



West Side Wine Club

November 2013

Monthly Rant

Scheduled Meetings

January 11, 2014

Annual Gala – Archer Winery

January 15, 2014

Crush Talk / Planning

February 19, 2014

Bordeaux Tasting

March 19, 2014

Aroma Kit / Faults & Flaws

April 16, 2014

2013 Barrel / Carboy Sample Tasting

May 14, 2014

Tour

May 21, 2014

Speaker

June 18, 2014

“Best Practices of Amateur Winemakers”

July 12 or 13, 2014

Annual Picnic.

July 19 or 20, 2014

Tour

August 20, 2014

All Whites Tasting

September 17, 2014

Other Reds Tasting

October 16, 2013

Pinot Noir Tasting

November

No Meeting

December 4, 2013

Planning, Tours, Speakers, Events, Elections



Last month: the best time to be a winemaker. That's because it was harvest, and picking up your fruit and crushing it is one of the most satisfying aspects of winemaking. Driving around with big barrels of Cab or Pinot in the back, what could be better? Put some Springsteen on...

This month: the toughest time to be a winemaker. You still have wines that need 3 punch downs a day, and brix measurements as they approach dryness. There are fruit flies everywhere, and hey, what's that smell? H2S? VA? Paranoia? There are wines to press, you need more carboys than you thought. And a lot of paper towels and mop up sessions... There are wines in malo, they need a warm environment and some stirring and hugging and no exposure to oxygen and sterilized implements and nutrients and, and, and... There are wines that need to come off malo and you need even more carboys, doses of sulfite, acid adjustments, more measurements and some Argon and some carboy schlepping.

If you're just doing a couple batches of reds, or nothing larger than 100 lbs or so of fruit, November can be a walk in the park. If your volume is measured in thousands of pounds, and you don't have the staff a real winery does, its a completely different story. No wonder some people quit after they've been at it a number of years. Too damn much work! But then, its the good work. And I just open a bottle from a couple years back and remember that this is what I'm going to be enjoying from this years harvest 2 to 3 years down the line. Yum!

If I survive the making part, that is... Phil

Drink Responsibly.
Drive Responsibly.

Information & Trivia

Drinking wine helps to prevent sunburn, says a study by the University of Barcelona and the Spanish National Research Council. According to the researchers, flavonoids in grapes and wine block the chemical reaction that causes the skin to burn when it's subjected to the sun's ultraviolet rays. So before you go outside next summer, cover your body with Cabernet Sauvignon, and you'll be just fine.



The Newport Seafood & Wine Competition is again soliciting amateur winemaker's entries. All entries must be received by the Newport Chamber of Commerce by January 14, 2014 or to a drop site by January 9, 2014. They are limiting amateur entries to 75 total. More details at: <http://www.seafoodandwine.com/wine-competition.html>

- A fine is a tax for doing wrong. A tax is a fine for doing well.
- A rose by any other name would still attract aphids.
- A rumor without a leg to stand on will get around some other way.
- As far as we know, our computer has never had an undetected error.
- Don't trust reality. After all, it's only a collective hunch.
- Everybody lies, but it doesn't matter since nobody listens.
- I know it sounds like I'm in denial, but I'm not.
- I started out with nothing... I still have most of it.

The next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, December 4 at 7:00 p.m. at Oak Knoll Winery. No November meeting.

- **Agenda Planning for 2014 tours, speakers, club events & election of officers. Come with your ideas for possible tours and speakers.**
- **Snacks: This will be another potluck; bring a small snack to share. Bring one of your wines to share.**
 - 1.) Please bring a wine glass for tasting.
 - 2.) Waivers will be present at the meeting. If you have not previously signed a waiver for, please do so at the meeting. You may also pay your 2014 dues if you have not already done so.
 - 3.) The meeting will begin at 7pm and end by 9pm. If you can get there a little early to help set up, please help to put away chairs and tables at the end.

