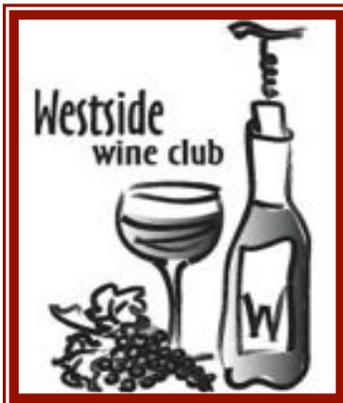


West Side Wine Club

December 2010



President's Musings



I was going to start my muse with a comment that "Early spring can be one of the more dangerous times for a wine". But with my 4th cold of the season I can hardly say it has been good for me either. If your wine has not finished ML, the temperatures will start to rise and hopefully set off unfinished ML or if you are unlucky something else. This is a great time to run a malo test. It doesn't take long for problems to develop in a barrel. Only tasting, testing and sulfating correctly can maintain your wine in peak condition. This is also a time to consider ordering a new barrel if that is what you are planning. Typically, if you are planning on ordering a new barrel from Bouchard Cooperates (Damy, Billion and Cadus), they will ship it to Portland for free so you don't pay shipping (you pick up at Port of Portland). Other barrel makers may have other incentive if they are contacted early. Also, our club members should be thinking about grape orders for the upcoming season. It seems early but orders will need to be in by June –especially this year with the early freeze in the Columbia Valley. We will be talking about this more in the upcoming meeting. If you have a vineyard you should have trimmed your vines by now.

Members of the board and interested parties undertook a testing of the new Vinmetrica. (<http://www.winepress.us/forums/index.php?/topic/44526-new-so2-meter-for-195/>). We evaluated the device against A/O and a Hanna Titrator. The results were quite good... so long as you were careful about using fresh chemicals from a reputable place. This is supported by the literature given out by Vinmetrica: http://vinmetrica.com/Souder_Eval.pdf Here are the options with cost and advantage / disadvantages:

Test	Approx Cost	Count	Est Cost/per sample	Notes
Accuvine	\$ 33.73	10	\$ 3.37	Poor man's ripper test. Probably only good for white wines
Titrets	\$ 18.95	10	\$ 1.90	Poor man's ripper test. Probably only good for white wines
				For the ripper method seems pretty accurate and very simple. Probe is electrical so will not wear out quickly unless not taken care of. There is the cost of chemicals which is \$35 for 50.
Vinmetrica	\$ 245.00	N/A	\$ 0.70	Considered to be the most accurate method. Requires more (but inexpensive) lab equipment and is time intensive. Cost of Chemicals.
Aeration Oxidation	\$ 100.00	N/A	\$ 0.50	Ripper: Highly accurate but dependent on expensive chemicals. Also, probe needs to be replaced every few years at a cost of approx \$150.00 (although with competition from Vinmetrica this may fall)
Hanna Titrator	\$ 600.00	N/A	\$ 1.00	
ETS Testing	\$ 15.00	1	\$ 15.00	Most accurate but very expensive.

I think that for most people in our club, the Vinmetrica fits with what people want. The Hanna, while quite usable, hardly seems worth the extra cost. A/O retains its status as the gold standard. However, the time requirements and complex procedures are not to everyone's liking. If you are curious about any of these methods, you can contact club members: Barb Thomson and Phil Bard use the Vinmetrica. Craig Bush uses A/O, while I use a Hanna Titrator.

We are much honored to be hosting a very talented winemaker at our next meeting, Robert Brittan. I met Robert at a tasting at Great Wine Buys and was greatly impressed both by his resume and by his amiable altitude. He has made wine for such outstanding wineries as Far Niente, Saint Andrews and Stags' Leap Winery in Napa. So don't forget to bring your "big red" question as well. You can find out more about Robert and the wines he makes at the following website:

<http://www.brittanvineyards.com/> His bio is a pretty awesome read (OSU Alum).

