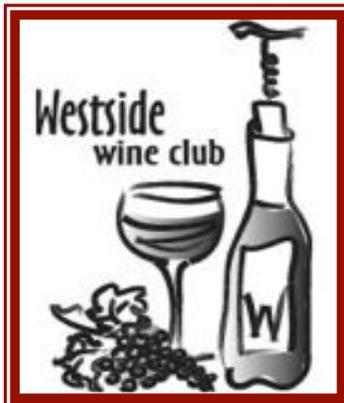


West Side Wine Club

December 2010



President's Musings



Scheduled Meetings

January 19, 2011

Crush talk

January 22, 2011

Holiday Party/Awards
Gala

February 16, 2011

Red Bordeaux tasting

February 27, 2011

Argyle Winery Tour

March 16, 2011

Speaker: Robert Brittan
of Brittan Vineyards

April 20, 2011

Speaker

May Winery Tours

May 18, 2011

Speaker

June 15, 2011

Other whites / Fruit
Wine / Mead / Sparkling

July 17, 2011

Annual Picnic at Oak
Knoll

August 17, 2011

Chardonnay Tasting

September 21, 2011

Other Reds Tasting

October 19, 2011

Pinot Noir tasting

November 16, 2011

Pinot Gris/Viognier

December 7, 2011

Planning, tours,
speakers, events

February's Hint of Spring to come.

February is here. A mild winter has given us 3 weeks of great weather. Weather which we all enjoyed at the Winter Gala. I had a blast and I know you did too. Special Thanks again to Sammy and Barb for their work in making it such a success. I also want to call out Mindy Bush for her dedicated and unrecognized (until now) contributions in developing and providing "marketing materials" for our club. Mindy provided everything from recruitment posters to an awards sheet. I want to reiterate my thanks to the officers and active members for their planning and assistance in making 2010 a great success for our club. For the last 40 years, the WSWC has been providing great tastings, great speakers and wonderful tours to our members. As your continuing WSWC president, it is my goal to insure that we have a productive and exciting year for 2011. But I can only lead a horse to water: You have to drink.

For our upcoming year, we will continue to build on our successes in 2010:

*Sammy will continue to work with Eastern Washington bring an incredible diversity of grapes to offer our members. We will continue to refine our group purchase process with the goal of providing outstanding service to our club members along with succinct and professional communication to the vineyard owners.

*We had some exciting speakers in 2009. Already we have two winemakers set to speak and some other ideas to follow. Craig Bush will "make it work".

*Mike Smolak has set our tour for Argyle. I am presently working on the Soter tour and once that is set I will focus on the Gorge Tour.

*Ken Stinger will continue to provide our club with high quality newsletters, along with event reminders and records of each meeting.

*Rick Kipper will continue to keep our website up to date. I will be working to do some revamping of the site, including (hopefully) a page where we will have information on our group buys.

I am constantly reminded of the value that this club provides. The issue of sulfites came up at crush talk in December. Recently, Don Robinson and I were evaluating a barrel of Sangiovese that, a couple of months before, was developing nicely. We tasted the barrel and noticed some off flavors. I suggested that there might be a sulfite issue. We tested the sample and the sulfite level was in the single digits. When we looked at some 2009 Syrah with a high PH but no surface mold, we guessed that the sample was probably adequately covered by sulfites- and it was. A regular tasting and testing the wines for SO₂ is clearly essential. In fact, perhaps this is essential for any wine with moderate to high PHs. Even high acid wines need to be tested to determine whether and if malolactic fermentation should/has been started. In a nutshell, this year I resolve to buy higher quality pinot and to test and maintain proper sulfite levels. Good new year's resolutions to have. We'll see if I keep to these resolutions after we know when our bud break has occurred.

Let's make 2011 another awesome year.

Jon Kahrs

Web Sites of Interest

If you crave reading more technically oriented Enology articles see this site at Virginia Tech's Enology Department. I know it's on the east coast but it's full of good stuff. Included is a titration procedure for determining free amino nitrogen (FAN) in pre-fermentation musts. Go to:
<http://www.vtwines.info/>

In ancient Babylon, the bride's father would supply his son-in-law with all the mead (fermented honey beverage) he could drink for a month after the wedding. Because their calendar was lunar or moon-based, this period of free mead was called the "honey month," or what we now call the "honeymoon."

Before thermometers were invented, brewers would dip a thumb or finger into the liquid to determine the ideal temperature, neither too hot nor too cold, for adding yeast. From this we get the phrase "rule of thumb."