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

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

October Meeting Minutes

Members present = 29

10/16/2014

- Phil poled members about having a meeting November 13. Marj will check on Oak Knoll's schedule. Members will be notified by e-mail if there is to be a meeting.
- We welcome 4 visitors to tonight's meeting: Liz & Gregg Colwell; Juanita Leard & Rob Landsness.
- Several members spoke about the grapes they have picked so far this Fall from various vineyards and their quality.
- Jon Kahrs has taken a new position with his company and has extended an invitation for anyone interested to attend a wine tasting and tour of the Southeast Wine Collective. Jon will provide us more details by e-mail.

Phil Bard & Bill Brown conducted a blind tasting & critique of members Pinot Noir wines. The results are listed below in order of tasting.

Wine #	Name	Varietal	Gold	Silver	Bronze	NM	Total Score	Medal Score	Medal
1	Bob Hatt	Pinot Noir; 2011 Stormy Morning	1	9	14	15	35	1.21	Bronze
2	Robert Lunifeld	Pinot Noir; 2011 Pommard; Z Farms			10	19	10	0.34	None
3	Jon Kahrs	Pinot Noir; 2011 Brittan Vineyard	8	21			66	2.28	Silver
4	Jon Kahrs; Don Robinson	Pinot Noir; 2011 Sunnyside, Temp. Hill	2	17	10		50	1.72	Silver
5	Phil Bard	Pinot Noir; 2011 Sunnyside, Temp. Hill	1	11	17		42	1.45	Bronze
6	Jim Ourada, Paul Rogers	Pinot Noir; 2012 Stormy Morning	1		5	23	8	0.28	None
7	Ken & Barb Stinger	Pinot Noir; 2012 clone blend Courting Hill		3	25	1	31	1.07	Bronze
8	Bill Brown	Pinot Noir; 2012 clone 115 Courting Hill		2	16	11	20	0.69	Bronze
9	John Hooson, Don Hoffard	Pinot Noir; 2012 barrel sample		1	7	21	9	0.31	None
10	John Hooson, Don Hoffard	Pinot Noir; 2009 6 Mo. In French oak	2	15	12		48	1.66	Silver

Ea Gold vote = 3 pts. Medal score 2.5 or greater = Gold

Ea Silver vote = 2 pts Medal score 1.5 to 2.49 = Silver

Ea Bronze vote = 1 pt Medal score 0.5 to 1.49 = Bronze

The Biochemistry of Winemaking: Why Is Must pH Not Stable

Common measurements taken by wine makers immediately following crush include the must's temperature, degrees brix, acidity, and pH. Retesting the must after it has rested for several hours can provide different readings.

Why does the pH change in must?

Angela Romo, a Sacramento Wine Club member, explains the reason for the change in pH. While somewhat a newbie home winemaker who is in the midst of her 4th harvest, Angela knows her science. She received her doctorate in Biochemistry and Molecular Biology from The Johns Hopkins University in 2005, and currently teaches chemistry at American River College in Sacramento, and biology online at The University of Phoenix.

Angela's Explanation

First a little vocabulary to keep us all on the same page:

H⁺: hydrogen ions. The more of these you have, the more acidic your solution.

K⁺: potassium ions. The way the mineral potassium (symbol: K) exists in our body. If it existed as potassium metal, we'd all be dead!

pH: the negative log of the concentration of H⁺ ions ($\text{pH} = -\log[\text{H}^+]$). This is a log scale like the Richter scale for earthquakes, meaning that going from pH 4 to pH 3 makes the pH 3 solution 10 times as acidic as the pH 4 solution. Why did I go backwards there? Because it's a negative log scale, meaning the lower the number, the more acidic the solution.

Cells: the basic unit of life. All cells we'll be discussing have a cell membrane; a barrier to the outside world. Its function is to keep the inside of the cell separated from the outside of the cell.

Pumps: proteins in the cell membrane that let things into and out of the cell. Remember that we need to get nutrients into cells and waste products out of cells in order to live. Pumps are specialized as to what they move--the ones we're going to talk about move H⁺ and K⁺.

OK, now onto the explanation!