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

May 29, 2011

Soter Vineyards Tour

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

Web Sites of Interest

These are geared toward the amateur winemaker:

"Wine-ing on the Weekends" at wineonweekends.com. Podcasts are also available from the website.

Winemaker's Journal is a reference for winemakers and vineyard growers with special attention given to the novice. See them at winemakersjournal.com.

Interesting Information

The world's most planted grape varietal is **Airén**. It occupies over 1 million acres in central Spain where it is made into mediocre white wine, but some quite good brandy.

Rose bushes are often planted at the end of a row of grape vines to act as an early warning signal for infestation by diseases and insects like aphids. A vineyard manager who notices black spots or root rot on the roses will spray the grape vines before they are damaged.

Portland Business Journal
A wine bottle manufacturing plant at the Port of Kalama which shut down in September 2009 after the previous owner went bankrupt, is expected to restart early next year and hire 100 people. Bennu Glass LLC bought the former Cameron Glass plant for \$64.8 million and plans to make 100 million wine bottles annually.

"The last time that I trusted a dame was in Paris in 1940. She was going out to get a bottle of wine. Two hours later, the Germans marched into France." --- Sam Diamond in *Murder by Death* (1976)

In keeping with the Sparkling wine theme from last month's Argyle tour, here are two reading recommendations from members:

From Marilyn Brown - "Widow Clicquot" "The story of a Champagne empire and the woman who ruled it". (Amazon \$10, paperback)

From Jon Kahrs - "Techniques in Home Winemaking" "A practical guide to making Chateau-style wines" that contains a section on sparkling. (Amazon \$15 paperback)

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

Agenda: **Speaker: Robert Brittan winemaker / founder of Brittan Winery.**
"Educated at UC Davis and moved to Napa Valley, where I made wines for Far Niente, Saint Andrews and Stags' Leap. Over 30 years of experience growing grapes and making wine."

Snacks: Terry and Deborah Swan
Place: Oak Knoll Winery

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

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

A few reminders:

- 1.) Please bring a glass for tasting member wines. Members, bring a sample of your wine(s) for everyone to taste.
- 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".

February Meeting Minutes

16 February 2011. Thanks go to Jon & Wendy Gassaway for sharing their home for this meeting. Twenty-three members were present. An abundance of great appetizers were furnished by all of those present.

Jon Kahrs brought the meeting to order at 7:40 PM and announced that the next meeting, on March 16, would be back at Oak Knoll and would feature a speaker, Robert Brittan of Brittan Winery. Terry and Deborah Swan offered to furnish snacks, thanks.

Jon Kahrs and Sammy Nachimuthu will start talking with grape growers in preparation for next fall. Jon will also try to contact Mike Hallock of Carabella Winery as a possible speaker.

Craig Bush & Phil Bard conducted a blind tasting of member Bordeaux varietals and blends. The results are listed below in the order of tasting.

#1 - 2008 - 50% Cabernet Sauvignon, 50% Merlot	Silver medal - Ted Brunner
#2 - 2005 - 67% Cabernet Sauvignon, 33% Merlot	Bronze medal - Barb Thomson
#3 - 2009 - 100% Malbec	Silver medal - Ken Stinger
#4 - 2009 - 100% Cabernet Sauvignon	Bronze medal - Lee Robinson
#5 - 2007 - 100% Cabernet Sauvignon	No medal - Don Robinson
#6 - 2010 - Barrel sample - 100% Cabernet Sauvignon	Bronze medal - Terry Swan
#7 - 2008 - 100% Cabernet Sauvignon	Bronze medal - Sammy Nachimuthu
#8 - 2009 - 100% Cabernet Franc	No medal - Bill Brown
#9 - 2008 - 100% Cabernet Sauvignon	Gold medal - Mike Franks

Everyone had an opportunity to tour Jon Gassaway's production facilities. Like a lot of us, a converted garage with the cars kicked out. At the present time he does most of his wine in full size barrels but would like to downsize into quarter and half barrels. The amount of wine he is making was impressive and included some fruit wines.

