



# Portland Winemakers Club

May 2017

Monthly Rant



## Scheduled Meetings

**January 14, 2017**

Annual Gala – Archer Winery; 4-9 PM

**January 18, 2017**

Crush Talk / Planning

**February 15, 2017**

Bordeaux Tasting

**March 15, 2017**

PWC women winemakers pouring their own creations.

**April 19, 2017**

Barrel / Carboy Sample Tasting

**April, 2017**

Tour: ?

**May 17, 2017**

Speaker: Rich Decenzo; ETS Labs.

**June, 21, 2017**

Speaker: Don Hagge owner of Vidon vineyards

**July, 15 2017**

Annual Picnic at Oak Knoll Winery (no regular meeting in July)

**August 16, 2017**

All Whites Tasting

**September 20, 2017**

Other Reds Tasting

**October 18, 2017**

Pinot Noir Tasting

**November 2017**

No Meeting

**December 6, 2017**

Planning, Tours, Speakers, Events, Elections

I've long been a fan of using American oak in my big reds. I have found, however, that the barrels can range widely in what influence they have on flavors, and how prominent that influence is. Silver Oak, one of Napa's most prestigious producers of Cabernet Sauvignon, ages their wine in 100 percent American oak and recently became the sole owner of the cooperage they use, A&K in Missouri. There is now a section of the Silver Oak website dedicated to American oak which covers a range of topics from growth of the wood to barrel making and use in aging. The chart below, from the site, nicely summarizes the differences in barrel character at different levels of toast. Another section covers the wood from trees grown in Missouri, Minnesota, Pennsylvania and Virginia, comparing the tightness of grain, tannin level and flavor impact of each. Good reading and informative if you are making barrel purchases. Their website: <https://www.silveroak.com/american-oak/Phil>



## Misc. Information

• **Sales of U.S. wine** in all channels hit \$3.4 billion in March 2017, up 5% from a year earlier. Sales for the 12 months through March 2017 topped \$39 billion, up 4% from March 2016.

• **Champagne house invests in Oregon Pinot**  
Maisons & Domaines Henriot America, the U.S. arm of the family behind Champagne Henriot, purchased a majority stake in **Beaux Frères**, a Pinot Noir producer in Newberg, Ore. Taking its name from the French term for brothers-in-law, the winery and 35-acre vineyard was founded by brothers-in-law Michael Etzel and Robert Parker of the *Wine Advocate*. *Etzel will remain a partner in the company, according to Wine Spectator, which broke the news April 17. Another investor, Robert Roy, sold his shares to Maisons & Domaines Henriot.*

• **The wettest winter in recent years** washed away California's drought, but it also left water standing on vineyards in southern Oregon and snowdrifts across eastern Washington. Many growers are now assessing vines for sign of winter kill, with initial reports pegging losses in some vineyards at between 10% and 30%.

• **Young, French & Angry: Winegrowers in Southern France are struggling.** They complain that cheap Spanish wine is undercutting them. Dozens of winegrowers from France's Languedoc region swept through three markets in Nimes in search of wine they believe is threatening their livelihood: low priced Spanish wine. To the dismay of market staff, who stood watching, the vigilante vigneron climbed the shelves, smashing wine bottles and emptying boxed wine cartons onto the floor. They piled shopping carts with more bottles dumping them on the pavement in the parking lot.

**The next regular meeting will be held on May 17th. The agenda will be Speaker: Rich Decenzo, research scientist from ETS Labs.**

**If you haven't already, be sure to renew your club membership and sign a new waiver.**

- 1.) Snacks: This will be a potluck; bring a small snack to share.
- 2.) **Everyone needs to sign a new waiver. If you didn't pay your dues at the Gala or picnic please remember to pay your 2016 dues at this meeting.**
- 3.) Bring a wine glass for tasting of 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.

Website: <http://portlandwinemakersclub.com/>

## April Meeting Minutes

Present: 15

- Bill Brown reported that next months speaker will be research scientist Richard Decenzo from ETS Labs.
- Bill also announced another speaker will be Don Hagge, owner of Vidon Vineyards for our June meeting.
- We are waiting to hear from Moe Momtazi from Momtazi vineyards and Maysara Winery. We are trying to arrange a tour of his facilities plus have Moe speak to us on biodynamic vineyard management.
- Bob Hatt passed out a preliminary grape purchase order form. Said he had no price updates yet.
- There was some discussion about the late bud break so far this year that could push harvest well into October.
- Barb Thomson reported that she has 3 sets of four "Govino" wine glasses with Westside Wine Club engraved on the sides. They are available at \$10 per set.
- Barb Thomson also said that there are a lot of members who have not paid their dues for 2017. Contact Barb at [bt.grapevine@frontier.com](mailto:bt.grapevine@frontier.com) to make your payment. Make checks out to PWC. It's only \$15.

The following members brought Barrel samples for all to taste and comment on.

- Randy Morgan; Pinot noir from Caffall Brothers Vineyard.
- Jon Kahrs: Pinot Noir, 50% Swan, 50% Pommard?; Brittan Vineyard, basalt soil.
- OT Millsap: Pinot Noir, 828 clone, Three Angels Vineyard, Eola Hills.
- Phil Bard: Pinot Noir, 777 clone, Momtazi Vineyard.
- Rufus Knapp: Syrah / Viognier, Chandler Reach.
- Bill Brown: Pinot Noir, Pommard, Estate 70%, Momtazi Vineyard 30%.
- Paul Boyechko: Cabernet Franc, Zerba Vineyard.