Let's get a little background about how things normally work in cells. Plants contain a special kind of protein pump in their cell membranes (called the H⁺/K⁺ pump in tomatoes, but they're plants too!). The job of this pump is to create energy for the cell. It does this the same way a dam allows us to create electricity--H⁺ are pumped out of the cell (like water stored in a dam) and then when they flow back through, they allow energy to be created (like when water from the dam flows through the turbine to create electricity). There is a cost for moving all of this H⁺ outside of the cell, however, and that cost is that something else has to be moved into the cell. In this case, in order to move H⁺ out of the cell, K⁺ must be moved into the cell to compensate. Think of going to the store to buy something. You can't just pick it up off the shelf and walk out with it; instead you have to pay money in exchange for it. The K⁺ is the money you pay in order to remove the H⁺. So the cell is the store, the K⁺ is the money, and the H⁺ is the good that you wanted to remove from the store and take home with you (or the good that the cell needs to move from the inside of the cell membrane to the outside of the cell membrane).

Another bit of background, cells need a certain pH in order to live. Human cells need a very narrow range from pH 7.3-7.5. Anything outside of this range and our cells start to die. Therefore, our cells work very hard to maintain this range. Grape cells are the same way--they need a narrow range of pH in order to properly function. Once things get out of this range, grape cells will work hard to get it back to normal!

As far as what's happening in your crushed grapes, the actual crushing process, well, crushes some of the cells and pokes gigantic holes in the cell membranes. This releases all of the H⁺, K⁺ and everything else that's inside of the cells. To top it off, the crushed cells are no longer using the H⁺ to make energy, so you get a buildup in your juice--this would be like continually filling a dam with water and never releasing any; the pressure would just build and build. In the case of the cells, the building pressure is seen by the increased acidity and lowering of the pH in the juice (which is why the pH falls when grapes are crushed).

However, not all of the grape cells are destroyed in the crushing process (look at all the intact skins that are still there!). The surviving grape cells don't realize that they are doomed. Instead, they go into survival mode. They know that the pH is falling into a range that will kill them, so they begin to try desperately to get the pH back where it should be. To do this, they throw that H⁺/K⁺ pump into reverse. Instead of removing H⁺ from the cell and bringing K⁺ in like it does when it's on the vine, now it starts to bring H⁺ in (to try to lower that pH) and pushes K⁺ out. It's like when you return something to the store that you don't want--you give them the goods, and they give you the money back.

Since you're removing the H⁺ from the solution, the pH starts to rise. This always takes a couple of hours, which is why we let the grapes rest overnight to stabilize. At the same time as the pH rises, you get more K⁺ into your juice, because that's the price the cell pays for removing H⁺ from the juice. So this is why you can see a rise in pH (because there are less H⁺ in

the juice), but no change in total acidity (because the H⁺ is still there, but now it's inside of the cells instead of in the juice). Back in the 80s, a UC Davis researcher actually considered this and suggested calculating total acidity by adding pH to [K⁺] and [Na⁺] (because plants also have Na⁺/H⁺ pumps). To be honest, that's a load of crap. All bacteria care about is the pH-- they don't care what total acidity is.

So there you have it! That's why you guys saw a rise in pH when you let your juice sit overnight. The poor little grape cells were just trying to live!

Angela Romo September 2013



The Benefits of Punching Down The Cap

If you've ever attempted to make a big red wine at home from fresh grapes - but the finished product lacked color, taste, or astringency - chances are, your wine could have benefited from a winemaking technique known as "punching down". This winemaking article will explain what a "cap" is, the benefits of punching the cap down during fermentation, and provide hints on how to do it. It does not discuss other methods of cap management, such as rotary tank or pump over methods, which are seen in commercial wineries.

This article is intended for home winemakers who make their own wine from scratch (from fresh grapes or fruit). If you make wines from kits, you will certainly benefit from this knowledge, but you won't have to "punch down" since most kits do not include grape solids like skins, stems, and pips.

What is a cap?

We'll define the "cap" as the solid mass of grape skins, stems, and pips (seeds) that floats to the top of the fermenting vessel during fermentation.

"Punching down" simply describes the process of breaking up the cap and pushing it back down into the wine so that the cap stays moist during fermentation. There are lots of benefits to punching down... read on!

