — in our case, *Brettanomyces*."

The information will help winemakers better understand Brett's behavior, and to produce wines with fewer additives.

Real-life applications

A better understanding about what controls Brett is welcomed by Joshua Maloney, director of winemaking at Milbrandt Vineyards in Mattawa, who has dealt with Brett first-hand at wineries in the past.

In addition to chilling and sulfur dioxide, he's also found a rigorous racking schedule to be helpful in knocking down an infection and preventing the production of undesirable compounds.

"Brett lives in the bottom. And if you routinely get away from the stuff living in the bottom, if you just rack off and leave it behind, you can actually knock the population down," he said.

This prevents the yeast population from reaching a point where it produces 4-ethylphenol and 4-ethylguaiacol, the compounds that contribute negative characters to wine. Maloney's experience indicates that Brett strains in Eastern Washington show their nasty side at concentrations of more than 5,000 cells per milliliter.

"But below that level, particularly at 200 cells per milliliter, it generally doesn't produce any of those nasty characters," he said. "So, if you have Brett, and you just keep regular racking, you keep your population low, and you keep your wine at 55°F and 35-40 parts free sulfur, you can generally avoid having any 4-ethylphenol and 4-ethylguaiacol produced."

Making Sense of Reduction

From "PinotFile", Nov. 2011

Reduction is a term used by winemakers and wine critics in the context of wine production and evaluation that wine drinkers rarely understand. It is like the Big Bang theory: a mysterious dark energy that hardly any normal person apprehends. Fortunately, we have talents who can explain reduction in understandable terms. The following offers unedited discussions of reduction and its significance in wine evaluation from Allen Meadows, aka Burghound, and a very geeky, scientific discourse on reduction's role in fermentation from Kerith Overstreet, M.D., the cerebral winemaker for Bruliam Wines.

Allen Meadows on Reduction

Because of the continued use, in fact growth, of reductive winemaking in Burgundy, more and more in-barrel tastings that occur after malolactic fermentations, result in notes that refer to reduction. When wines are reduced, I say so rather than substituting a wine writing euphemism. p> The reason that the term reduction is seen so often is because more and more Burgundians, for both red and white wines, are now practicing what is called reductive winemaking. Effectively, what this means is that they are increasingly working with the fine lees; while this has long been accepted practice with whites, it has now spread to the reds as well. As a result, they rack less often or not at all and when they do, it's often with limited or no exposure to oxygen. Indeed, more and more vigneronas rack only in preparation for the bottling, which means that when I and other reviewers pass by to take a look at the wines a year after they were made, they are generally in a pretty reduced state.

Without getting into a chemical analysis (see Overstreet's discussion below), of which I am ill-equipped to guide you anyway, this practice often results in a highly reductive environment in barrel, which simply put is the absence of oxygen.

Winemakers have long understood that too much oxygen, particular in whites, is not a good thing because it oxidizes them and in extreme cases, can turn both reds and whites prematurely brown. However, the reverse can be taken to an extreme as well and when this occurs, a condition known as reduction occurs. A reduced wine smells dirty and in particular of sulfur compounds. A heavily reduced wine will taste of it as well and when extreme reduction occurs, mercaptans appear.

Mercaptans smell of burnt rubber, garlic, stale sweat among other descriptors and suffice it to say, that is very unpleasant and if not corrected, can ruin a wine.

Reduction is, generally speaking, easily cured simply by introducing oxygen. As a practical matter, the way that this is most often done is to rack the wine from one barrel to another, which introduces oxygen and eliminates most of the lees (though sometimes they are kept and added back). However, if reduction appears in a finished, bottled wine, it is a clear flaw and while aeration (decanting) will usually clear it up, some wines are permanently reduced and about all that can be done is to put a penny in the wine. Sounds bizarre, but it works! (Note that my wife suggests a clean penny).

The reason that reduction is significant is because it renders a wine particularly difficult to judge. Slight reduction is not something to worry about because the basic characteristics of the wine are still evident. Heavy reduction that extends to the flavors makes a wine almost impossible to accurately judge and if the condition is left untreated it can permanently mark a wine. This risk explains why traditional practice in Burgundy is to rack a wine after the malolactic fermentation is finished so as to introduce some oxygen and thus dissipate the reductive aromas. However, with ever more precise analytical tools, a winemaker can push the edge of the envelope in this regard and still not reach a condition where more radical or invasive solutions are required to fix a problem. While this practice probably does result in richer and more complex wines, it makes the review process extremely difficult while the wines are in this state. I share this with you in the interest of full disclosure as I make every effort to judge a wine as accurately as possible but when there are limitations on my ability to do so, it's incumbent upon me to say just that.....It stands to reason that the closer any wine is to its finished state the more accurate the guidance will be.