"In wine there is wisdom.  
In beer there is freedom.  
In water there is bacteria."  
Ben Franklin

**Editor:** I know this Newsletter should concentrate on winemaking knowledge, new ideas and best modern practices. However, I found this article to be an interesting bit of early American history regarding the introduction and success (or not) of wine cultivars particularly *Vitis vinifera*.

## **FRENCH WINE MAKERS AND THE LAUNCHING OF AMERICAN VITICULTURE**

### **SAL WESTRICH**

While one cannot speak of sustained French immigration to the American colonies, some notable examples can be cited. The Labadists were mystics who lived communally on their 4,000 acre Maryland farm. There were the French settlers of Gallipolis in Ohio who, it appears, produced a wine so poor in quality it was named *méchant Suresne* after a wine known for its sourness produced near Paris. The arrival of French Huguenots in South Carolina is of particular interest because, for the first time, a large group of settlers reached the New World with the primary aim of growing grapes. They had left France for England to escape religious persecution and in 1763 petitioned the British Government to provide them with land in South Carolina so that they could “apply themselves to the cultivation of vines and of silk.” The request was approved. Setting sail a year later, the Huguenots reached South Carolina founding the township of New Bordeaux in the southern part of the colony. They were joined four years later by another group of co-religionists lead by the forceful Louis de Mesville de Saint Pierre. But now came a setback. The colony’s governing body refused to provide the settlers with the funds needed to purchase vine cuttings. Saint Pierre thereupon decided to return to England and appeal for financial aide to Lord Hillsborough secretary for the American Colonies, but to no avail. Rumors had it that Hillsborough had received a 250,000 British pounds bribe from French wine merchants dismayed at the prospect of losing the lucrative American and British markets. Budgetary constraints are a more likely explanation. A costly war with France had just ended forcing the British Government to reduce expenditures. It was about that time that Parliament, seeking new sources of revenue, passed the Stamp Tax and Revenue Act which set the stage for the American Revolution.

Samples of New Bordeaux wine were submitted to the Royal Society earning for Saint Pierre a gold medal but nothing more. Other personal appeals proving to be equally fruitless—one was even addressed to King George III— Saint Pierre decided to take his message to the public publishing a tract bearing the lengthy title, *The Great Utility in Establishing the Culture of Vines and the Absolute necessity of Supporting the Infant Colony of French Protestants Settled in New Bordeaux South Carolina, who have brought the Culture of Vine and the Art of Raising Silk to Perfection*. When nothing came of this, Saint Pierre had no recourse but to sail back to South Carolina stopping off in Madeira, however, to purchase vine cuttings. (Had financial support been provided by wealthy Huguenots?) A final setback awaited his return for the cuttings died soon after being planted, victims of the root-boring lice, phylloxera. The New Bordeaux community eventually scattered, Saint Pierre being its last resident. He would die in the first year of the American Revolution, the victim of an Indian attack.

Although Saint Pierre was unable to create a productive vineyard, his efforts were not lost on future winemakers, especially those from Bordeaux who knew of the fledgling community across the ocean that bore the crescent city’s name, and of the valiant grape grower who had ventured there. Some followed his example and many more seriously considered doing so, for after Saint Pierre, sailing to the New World to grow grapes had become a realistic prospect appealing to adventurous souls willing to brave the unknown.

The close political and commercial ties between France and the United States forged during the War of Independence may explain why numerous winemakers from greater France—thereby including parts of Belgium and Switzerland— chose to migrate to America in the years that followed the conflict. Among these none was to play a more prominent role than Pierre Legaux. Trained as a lawyer but with an abiding interest in winemaking, Legaux reached America in 1783 settling in Spring Mill, a village north of Philadelphia. He lost no time purchasing an estate of 206 acres and planting three hundred vines from Burgundy, Champagne and Bordeaux— all *Vitis vinifera*— he had brought with him from France. He then set about organizing a joint stock company, The Pennsylvania Vine Company capitalized at \$20,000, whose investors eventually included Aaron Burr and Alexander Hamilton. (Political rivalries could apparently be set aside when it came to growing grapes and making wine!) A confident Legaux could not envision any difficulties as the following notice placed in the Philadelphia *Daily Advertiser* indicates:

*“the first vintage ever held in America would begin at the vineyard, near Spring Mill, and in a few weeks Mr. Legaux will begin to produce American wine, made upon principles hitherto unknown, or at least unpracticed here. This will form a new era in the history of American agriculture. . . . Succeeding generations will bless the memory of the man who first taught the Americans the culture of this generous plant.”* (Cited by Thomas Pinney in *A History of Wine in America*.)

The vines, however, failed to survive, victims again of phylloxera. With less than 15 % of the shares in the company sold, Legaux had no choice but to declare bankruptcy and put his vineyard and house for sale. How bleak was his situation can be gauged by the testimony of a visitor who found him “wearing stockings full of holes and a dirty night cap.” But Legaux had no intention of giving up winemaking for he proceeded to rent fifteen acres and began again to plant vines and this time successfully. Thinking that the thin leaves were those of the Constancia, a *Vitis vinifera* from Capetown, South Africa, Legaux concluded that he had succeeded where he and others had previously failed: to grow *Vitis vinifera* varieties in American soil. In fact what he had planted was the Alexander, an accidental hybrid much appreciated by Thomas Jefferson who thought it “as good as the best Burgundy and resembling it.”

