

West Side Wine Club

March 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: Michael Blackard of "Portocork"

April 15, 2015

Barrel / Carboy Sample Tasting

April ?, 2015

Tour: ?

May 20, 2015

Speaker: ?

June 17, 2015

"Best Practices of Amateur Winemakers"

July 11, 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



Random thoughts: March is one of those months when it seems like the only thing going on is either some racking or perhaps a bottling session. Not a real high energy time in Oregon as it is usually still cold and somewhat rainy. This year its decidedly different however, we've already been doing some gardening and cycling, and I just barreled my Syrah, which had been outside in carboys cold stabilizing. Took forever in all this warm weather, but hey we have daffodils and plum trees and even a little sunburn. I re-coopered a French oak barrel over the weekend and it was great to be able to work with the garage doors open and do the toasting outside without wearing a jacket and gloves. Not sure what this means for the growing season ahead, no doubt it's beginning early and will be dry in the short term.

Soon we will be thinking about ordering fruit and also about whether we will be trying anything new. I want to find a better source for American oak as I like a little of it in my big reds, there are a number of different states that grow it and the barrel's personality varies widely according to which the wood comes from. Seems like French is a bit easier to predict, but either way it strikes me that learning to properly complement your wines by making oak choices is not something you learn in the first year or two of winemaking. Hope I figure it out before I'm too old to smell anything at all.

Cheers....Phil

Note: See the article "Strong Barrel Sales Herald Strong Industry" American oak supply strained as U.S. becomes largest barrel market in the world in this issue.

Drink Responsibly.
Drive Responsibly.

Information & Trivia

• The WineMaker Magazine Conference is now accepting registrations for the 2015 conference held in Portland, Oregon! Register at:

<http://winemakermag.com>

• If aliens are smart enough to travel through space, why do they keep abducting the dumbest people on earth?

• Scholarships available in Washington: Washington Wine Industry Foundation is offering more than \$30,000 in scholarships for undergraduate and post-graduate students studying viticulture, enology or related disciplines.

Applications are due March 15 with awards for the 2015-16 school year awarded by May 15.

Applications can be found online at:

washingtonwinefoundation.org.

• Martin Bouygues was briefly reported as dead last weekend by *Agence France Presse (AFP)*, but the news agency retracted its report and issued an apology after the Bouygues Group clarified that the the billionaire co-owner of Chateau Montrose was still alive. - O,well, it's just France –

• Drinking a glass of 'Sussex' could soon become a reality with English wine producers poised to bid for the same protected name status as Champagne and Bordeaux. The move could provide Sussex wineries with a Protected Designation of Origin (PDO) status across the European Union, with more stringent standards than English wine in general. – I would hope so -

The next regular meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, March 18 at 7:00 p.m. at Oak Knoll Winery. Agenda: We will have a featured speaker, : Michael Blackard of "Portocork".



- 1.) Snacks: This will be another potluck; bring a small snack to share.
- 2.) If you have not paid your dues or signed a waiver, please do so at this meeting.
- 3.) Bring one of your bottles to share and a wine glass 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/>

February meeting minutes

Present: 17

- We had one guest at the meeting: Bob Flagella who knows Dennis & Marlene Grant.
- Mike Smolak, Speakers – Mike is pursuing having ETS Labs in McMinnville give us a talk at one of our meetings.
- Don Robinson, Competitions – Don mentioned that Ken Stinger won best of show at the Newport Wine & Seafood amateur competition for a 2013 Cabernet Sauvignon. Ken mentioned that Paul Boyechko also won a bronze medal at the Cellarmaster amateur wine competition in Los Angeles with a 2012 Cabernet Franc. Don suggested that members enter the Winemaker Magazine amateur competition since they are holding their annual conference here in Portland. The WVAWS club in Salem is discontinuing holding their amateur competition. Don will set up a meeting with Gary Arndt of their club with our competition committee to discuss the nuts & bolts and the pros & cons of running a competition.
- Bill Brown, Tours – No report.
- The March meeting will be speaker, Michael Blackard of Portocork.

