



West Side Wine Club

January 2015

Monthly Rant

Scheduled Meetings

January 10, 2015

Annual Gala – Archer Winery

January 21, 2015

Crush Talk / Planning

February 18, 2015

Bordeaux Tasting

March 18, 2015

Speaker: ?

April 15, 2015

2013 Barrel / Carboy Sample Tasting

April ?, 2015

Tour: ?

May 20, 2015

Speaker: ?

June 17, 2015

“Best Practices of Amateur Winemakers”

July ?, 2015

Annual Picnic

August 19, 2015

All Whites Tasting

September 16, 2015

Other Reds Tasting

October 21, 2015

Pinot Noir Tasting

November

No Meeting

December 2, 2015

Planning, Tours, Speakers, Events, Elections



End of another year. Time for thank you's and reflections back. My thanks to everyone who in some way makes this club successful, that includes many but especially it means the committee chairs and fellow officers. Ken Stinger (and Barb), Barb Thomson, Mike Smolak, Ted Johnson, Bill Brown, Jonathan Brown, Don Robinson and Marlene Grant, for each doing a great job with his or her respective obligation. Also to Rick Kipper for website management, not something we think about as often as we should. Having been a member of numerous clubs and boards over the years I have a great deal of appreciation for how the strength and success of any given group is a function of the people who contribute. So thanks everybody...

I can't speak for everyone on this, but I for one had a great time making wine this year. From trips to pick, and pick up, bins of beautiful fruit, to savoring the warm weather that we had for the early phase of the winemaking process. Usually a trip back from eastern Oregon with grapes on board finishes with a shivering round of weighing out and crushing fruit in the fading evening light. But this year, with everything coming in so early, each crush was sunshine and short sleeves, and that was nice. A little hard on cold macerations, but still nice. I suppose we could call it Oregon winemaking California style. Fine as long as the wines taste like they were made in Oregon.

See you all at the Gala!

Phil



Information & Trivia

The updated 2013 Oregon Vineyard and Winery Production Final Report is available at:

[http://
www.oregonwine.org/
news/media-information/
winery-and-vineyard-
reports.aspx](http://www.oregonwine.org/news/media-information/winery-and-vineyard-reports.aspx)

The next WSWC event is the annual Gala scheduled for Saturday, January 10 starting at 4:00 p.m. at Archer Winery. See below for additional information. The next regular meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, January 21 at 7:00 p.m. at Oak Knoll Winery. Agenda : Planning for 2015, crush Talk. We need suggestions for speakers and winery/vineyard tours or special places we might visit. Bring a bottle for us to share. How are your 2014 wines doing so far?

- 1.) Snacks: This will be another potluck; bring a small snack to share.
- 2.) As you will see at the Gala we have a new waiver that includes the club grape purchase rules. Everyone needs to sign a new waiver. You may also pay your 2015 dues at the Gala.
- 3.) Bring wine glasses for tasting member wines.
- 4.) The regular club meeting will begin at 7 pm and end by 9 pm. If you can, get there a little early to help set up. Please help put away chairs and tables at the end of the meeting.

WSWC Website: <http://www.westsidewineclub.com/>
Message Board: <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/Westsidewineclub/>

The December meeting minutes were printed in the December Newsletter



WSWC Annual Gala

Saturday January 10th 2015

4:00pm—9:00 pm

Archer Winery

32230 NE Old Parrett MTN Rd.
Newberg Oregon 97132

Bring your own wine glass and favorite wines to share.

If your last name starts with:

A - O please bring Side Dish

P - Z please bring Dessert

Come for great food, and
“of course” the great wine!

\$15.00 per person

Pay at the door also renew your membership

From Portland, Archer Winery is off Hwy 99W before entering the town of Newberg, Turn Left on Parrett Mountain Rd. It is 300 yards on right.

2014 Oregon Harvest Report: Vintage delivers exceptional quality grapes at higher than normal yields

Wine Business The 2014 vintage in Oregon may be remembered as the vintage of a lifetime. From bud break through harvest, growers and winemakers throughout the state experienced an almost ideal growing season that delivered a record amount of exceptionally balanced fruit.