His faith in American viticulture restored and with adequate funds thanks to the public stock offering which had resumed, Legaux regained control of his estate now named Montjoy on which he planted 18,000 vines, with an adjoining nursery containing 200,000 more vines. His goal, he declared, was “the cultivation of the vine and the supply of wines, brandy, tartar and vinegar from the American soil, and the extension of vineyards and nurseries of plants of the Burgundy, Champagne, Bordeaux and Tokay wines, and to procure vine-dressers for America.” (Cited by Pinney.)

News of Legaux’s achievement reached Bordeaux where it provoked a predictably hostile response from the city’s powerful *négociants*. An appeal was made to Bonaparte, France’s First Consul, who agreed that the matter was sufficiently grave to merit immediate attention. François André Michaux, a noted botanist, was dispatched to the United States to assess American wine making activities. We ignore the content of Michaux’s report but it must have been sufficiently alarming for the French minister in Philadelphia to be instructed to spare no effort to induce Legaux to uproot his vines. As he had surrendered his citizenship and property holdings when he left France, these would be returned to him; in addition he would be given a cash payment of \$3,500 upon his return to France. Legaux did not deign to respond.

A series of natural disasters created new challenges. In 1803 there were severe frosts and a hailstorm which destroyed most of the vines. Legaux’s response was simply to replenish his vineyard with new vines as we learn from an entry in his journal of April 15, 1805: “The day at half past ten o’clock at night I received a letter from Mr. McMahon [secretary of the vine company] with three boxes of grape vines, sent by Mr. Lee American Consul from Bordeaux, all in very good order and good plants of Chateaux Margaux, Lafite, and Haut Brion, 4,500 plants for \$230.” English was evidently still a foreign tongue to M. Legaux! Then more disasters: a heat wave followed by a lengthy drought. By 1807 Montjoy was no more than an overgrown field. But the Frenchman remained undaunted. After a series of failed lotteries, he fired all his workers and was now laboring in the vineyard alone. He wisely decided to abandon the planting of *Vitis vinifera* in favor of the Alexander still thought to be the *Constancia*. At long last success: in 1809 a first vintage was produced. Legaux’s tribulations, however, were not at an end. An infestation of caterpillars descended on his vines. Then came the upheavals produced by the War of 1812 and this time Legaux capitulated. After a quarter century filled with some successes but mostly setbacks, the Pennsylvania Vine Company ceased to exist. Legaux died in 1827. His poignant last words are worth remembering: “No horses nobody no money and any assistance whatever to expect. What shall I do?”

The importance of Legaux’s contribution to American viticulture cannot be overstated. Cuttings from his nursery found their way to vineyards throughout the United States. They were planted in Jefferson’s vineyard in Monticello; Colonel Morgan planted them on his farm in Princeton before taking them to western Pennsylvania; Nicholas Longworth cultivated them in Ohio; and Jacques Dufour, as we are about to learn, brought them to Kentucky. Then there were the countless visitors to Montjoy who, stirred by Legaux’s words and the sight of the vineyard, returned to their farms determined to engage in grape growing and wine making, thus keeping viticulture alive in the young republic.

The idea of growing European grapes in America was next taken up by Jacques Dufour, of Vevey Switzerland. As a youth Dufour had heard the complaint of French officers who had served in America that good wine could not be produced there, presumably because of the poor quality of native grapes. Why then not plant European varieties, the noble *Vitis vinifera*? Encouraged by his family to do just that Dufour began the long trek to the United States, arriving in 1796. His first task was to find suitable land which led him to explore every part of the country, an experience that proved disappointing, most vineyards being neglected or, as in the case of Jefferson’s in Monticello, completely abandoned. Only one vineyard impressed him favorably and that was Legaux’s in Spring Mill. He heard that Jesuits had planted vines near St. Louis and headed there but not content with what he found decided to go further west to Lexington, Kentucky, where some Swiss had founded a colony. Lexington was a bustling town of some culture, the great legislator Henry Clay being one of its leading citizens. However appealing he found the town, it was Kentucky’s rich soil so similar to that of Switzerland that convinced him that his search was over. Following Legaux’s example, he set about organizing a joint stock company, the First Vineyard of Kentucky, known subsequently as the Kentucky Vineyard Society, capitalized at \$50,000. A promissory note was obtained from a local bank with which Dufour purchased 633 acres, along the banks of the Kentucky River, at Big Bend 25 miles west of Lexington. He then traveled to Spring Mill to purchase 10,000 cuttings including Alexanders (still thought to be the *Constantia*) but mostly *Vitis vinifera*. (Evidence that as late as 1798, Legaux had not given up on them.) So confident was he of the outcome that Dufour invited his family to join him. Seventeen of them made the long voyage to Kentucky, arriving in the vineyard’s second year when all the vines were flourishing. Then, in the third year, disaster! Except for the Alexanders all the vines had withered and died. The demise of Kentucky Vineyard Society soon followed.

However dire their plight, the Dufours were not prepared to abandon their viticultural quest. The right soil had clearly not been found. Why not try Indiana? *Eh bien, pourquoi pas!* And so the clan headed for Indiana, then still a territory, staking out land along the right bank of the Ohio River. Thus was born Vevay, Indiana (spelled with an “a” to distinguish it from the Swiss town). Vines were duly planted and as these were of the Alexander variety, all survived and indeed flourished. With wine production burgeoning, Dufour decided on a patriotic but also commercially astute gesture: several barrels were loaded on to carts and shipped to Washington D.C. where they were offered to President Jefferson who was favorably impressed with the wine’s quality, thereby gaining for Indiana the reputation of being a grape growing region. More grape growers arrived and soon the land around Vevay was covered with vines, making Indiana for a time the center of winemaking in the United States. The good times, however, did not last. In 1818 the speculative bubble burst sending land values and the price of

produce plummeting, grapes included and therefore of wine. By the end of the 1820s most of the vineyards were gone except for Dufour's which survived until the 1850s.