Kerith Overstreet, M.D. on Reduction

"Let's talk about NAD+/NADH and electron swapping. It's like wife swapping but better."

"Redox" is an abbreviation of reduction and oxidation. These are terms that describe the way organic compounds swap and exchange electrons. When you gain an electron, it's called reduction. Your overall charge is more negative; you're reduced from no net charge to say -1. If someone steals your electron, you're oxidized. Since oxygen is notorious for swiping electrons from unsuspecting compounds, electron loss is called oxidation. There is a nifty pneumonic for this: "OIL/RIG." Oxidation is loss (of electrons) and reduction is gain (of electrons).

This concept is paramount since electrons are energy. In fact, electron energy potential is stored in a compound called NADH. NADH can give away an electron to become NAD+. When this happens, NADH is itself oxidized, the electron recipient is reduced since it takes that electron. NADH's potential energy, in the form of electron donations, is known as "reducing power." NADH energy drives cellular functions and metabolism. It's energy currency, but it goes both ways (like wife swapping). Say you've got a lot to do so you burn through all of your NADH savings. Well, you're stuck with a stockpile of NAD+. From an energy perspective, it's pretty useless. It's like finding an empty gum wrapper at mile 20 of a marathon. Its a black fly in your Chardonnay. Even so, you need some way to convert your NAD+ back to the good stuff, so you can proceed with your day. Enter fermentation.

Along the path of fermentation, grape sugars travel the trajectory from sticky, sweet grape juice to vino. The very first step of fermentation is a chemical conversion that initiates the magic, when grape sugars are transformed to pyruvate. Listen, you don't want to down a kegger of pyruvate, but it's a start. But in order for glucose and fructose to become pyruvate, they need to give up an electron. What you say? You mean glucose and fructose are **oxidized** to pyruvate? Yes, it's true. And can you guess who sops up all of those freebie electrons? NAD+ of course. Fermentation actually helps recycle the NAD+ and renews the energy coffers. In fact, early fermentation, during the yeast exponential growth phase (characterized by an orgy of asexual budding), yeast require lots and lots of reducing power and harness the power of NADH to grow and reproduce. Luckily, our insatiable appetite for wine can make that happen. I've got bins of glucose and fructose at the ready. You are aware that the final step of fermentation is the conversion of acetaldehyde to ethanol. This is the most important step since it makes wine, wine. Ethanol is the final electron acceptor. It's a Hanukkah miracle come early. Acetaldehyde is **reduced** to ethanol. You know that the electron comes from NADH, the same stuff that was recycled when glucose and fructose were oxidized back at step #1. It's a perfectly balanced cycle. The first step of fermentation generates the reducing power (NADH) that ultimately reduces acetaldehyde to ethanol. Ethanol captures that final electron, regenerating the NAD+ necessary to keep the machine churning.

Yeast stockpile a pretty limited supply of NAD+, and without its regeneration, fermentation of grape sugars would grind to a halt. To keep fermentation moving, the redox balance must remain in check. The yeast adjust to the evolving flux in sugar, temperature, and alcohol by tinkering with and maintaining the redox balance."

How Oregon's Prized Pinot Noir Grapes Will Take The Heat Of Climate Change

by ALASTAIR BLAND

Pinot noir grapes are notoriously finicky about the weather, and climate change has winemakers in Oregon thinking about the future.

Some grapes like it hot.

But for growers of Pinot Noir, mild summers tempered by chilly nights and fresh ocean air make for award-winning, fortune-finding wines. Such a climate has turned Oregon into a producer of some of the world's most highly regarded Pinot Noir. This variety, which seemed to receive a strong sales boost from the 2004 film *Sideways*, accounts for about 60 percent of Oregon's wine production and 70 percent of Oregon's total wine sales.

But as global warming nudges average temperatures upward across the planet and causes tumultuous, grape-damaging weather changes, winemakers in Oregon are wondering just how their superstar grape will fare — if at all.

"Fifty years from now, we could be required to change to new grape varieties," said Harry Nedry-Peterson, owner of Chehalem Wines in Newburg.