Blind tasting of member produced Bordeaux varietals & Blends

Name	Wine	Gold	Silver	Bronze	No Medal
Phil Bard & Alice Bonham	2013 Cabernet Franc	•			
Paul Boyechko	2012 Cabernet Franc		•		
Ken & Barb Stinger	2013 Cabernet Sauvignon		•		
Don Hoffard & John Hooson	2013 Bordeaux Blend		•		
Bill & Marilyn Brown & Phil Bard	2013 Cabernet Zinfantivo			•	

Member **Paul Boyechko** won a bronze medal on his 2012 Cabernet Franc at the Los Angeles Cellarmaster amateur competition.

Sur lie and bâtonnage (lees contact and stirring)

Why use lees?

When yeast cells die their cell walls breakdown, gradually releasing such compounds into the wine as polysaccharides (e.g. glucose), amino acids (and peptides), fatty acids, and mannoproteins. The compounds released can influence the structural integration of the wine in terms of phenols (including tannins), body, aroma, oxidative buffering and wine stability.

At the end of alcoholic fermentation, yeast cells autolyse. Yeast autolysis is a slow process involving hydrolytic enzymes which act to release cytoplasmes (peptides, fatty acids, nucleotides, amino acids) and cell wall (mannoproteins) compounds into the wine.

The primary reasons for sur lie ageing are usually based on stylistic goals: to enhance the structure and mouth feel of a wine, give it extra body (an impact of polysaccharides on astringency), and increase the aromatic complexity, flavor/aroma depth and length. Lees also absorb oxygen, assisting in maintaining a slow and controlled oxidation during maturation. Lees stirring can increase the release of yeast compounds into the wine bulk. Stirring can result in a creamy, viscous mouth feel, and can enhance flavor complexity.

Some of the compounds from broken down yeast cells also contribute to wine in the following ways:

- polysaccharides contribute a roundness and volume to the palate
- mannoproteins can bind with anthocyanins and tannins to increase color stability and decrease astringency
- the nutrients released from the dead yeast cells assist the growth of malolactic bacteria
- increased palate length, attributed to the late release of particular volatile compounds in the polysaccharide network of the fruit and yeast
- they can assist in protection from oxidation of particular fruit aroma compounds.
- the process of proteolysis, whereby proteins are hydrolyzed to amino acids (which can act as flavor precursors, possibly enhancing flavor complexity) and peptides (which travel through the yeast cell walls causing an increase in nitrogen content)
- dead yeast liberate esters, particularly fatty acids with sweet/spicy (fruity) aromas (such as ethyl hexanoate and ethyl octanoate); this coincides with the time when fermentation esters (such as isoamyle acetate and hexyle acetate) experience hydrolysis, resulting in combined sweet/spicy/fruit aromas
- the release of amino acids and nucleic acids can enhance flavors and complex aromas, particularly at the end of the palate.
- they yield a sweetness when binding with wood phenols and organic acids
- they modify wine esters and wood aromas
- they provide a natural fining, reducing more yellow colors in whites
- they improve protein stability (current research suggests that lees do this by producing an extra mannoprotein (polysaccharidic molecules which constitute ~35% of the yeast's cell) which prevents polymerization of tannins, pigments and volatiles; and more of this compound is released when the temperature is increased, and with greater contact time and lees stirring frequency)
- they can assist potassium bitartrate stability, since mannoproteins act as potassium bitartrate crystal inhibitors
- they can reduce color: the more yeast cell surface area, the higher the absorption and subsequent loss of color

Lees and oak

Lees can help remove harsh oak phenolics and assist in integrating oak flavors. Lees substances (such as polysaccharides) bind with free ellagic tannins, modifying wood tannin astringency and thus reducing the amount of perceived tannins. Additionally, lees substances can bind with wood-derived compounds such as vanillin, furfural and methyl-octalactones, modifying the oak aromas present in the wine.