The vintage milestones averaged two weeks early from bud break through harvest, with some sites and varieties maturing as much as three weeks early. Growing conditions were mostly dry and warmer than normal throughout the spring providing a great environment for flowering and fruit set. The result was large clusters that ripened evenly over the course of the warm, dry summer. The 2014 vintage broke the previous record for heat accumulation during the growing season, set in 2006. This record was broken not by the daytime highs but rather the overnight lows being higher than normal for most of the year. This allowed the grapes to continue ripening through véraison without putting heat stress on the vines.

Harvest began around Sept. 12, roughly two weeks earlier than normal, although some of the warmer sites began during the first week of September. Conditions remained mostly dry through September with some rain at the end of the month.

However, the rains this year were viewed as more of a nuisance than an actual problem or challenge, and ultimately helped to reduce pH levels and lower the rapidly rising sugar accumulation. Growers were able to harvest fruit in almost pristine conditions with no signs of disease and minimal fear of pest or bird effects. Most wineries are reporting higher than normal yields that resulted from larger than normal clusters. However, a freeze in December 2013 impacted some regions and sites, resulting in some bud and vine damage.

Regional Overviews:

Willamette Valley

- This is one of those rare vintages when you have high quality and high quantity simultaneously. From the standpoint of weighing quantity against quality, it was one of the best perhaps as wines are very good and range from refreshing and vibrant to rich and ripe. The Pinot noirs are deeper in color and range from the low 13's to lower 14's in alcohol percent. I believe the consumer will love these wines as they will be similar to the 2009 vintage. – **Joe Dobbles, Dobbles Family Estate**

- This year has been very unique – starting with a slightly early bud break, warm and dry conditions during the early spring growing season and on into a warm and dry summer gave us a perfect situation for an early harvest. The wines are darkly fruited and quite concentrated. We have some wines that have big tannins but the core of fruit is so sweet that they are balanced with moderate alcohol. – **Lynn Penner-Ash, Penner-Ash Wine Cellars**

- Vine fruitfulness and set were extraordinary this year, yielding a very large potential crop. We thinned most of our 100 acres at lag phase as usual, but we thinned more moderately than usual, and in some blocks we did not thin at all. Our thinking was that more draconian crop removal would result in high sugars and green flavors, given the unusually warm weather from the beginning of the season. At harvest the crop was (not unexpectedly) abundant, with average yields across our acres at about 2.75 tons per acre. One thing I can say for sure, 2014 will set a new record for tons harvested. Around the industry there is a common lament "there is no room at the inn." – **Ted Casteel with input from Ben Casteel and Mimi Casteel, Bethel Heights Vineyard**

- Even though we spent considerable time and money thinning fruit in July and August, our overall estate crop load was 40 percent larger than 2013. It was as if Mother Nature just heaved grapes out of the bosom of the Earth! Never seen the likes of it in 25 years. The good news is that the wines are by and large lovely, ripe, rich, deeply concentrated and aromatic. Once we get past the shock of the investment required to bottle and package all this wine — and deal with the exigencies of where and how to sell it all — I'm sure we'll look back at 2014 as a rare gift. Unlike so many Oregon vintages, it offered everything a winemaker could want... and, in some instances, almost too much so. – **Doug Tunnell, Brick House Wine Company**

Southern Oregon

The quality of the fruit is excellent. With sugars coming early we chose to wait on some varieties because the flavors weren't there yet. This proved to be the right decision. The fruit we pulled had great balance and flavors. The yields were low for us due to winter damage experienced by most east side vineyards. We anticipate a good recovery for next year from good retraining and plants coming back. – **Ruth Garvin, Cliff Creek Cellars**