Why is it important to punch the cap down?

The main reason it is desirable to punch down this mass of skins, stems, and seeds back into the liquid is that **your wine will have a richer color, flavor, and astringency.**

Here are some other benefits of punching down the cap:

- During the early stages of fermentation, the physical act of punching down helps introduce oxygen to your yeast cells, helping them "kick start" fermentation.
- Punching down helps mix the yeast into the must.
- It helps keep harmful bacteria or mold from forming that could ruin your wine.
- It ensures color, flavor, tannins and other phenolic compounds are added to your wine.
- Punching down helps dissipate heat that naturally occurs during fermentation. Left alone, the cap can reach high temperatures, providing an environment that helps grow harmful bacteria.

Hints for punching down

First of all, take into consideration the size of your fermentation vessel. If you are making 6 gallons of wine in a 6.5 gallon fermentation bucket, you would lose a lot of wine over the side of the bucket when you start punching down the cap.

Remember, you will displace the wine as you push the cap beneath the surface of the wine. Be sure to allow for this displacement when you start your next batch of wine by getting the right size bucket for your batch.

The best tool (at least for the home winemaker) for punching down is probably a stainless steel potato masher. They're inexpensive, easy to find, easy to clean, and have the right size footprint for punching on a small scale. We've heard of some folks who use wooden utensils for punching down, but we wouldn't recommend it... the surface of wood is too porous and could easily harbor harmful bacteria if not properly cleaned.

When you punch down, your goal should be to gently break up the cap and work out all the lumps. When finished, the surface of the wine should be smooth and moist throughout.

You should start punching down as soon as you pitch your yeast. As already noted above, this will help mix the yeast into your wine as well.

After the initial punching down, fermentation should proceed rapidly. Due to the buoyancy provided by the CO₂ bubbles during fermentation, the cap will start to form and float to the top. You'll need to **punch down the cap about three times per day** to ensure the cap stays moist. Do not allow the cap to cake up or get dry on top.

The ideal temperature for this process is around 60 to 65 degrees Fahrenheit. Do not allow your wine to get any hotter than 70 degrees if you can help it.

At some point - and this depends on a lot of variables, like the variety of grapes, temperature, Brix, SO2 and pH levels, type of yeast used, etc. - the cap will stop forming at the top. You'll notice that the solids in the wine will start to SINK instead of float. This happens because fermentation is slowing down and there are less CO2 bubbles to push the solids to the top.... and it's your signal that it's time to PRESS.

Conclusion

If you're making a wine from scratch, punching down the cap during fermentation is one of the most important things you can do to ensure full color, taste, and astringency. Punching down is easy to do, but it must be done consistently (about 3 times per day) in order to achieve the desired effect. The basic rule of thumb is to keep the cap broken up and moist so long as the cap continues to form at the top of the fermentation vessel.



Editor: Some rather harsh words about wine competitions.

Controversial Wine Judging Study: The Real Story

Retired statistics professor Robert Hodgson has owned Fieldbrook Winery in northern California for 35 years. Several years ago he released a study which showed that wine judges at the California State Fair gave dramatically different scores to the same wine when tasting it blind on two different occasions. The study has popped back into the mainstream media this year, cited as proof that wine tasting is "junk science" or "bullshit." **W. Blake Gray** asked Hodgson what the study really means.

What made you start doing this experiment?

It goes back to early 2000. I was always curious about how some of our wines would do really well some places and not get anything other places. We won the San Francisco International Wine Competition Best of Show. It was a '93 Zinfandel from Pacini Vineyard. And we entered that wine in another competition and it didn't win anything.

I was a judge at the State Fair for a while. I finally told Pooch [G.M. Pucilowski], the chief judge at the time, that I didn't think I was very good at it, so I excused myself. He invited me to be part of the advisory board for the State Fair, partly because of my technical background and partly because I owned a small winery. As soon as I was on the board, I started talking to Pooch about running some tests to check the reliability of the judges.

You started testing all the judges in 2005. How did they do?