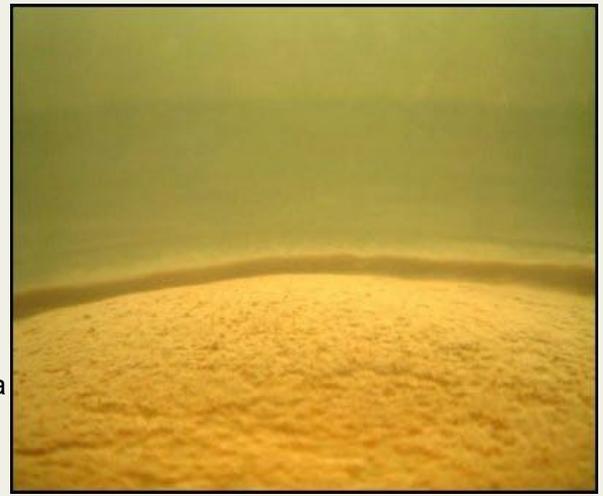
Lees and MLF

Lees contact is often run parallel with malolactic fermentation. The goals of each technique are similar in some respects (e.g. creating a wine which is generally perceived as softer). Lees in the presence of MLF tends to lead to lower diacetyl ("buttery") concentrations, since the yeast metabolize the diacetyl to the non-aromatic compounds acetoin and 2,3-butanediol.

Potential risks and prevention

Potential problems

It is vitally important to conduct regular sensory evaluations of wines undergoing sur lie to monitor them for the presence of any reductive aromas. These may include hydrogen sulfide (the smell of rotten eggs), yeast autolysis without stirring (usually resulting in overly yeasty aromas), or off flavors in general. A low oxygen content (for example, in large tanks) can be particularly dangerous.



Hydrogen sulfide (H₂S), with its characteristic rotten egg aroma, is the more common problem when sur lie ageing. It results from chemically reduced (the opposite of oxidation) sulfur dioxide and can be detected at about 1 ppb (1 part in 1 billion). There are also a number of reduced sulfur groups and alcohols. While some add complexity to wine aroma, too much can permanently ruin a wine as the reactions are non-reversible.

Mercaptans pose a more serious problem. These are sulfur compounds corresponding to wine alcohols with a thiol (-SH) group rather than a hydroxy (-OH) group. Ethyl mercaptan smells like burnt rubber, or garlic and methyl mercaptan is often likened to rotten or cooked cabbage. The sensory threshold is again about 1 ppb. Mercaptans can be oxidized to disulfides. Methyl mercaptan oxidizes to form dimethyl (disulfide and smells like onion or cooked cabbage with a sensory threshold of about 30 ppb.

Prevention and cure

Wines with minimal reductive tones that have not yet further complexed may be treated with some oxidation (e.g. racking) to bring the wine back into a more oxidative and healthier aromatic state. Due to its greater tendency to develop off aromas and flavors, gross (or heavy) lees may be avoided in favor of fine lees. Lees that contains vegetal matter should be avoided in any case. Lees that has been in barrels for two or more months for example, are much less likely to acquire reductive aromas.

Preventing hydrogen sulphide formation involves sensible sulfur dioxide usage, avoiding fruit with elemental sulfur, providing sufficient nutrients for yeast prior to fermentation, and use of a yeast that produces little hydrogen sulphide during fermentation. Wines that do not produce significant hydrogen sulphide during fermentation are less likely to encounter problems later.

Sulfur dioxide usage should not be overlooked here. If large quantities of sulfur dioxide are added to the must, they may later bind with acetaldehyde during fermentation. Acetaldehyde is normally reduced during fermentation to form ethanol. If there is a lack of acetaldehyde present, other juice components such as sulphate may be reduced instead, leading to hydrogen sulphide.

Additionally, sulfur dioxide can convert hydrogen sulphide to elemental sulfur, which may subsequently be reduced back to hydrogen sulphide.

Sur lie and SO₂

It is worth noting that the early use of SO₂ increases the number of compounds that bind with later SO₂ additions. Excessive SO₂ tends to oppose wood/oak flavors and stunts flavor development, whereas insufficient SO₂ favors premature ageing and flattens the wine.

When malolactic fermentation (MLF) is to take place, extra care must be taken with sur lie ageing since no (or very little) sulfur dioxide will/should be present to protect the wine. Sur lie ageing in this situation does provide some assistance against oxidation (through oxidative buffering and the fact that some dissolved carbon dioxide will remain from fermentation), but it also provides a window of opportunity for the development of unwanted bacteria. The most secure approach is to inoculate with a MLF culture early on in the ageing process, or perhaps during alcoholic fermentation itself. Some winemakers, however, feel that a period of non-SO₂ lees contact post MLF can contribute further complexity to wines.