- The 2014 vintage was hot and dry. Roseburg's average daily temps were the highest ever, which calculates to a record 3,500 Growing Degree Days (GDDs). True, it was a hot year, but the absolute maximum temperatures of 2014 were considerably lower than normal. During the cooler 2003 thru 2012 interval, Roseburg's average annual absolute T-max was 107.5° F and typically we had several, multi-day heat waves. In contrast, Abacela experienced only two triple digit days in 2014 and the maximum temperature recorded was 103° F. We saw a record number of days (49) with maximum temperatures between 90 and 99° F, which combined with warmer nights (up 5° F in August), are what raised the average temperature and the GDDs. The vines tolerated almost daily 90 degree temps in the absence of heat waves very well and we actually used less irrigation than in previous cooler years. Coupling this with warmer nights (and shortened diurnal temperature range) had a profoundly positive physiological effect on our vines. The results; perfectly ripe, flavorful fruit and virtually no disease or predation certainly made 2014 a great vintage. – **Earl Jones, Abacela**

• The 2014 growing season has been incredibly beautiful, with perfect temperatures throughout harvest. It was a wonderful not to have to pick in the rain or rush to beat the weather. We did have some frost damage from December 2013 on the lower level of the vineyard, and well need to be replaced this next year. However, the big reds on the hill resulted in yields above average. – **Jolee Wallace, Del Rio Vineyards**

Columbia Gorge

• We had an unusual winter freeze event in December of 2013. The freeze was very specific to vineyards located in lower elevation areas or on the valley floor. I find it surprising that the yields were so high this year after that winter freeze event. It was not unusual in the 2014 growing season to see yields 10 – 25 percent higher than normal with great quality intact. I'm sure 2014 will be considered one of the best vintages of the decade! – **Lonnie Wright, The Pines 1852**

• Bud break came early in the western side of the Gorge, just about two weeks earlier than a typical year. Fruit set was on the heavy side, but we normally drop a little less than half of the fruit to enhance quality. This vintage we reduced less than standard in an effort to stretch the season. The final, increased yield was largely due to efforts to balance the vines to the early and prolonged heat of the vintage. Harvest weather was ideal. We were able to pick at a relaxed rate. Each block came off the vine at its optimum moment. – **Robert Morus, Phelps Creek Vineyard**

• We worried about a very dry, cold winter and then March was very wet and eased our drought concerns. The vintage started with warm degree days at bud break, near record breaking numbers. The weather remained nice and warm and dry and the degree days kept accumulating at a very rapid rate. The beginning of July had higher than normal, but not unprecedented degree day numbers, but by Aug. 1 we were well ahead of every year back to when I started recording in 2001 and that trend continues still today. We were in this same place in 2013 however, and when the rain came and didn't stop, we asked ourselves if this would be a repeat but somehow it just felt different. Mother Nature was on our side. Disease pressure was low, yield was high and quality was amazing. – **Leigh Bartholomew, Dominio IV**

Eastern Oregon

• I think the vintage's ripe, flavorful wines will be very enticing for the consumer. The conditions made it relatively easy to make good wines, with no worries about achieving ripeness, and the lack of frost risk allowed us to keep grapes on the vine as long as we wished. – **Casey McClellan, Seven Hills Winery**

• This vintage was warm and dry from bud break to harvest. Growing conditions were stable and pest and disease pressure was low. From start until finish, all major growing stages were 7 -10 days ahead of the average. Winter was dry, but pre-bud break we had a significant amount of moisture that helped the vines get a healthy start. We saw perfect bloom weather that created fantastic fruit set. The crop looked phenomenal and I have received a lot of positive feedback from winemakers already. Even though sugars are high this year, we saw really great acid and pH levels in almost all of our varieties to balance the high sugars. – **Sadie Drury, Seven Hills Vineyard /SeVein**

• The 2014 vintage was a scorcher. From Apr. 1 – Oct. 26 the Walla Walla Valley had 3312 Growing Degree Days and no cold weather events that caused frost damage. To put that in perspective, our average is 2741 GDD and in 2013, which was another early and warm year, we only hit 3050 GGDs. All of the major milestone indicators came earlier than average and a week ahead of the 2013 vintage. Weather through bloom and set was perfect, which is evident in the yields. If our early indicators are any measure of quality, 2014 is another excellent vintage for the Walla Walla Valley. – **Chad Johnson, Dusted Valley**



Postmodern Winemaking

Four Ways to Make White Wine

September 2014 Clark Smith

Most but not all contemporary white wines focus on freshness and purity rather than embracing aromatic integration through refined structure, soulfulness and graceful longevity. I love modern Mosel wines so much that I cannot keep them in my cellar. I buy them, I drink them. But I believe there is an aesthetic difference between the beauty of these wines and the profundity of great Cabernet. Would you rather have lunch with actress Angelina Jolie or philosopher Bertrand Russell?