The first year, about 10 percent of the judges did pretty well. Another 10 percent did pretty poorly. I would define 'pretty well' as being if they could stay within the range of one medal. We could translate the medals to scores. If the judge was within four points, that was really good. If the judge was up to 14 or 16 points disparity, that was really bad.

Who were the judges at that time?

Until this year, all the judges that were invited to judge at the State Fair had to go through a wine-tasting course. If you wanted to be a judge, you had to take a test. There were people who were professors of viticulture and enology at UC Davis and at Fresno. There were wine buyers for stores. There were people who were professionals in other fields, but they were knowledgeable about wine.

This year, we decided to suspend this and let new chief judge Mike Dunne invite anyone he wanted to.

How did people do this year, compared to the past?

About the same. The question is whether this program is going to continue. We've been collecting data since 2005. We hoped that we would determine the best judges to use them as mentors.

It turned out that the judges who were really good in 2005 were in the middle of the pack in 2006. That has repeated. The ones that do well are going to change every year.

Is the California State Fair better or worse than other wine competitions in the U.S.?

The second paper I wrote had to do with tracking wine through U.S. competitions. About 99 percent of the wines that get gold medals one place, get no award some place else.

Several gold medal-winning wines were entered in five competitions. None of them got five or even four golds. It's amazing, the lack of consistency. I put together a study that showed these are the results you would get if this were a completely random process. I'm not willing to bite the bullet and say it's completely random, I don't think that's true. But that's what the results indicate.

One winery entered 14 competitions and got no awards in 13 of them, and got a gold medal in the 14th. Guess what's on the label of that wine? Gold medal winner.

Who are these competitions for, the consumer or the wineries?

They're for neither. They're for the competition organizer. Haven't you figured that out yet? At the San Francisco Chronicle competition, you know how many entries there are? 5,500, at \$75 per entry. You can multiply, right? You judged at that, right? Did you get paid anything? You collect 5,500 wines at \$75 and pay the judges nothing. I think somebody should follow the money. I think it would be an interesting article.

The people that enter wines are doing it because they think that having a gold medal on the bottle will sell wine. There's some work that suggests that's not true.

The International Organization of Vine and Wine has developed a system for wine competitions like the Concours Mondial in which tasters get no more than 50 wines a day, and are not supposed to discuss the wines. They give scores to the wines, and their scores are combined and statistically adjusted to adapt for judges' biases. For example, I was on average about 1.2 points below the rest of the judges on my panel this year, so there's an adjustment for that. What do you think of that system?

What they're doing is exactly right. We've talked about that at the State Fair. You should take into account the bias of each judge. We've said we should evaluate the wine twice. The first time without talking. The second time, when judges talk about it, some judges are very persuasive at getting people to change their score. That data is not very valid.

One of the things we've been working on is using rank-order statistics. One real simple example is, if you have 10 wines and four judges, you give the wines scores but you convert the scores to overall ranks. You add up all the ranks together. You take the sum of the ranks. Let's say a particular wine got 1st (out of 10), 1st, 3rd, 1st. It would have 6 points. Another wine would be ranked 10th by all four judges, it would have a rank-order score of 40. The wine with the lowest rank-order score wins.

There's a lot of mathematical theory that says that's a better way to do it. Without rank-order scoring, somebody who's a very lenient scorer would have a lot more weight in the group than a more stingy scorer.

I'm a stingy scorer, so I have less weight?

That would be true, but it wouldn't be true if you look at the ranks. I doubt that it's going to happen because averages are easy to understand.

What about social promotion medals, when judges adjust their scores upward because another judge convinces them to?

That's a human characteristic. That just screws up the data. There's no way to work with the data. If the data aren't independent, you should just give up. I've been on enough panels to know there's a good side to people. They want to help out.

Do these results apply to ratings given by wine critics?

These results are only about competitions. I have friends who would like me to submit a bunch of wines to the Wine Spectator with different labels. But I haven't done that. I think there's a real opportunity for the Spectator to enter into an agreement with somebody to test their results statistically. If they do well, they can publicize it and it looks good for them.