Lees control: types and quantity

Lees stirring is usually conducted on "fine lees" and not "gross/heavy lees".

Heavy lees can be defined as comprising of particles that are typically 100 microns to 2 millimeters. They tend to settle within 24 hours (without pectin). This definition certainly includes fruit debris. Fruit debris can impart off and herbaceous aromas and flavors and can combine with SO₂ blocking its antimicrobial and antioxidant properties. Heavy lees may yet further be defined as those substances continually forming in wine. In this case they may also comprise of yeast, bacteria, precipitated tannins/coloring matter/colloids, and particles formed from fining treatments. These can release undesirable bitter substances into the wine.

Light lees comprise of particles that are typically of size one micron to a few tens of microns. They tend to remain in suspension for longer than 24 hours after they have been agitated. They are comprised of yeast and lactic bacteria (produced towards the end of alcoholic fermentation and malolactic fermentation, respectively). Light lees are favored for sur lie and stirring, but still poses risks of producing reductive aromas/flavors if inappropriately managed.

Separating the gross/heavy lees from the must provides the first opportunity to control the content of lees in the must/wine (the process is called "débouillage" in French). The first racking following alcoholic fermentation gives an opportunity to control the amount of fine lees to be used for sur lie ageing. Choosing the timing of heavy lees separation is an important aspect of lees management. Many winemakers make a judgment on the amount of lees to include in the bulk wine (or whether to include any at all) based on its taste (whether "clean" or "dirty" smelling) at either of these two important stages.

Lees and yeast

The influence of the compounds from broken down yeast cells depends on the individual yeast strains (though the release kinetics of mannoproteins appears to be independent of yeast strain). Different results should therefore be expected from different yeasts. While this influence is not important as other features (such as lees quantity and type control), it may still be taken into consideration.

Lees stirring (Bâtonnage)

Bâtonnage is the French term for stirring the settled lees back into the wine.

Method of stirring

Any method that redistributes the lees thoroughly provides an adequate method of stirring, but different methods contribute differently to wine.

On a moderate scale (such as a single barrel), this can be achieved by the use of a steel rod with a paddle at the end that can be placed in the tank or barrel and spun with an electric drill attached.

On a small scale, a food turntable can be used which allows the process to be controlled externally.

It is important to note the oxygen exposure that each method exerts on the wine, since this will significantly impact wine development.

Intensity and frequency

Lees should be stirred thoroughly, bringing all lees into suspension. The more lees there are, the more frequently stirring should be conducted.

Oxidation and vessel

Oxygen uptake during lees stirring plays an important part in wine development. For example, oxidative stirring increases acetaldehyde concentrations and may increase the acetic acid concentration. The oxygen uptake of a wine under stirring should be factored into the decisions made on maturing schedules.

The vessel type and size in which stirring is conducted should also be noted.

Benefits of stirring

Stirring redistributes the previously mentioned desirable compounds (such as polysaccharides and mannoproteins) of dead cells into the wine mass and, in the case of barrel ageing, re-exposes the wine to the wood at the bottom of the barrel.

Lees absorb oxygen, in the absence of which the wine will become reductive. Bâtonnage, or lees stirring, helps prevent this by redistributing the lees (especially at reductive-point zones) into the wine mass and potentially exposing the wine to some oxygen.

Living yeast cells can enzymatically consume ruptured dead yeast cells. Excessive pressure (such as experienced in large tanks) on dead cells is a primary cause for yeast cell rupture. This is called yeast autolysis and is the process that the traditional Champenoise method employs to gain yeasty/bready notes in Champagne style wines. Yeast autolysis is not usually a feature of sur lie ageing since this process tends to occur at time scales greater than those usually used for sur lie (i.e. around a year as opposed to the several months of sur lie ageing).

Stirring tends to enhance the characteristics of sur lie ageing, diminishing fruitiness and slightly reducing wood/oak influence.