Argyle Winery Tour

Thanks go out to Mike Smolak and Jon Kahrs for arranging for a very nice tour of Argyle's sparkling wine production facilities followed with a private tasting of nine wines. Fifteen club members were on hand. Our tour leader was Matt Majdecki who is only 23 and has been with the winery only one year but has managed to learn most everything about the process. Most of the technical questions we threw at him were expertly answered.

The tour started with a very complete and impressive lab facility and then to the cold room (35°) where grapes first come into the winery. Grapes destined for sparkling wines arrive at 18 to 20 brix hopefully with high acid but developed flavor. Argyle's sparkling is made from Pinot Noir, Chardonnay and Pinot Munier. They are first whole cluster pressed and processed as normal still wine. Still wine is then put into champagne bottles along with a "Tirage" of sugar, yeast and nutrients then sealed with a crown cap. This secondary fermentation creates CO₂ dissolved into the



wine at 5 to 6 atmospheres pressure. The wine is left on the lees for 18 months to 4 years and, in the case of their Premier style, out to 10 years. When they are judged ready for market they are tilted neck down at a 45° angle in special automated “Rumage” (riddling) machines. The bins are then rotated 45° at a time, many times a day. This moves all of the lees into the neck next to the crown cap (takes 4 days). The bottles are fully inverted and carefully moved into the cold room and cooled to 35°. The neck is then immersed ¾ inch into a very cold glycol solution which freezes that portion of the neck. This is immediately followed by “Disgorgement” where the crown cap is removed and the lees plug is expelled by pressure in the bottle. A “Dosage” consisting of some of the wine removed, maybe some still wine and an amount of sugar depending on style is added back to the bottle to the fill line. The bottle is then corked, a wire cage applied around the

cork and inspected. All in all a very interesting process and our group had many questions. We then retired to the tasting room where we tasted:

- #1 - 2007 Brut, Argyle's least expensive sparkling, 3 years on the lees (90 Wine Spectator).
- #2 - 2000 brut, 10 years on the lees. More aroma and flavor, much smaller bubbles (95 Wine Spectator).
- #3 - 2007 Nuthouse Chardonnay, light buttery style, 30% new oak (92 Wine Spectator).
- #4 - 2008 Nuthouse Pinot Noir, Argyle's most bold style.
- #5 - 2007 Spirithouse Pinot Noir, top of the line (90 Wine Spectator).
- #6 - 2008 Black Brut - made from full skin contact Pinot Noir. An Oregon twist on Australian sparkling black Shiraz, very nice.
- #7 - 2008 Riesling, 1.2% residual sugar, good food wine.
- #8 - 2009 Nusshaus Riesling, 7.2% residual sugar, yummy.
- #9 - 2008 Minus Five, Dessert ice wine from grapes frozen one month, slow pressed while frozen, 20% all natural grape sugar, 8% alcohol.



The Red Varietals of Northern Italy

NEBBIOLO (Neb-bee-oh-low)—Italy—Barolo

Nebbiolo is usually a lightly colored red wine generally associated with aromas and flavors of black cherry. They can be highly tannic in youth and frequently require years of aging to balance the tannins with other characteristics in the wine. As they age, Nebbiolos can take on a characteristic brick-orange hue at the rim of the glass and mature to reveal other aromas and flavors such as those associated with raspberries and prunes with accents of violets, roses, wild herbs, truffles, tobacco, licorice, tar, hung game, and chocolate. The first explicit mention of Nebbiolo dates to 1268 where a wine known as "nibiol" was growing in Rivoli near Turin. As with many of Italy's wines, Nebbiolo is a frequent ingredient in popular blends.