Dufour died in 1827 the year after he had published *The American Vine Dresser's Guide*, the standard reference work on viticulture until the end of the 19th century. A fitting successor to Pierre Legaux, Dufour showed that American winemaking could be a profitable activity, a state of affairs unknown to the Pennsylvania winemaker. Subsequent viticultural pioneers such as Nicholas Longworth of Ohio, Nicholas Herbemont of South Carolina and Louis Renault of New Jersey were certainly aware of Dufour's accomplishments and could not but be influenced by them.

If Legaux and Dufour had known viticultural success, this was not the case with Jacques Lajonie of Switzerland and Jean Claude Roudet of Bordeaux. The two made their way to southern Alabama in the 1820's where French expatriates— mostly officers who had fled France after the fall of Napoleon— had established a "Society for the Cultivation of the Vine and Olive." It did not take long for Lajonie and Roudet to discover that neither vines nor olives could survive the region's intemperate climate and their cultivation was abandoned.

The failure of the Alabama venture does not seem to have discouraged other French cultivators from trying their hand at grape growing in America. Alphonse Loubat chose as his destination New Utrecht, Long Island. There, on forty acres, he began growing *Vitis vinifera* grapes with predictably calamitous results. Wishing to spare others that outcome, Loubat, in 1827, published a book bearing the same title as Dufour's: *The American Vine Dresser's Guide*. Loubat's study, however, is written in both French and English, indicating that it was intended as much for his countrymen as for Americans. He describes numerous diseases of the vine but is silent in regard to phylloxera, which is not surprising as he knew as little about the infestation as Saint Pierre, Legaux and Dufour before him. Another half century would have to elapse before phylloxera was identified.

Loubat's warning went unheeded. André Parmentier, a Belgian resident of Brooklyn, then a rural community, who is best remembered as the creator of a botanical garden in which he grew 400 species of ornamental trees and shrubs and 200 varieties of roses and other flowers, persisted in cultivating *vinifera* varieties. When all succumbed he turned to American hybrids, principally Catawba, but did so reluctantly as is evident from his 1828 catalogue in which he advertises twelve European varieties but not Catawba or any other American variety. It was one of the last commercial attempts to promote *Vitis vinifera*, for by then every grape grower knew that attempting to plant them in American soil was a hopeless task. If the country was to produce drinkable wines it would have to be with American grapes.

In the year that Parmentier published his catalogue, the Maryland Society for the Promotion of the Vine was incorporated "to carry on experiments of the cultivation of both European and native grapes." Its demise was swift, the Society surviving but three years. One who would have not been surprised by that outcome was Nicolas Herbemont, a Frenchman who, following Saint Pierre's example, migrated to South Carolina. Intending at first to grow European varieties, Herbemont altered his plans when he learned of the previous failures and began growing American varieties such as Bland, Isabella, Renoir, and Warren. A cutting of the last was sent to the renowned Prinz nursery in New York which was so impressed with its attributes that it renamed it the Herbemont before having it distributed throughout the United States, making the Frenchman the best-known viticulturalist of his day. The seriousness of Herbemont's commitment to viticulture can be gauged from the words he wrote at the end of his life: "I was born in a country where the culture of the vine is the principle object. My greatest wish has always been to introduce it into the United States and particularly into South Carolina. To the attainment of the desired object, I have for upwards of 18 years spent all of my exertions. It has not been without very considerable expense, labor, time and perseverance, that I have finally come after many failures, to succeed in cultivating the grape advantageously and to making good wine." It is significant that Herbemont employs the term "good" rather than excellent. Constrained to make wine with native American grapes, he harbored no illusions as to the results. Here may be found the reason why, after the 1830s, French grape growers ceased migrating to the United States. Viticultural perfectionists, they were not drawn to a land where the making of superlative wines was impossible. Making "good wine" was, for them, not good enough.

By the middle of the nineteenth century Alexanders, Catawbas, Isabellas, Blands and Herbemonts were ubiquitous in American vineyards. Another variety about to make its appearance would supplant all these: the Delaware. Paul Prévost, a French/Swiss grape grower who had settled in Frenchtown New Jersey, is credited with its discovery which occurred in the late 1820s. Two decades later it was rediscovered by Abraham Thompson, editor of the *Delaware Gazette* of Ohio (hence the grape's name) who traced it back to Prévost, then no longer alive. The Delaware has been called an accidental hybrid, but I am not convinced. Already practiced, the process of controlled hybridization was not beyond the competence of an accomplished horticulturalist such as Prévost. One can surmise that he was seeking to produce a grape that combined the best qualities of the French and American varieties, that is one with high levels of sugar and able to withstand harsh climatic conditions, requirements the Delaware met. Still considered today the première of American grapes, the Delaware remained, until the advent of the French- American hybrids, the grape against which all other grapes were measured.