Some inventive winemakers are tinkering with clay fermentation vessels in the United States, but the first clay jar wines from Italy and Georgia embodied a different style that could take 10 years to reach maturity.

Example: New Zealand Sauvignon Blanc.

Desired outcome: Intense, fresh varietal aromatics, thiols and esters. Lean, focused palate with bright, refreshing flavors. Ready for consumption.

Techniques: Night harvesting, dry ice blanketing during crushing, gentle whole-cluster pressing with inert gas blanketing, free run, sulfited must, cold fermentation, immediate sulfiting post fermentation, suppressed malolactic fermentation, fining to remove tannin (if necessary), early sterile bottling under screw cap closures, immediate marketing.

Comments: Because this methodology allows no access to enological uses of oxygen to refine tannins, great care must be taken to prevent tannin pickup and avoid harshness and reductive vigor, which might lead to sulfides in the bottle. This style was impossible to make before World War II, which ushered in innovations including bubble-pointable sterile filtration, an artifact of atomic energy.

METHOD NO. 2 Hyper-oxidized must treated reductively after fermentation.

Example: Typically used for aromatic varieties where density is not prized, such as in German Mosels.

Desired outcome: Lean, age-worthy aromatic varieties with high native phenolics that can otherwise generate peroxide, which oxidizes terpenes.

Techniques: Juice is initially un-sulfited, given one to three saturations of oxygen that is consumed within two hours—often in concert with gelatin fining and flotation of solids. Post fermentation, the resulting wines, which are low in phenolics, are handled reductively as in Method No. 1.

Comments: Winemakers are often shocked to see brown, muddy musts transformed into lean, fresh, straw-green wines of great freshness and longevity.

METHOD NO. 3 Structured wines incorporate tannin as a positive element.

Example: Muscadet sur lie, Savennières.

Desired outcome: Multi-dimensional, age-worthy wines that, after an initial pleasant stage in which the wine shows well based on fermentation bouquet, may experience a reductive adolescent phase before blooming into maturity five to 10 years later.

Techniques: Tannins are intentionally introduced through variety and site soil selection, skin contact, hard pressing and sometimes well-cured, untoasted oak in the fermenter. Lees are stirred frequently until tannins are enrobed by protein, as in milk chocolate.

Comments: Resulting structure integrates aromas as in red wines.

It's time for me to confess that white wine can deliver profundity and age-worthiness—and before modern styles emerged in the 1960s, that's what most serious white wine was up to.

I find it useful to divide white winemaking into four distinct style categories, each with its own approach and goals. I will state the four methodologies in reverse order of their historical chronology because today's methods are more familiar, allowing me later to illustrate by contrast the traditional methods of bygone eras.

In subsequent columns I will focus on a practitioner of each of these methodologies.

METHOD NO. 1 Totally reductive. From crushing to bottling, inert gas protects grapes, must and wine from oxygen at every point.

METHOD NO. 4 Clay jar wines (known in Italy as ‘orange wines’ and in Georgia as qvevri wines) generally are made from semi-aromatic varieties.

Example: Kakheti Rkatsiteli, Friuli Ribolla.

Desired outcome: Highly complex, tannic wines resembling alcoholic tea requiring five to 10 years aging to smooth out and open up. The wines appear oxidized, but they are actually quite reductive.

Techniques: Crushed grapes in their entirety—including juice, pomace, seeds and stems—are sealed in a clay jar buried in earth and racked off after six months. Spontaneous alcoholic and malolactic fermentation, high phenolic extraction, lees contact. Little or no oak influence, though oak uprights are sometimes employed during aging.