Nebbiolo is one of Northern Italy's classic grapes which, despite great potential, and being responsible for some of Italy's finest wines, has not been widely planted in the U.S. Its home is not just in Barolo, but also nearby Barbaresco, where fine wines are also produced. It is ideally suited to planting in warmer climates, as this thick-skinned variety is late ripening. Indeed, the name Nebbiolo may be derived from nebbia, a fog that hangs over the vineyards during the Autumn harvest. Nebbiolo appears to favor calcareous soil as well as warm slopes to produce at its best. There are small plantings in California, Washington, Australia, and Argentina.

BARBERA (Bar-bear-ah)—Italy—Lombardy

Barberas are deep, purplish black in color in their youth, ruby red in later life, and if light in tannin, tend to early browning and lightening as they age. Barberas range from light, tart mouth washers through powerfully and intensely flavored wines that require extended cellaring. As are most Italian wines, they can have pronounced acidity that it is said can be accentuated by overproduction. Barbera is commonly bottled as a varietal in Italy as **Barbera del Piemonte**, with the best wines labeled **Barbera d'Alba** and **Barbera d'Asti**. Until recently, Barbera in the U.S. was used as a blending wine, and only rarely as a bottled varietal. However, this is changing. U.S. Barbera can now be found on the shelves of most wine shops and larger supermarkets as wine lovers and some wineries explore this grape as a stand-alone varietal. Black raspberry, blackberry, cherry and mineral notes are attributed to the wine.

In Italy, Barbera is planted extensively in **Piedmont** and southwest **Lombardy** and accounts for over 50% of the wine produced in the region. The grape is popular with growers because it is vigorous and reliably productive in a wide variety of soils and also highly resistant to fungal diseases. The fruit hangs in moderately tight large clusters and is naturally high in acid, which it retains very well, even in hot climates. Barbera grapes are also high in anthocyanins, but usually carry only low to moderate tannin content.

DOLCETTO (doh-CHET-toh)—Italy—Piedmont

A black wine grape variety widely grown in the Piedmont region of northwest Italy. The Italian word *dolcetto* means "little sweet one", but it is not certain that the name originally carried any reference to the grape's sugar levels: it is possible that it derives from the name of the hills where the vine is cultivated. In any case the wines produced are nearly always dry. They can be tannic and fruity with moderate, or decidedly low, levels of acidity and are typically meant to be consumed one to two years after release.

One theory suggests that the grape originated in France and was brought to Monferrato some time in the eleventh century. A competing theory has the grape originating in the Piedmontese village of Dogliani.

Most Dolcetto is found in the Piedmont region of northwest Italy, where many of the top estates produce Dolcetto on less favored sites as an "early to market wine" to generate some income for the winery while the Nebbiolo and Barbera are being matured. It is particularly associated with the towns of Dogliani and Diano d'Alba in the province of Cuneo, although the greatest volumes come from around Alba and Ovada. The grape is also found in Liguria under the name *Ormeasco*, and in the Oltrepò Pavese where it is called *Nebbiolo* or *Nibièu*.

Outside of Italy Dolcetto is known as *Douce Noire* in Savoie and *Charbono* in California. However, DNA fingerprinting done at the University of California, Davis have shown that the actual *Douce Noire* and *Charbono* vines are not, in fact, Dolcetto but two different vines. In spite of this confirmation, some plantings of true Dolcetto vines still retain the local synonyms in some areas of Savoie and California.

The grape was first brought to California by expatriate Italians and is most popular in Mendocino County, Russian River Valley AVA, Napa Valley AVA, Santa Cruz Mountains AVA, Sta. Rita Hills AVA, and Santa Barbara County. There is also some plantings in the Oregon AVAs of Umpqua Valley AVA and Southern Oregon AVA as well as the state wide appellations of New Mexico and Pennsylvania. Australia is home to the oldest current plantings of Dolcetto with vines dating back to the 1860s.

AMARONE (Ah-mah-row-nay)—Italy—Northeast Italy (I know, I know Amarone is not a grape but a style)

Deep ruby red exuding aromas of sour cherry, dark chocolate, stewed plums, dried fruit, anise, raisins, bitter almond, tobacco, leather and molasses with a spicy earth bittersweet finish and huge tannins. Amarone is a robust wine that will lay well for 7 to 15 years, and pairs with game, grilled meat and pastas.