I think a lot of the stuff they write about is bullshit. I like to think that I write about something I know about. Clearly people like the Wine Spectator. There's no way anyone can taste that many wines in a week. I don't know how good the Spectator is. All I can tell you is that wine competitions aren't very useful.

The major wine magazines give one person's opinion, while competitions use a group of tasters. Which should give more repeatable results?

Definitely a group is better. From a statistics point of view, the more evaluators you have, the less noise. You have to have a panel that has consistent tasters.

What if this were doctors? You'd have one doctor who says, you need to amputate your arm, and another who says, you need to take some aspirin. Would you like a board of experts to determine what woman would be your wife?

Your results have been available for a few years. Why all the attention now?

I have no idea, although what you say is true. The last time that there was a fuss was when there was an article in the Wall Street Journal a few years ago. That led to some reaction. And then nothing happened until a month or so ago. All of the sudden The Guardian called, and then the L.A. Times.

Your research has been used recently to attack not only wine judging, but wine itself. What do you think about that?

I've only read a few articles. I've only read ones where people have interviewed me and they have been accurate portrayals of what I've said. There are some people who think I'm killing wine competitions. I don't think that's true.



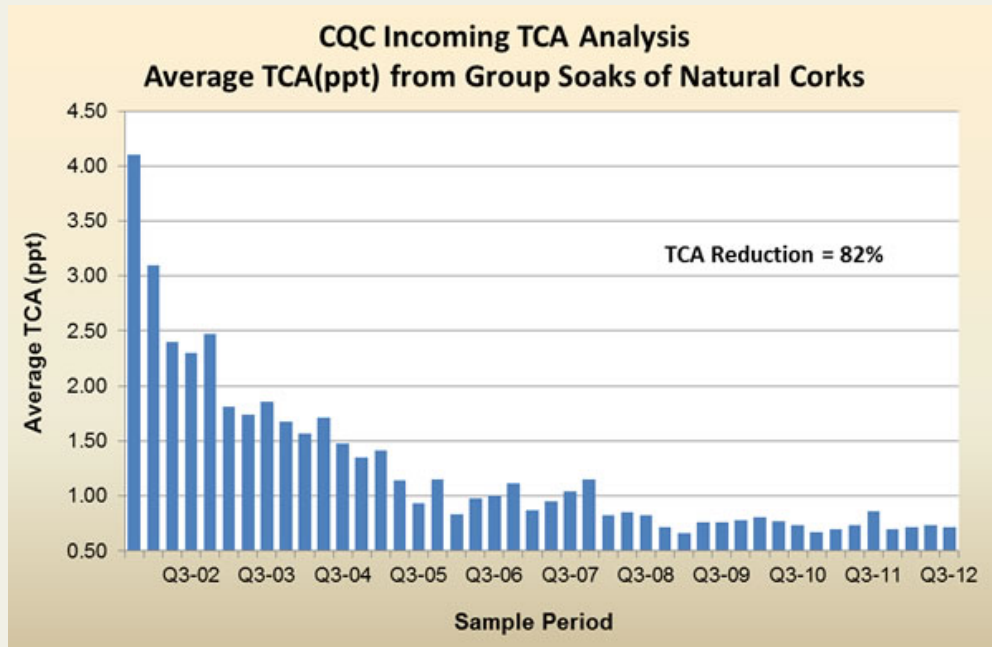
Cork Quality Council Audit Results - September 2012

Current Results from Screening of Incoming Cork Shipments Show an 82% Reduction in TCA

Analysis of natural cork shipments continue to demonstrate a steady reduction in occurrence of the chemical compound associated with taint. Over the past nine years, the California based, Cork Quality Council has screened every shipment of natural corks its members have brought to their warehouses. Before CQC members accept any cork lot into inventory, screening samples are sent to ETS Laboratories for GC/MS analysis of 2,4,6-Trichloroanisole (TCA).