In general, stirring is used to:

- reduce reductive aromas

- assist the release of such substances as yeast polysaccharides, amino acids and esters into the wine

- impart a creamy, viscous mouth feel, and encourage the formation of more complex flavor and better length

- in the case of barrels, help integrate wood/oak characters and re-expose wine to the wood/oak surface

- promote secondary reactions (oxidative stirring)

Stirring schedules

General schedule

Lees stirring schedules, and the total time spent on lees, vary widely depending on winemaking set-up, wine type and style, and winemaker. It is important to find a schedule that suits your own set-up, wine style and individual wine.

Stirring is often done every 2-3 days during the last stages of fermentation (helps prevent sepsis in the lees) and then every 1-3 months once fermentation is complete. However, sur lie ageing in newer barrels might involve more frequent stirring to integrate and re-expose the wood into the wine. The total time spent on lees varies depending on the wine and style in question. An 8-10 month time frame is typical, however, some wines will experience only a few weeks on lees, whereas others may spend 18 or even 24 months.

Common schedules

Common schedules, beginning after alcoholic fermentation, include:

- Once-twice each week for 6 months.

Once each week for the first 4 weeks, then once fortnightly for the next 6 weeks, and monthly thereafter.

Some schedules involve a period of stirring followed by a period on non-stirring contact, for example:

Twice each week for 10 weeks, followed by 6-12 months of non-stirring contact.

Thrice each week for 6 months, followed by 3-4 months of non-stirring contact.

Extreme schedules

Some of the winemakers of top white Burgundy provide perfect examples of extensive sur lie schedules:

Dom. Valette (Vinzelles, Burgundy) wines experience 12-24 months on lees with regular stirring prior to MLF, then only occasional stirring post-MLF.

Under Guillaume de Castelnaud, the wines at Dom. Génot-Boulangier (Meursault, Burgundy) are fermented with fine lees (and possibly gross lees if it is "healthy") before being stirred every 7-10 days and "led toward an oxidative state, and then brought back into a reductive state prior to MLF." Following MLF they are placed in stainless steel "to gain body".

Of course, not all white Burgundy producers use extreme schedules. Alain Coche of Dom. Alain Coche-Bizouard (Meursault), for example, lees stirs once every 8 days for about 4 months and once every month thereafter.

Generally speaking, those who bulk age sur lie for longer periods of time tend to stir less, and vice versa.

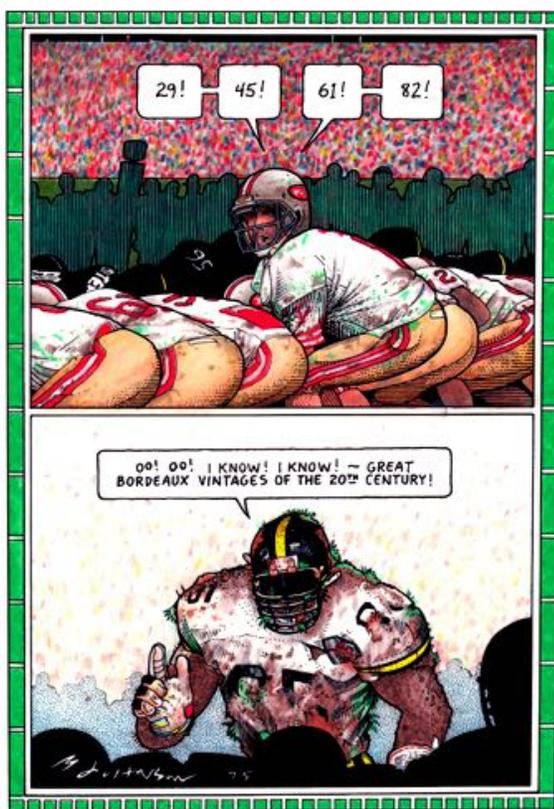
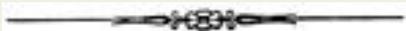
Bâtonnage and character/delicacy/finesse: counter opinions

Many Burgundian producers argue that (excessive) stirring can be detrimental to wine quality. They feel that lees stirring tends to reduce a wine's individual character, delicacy, and finesse, and that wines made using this technique are not capable of ageing as long as those made without it.