Comments: This is the oldest form of winemaking. It dates back 8,000 years and was not widely practiced in contemporary winemaking until its recent resurgence. It is said that a qvevri was buried when a son was born and opened and consumed on his wedding day.



The Use of Modern Crusher/Destemmers in Winemaking

Lance Cutler

In the past, grapes were picked in the cool, early morning hours and rushed to wineries as quickly as possible. After leaving the comfort and safety of their mothering vines, the first thing they encountered at a winery was the crusher/destemmer. This machine ripped the grapes from their stems, crushed them between two rollers, dropped them into a bin and then pumped them to tanks. It was a rude awakening to the winemaking process. In the '80s, most crusher/destemmers copied the old Valley Foundry design, which used augers to convey the grapes to the crusher where they passed through rollers into a cage with holes that turned counter to a helical blade or pronged beaters inside. As grape clusters bounced around in this cage, berries would be knocked off their stems and fall through the holes in the cage where they would be pumped to tanks. Grape skins were torn, juice would run freely, seeds would be exposed (if not crushed), and bits of stem (jacks) chewed up in the process would drop through the holes into the must as the stems traveled out of the cage.

The evolutionary focus on developing crusher/destemmers was to be gentle with the grapes and to remove as much bad fruit and Extraneous material as possible. Flat-belted conveyors replaced the auger system to move grapes and gave winemakers the opportunity to sort through them to remove moldy fruit, raisins and material other than grapes (MOG). This was first accomplished by hand, but more and more is being handled by optical recognition sorters.

Inside the destemmers, metal beaters are being replaced by less abusive “fingers” with rubber tips. State-of-the-art destemmers are moving away from blades and fingers altogether, replacing them with oscillating cups that gently remove berries from the stems by inertia. How have winemakers adapted their winemaking techniques to work with the new machines? Do these techniques vary, according to style or variety, and what are winemakers hoping to accomplish when they decide whether or not to “crush” their grapes?

Nate Rippey, VP of production at The Vintner’s Group, uses a Delta E8 from Bucher-Vaslin. He finds it to be user-friendly with high throughput. It’s reliable, easy to clean and relatively simple to work on.

“These days it is very infrequent for a customer to request rollers in the machine. The whole approach is to be as gentle with the fruit as possible,” explained Rippey. “White grapes never even go through the machine. They are all dumped directly to the press for whole cluster pressing.”

Rippey said he is starting to see more grapes coming in from mechanical harvesters after being run through optical sorters. In those cases, he just receives berries that get dumped directly to fermenters.

Gentler Handling of Grapes

Patrick Saboe, director of wine for The Wine Foundry, used a Delta E2 before shifting to a Delta Oscillys. “The cage is upright with helical arms. The whole thing oscillates (shakes), and berries fall through holes,” he said. “Berries are cracked but relatively uncrushed. Rollers are post-destem, but we haven’t used the rollers in premium wine production in the last 10 to 15 years. Premium wines use more and more whole berries. To that end, we have different cages with different hole sizes to accommodate larger or smaller sized berries.”

Saboe reasons that this gentle handling of fruit is an outgrowth of growers having improved at delivering fruit with solid



tannic profiles. “The fruit is more structured, and so winemakers no longer have to extract as much tannin in the winemaking process.”

Bill and Dawnine Dyer, winemaking partners for Dyer Straits Wine Co. and active consultants for several other wineries, talked about modern winemaking techniques that have changed the crushing regimens. “Back in the day when we picked grapes that tested 23° Brix, it most likely included grapes between 21° and 26° Brix,” said Dawnine. “Now with green-thinning, leaf-pulling and experience, we are better able to harvest more evenly ripened fruit. In winemaking, cold soaks and minimizing the shredding of fruit gives us good extraction while avoiding those green and seed tannins that we don’t want.

According to Bill, there is still a time and place for crushing grapes. “There are times when it is beneficial to crack skins on berries. A crusher over an open-top tank can deliver almost completely whole berries. There is no juice to start the fermentation, and with Cabernet, perhaps carbonic maceration is not what you are looking for. I think with Cabernet, broken berries are desirable, especially if you are looking for a more tannic-structured style that is capable of long-term aging.”