Excepting for Saint Pierre, French winemakers cannot take credit for initiating viticulture in America, a distinction that belongs to the early Dutch and English settlers and to such individuals as William Penn, Thomas Jefferson, Edward Antill and William Alexander, (and then there is the pioneering work done by the Spanish missionaries in California). It must, however, be acknowledged that these efforts were marginal without lasting consequences, the aim being to produce some

wine to meet one's needs, or in the case of Jefferson and Antill, to carry out an interesting experiment. This was not the intention of the French whose goal was to launch an enduring commercial enterprise, one requiring expert knowledge, acute sensibility and above all a commitment to viticultural excellence. Before the French arrival, what had been another farming activity now became an esteemed endeavor, an artistic (poetic?) engagement, a cultural act. Through the French example an occupation became a calling, the tasks of planting, pruning and pressing, a way of life. The new world began to learn from the old. We can imagine conversations between French and American vignerons in which knowledge and techniques were imparted, a particular region's grape-growing prospects were assessed, and legends and traditions were conveyed. But word of mouth was not the only form of communication. As not a few of the French viticulturalist wrote manuals and catalogues, and were not shy of divulging their views to the press, their ideas were able to reach large parts of the rural world with far reaching implications for American wine making.



**Editor:** For those who like better wine through chemistry, new oak chips, logs, staves and concentrates are being used by winemakers more and more. Here is an article describing some of the more recent products.

## Replicating the Barrel with New Alternatives

**Suppliers expand range of shapes and sizes of alternatives and offer new extracts**

By Andrew Adams

As the range in sizes and shapes of barrel alternatives has expanded in recent years, the oak products also have improved in general quality. Suppliers have invested in better toasting techniques as well as research to understand how the extraction process with alternatives differs from that with barrels. This also has led to the creation of certain products with specific applications to help winemakers add a more precise amount of oak at just the right time.

### Oak powders and extracts

In developing new additions for its trū/tan line of tannin products, Oak Solutions Group created a new, proprietary process to take its oak chips and turn them into a liquid extract that provides the same sensory and tannin impact as chips. The two new products, Aquadolce and Aquatexture, are based on a blend of ellagitannin and gallotannin compounds that the supplier says retain the “aromatic freshness and potency” of wood.



Technical sales engineer Glenn Jeffries said the company's new extraction process preserves the all-important wood aromas. “We wanted to provide a product that primarily preserved those aromatic components—the sensory profiles of chips,” he said. “These are completely, 100% oak-derived products.”

The new extracts also are produced in a manner that doesn't compromise the oak tannin compounds, he said, making them integrate quickly and seamlessly into wine. The liquid formulation also enables winemakers to make oak additions that provide a near-instant oak impact. “The idea is to give winemakers decision-making tools as close to bottling as possible,” he said.

Aquatexture is designed to help balance fruit and structure in wines, while Aquadolce “immediately lifts the aromatic character of wine.” The products comply with the International Oenological Codex and are water soluble. Oak Solutions Group can provide test kits, and product volumes range from small doses for perking up neutral barrels to treating large-capacity storage tanks.

Earlier this year, Tonelería Nacional added PureOak to its line of barrel-alternative products. The powder is derived from convection-toasted staves that are subjected to a water extraction process that the supplier claims retains all the major aromatics. PureOak is available in 500-gram bags and is intended as a finishing product.

Pickering Winery Supply offers finishing powders and small chips produced with French oak by the Australian supplier SuberOak. The company also produces liquid oak tannins from French and American oak.

Quercus Concepts touts its new Eco Impact staves as a “groovy” option that offers more oak impact from the same amount of oak.

Pronektar, the alternatives division of Tonnel-lerie Radoux, introduced a new block that is cut from the company's 17 mm-thick Extreme staves, which are thicker than most other tank staves. "It's a more user-friendly way to use the 17 mm stave because it doesn't take as much time to extract," Pronektar sales manager Steve Burch said.

The blocks also offer some complexity in the extraction process because they provide sweeter flavors from the exterior, toasted surface and also expose the wine to the interior areas of the stave that were not toasted. Burch said the infusion bags only need three to four months of total extraction time and have been used successfully in white wine fermentations.

He said he's also been offering clients what Radoux is calling its "Nektar ID" samples, which are produced by steeping a pack of staves in a proportioned amount of wine to produce a concentrated oak solution.



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Rather than waiting weeks to see what a small sample pack of alternatives can do in a 750 ml bottle of wine, Burch said he can sit down with a winemaker and run some quick blending trials with the liquid and see what the effects could be almost instant. "It's just a way for us to help our customers understand our product and get them to a decision faster," he said. "Lots of winemakers do this; a lot of wineries make 'oak tea' or an oak concentrate and use that to blend their wines."

Seguin Moreau has changed the format of its Oenofirst and Oenofinisher logs, which are produced with a blend of French and American oak chips compressed together. The cooper is reducing the logs in size from 4.4 pounds to 1.65-pound bricks. "It allows winemakers to use smaller increments on small lots," said oak alternatives sales manager Marion Ghiringhelli.

Oak Solutions Group unveiled two new extracts it says can provide near instant integration into wine. The company also is expanding the range of the products with new profiles for short contact times of one to two weeks at 1-2 g/L dosage rates that include Toast Booster, Vanille and Spirit Booster for spirits.

Fine Northern Oak, which is owned by Seguin Moreau, added two new toasts to its line of American oak chips: medium toast and intense. The medium toast chip offers structure and volume with notes of fruit, vanilla and spice, and the intense chips bring ripe fruit, spices and a full mouth feel.

Seguin Moreau is part of the French company Oeneo Group, owner of the consulting and winemaking technology firm Vivelys, which also sells chips under the Boisé brand. The company sells a wide range of French oak chips and has now assembled two pre-packaged blends to make using the chips easier for winemakers.

Boisé's "Y" blend is designed to help wines "with little fat or volume on the mid-palate" by adding some sweetness and aromas of ripe fruit. The "T" blend is for wines that have the potential for long-term aging "but lack power and balance on the palate." In addition to boosting volume and structure, the supplier claims the "T" blend will also extend the profile of wine while enhancing aromas.