Jean-Marc Roulot, winemaker at Dom. Guy Roulot (Meursault, Burgundy), is more restrained when it comes to bâtonnage. He believes that excessive stirring of the lees can destroy wine delicacy, refinement and flavor intricacy, and therefore conducts bâtonnage sparingly.

Dom. François Jobard (Meursault, Burgundy), who makes "some of Meursault's tightest and long-lived wines" according to Pierre-Antoine Rovani, goes a step further. Jobard leaves his wines on gross lees for over a year, rarely stirring the lees and never stirring the fine lees while his wines are in barrel. He believes that stirring results in a faster evolution in the bottle. He reasons that this is because residual carbon dioxide (remaining from fermentation), which would otherwise protect wines against oxidation, is lost during stirring.

Louise Trébuchet of Charton et Trébuchet (Puligny-Montrachet) even believes that "overly stirring the lees covers a wine's finesse and typicity more than oak ever could."



Strong Barrel Sales Herald Strong Industry

American oak supply strained as U.S. becomes largest barrel market in the world

Barrel sales stayed strong in 2014, and coopers are expecting to see another good year in 2015 in spite of significant price increases for American oak.

French oak prices are expected to rise between 3% and 5%, yet the euro has been dropping against a strengthening dollar, and it's widely expected that trend will continue for the short term at least. American oak barrel prices shot up by as much as 10% for some coopers in 2014 because of supply constraints resulting from the surging demand for whiskey barrels and other factors. That supply issue isn't expected to abate in 2015, so American oak barrel prices will also increase in the range of 3% to 5% (or higher) this year. Prices for European oak, which includes Hungarian oak, are seeing some increases or staying stable, based on the cooper.



New American oak barrels are toasted at the Nadalie USA Cooperage in Calistoga, CA. Several factors including the popularity of American whiskey have driven up the price of American oak barrels.

Just as the United States has become the largest wine-consuming nation in the world, it is also the biggest wine barrel market. In June of 2013 the French coopers' trade association Tonneliers de France reported that its 49 members sold a total of 532,990 barrels worth 332 million euros (or \$408 million), which was a 3.6% increase in volume and 3% increase in value. Nearly seven out of every 10 barrels produced in France is exported, and the United States (as the largest export market) is now rivaling French domestic demand. The coopers' group, which does not include every French barrel maker, reports France and the United States account for 60% of its members' sales. "The USA is definitely the largest wine barrel market in the world, much larger than France," said Jason Stout, international sales director for Cooperages 1912. "If you consider Europe to be a single market, then Europe is slightly larger than the USA.

Rough weather during the past two harvests in Burgundy and Bordeaux reduced France's barrel needs, while California posted record wine grape crops in 2012 and 2013. Cooperage sales staff, many of whom spoke to *Wines & Vines* after attending the recent Vinitech-Sifel expo in Bordeaux in December, said the focus for French barrel makers has been the United States (and especially California) for a few years. It's a challenge to pin down the total volume of the worldwide barrel market because many of the companies making and selling barrels are privately held firms that seldom release figures about their production volume.

Demand strong; prices creeping higher

Stout said 2014 barrel sales were up slightly over 2013, which is "incredible considering the harvest was smaller." He said the quality of the 2014 harvest and the strengthening economy helped push barrel sales higher.

Pricing in 2015, however, will be a challenge. Stout said the cost of American oak logs has grown 25%-30% in the past 12 to 18 months. "Cooperage is a small player in the hardwood industry, and we are doing everything possible to hold down costs and still get enough logs to meet demand." He said Cooperages 1912 has the logs to meet projected demand for 2015-16, but "prices are still high and very volatile." Stout stressed he does not expect to see a shortage of American oak barrels for the U.S. wine industry. French and European oak should only see "modest" price increases.

Michael Mercer, who sells French oak for Tonnellerie Leroi and American oak barrels from Charlois Cooperage, said the past year was another great vintage and a strong one for barrel sales. He said a slightly smaller harvest in some parts of California's North Coast was offset by the large harvest in Washington state and the Long Island region of New York.