In English pubs drinks are served in pints and quarts. In old England, bartenders would advise unruly customers to mind their own pints and quarts. It's the origin of "mind your P's and Q's."



Enter your wines and compete for gold, silver and bronze medals in 50 categories. You can gain international recognition for your winemaking skills and get feedback on your wines from the judging panel. Go to:
<http://winemakermag.com/competition> Dates: Entry deadline for wines to arrive in Vermont: **March 4, 2011**

Next Meeting: Wednesday, February 16 at 7:00 p.m.

Agenda: Red Bordeaux tasting (Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Cabernet Franc, Petit Verdot, Malbec, Carmanere) or any blend thereof.

Snacks: Everyone bring a small, easy to clean up appetizer to share.

Place: Home of Jon & Wendy Gassaway; 1179 NW Weybridge Way Beaverton. Our house is just off of 173rd in Beaverton, between Walker Rd. and Cornell Rd. Directions From Hwy 26:

Hwy 26 Westbound from Portland:

- 1) Take the Cornell Rd. exit and turn left onto Cornell Rd.
- 2) Drive ~ 1 mile on Cornell then turn left onto 173rd (traffic light).
- 3) Drive past the school, then turn left onto Weybridge Way at either of the two entrances. Our house is blue and has a tempranillo vine draped over an archway out front.

Hwy 26 Eastbound (toward Portland) from Hillsboro:

- 1) Take the 185th St. exit and turn right onto 185th St.
- 2) After several lights, turn left onto Cornell Rd.
- 3) Turn right at 173rd (the 2nd stoplight)
- 4) Drive past the school, then turn left onto Weybridge Way at either of the two entrances. Our house is blue and has a tempranillo vine draped over an archway out front.

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

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

A few reminders:

- 1.) Please bring two glasses from which to taste and 10 score sheets.
- 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: We will all need to fill out and sign a new waiver for 2011. The waiver form and score sheets can be obtained from our web site (above) under "Current News".

January Meeting Minutes

Nineteen members were present. Please welcome new members Keith & Leah Peterson.

Jon opened the meeting at 7:18. The February meeting will be held at someone's home since Marge will be on vacation. E-mail will follow for the time and location.

We will have a speaker for the March meeting, Robert Brittan of Brittan Winery. Craig Bush will schedule for another speaker later in the year. Phil Bard suggested that Mike Hallock of Carabella Winery would also be a good speaker. Also, Mike Blackard from Portocork will be scheduled for one of the remaining open dates.

Dana Blizzard would like to have a special commercial tasting of the wines from Southern Oregon's Applegate Valley.

Jon would like for members to start thinking about grape purchases from Eastern Washington now.

Jon will schedule winery tours at Soter Vineyards and possibly Rocco Winery in March or April.

Mike Smolak will set up a tour with Argyle Winery sometime in March.

"Mainbrew" has opened their new outlet on Sunset highway for homebrew and wine making supplies.

Barbara Stinger reported on the upcoming Gala. Everything has been arranged and all protein dishes have been assigned. Gala admission fee and dues can be paid at the door. So far 47 people have responded to attend.

It was mentioned that Lallemand "Rhone 4600" is a very good yeast for white wines, rose and Sparkling.

Crush talk:

There was a lively discussion around all phases of our winemaking this fall. We took turns describing wines we are making from the 2010 harvest. Mostly good results reported so far from Washington and Southern Oregon grapes. However, there were many complaints about Willamette Valley Pinot Noir grapes centering on insufficiently ripe fruit, high acid and bunch rot. Some folks are turning it into Rose and a couple mentioned making it into sparkling. We have been spoiled with so many good years here in Oregon so it's inevitable that we have a bad year. One or two bad years out of ten is a pretty good record.

WSWC Annual Awards Gala held January 22, 2011 at Portland Wine Storage

It was evident that everyone had a great time this year at our annual Gala which didn't end until nearly 11:00 PM. About 50 people converged on the Portland Wine Storage facility in SE Portland to celebrate the holiday season and to recognize all of our members who received competition awards during 2010. This year, this included first, second and third place certificates to recognize winners of our club's blind tastings. Thanks to Craig & Mindy Bush for keeping good records and for preparing the certificates. Members brought plenty of their award winning wines for us to sample along with ample food and desserts. President Jon Kahrs gave an award winners. Thanks go out to Barb Craig & Mindy Bush and everyone else who worked with the Gala committee for a job well done.



us to sample along with ample food and inspiring speech and recognized all of the Stinger, Sammy Nachimuthu, Bill Spiller, who worked with the Gala committee for a



Thanks go to Mike Hauser for the great photos.