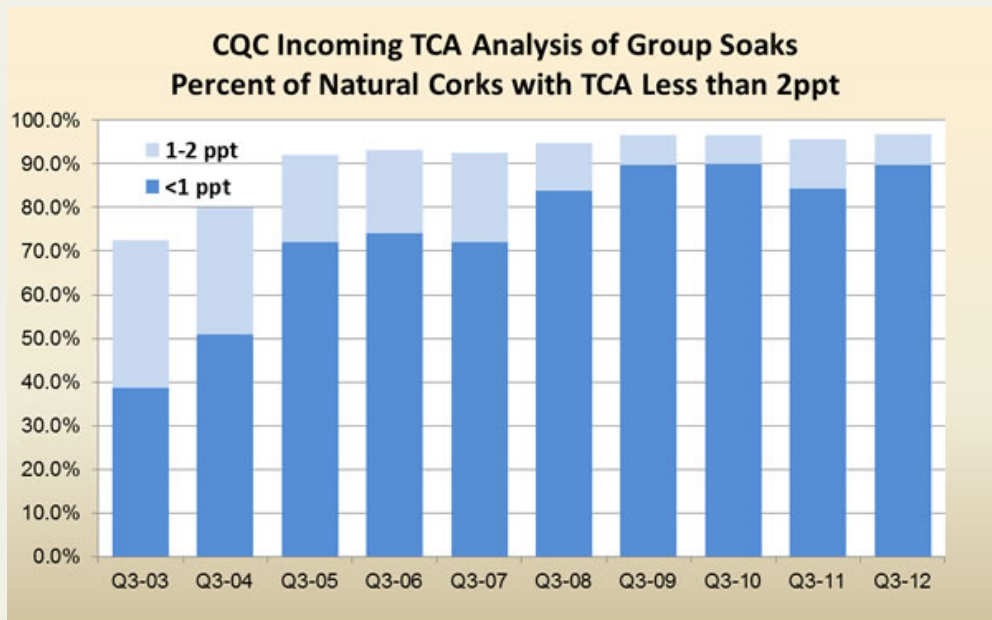
Historic results show major reductions in TCA

Last year CQC members conducted over 24,000 analyses. Their combined screening records over the past nine years show a steady reduction in TCA levels that are now 82% lower than the results seen when records were first tabulated in 2001



The CQC screening protocol receives data with minimum reporting limit of “<1.0ppt”. The group has agreed to treat results below the mdl as “0.5ppt” for statistical purposes. Under this assumption, the group’s statistical records cannot improve below 0.5ppt

In the last reporting period, 90% of all samples from incoming natural cork shipments were tested at the <1.0ppt level. Another 7% had results between 1.0-2.0ppt. Approximately 3% of incoming natural cork lots were rejected by the CQC members prior to acceptance into inventory.



Results from Testing of Technical Corks

Technical corks have been subject to requirements for chemical testing since 2007. Largely due to improvements in production methods —TCA results are now very similar to those levels seen in Natural Corks

Audited quality standards

The CQC conducts annual audits to verify that all approved QC protocols are observed. The foremost QC measure is screening for TCA, based on the GC/MS analytical method developed by ETS Laboratories. This analytical method is now widely used throughout the U.S., Europe, and Australia by members of both wine and cork industries. Other audited procedures involve moisture levels, physical integrity, residual oxidants and the maintenance of documentation.

The CQC cork sampling program is rigorous

For a typical lot of 100,000 corks CQC guidelines require a minimum sample of 250 corks taken from a selection of at least five separate bales. These corks are placed in 50-cork wine soaks for 24 hours to extract releasable TCA. Resulting soaks are analyzed at ETS Laboratories using a method that reports TCA at concentrations as low as 1 part per trillion. If one of the five soaks indicates TCA as high as 1.5ppt – the entire cork lot is flagged and withheld from inventory.

Information provided by the Cork Quality Council, a non-profit association of selected US wine cork suppliers



West Side Wine Club Leadership Team - 2013

- 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: **Scott Nelson** nelsonsw@gmail.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: **Craig Bush** pnoir1@hotmail.com & Phil Bard phil@philbard.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 & Jim Ourada
jim.m.ourada@intel.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@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@earthlink.net Barbara Stinger & Mindy Bush – Helpers

- Awards Gala / Holliday parties

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

Webmaster: **David Ladd**