Mercer said he often makes barrel deliveries himself, and it wasn't uncommon in 2014 for winemakers to request a few more barrels on the crush pad. "Overall it was pretty much a great harvest for barrel sales," he said.

He said in 2014 Charlois had to increase its prices 10% because wood prices have shot up at mills as a result of demand from the spirits industry. "It was a huge issue in 2014," he said. "I've never seen anything like it."

Now that the Cloverdale, Calif.-based cooperage has established some relations with mills back east, Mercer said their wood supply would be a little more dependable.

That's an advantage for Premier Wine Cask, said president Eric Mercier. The company works with mills in Minnesota and Missouri that only produce staves for wine barrels, so they've been able to ensure a steady supply of wood. He said in the past mills regularly had excess wood available for wine barrels, but now that excess is being snapped up for whiskey

barrels. "If you're buying from a broker you're in trouble," he said.

The spirits demand was a pleasant surprise for Tonnellerie O, said James Herwatt, the company's chief operating officer. He said the cooperage had purchased a large amount of American oak a few years ago and has been able to use that inventory to support demand from distillers looking to age their products in premium American oak.

At the cooperage in Benicia, Calif., coopers give Tonnellerie O's American oak wine barrels a deep char, which is what the spirits producers want. "We were actually lucky and fortunate to have sourced quite a bit of wood quite a few years ago anticipating our growth," he said.

That business from distillers gave the company a very successful 2014, and Herwatt said he doesn't anticipate any slowdown in demand for spirits barrels in 2015.

Prices for French and American oak went up 3% in 2014, and Herwatt said he expects a similar increase this year because of supply and operating costs. The company recently opened an office in China to serve the growing number of premium wineries opening there.

He said it's great to see global demand for premium barrels to age high-quality wines returning to levels not seen since the 2008 recession, and the United States is leading that demand. Herwatt said he believes the United States has been the largest barrel market for three to five years. "People want and expect high-quality barrels, and demand them, and are willing to pay for it" he said.

Martin McCarthy, sales and marketing manager for Tonnellerie Radoux, said the American oak situation is more than just demand for whiskey barrels. He said the U.S. timber industry has still not recovered from the recession that ground new home construction to a halt. Many log cutters left the trade to find work elsewhere. The regions where American oak is harvested also suffered wet summers in recent years, making it impossible to cut trees as well. "All at the same time bourbon is exploding," he said, adding it was almost a "perfect storm" to constrict the supply of oak for wine barrels.

Radoux has had to raise its American oak prices, but McCarthy said that increase didn't reflect the true cost increase it saw for wood. "As the wine guys know, you can only absorb part of the price increases until that catches up with you," he said. The Radoux American oak barrel now priced around \$450, while French oak ranges from \$700 to \$1,300, and European is in the high \$600s per barrel.

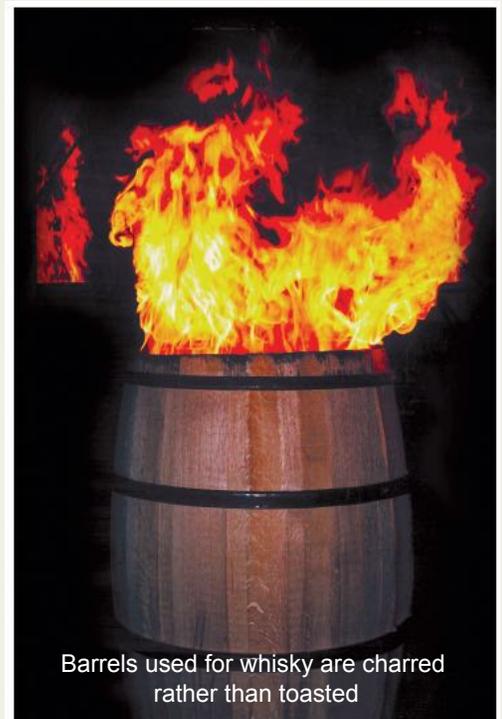
Vincent Nadalie, director of sales for Nadalie USA, said the cooperage will raise the price for its American oak barrel, but he's still not sure exactly how much. He credited the lack of American oak due to whiskey demand and added he hopes the popularity of brown spirits will wane in the next two to three years, as most consumer trends are apt to do.