He also pointed out that while few people are using rollers in their crusher/destemmers, the fruit is still getting crushed. “Nowadays, pumps that move the must serve the same function as rollers in a crusher, and they do it in a more gentle manner.”

Finding the “Sweet Spot” to Eliminate Jacks

Jared Brandt is co-winemaker along with his wife Tracey at Donkey and Goat Winery. They have a Marchisio destemmer from which the rollers have been removed. Jared said he was trying to keep the berries as intact as possible. To that end he won’t even use a must pump, preferring to move the grapes to tank by conveyor belt. Most Donkey and Goat wines are made from Rhône varietals although they make some Pinot Noir as well. They will often use 30 to 40 percent whole cluster in their fermenters. “We will actually chew on the stems, checking the taste. When the tannins are ripe and the under-ripe, “green” tannin flavor has diminished, we’ll use the whole cluster. Whether we use whole cluster or destemmed fruit, we prefer to foot crush in the fermenter because the pressure from foot crushing can’t crack the seeds. We’d like to avoid the bitter tannins from seeds as much as possible.”

Brandt is also wary of jacks. He will wrap the last third to half of the cage on his crusher, which he said reduces the amount of jacks in his must by as much as 80 percent. He also varies the speed on his crusher. He finds there is a sweet spot for crusher speed for each different varietal that minimizes the amount of jacks.

Stephan Tebb is the winemaker for Robert Craig Winery. He has been using the Delta 2 but has switched to the Oscillys because he wants to reduce the amount of jacks in the must. He will use different sized cages, depending on variety; and while he treats varieties differently in the winery during cold soak and pump-over, how they are handled at the crusher is the same.

“I have never used crusher rollers on grapes,” he said, “but I do use a pump to get the must to the tanks, which crushes the fruit enough. ***Not crushing the berries gives me a level of control over extraction. I want to extract as much as I can from the skins and less from the seeds. Being gentle with the fruit and going through a cold soak allows me to do that. I want to deplete the skin tannins and get some seed tannin. If I busted up that fruit in the beginning, I’d be extracting both skin and seed tannin from the get go.*** I prefer not to do that.”

Ed Filice is senior winemaker for Sonoma Wine Company. With decades of experience in the wine industry, he echoed other winemakers. “We are looking for our crusher to separate the berries from the rakes with minimum damage to the berries themselves. We will either spread the rollers to minimize contact or remove them altogether. The grapes enter the fermenters, looking like ball bearings. We do use pumps to move the must, but these new pumps are also much gentler than the old ones. The only exception is Cabernet Sauvignon, where we will set the rollers for some minimal soft contact to gently split some skins.

”Filice pointed out that most winery practices have moved to gentler handling of the fruit. Pump-overs are no longer performed by shooting powerful streams of fermenting juice through 2-inch hoses to plunge the cap down into the must. Instead, juice is broadcast over the cap to keep it moist without disturbing the grapes. Depending on tank size and configuration, punch-downs can be substituted for pump-overs. Filice suspects that the main positive of all this gentle handling is lower solids in the must, insisting that lower solids make better wine.

Conclusion

When it comes to winemaking, technology is constantly advancing and showing us ways to make better wine. Winemakers are looking to handle their fruit in the gentlest ways possible because they feel this leads to the extraction of finer, more structured tannins, while allowing for richer fruit aromatics and flavors. Moving must with pumps seems to macerate berries enough to get fermentations started, without exposing and cracking seeds as much as crusher rollers.

The emphasis on gentle handling of grapes has pretty much made crusher rollers an endangered species. The focus is now shifting to ways to minimize torn stems from entering the must. Along with new technology in the destemmers themselves to reduce the amount of jacks, techniques are moving from man-operated sorting to automated optical sorters. As technology moves forward and field harvesting (in conjunction with optical sorting) becomes more common, the winery crusher/destemmer may follow in the way of crusher rollers and turn into an antique piece of equipment that simply serves to remind us of the good old days.

Getting into Grower Champagne

Learn some interesting details on about Champagne that will surprise you and find out how to select small-producer Champagne.