### Inserts and staves

Quercus Concepts introduced a new stave called Eco Impact that it says offers more extractive surface in the same area of a traditional fan pack. The staves have a grooved surface on both sides. According to the supplier, the new patent-pending design offers more oak impact, and the staves are more economical and "green" than traditional staves. The Eco Impact staves are available in Hungarian, French and American oak with a variety of toasts.

Alicia McBride, president and general manager of Innerstave, said the company has added new flavor profiles, called Revere Oak, for its French oak barrel inserts and fan staves. The new flavors come from extra seasoning time (36 months) and a new toasting regime creating new flavors and better integration. "In addition to the specialty toasting, we're having our flavors become more barrel-like as far as the integration is concerned," she said.

The "FM" profile offers "vanilla, caramel and baker's spice with elegant tannins," while "FP" adds "robust vanilla, butterscotch, dark chocolate and a creamy mouth feel," and FPP is marked by "dark chocolate, dark-roast coffee, slight smoky bacon and smooth lingering tannins."

Oak Solutions Group touts its new Cuvee 4 and Cuvee 5 staves as producing barrel-like extraction in a tank. The staves are

toasted on one side with a unique infrared toast and left untoasted on the other side. By exposing the wine to both toasted and untoasted wood, international sales director Kyle Sullivan said it creates a similar dynamic in the tank to what occurs in the barrel when wine pushes past the depth of the toast into the barrel's interior surface. "We are toasting one side with a pretty deep toast and getting a pretty deep transformation of compounds and leaving the other side virtually untoasted," he said. "We're seeing more elegant flavors with much better integration."

Cuvee 4 staves provide more red, dark fruit flavors with a touch of vanilla and spice and are similar to a new American oak barrel. Cuvee 5 is more like a new French oak barrel and accentuates aromas while adding spice and toast plus tannic structure. Extraction time takes about four to six months.

The new XL Stave by Nadalie Oak Add Ins are about 3 feet long and best suited for longer tank aging of up to 18 months. The staves come in bundles of 10 and are made with 24-month-aged French oak. A unique toast helps accentuate aromatics with an aromatic finish and provide better integration overall.

Nadalie also has expanded its range of toasts for its alternatives that are suited for white wines. The "spicy" and "fruity" toasts are most similar to the cooper's Perle Blanche barrel. Director of sales Vincent Nadalie said for the fruity toast the alternatives are pulled out of the oak-fired toasting oven, then sprayed with water to release smoky notes and put back in to dry. The spicy toast is similar but at higher temperatures. Mineral and blond toasts are closest to the barrels by Marsannay, which is owned by Nadalie.

He said he was struck by the diversity of products on the market, but with range of options comes an even greater need to conduct extensive trials to ensure each type of alternative product provides the desired effect on a particular wine. "They all have really good applications, and I know a lot of wine-makers using them to great success," he said. "They're getting more diverse but are very specific in how the product can be used. In that regard, they may or may not work for a particular wine."



## News Update on the Washington State Fair Amateur Wine & Beer Competition

**Drop off date for entries: Saturday, August 12, 2017.**

Last year we were fortunate to have a couple of remote drop off locations, as well as the Fair office, for people who could not make this date and/or location.

**Judging date: Sunday, August 20, 2017.**

**Entry fee: \$3.50 per entry.**

Again this year, we will need you to complete your entry process **online** before arriving on August 12.

**The Washington State Fair Amateur Wine Competition judges each wine on it's own merits.**

It's presence, it's balance, it's type or varietal character, not by how it compares to others. For this reason, there can be many (or few) winners at each level and in each category.

Please be sure you test and record your final specific gravity, using a hydrometer.

# Stabilization of Wine

by Charl Theron | 1 May, 2015

## Tips for Cellar Workers

After the fermentation of wine the yeast and other turbidities will settle to the bottom of the container. It is however a slow process and other clarification methods (like fining and filtration which have been discussed previously) are usually applied to clarify it. Before the wine is sold it must be stabilized. This is necessary to assure that whatever can be seen, smelled or tasted in the wine does not change over a certain period. Such a wine is stable. If it does change within a certain time the wine is unstable. We can see whether the wine is clear or which color it is, we can smell the flavors in the wine and we can taste whether the wine is acidic, dry (without sweetness), sweet or bitter.

Different types of stabilities are important in wine, namely microbiological, oxidative, tartrate, protein, color and metal stability. Seeing that consumers do not like the change of wine over a certain period wine must be stable before it is sold.

### Microbiological stability

If living yeasts or bacteria occur in wine it can grow and multiply if the existing conditions are suitable. It can cause haziness in the wine, gas can be formed in the wine and undesirable flavors can also be formed in the wine. The bag of a Bag-in-the-box (BIB) packaging can for example inflate as result of the formed gas. These undesirable changes in the wine can only be prevented by removing or killing the yeasts or bacteria to prevent its development. The removal of it can be done by sterile filtration. Special filtration is used, but it must be applied correctly to be effective and contamination after the filtration must be prevented. The yeasts and bacteria can be killed by pasteurizing the wine or the addition of preservatives to the wine. Pasteurization is the heating of the wine to a certain temperature within a closed system. Different preservatives can be used, but it must be assured that it is legal. Preservatives are also very specific and kill only certain yeasts or bacteria. The quantities which are added must also be controlled. Sulphur dioxide is generally used during winemaking and certain yeasts and bacteria are very sensitive to it. It is however not sufficient to protect wine against the growth of yeasts and bacteria.