Cooper raises a barrel at Sequin Moreau Cooperage

Chris Hansen, general manager at Sequin Moreau Napa Cooperage, said French barrels will see a small price increase in step with rising cost of wood, and American oak barrel price increases will be much larger (although that increase has yet to be determined). "Wood prices continued to escalate during the past year due to continuing low American oak log supply," he said.

Hansen said he isn't sure when the United States took the top spot in terms of barrel sales, but it's not surprising given how many new barrels American wineries buy and how many new wineries open every year. "The change we have seen is more cooperages are entering the sales market in the USA each year that never sold here before," he said. "Most winemakers tell us they hear from new coopers every year now."



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Trends in the cellar

The coopers all agreed that winemakers continue to seek "restrained" and "balanced" barrels for their oak programs.

Mercer with Leroi said the cooperage's medium-long toast continues to be popular for Bordeaux variety wines because it can lift the fruit flavors from a vineyard that generally produces riper grapes. "It's all about having the fruit forwardness and not having the barrel show," he said.

Leroi, one of a few coopers to have licensed the barrel-fermentation system first introduced by Tonnellerie Baron and Mercer, said it's been quite popular.

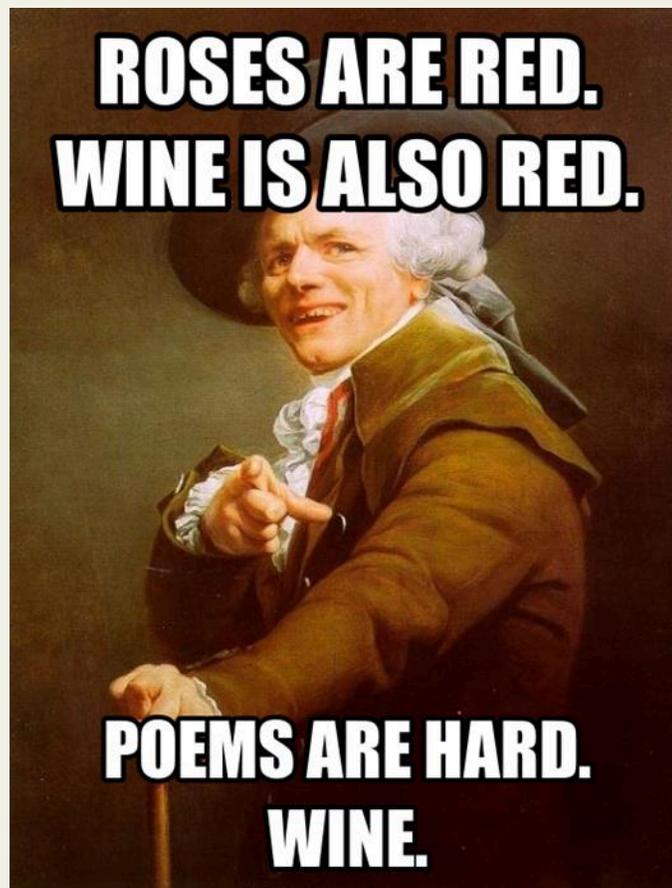
Radoux's McCarthy said "flashy" oak is out and winemakers instead want and three-year oak and tight-grain American and French barrels that provide structural support for wine and less of the bold flavors easily perceived in the finished wine.

"Any barrel that is designed to put fruit and *terroir* up front and soft oak aromatics in the back should be doing well in this market," said Stout of Cooperages 1912.

Tight-grain continues to be popular, said Nadalie. "What they're always looking for is more structure and length from the barrels."

Herwatt, with Tonnellerie O, said more of his firm's clients are combining barrels and oak alternatives rather than opting for one or the other. The cooperage is part of Cork Supply Group that also includes the alternatives supplier Creative Oak.

He said he has seen winemakers add oak alternatives to a new barrel to extract maximum oak flavor that is then spread throughout a finished blend. Instead of buying 10 new barrels, a winemaker could rather buy five and add alternative products. "More and more wineries are using a combination of barrels and oak alternatives to really flavor wine."



West Side Wine Club

Leadership Team – 2015

- 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**