We will taste member wines made from Bordeaux varietals in our next meeting on February 16 so here is a run down of the Bordeaux region of France.

Bordeaux

Red Bordeaux (or "Claret" as the British have always known it) can be the epitome of fine wine. The best wines exhibit a wonderful complexity of aromas and flavors, great elegance and refinement and an ability to age gracefully - some for a hundred years.

Like all of France, quality wine production in Bordeaux is governed by a set of regulations known as "Appellation Contrôlée", often abbreviated to "AC". An AC covers a certain geographical district and governs production of wine within the district. The whole of the Bordeaux region is covered by a couple of catchall, generic ACs: *AC Bordeaux* and *AC Bordeaux Supérieur* (the latter is higher in alcohol, but not necessarily better). An enormous quantity of inexpensive, "everyday" wine is made under these ACs. Though this is not the "great" Bordeaux that all the fuss is about, it can provide very attractive, reliable drinking.

There are also many smaller, named areas, each entitled to its own AC: *AC Fronsac*, or *AC Pomerol* for example. These more specific ACs are usually superior to generic Bordeaux and have stricter regulations. To the west of the river Gironde, the vineyards of the Médoc and Graves are based on gravelly soil and are planted mainly with Cabernet Sauvignon vines. To the east lie Pomerol and St-Emilion, two smaller areas of predominantly clay soil, planted with a higher proportion of Merlot. Hence we have "left bank" and "right bank" wines.

The wines from each area can have quite a different character because of the different soils and predominant grape variety. This also means that one is usually more successful than the other in any given year.



Bordeaux Grapes

No matter where they are from, almost all red Bordeaux is blended wine: made from two or more grapes. Red wine grape varieties allowed in Bordeaux, in order of importance, are: Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Cabernet Franc, Malbec and Petit Verdot & Carmanere.

Bordeaux also produces considerable quantities of white wine. Grape varieties permitted are: Sémillon, Sauvignon Blanc and Muscadelle.

Classic Regions - The Médoc

The Médoc is home to most of the great, classic Bordeaux. You will find wines labeled AC Médoc that are usually one step above basic Bordeaux, but the very best wines of the Médoc come from even more tightly defined ACs *within* the Médoc. The best of these individual ACs include: AC Margaux, AC St-Julien, AC Pauillac and AC St-Estèphe.

Large winemaking estates, known as châteaux, dominate this region. While many of these do indeed have a château as their HQ, others have nothing more than the vineyards and a collection of ordinary working buildings. Unlike many producers from other parts of the world, each château tends to produce only one "grand vin" which carries its name. Some of them also make a white wine, and many make a second wine, from vats not considered good enough for the "grand vin". Each of the top ACs of the Médoc has its own character:

Margaux is home to the most perfumed, elegant and "feminine" wines

Pauillac three 1ers Crus. Classic, powerful yet elegant wines

St-Julien the epitome of Claret: savory, well-balanced and refined

St-Estèphe wines are structured, tannic, long-lasting, "masculine" wines.

In 1855 Médoc wines were **classified**. From the many thousands of wines produced in the area, just sixty were thought worthy of classification. These sixty were sorted into five ranks or, in French, "Crus" (meaning "growths"), i.e. "Premier Cru" (first growth), "Deuxième Cru" (second growth) and so on.

There are only five top ranking Premier Cru wines:

Château Lafite-Rothschild

Château Latour

Château Margaux

Château Haut-Brion (actually in Graves)

Château Mouton-Rothschild.

All classed growth wines command very high prices and sadly many of these, particularly the Premiers Crus, are bought by investors as often as by wine lovers. Who knows if they will ever be drunk?

To this day the classification remains more-or-less unchanged and many of the original classified châteaux are still producing some of the world's greatest wines. Of course strong arguments could be made for promotions and relegations within the classification. A group of wines known as the "super seconds" are generally acknowledged to be Premiers Crus in all but name, and a few of the original châteaux have either gone or have lost their reputation. However, apart from some obvious anomalies, it is remarkable how the bulk of the classification holds up, even after 150 years.

The Médoc Crus Bourgeois

Just below these classed growth superstars of Bordeaux are a host of wines known as the "Crus Bourgeois". Many fine wines can be found within this classification - some are worthy of classed growth status, yet are available at a fraction of the price. In 2006 a court case found that the classification of the Crus Bourgeois was illegal, and pending a restructuring which means wines will have to be independently assessed for inclusion each vintage, the whole classification was temporarily suspended.