### Oxidative stability

If wine is exposed to excessive air the color of the wine will change and undesirable flavors and tastes will develop. White wine will for example change to a yellow color initially, but become brown eventually. It can be prevented by limiting the contact with air or removing the substances, which can change during air contact, from the wine. After completion of the alcoholic fermentation the wine contains much carbon dioxide which prevents the wine from air contact. If the wine is however racked, fined or matured after the fermentation the carbon dioxide evaporates and air contact must be limited. It can be done by topping containers with topping wine, preventing hoses and valves from sucking air and the ends of hoses must always be below the wine surface. Air contact can however not be prevented completely in this way and sulphur dioxide in the wine or the use of inert gasses like nitrogen and argon can be used to replace the air from empty containers. Certain fining agents can also be used to remove the wine compounds beforehand which can be changed by the air contact.

### Metal stability

If the copper or iron concentration of wine is too high it can cause a haze in the wine. The most important sources of copper or iron contamination are the use of copper sulphate in the vineyard or cellar or exposure to copper or mild steel in the cellar. The latter can occur if mild steel equipment or tanks are not painted or coated properly. The general use of stainless steel in the cellar eliminates the problem mostly.



Cream of tartar removed from grape juice after cold stabilization.

### Tartrate stability

Tartaric acid and malic acid are the most important acids which occur in the grapes and eventual wine. The concentration of it in wine plays an important role in the taste of wine. At a low concentration the wine will taste insipid and watery and excessive acidity causes an unbalanced acid taste.

The acid concentration is usually higher in cold than warmer wine countries. If the acid concentration is too low winemakers may add the acids to the juice or the wine. The acid concentration will however decrease during the winemaking due to different reasons. The malic acid concentration will decrease if malolactic fermentation (MLF) occurs in the wine, because the malic acid is converted to lactic acid during MLF. If the MLF is prevented the malic acid concentration will remain unchanged. The tartaric acid concentration will however always decrease during winemaking.



Consumers do not like wine with faulty color or haze

Tartaric acid occurs in different forms in juice and wine and one of the forms is known as cream of tartar. When juice or wine is chilled the cream of tartar precipitates as fine crystals. This phenomenon can be seen on the inside of crushers, settling tanks or fermentation tanks. It is also sometimes seen on the bottom of wine corks of red wines. Seeing that white wines are usually made at lower temperatures, more cream of tartar will precipitate.

Consumers usually do not want to see or taste crystals after wines are chilled in a freezer and wines must consequently be stabilized to prevent the crystal precipitation. Different processes can be applied to obtain tartrate stability. Wine can either both be chilled to a temperature just above the freezing point of the wine and kept at the low temperature for a certain period or the precipitation of the crystals can be prevented by the addition of certain additives or application of certain processes. If the first mentioned process is used the excessive cream of tartar is precipitated as crystals, which is removed by cold filtration.

### **Color stability**

Color stability in white wines will prevent the browning or unacceptable darkening of the wine, but in the case of red wines color changes or the precipitation of excessive color must be prevented.

The darkening of white wine occurs when the wine is exposed to air contact for example ullage on the top of tanks or barrels or during processes like rackings, pump over, filtration or bottling. It can be prevented by managing the mentioned processes properly to limit air exposure and ensuring that the free sulphur concentration is high enough. The browning of red wines is prevented in the same way as for white wines, but the color sedimentation in young red wines can be prevented in the same way as for the tartrate stabilization of wine, by cooling it.

### **Protein stability**

The proteins in wine originate mainly from the grapes, but can also originate from fining agents like gelatin, egg white or casein which are used during winemaking. In the case of white wines which are exposed to high temperatures, for example in the display windows of shops, the wines can become turbid if it was not stabilized properly.

White wines are stabilized against protein turbidity by fining it with bentonite prior to bottling. In the case of red wines a bentonite fining is usually unnecessary, because the tannins originating from the skins react with the proteins in the wine to stabilize the wine. It is however still important to test the stability of the wine, otherwise it must also be fined with bentonite.

## **Editor: Also some advice from our friends in Vancouver, BC, the Nanaimo Winemakers.**

### **Cold Stabilization**

Cold stabilization is the process of chilling wine prior to bottling in order to hasten the crystallization and precipitation of potassium bitartrate (cream of tartar) and thereby prevent "wine diamonds" from forming in the bottle. Home winemakers tend not to be overly concerned about these tartrate deposits because they know they are harmless. However, commercial winemakers go to considerable effort to prevent them. If they don't, customers will return wine when they find "glass" or "particles" in the bottle.

### **Preliminary Points**

Cold stabilization only works for potassium bitartrate instability. There are other possible crystalline salts (calcium tartrate, calcium oxalate) but their precipitation is not assisted by cold temperatures. You can cold stabilize your wine and still end up with "wine diamonds," although this will be relatively rare.

Changes to a wine (e.g., blending, fining) will affect its bitartrate holding capacity. Therefore cold stabilization is better done when other changes to the wine are complete.

Higher pH wines drop more bitartrate.

White wines are more likely to be cold stabilized because (a) they are bottled earlier and have less time for natural precipitation, (b) they are commonly stored at colder temperatures, and (c) their sediment is more noticeable. However, commercial wineries usually cold stabilize reds as well.

Red wines undergo many more changes in the bottle than white wines—and therefore can drop their bitartrate years later. As the tannins change and color oxidizes in an aging red wine, bitartrate that was previously bound to these phenols is newly available for crystallization and becomes part of the sediment.