What is Grower Champagne?

Grower Champagne is sparkling wine crafted by grape growers and their families. Those who grow grapes in their own vineyards and produce cuvées (aka sparkling wine blends) that reflect the their distinct vineyards and style.

INFO: Only 5% of the Champagne imported into the USA is grower Champagne.

Do you like the unique character of farm-fresh eggs or single origin coffee and chocolate? Well, Grower Champagne is similar in that it rarely tastes the same every year and each producer is different, of course, this is part of what makes it so compelling.

What does Grower Champagne taste like?

Grower Champagnes come in a very wide range of styles. What's been noted about these bubbly wines is that the individual work of the growers really comes through in the finished cuvée. See below on details of several common styles.

3 Types of Producers in Champagne



types of CHAMPAGNE PRODUCERS



MAISON



COOPERATIVE



VIGNERON

There are three general classifications of Champagne producers imported into the USA: Maisons, Cooperatives and Vignerons.

Maisons

Large Champagne Houses

Maisons (aka 'Houses') make up 87% of the Champagnes imported into the USA. Champagne houses buy their grapes from lots of grape growers from all over the region. The Maisons focus on blending grapes from different regions and vintages to produce a consistent taste every year.

How to recognize: Maisons are the large Champagne brands or 'negotiants' (neg-gosse-see-yont) that may have familiar names such as Moët, Veuve Clicquot, Perrier, Bollinger, etc. Maison Champagnes are widely available and are famous for making appearances at fancy events. Chances are, if you're at an Oscars afterparty, your probably sipping a Maisons de Champagne!



MAISON

Cooperatives

Co-op Champagne Facilities

Co-ops are typically wines from a specific village in Champagne and from grapes grown around that village. Growers who don't have all the sparkling wine making equipment can opt into a village co-op. There are many different ways in which co-ops function, but usually, the growers supply their grapes to the co-op and the chief winemaker makes the final cuvées. The Champagnes can be labeled individually for the growers and they can be labeled as the co-op brand.

How to recognize: Cooperative Champagnes are typically labeled with the letters 'CM' for 'Coopérative Manipulant' in small print on the bottom of the front label. However, there are a few other types of producer who use co-ops (see below).

Vignerons

Grower Champagne

These are the grower-producers. The word 'vigneron' roughly translates to winegrower or more specifically, someone who cultivates a vineyard for winemaking. Growers typically own small parcels of vineyards in very specific places within the Champagne region. They tend to their vines all year and harvest their grapes on their own. Because their sparkling wines are crafted with grapes from specific parcels of land and blended in small lots, they tend to taste very distinct and different every year.

How to recognize: A good tip is to look for hyphenated names. Growers often label their sparkling wines using their last name, along with a hyphenated maiden name (or two) that typically comes from the grower's mother or spouse. This is done to honor the heritage of the land. Also, see the official producer types below for more tips.

Hints on the Champagne Label:

In total, there are 7 official producer types that are identifiable by two letters small print at the bottom of the front label. Use these letters as a hint to the producer type, but remember, **there are occasionally exceptions to these regulatory classifications:**

- NM 'Négociant Manipulant' A producer who buys all or some of their grapes from other growers. Anything less than 94% estate fruit must be labeled NM. Maisons typically have this producer class, but it's entirely uncommon to see grower Champagne under this producer type as well.
- CM 'Coopérative Manipulant' A grower's co-op that pools resources and produces wine under a single brand.
- RM 'Récoltant Manipulant' A grower-producer who uses a minimum of 95% estate fruit. This is classically considered the grower Champagne producer type, although, it's possible for a Maison use this label indication with a sub-label.
- SR 'Société de Récoltants' A union of growers who shares resources and collectively markets their own brands.
- MA 'Marque d'Acheteur' aka 'Buyer's Own Brand' A large retail or restaurant that buys a finished wine and sells it under their own private label.
- ND 'Négociant Distributeur' A buyer who labels and distributes Champagne that they didn't grow nor produce.
- RC 'Récoltant Coopérateur' A grower-producer who has their own Champagne brand made at a co-op facility.