Already, Nedry-Peterson says, the wines of Oregon are changing. He says the average alcohol content in his wines has increased over the past 20 years — a result of higher sugar levels produced in warmer, sunnier years. And while some of his best vineyards were "only marginally adequate" producers 30 years ago, today they produce first-rate wines, he says.

"The warming we've seen has benefited those vines," Nedry-Peterson said.

But if the warming trend continues, then what? Nedry-Peterson says moving vineyards to higher elevations could keep the good Pinot flowing from Oregon's wine country. Shifting to north-facing hillsides could buy some time, too — and a few degrees — as could allowing greater foliage growth on each vine to shield the grapes from the sun.

Another area winemaker, Alex Sokol Blosser of his family's namesake winery in the Dundee Hills, says that irrigating Oregon's mostly dry-farmed vineyards could mitigate somewhat for increasingly warm summers.

Warmer summers are already a reality. Greg Jones, a research climatologist at the University of Southern Oregon, says the last decade was, worldwide, the warmest ever recorded, and that Northern Hemisphere temperatures are now between one and three degrees Celsius warmer than the 1961 to 1990 average.

Though Jones says small adjustments in basic vineyard management will probably allow Oregon's winemakers to deal adequately with gradual long-term temperature changes, what could really hurt grape growers, he says, are the extremes, like record-high temperatures, unprecedented storm events, cold spells like farmers have never seen before, and severe droughts. (As we've reported, the extreme weather changes expected will also make for extreme food price fluctuations throughout the world.)

Just last year was considered the most turbulent weather year on record in Oregon, says Jones. That spring was the coldest since 1890, he says, that June, the wettest, that September the warmest, and that fall the driest.

"Pinot Noir is still king here, but these events make us wonder, 'What are the drought and heat thresholds that different grape varieties can stand?'" Jones says.

Pinot Noir is a notoriously difficult grape to grow. It has tight, almost seamless clusters that may trap moisture and begin rotting should any late-season rain fall on them. The grapes are also particularly susceptible to sunburn, which damages the complex nuances of flavor and aroma that can make Pinot Noir such a fine and expensive wine. Thus, in a warmer or wetter future, other, hardier grape varieties could be in order.

Figure 2

Ray Nuclu, vineyard manager at Croft Vineyards in the Willamette Valley, believes a warmer future would provide plenty of wiggle room in Oregon. That is, while Pinot Noir quality could falter, winemakers could still turn to Syrah, Merlot, or Cabernet Sauvignon as possible replacements. California's winemakers are struggling with similar uncertainties.

But there is another possible outcome of climate change, and one that seems to scare the grape growers even more than the heat: A cooler future along the coast.

"The Pacific Northwest is a cool area already, and if that's the scenario, we could be pushed out of growing Pinot Noir," Nuclu says. "There wouldn't be a lot of good options for us. We're already a cold area at about the limit of where Pinot Noir will grow, and if it got much cooler I'm not sure what we could do."

West Side Wine Club Leadership Team – 2012

- President: **Jon Kahrs** jekahrs@aol.com
- Set agenda for the year
- Establish leadership team
- Assure that objectives for the year are met
- Set up agenda and run meetings

Treasurer: **Scott Nelson** nelsonsw@gmail.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
- Keep updated list of members, name tags and other data

Chair of Education: **Mike Smolak** Mike@NWRetire.com

- Arrange speakers for our meetings

Chair for Tastings: **Craig Bush** pnoir1@hotmail.com & Phil Bard phil@philbard.com

- Conduct club tastings
- Review and improve club tasting procedures

Chair of Winery/Vineyard Tours: **Jack Seigendall** jseigend@comcast.net

- Select wineries to visit
- Arrange tours
- Cover logistics (food and money)

Chair of Group Purchases: **Sammy Nachimuthu** murugasamy_nachimuthu@yahoo.com

& Daniel Larson daniel@genesislabels.com

Makes the arrangements to purchase, collect, and distribute.

- Grape purchases
- Supplies – These should be passed to the President for distribution

Chair of Competitions: **Miriam Schnepf** mowtnwmn@gmail.com 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 kbstinger@frontier.com
murugasamy_nachimuthu@yahoo.com

- Awards Gala / Holliday parties

- Web Content Editor: **Rick Kipper** kips@lycos.com

Webmaster: **David Ladd**