Graves

Graves lies to the south of the city of Bordeaux. This region produces both red and dry white wines on the very gravelly soils after which the region is named. The red wines tend to express a soft, earthy quality. Like the Médoc this region was also **classified**, but not until 1959. Only a couple of dozen châteaux are entitled to the words "Grand Cru" on their label.

The best vineyard sites of the Graves are clustered in the North of the region. That is where almost all the Grand Crus are situated. In 1987, this area was given a brand new AC of its very own: *Pessac-Léognan*. Wines bearing these words on their label should be of higher quality than most Graves.

The undoubted super-star of the area is Château Haut-Brion. As noted earlier, this property was actually declared a Premier Cru in the 1855 classification of the Médoc due to its exceptional quality. Uniquely, it is allowed to have both classifications on its label: *Médoc Premier Cru* and *Graves Grand Cru*. Its sister property, La Mission Haut-Brion, is also capable of the highest quality.

St-Emilion

Although the area is quite large, the properties here tend to be much smaller and less grand, and the wines

(exclusively red) are very different. The soil is clay and limestone rather than gravel, and the dominant grape variety is not Cabernet Sauvignon, but the softer Merlot and Cabernet Franc. The wines tend to be approachable at a younger age and to have a warm-blooded fruitiness.

It is an area that requires a little bit of caution because of its **classification** system. St-Emilion wines are divided into 5 classifications. In ascending order, these are:

- St-Emilion
- St-Emilion Grand Cru
- St-Emilion Grand Cru Classé
- St-Emilion Premier Grand Cru Classé "B"
- St-Emilion Premier Grand Cru Classé "A".

Obviously this could be rather confusing as you stand in front of the wine-merchants' shelves! To add to the confusion, unlike the 1855 classification of the Médoc, St-Emilion's system is revised every 10 years or so, with promotions and demotions as necessary.

Pomerol

Pomerol is by far the smallest of the great regions. It has 2 basic constituents that determine the character of its wines: the soil is thick, heavy clay and one grape variety dominates: Merlot. Pomerol wines are extremely soft, seductive and full of spice and vivid fruit. The production tends to be tiny in the area, so the wines are generally expensive. Indeed, Pomerol is home to some of the world's most expensive wines such as Châteaux Pétrus and Le Pin, the latter producing little more than 500 cases each year. You will rarely see these wines in shops as they are snapped up years in advance of production. Look for more reasonably priced wines such as Petit-Village, Le Bon Pasteur and Clos René. The wines of Pomerol have never been classified.

Sauternes and Barsac

The Bordeaux area also produces world class white wines, though invariably in tiny quantities. The most famous of these are the sweet wines of Sauternes and Barsac, including the almost legendary Château d'Yquem. These luscious wines (also **classified** in 1855) are created by a particular and unpredictable fungus, called botrytis. Botrytis rots the grapes, leaving them high in sugar and glycerine that leads to their eventual silky, honeyed sweetness.

The best *dry* white wines come from the Graves area. Though often of tremendous quality, these tend to be scarce and the famous names are very expensive.

The minor regions

From the inexpensive, soft, fruity and delicious wines of the *Premières Côtes de Blaye* in the north of the Bordeaux region, to the moderately-priced structured, tannic and impressive wines of *Fronsac* or *Lalande de Pomerol*, the "lesser" red wines of Bordeaux are not to be despised. While the finesse and breeding of the top classed growths might be missing, the red wines of the region are generally very reliable and well made.

The dry whites of the region, from areas like *Entre-Deux-Mers* or simple *AC Bordeaux* can produce refreshing, zippy, occasionally slightly tart wines for drinking young. Areas around Sauternes, like *Sainte-Croix-du-Mont* or *Loupiac* which lie just across the Gironde, also produce sweet, sometimes botrytis affected wines that can be very good and are moderately priced.

Rosé is also produced in the Bordeaux region, often from the Cabernet Sauvignon. It can be delicious stuff with bright, supple fruit and refreshing acidity.

NOTICE, WINERY TOUR IN FEBRUARY

Mike Smolak has set up a tour of Argyle Winery. It is scheduled for February 27 starting at 11:00 AM at the winery in Dundee. There will be a \$10 per person fee. Space will be limited to 15 people. Contact Mike Smolak at : <mailto:smolakm@dimensionresources.com> to reserve your spot.

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

Chair of Education: **Craig Bush** pnoir1@frontier.com

- Arrange speakers for our meetings

Chair for Tastings: **Craig Bush** pnoir1@frontier.com

- Conduct club tastings
- Review and improve club tasting procedures

Chair 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

Webmaster: **David Ladd**

Chair 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@frontier.com
- Supplies – These should be passed to the President for distribution

Chair 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