Perrier-Jouët is a Maison under the 'NM' producer classification.

"Champagne is on the verge of a profound change... The era of great growers and great vineyards is just beginning"
"Andrew Jefford, "The New France".

Recent Top/Best Champagne Vintages to Seek Out: The best vintages in Champagne over the last 20 years are debatable and have a lot to do with the individual producer, but, 1996, 2002, 2004, and 2008 are pretty great across the spectrum.

Quick Breakdown: 5 Primary Styles of Champagne

If you're just getting into the different styles of Champagne, here are some useful tips on where to find the style you like:

Brut Nature Champagne

Bone Dry & Minerally

Expect to spend: \$50–60

Very dry with keen acidity backed up with citrus and floral notes. Because these are dry with high acidity, they aren't for the timid and probably shouldn't be tasted immediately after brushing your teeth! Brut Nature is a great wine to pair with a wide range of foods for its palate cleansing effects.



Look for Brut Nature from *Montagne de Reims* and *Côtes des Blancs*

Blanc de Blancs

The 100% Chardonnay Champagne

Expect to spend: \$40–50

Chardonnay is full of white flower and citrus aromas and depending on where it's grown, it can also have flavors of chalk and minerality. As Blanc de Blancs age, they develop aromas of fresh baked bread, butter, and roasted nuts.



Look for Blanc des Blancs from *Côtes des Blancs*

Blanc de Noirs

Fruity & Funky

Expect to spend: \$30–40

Blanc de Noirs have rich aromas of white raspberry and apple and sometimes a subtle funky note that is often described as Parmesan cheese. A Pinot Meunier dominant Blanc de Noirs and tend to be more funky and are meant to be drunk relatively young to preserve acidity.



Look for Blanc des Blancs from *Vallée de la Marne*

Rose Champagne

From Minerals to White Cherry Cream

Expect to spend: \$55–65

Rosé Champagnes come in a wide variety of tastes and colors. Some are almost orange, some are deep red, some are totally dry and tart, and some are full of ripe red berry flavors. These wines range based on the producer, where they are from, the sweetness level and vintage.



Look for Vintage Champagne from *Montagne de Reims* and *Côtes des Blancs*

Vintage Champagne

Creamy & Nutty

Expect to spend: \$55+

Marzipan, honeycomb and hazelnut are often noted on vintage Champagne as well as baked apple, white cherry and lemon curd. Vintage Champagne must be aged for a minimum of three years and, the longer it ages before release, the more creamy and nutty it becomes. Therefore, the older the vintage, the more it developed it will be with nuttiness. num.

How to find great Vintage Champagne?

Look for 'recently disgorged' vintage Champagnes where the producers have done extended aging on the lees in their caves. Many growers label disgorgement dates on their bottles so you know when it left their cellar; this is useful in determining how long the wine has been sitting on a shelf getting UV damage.

West Side Wine Club

Leadership Team - 2014

- President: **Phil Bard** phil@philbard.com
- Set agenda for the year
- Establish leadership team
- Assure that objectives for the year are met
- Set up agenda and run meetings

- Treasurer: **Barb Thomson** bt.grapevine@frontier.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: **Ted Johnson**, tedj52@msn.com
- Conduct club tastings
 - Review and improve club tasting procedures

- Chair of Winery/Vineyard Tours: **Bill Brown** bbgoldieguy@gmail.com
- Select wineries to visit
 - Arrange tours
 - Cover logistics (food and money)

- Chair of Group Purchases: **Jonathan Brown** jonabrown@gmail.com Bob Hatt & Jim Ourada helpers.
- Makes the arrangements to purchase, collect, and distribute
- Grape purchases
 - Supplies – These should be passed to the President for distribution.

- Chair of Competitions: **Don Robinson** don_robinson_pdx@yahoo.com
- Encourage club participation in all amateur competitions available. Make information known through Newsletter, e-mail and Facebook.

- Chairs for Social Events: **Marlene Grant** denmargrant@gmail.net Barbara Stinger & Mindy Bush – Helpers
- Awards Gala / Holliday parties

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

Webmaster: **David Ladd**