### **The Technique of Cold Stabilization**

Over the course of a year or two, potassium bitartrate will crystallize and precipitate even at moderate temperatures. Because potassium bitartrate is less soluble at colder temperature, chilling speeds up the process—the colder, the faster. Commercial wine makers chill large tanks of wine through refrigeration. They aim for about one week at 22°F or two weeks at 25°F.



The Vancouver Island home winemaker usually opts for a less precise method, either: Several months at a very cool cellar temperature; OR One month in a fridge or outdoors in the coldest part of our winter. Winter elsewhere can be too cold—wine can freeze, in which case you end up with a broken carboy and a mess. You can assist with process of bitartrate crystallization and stabilization by: Seeding with finely powdered cream of tartar. Add one gram per liter and stir thoroughly. You don't need to be precise about additions. The cream of tartar will not dissolve in the wine, which is already supersaturated with it. It simply acts as small crystals, the nuclei, which will attract the bitartrate in the wine, thereby creating bigger crystals, which fall to the bottom. Getting crystals started is the hardest (most energy intensive) part of crystallization. Seeding jump-starts the process. Stirring regularly: This increases the contact between growing crystals and the wine. But don't introduce oxygen and thereby endanger the wine. Filtering the wine while it is cold. Filtering captures the small crystals that may still be in suspension. Commercial wineries have other techniques they can use to remove bitartrate, but they are not feasible for the home winemaker.

### **Cold Stabilization and Acid Reduction**

People often say the wine is "dropping acid" when bitartrate precipitates. This is because it takes 1.00 gram of tartaric acid to make 1.26 grams of potassium bitartrate. Although not a lot of new potassium bitartrate is formed during cold stabilization (most already exists in solution), it turns out that cold stabilization can reduce TA in a wine about 0.3 grams per liter. And the magic is that pH also goes down a bit, due to the removal of positive potassium ions.

### **Sources**

Ron S. Jackson (1994). *Wine Science: Principles and Applications* (Academic Press), 283-84.

Bruce Zoecklein (1988). "A Review of Potassium Bitartrate Stabilization of Wines," Virginia Cooperative Extension Service, Publication 463-013. Available at <http://www.apps.fst.vt.edu/extension/enology/downloads/PotBitar.pdf>

## **Should I Fine My Wine Before Cold Stabilization?**

*Lum Eisenman replies.*

Sometimes a new wine will have several defects, and it will be obvious to the winemaker that multiple fining treatments will be needed. In general, fining operations are done in the following sequence.

Treat any hydrogen sulfide problems with copper sulfate as soon as fermentation is done.

Cold stabilize the wine to remove potassium bitartrate. Chilling also helps clean up the wine, and it reduces the microbe population.

Use protein materials (gelatin, casein, Isinglass, egg whites, etc.) to fine the wine for astringency, clarity or color problems. Fine with bentonite to remove excess protein and make white and blush wines hot stable. The bentonite fining will help remove any left over protein material, and it may also improve wine clarity.

But small wineries often depart from the sequence given above to reduce handling. They fine their white and blush wines with bentonite and then immediately cold stabilize the wine. During cold stabilization, the soft bentonite lees are compacted by the tartrate crystals, and the compacted lees make racking much easier.



Howard Mozeico was tragically killed Thursday, April 13. Howard was very active in the WSWC and served as President for two terms, 1998 & 1999 I do believe. During this time, he and Mindy (Secretary/Treasurer) implemented several new WSWC programs that re-energized the club. Among these programs were the transferring of the newsletter from US Postal service to email format and designing the basic format of the newsletter still in use today, upgrading the Club tasting format and wine critique/guidance program; instituting and encouraging the group purchase program; expanding the group touring program with numerous well attended tours to, amongst several others, - Domaine Drouhin (with Veronique Drouhin as our guide), Adelsheim (with David Adelsheim as our guide) in a barrel/clone tasting that was truly memorable, Archery Summit, Domaine Serene, and several others. Howard and his lovely wife Mona hosted two WSWC summer picnics at their lovely home in the Chehalem hills. Howard and his daughter Jessica started Et Fille in 2000. Below is an excellent link. He will truly be missed.

<http://www.princeofpinot.com/winery/266/>



Regards. Craig Bush

# Portland Winemakers Club

## Leadership Team – 2016

President: **Phil Bard** [phil@philbard.com](mailto: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](mailto:bt.grapevine@frontier.com)

- Collect dues and fees, update membership list with secretary
- Pay bills

Secretary: **Ken Stinger** [kbstinger@frontier.com](mailto: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: **Marilyn Brown** [brown.marilynjean@gmail.com](mailto:brown.marilynjean@gmail.com)

- Arrange speakers for our meetings

Chair for Tastings: **Paul Rogers & Barb Stinger** [paulgrogers@fastmail.fm](mailto:paulgrogers@fastmail.fm)  
[kbstinger@frontier.com](mailto:kbstinger@frontier.com)

- Conduct club tastings
- Review and improve club tasting procedures

Chair of Winery/Vineyard Tours: **Bill Brown** [bbgoldieguy@gmail.com](mailto:bbgoldieguy@gmail.com)

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

Chair of Group Purchases: **Bob Hatt** [bobhatt2000@yahoo.com](mailto:bobhatt2000@yahoo.com)

- 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@gmail.com](mailto:don.robinson.pdx@gmail.com)

- Encourage club participation in all amateur competitions available. Make information known through Newsletter, a-mail and Facebook

Chairs for Social Events : **Marilyn Brown & Alice Bonham** [bbgoldieguy@gmail.com](mailto:bbgoldieguy@gmail.com)  
[alice@alicedesigns.org](mailto:alice@alicedesigns.org)

- Awards Gala / Holliday parties

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