Amarone is produced in the region of Veneto by estates that make Valpolicella, one of the most popular wines of this area in Northeastern Italy. This is really not a varietal but a well known blend of Corvina (the lead component), Rondinella, and Molinara that are laid on straw mats to dry them before fermentation, giving the wine its distinctive raisin flavor. Amarone is derived from amaron meaning bitter in Italian.

Bottle Head Space, SO₂ and Wine Oxidation

Here are some thoughts on wine SO₂ content and how much "headspace" should be left at bottling time. These ideas are based on the following: (1) Only small quantities of gases dissolve in a liquid. Then the liquid becomes saturated, and no more gas can dissolve in the liquid. (2) Air contains about 21 percent oxygen, and when wine is exposed to air, oxygen dissolves in the wine quickly. (3) When saturated, room temperature wine contains about 7 milligrams of oxygen per liter.

Most home winemakers use a "wand" type bottle filler attached to their siphon tubing. A valve presses against the bottom of the bottle when the wand is inserted in an empty bottle, and the wine starts to flow. Wine flow automatically stops when the tube is raised. Little bubbling occurs when bottles are filled slowly, but these little fillers can generate excessive amounts of foam when bottles are filled quickly. The foam exposes a large surface area of wine to the air, and considerable oxygen dissolves into the wine. This is why wine often becomes saturated with oxygen when bottles are filled carelessly. Saturated wine contains 7 mg of oxygen per liter, so a 750-ml bottle of saturated wine contains about 5.2 milligrams of dissolved oxygen.

Some home winemakers claim these wand-type bottle fillers "leave just the right amount of head space in the bottle." I have three different fillers and each leaves almost three inches of headspace in the bottles, and much of this air is compressed when the cork is driven. Since air contains 21 percent oxygen, 10 milliliters of headspace contains about 2.8 milligrams of oxygen.

One of the most important reasons for adding sulfur dioxide to wine is to scavenge oxygen. But, the bottling operation adds much oxygen to the wine; so determining the correct amount of sulfur dioxide at bottling time is not easy. The molecular weight of Sulfur (S) is 32 and oxygen (O) is 16, so 4 milligrams of sulfur dioxide (32 + 16 + 16) are required to react with 1 milligram of oxygen (16). Knowing that 4 milligrams of sulfur dioxide are required for each milligram of oxygen in the wine can be used to estimate how much sulfur dioxide is needed.

For example, wine splashed excessively at bottling time will be saturated, and each bottle of wine will contain about 5.2 milligrams of oxygen. If the bottle is under filled, resulting in 10 milliliters of headspace, the headspace contains 2.8 milligrams of oxygen. Consequently, the total oxygen content of each bottle of wine will be about 8 milligrams (5.2 + 2.8). Four milligrams of sulfur dioxide are required for each milligram of oxygen, so 32 milligrams of sulfur dioxide are needed to react with the dissolved oxygen. Since a bottle contains 750 milliliters, the wine would need to contain about 43 ppm of SO₂ just to react with the dissolved oxygen. Even so, practically no SO₂ would be left to protect the wine. If 15 ppm of residual SO₂ is desired, a free SO₂ level of 63 ppm in the wine would be needed.

Here is a second example. Wine might be about 1/3 saturated when bottles are filled with little splashing. Then, each bottle of wine will contain about 1.7 milligrams of oxygen. If the volume of the headspace is reduced to 5 milliliters, the headspace will contain about 1.4 milligrams of oxygen. Each bottle of wine will have a total oxygen content of 3.1 milligrams, and 12.4 milligrams of SO₂ will react with the oxygen. If the wine contained 30 milligrams of SO₂ per liter at bottling time, less than half (41%) of the SO₂ would be consumed by reacting with the dissolved oxygen. Now, about 18 ppm of SO₂ would remain in the wine to provide prolonged protection.



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