



West Side Wine Club

October 2008

2008 Calendar

January 16th

Plan for the year

February 20th

Wine Faults and Flaws

March 19th

Bordeaux tasting

April 16th

Other Reds tasting

May 8th

Barney Watson at Chemeketa

May 10th

Chemeketa Tour

May 21st

Rick Mafit of Mystic Wines

June 18th

Michael Brown from Sokol Blosser

July 13th

Sokol Blosser Tour

July 20th

WSWC Annual Picnic!

August 20th

Steve Anderson and Other Whites

September 19th

Awards Gala!

October 15th

Pinot Noir tasting

November 19th

Pinot Gris / Viognier

December 17th

Speaker?

January 17th 2009

Holiday Party

Next Meeting: October 15th, 2008 at 7 p.m.

Place: Oak Knoll Winery

Subject: Pinot Noir

Snacks: Ken and Barbara Stinger

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

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

We will be tasting and judging Pinot Noir.

A few reminders:

- 1.) Please have your wines to taste at the meeting no later than 6:55 pm. Wines brought in after that time will be held in reserve to taste as time allows.
- 2.) No commercial wines
- 3.) Be sure to bring two bottles of the wine to be tasted and two glasses.
- 4.) Name tags are distributed before the meeting. Come a little early to help set up so that we can start promptly at 7pm and end by 9pm.
- 5.) Please print your own tasting score sheets prior to coming to the meeting. Go to <http://www.westsidewineclub.com/docs/ScoresheetWSWC.pdf> and print out enough sheets to judge 10 wines.
- 6.) For all our protection, a waiver will be signed by all current and future members. If you have questions, please contact WSWC President Don Robinson at don_robinson_pdx@yahoo.com

September with the WSWC

The WSWC did not have a regular meeting in September. Instead, we held the annual WSWC Awards Gala at Portland Wine Storage. Members shared wine and had a chance to talk and swap wine-making stories while enjoying music and food.

Pictures in this issue of the newsletter were taken by Patrick Torres, Patrick.Torres@BES.CI.PORTLAND.OR.US. Our guitarist at the gala was Jason Okamoto, okamoto_jason@yahoo.com.



Craig Bush's Toast at the WSWC 2008 Gala



Welcome everyone to the fifth annual WSWC Fall Gala celebration. It is very gratifying to see how this event, much like the club itself, has grown and flourished over these past five years, and hopefully – it will remain one of our annual traditions.

At this time let us all take the opportunity to thank a couple of ladies who worked very hard to make this event a success, Mindy Bush and Luna Hauser. We also want to thank Andria, Tom, and Joe for providing us a place to hold our little soirée, and for the lovely foods we have to nosh on. For the beverages... we have ourselves to thank...

Five years ago the intent of this event was to honor award winning wine made by members of our club. As we can see from the listing for 2008, this is a substantial number of wines... For the past 39 years, the WSWC has been a place for people with an interest in winemaking to gather and learn about their craft, as well as to socialize and establish bonds of friendship that extend beyond winemaking. Hopefully, the club, with the support of the membership, will continue to do this for another 39 years...

And now for a little "Sideways" moment...

30 years ago, when I went to work in a restaurant that was known for it's fine wine list, we as servers were made to learn about the wines we offered. It was either that or we could work elsewhere... and in this restaurant, the owner had a large sign that hung conspicuously over one of the large wine racks for everyone to see; the sign read simply "IN VINO VERITAS" the literal Latin translation - "In wine, there is truth"... It was not until many years later, after I picked up this hobby that has turned to a passion, did I realize the true meaning of this phrase...

The grapes, the soils, the location, the climate, the vigneron, the winemaking process - all these things become transparent and true in the wine...

The pairing of wines with food; the conversations with friends and loved ones – laughter and tears alike, while sharing our favorite wines; the aroma, bouquet, and wonderful flavors in wine – again, transparency and truth in our enjoyment of wine...

So, here is a toast for the evening...

To all of us gathered here, and to our friends who could not join us,

May our fruit be ripe to perfection...
May the yields be reasonably small...
May our results exceed our expectations...
So we may share our wines with all...

Thank you for coming, have a great evening



President's Musings

Yippee, it's fall, WSWC Winemakers!

Crush in the Northwest usually begins early in the fall, and continues until all of the grapes are harvested. It also marks the start of the sometimes tense standoff between grape growers and the winemakers who buy the grapes.

I just got my first batch of grapes for the season—beautiful Syrah grapes from a location adjacent to the Red Hills AVA in Washington. At a drop point in Hillsboro this past Sunday where we communally crushed our grape orders, the grower had posted the overall specs of his Syrah delivery—Brix: 25.5; TA: .67%; and pH: 3.35. Naturally, I was very excited about these numbers. They seemed nearly ideal for Syrah—high in sugar and relatively high in acid.

Later, after I and others independently re-ran the tests, we came up with generally different numbers that averaged a Brix of: 23.8; TA: .65%; and pH: 3.58. It's frustrating, but I've observed that number inflation by growers is not uncommon. To be fair, I'm not sure how the grower sampled his large order to determine his numbers; but regardless, his sample was not representative of my batch. Also, I'm confident in our numbers, as we used hydrometers and refractometers for the sugar; our titration and calibration solutions had been purchased only last year at Nurnberg Scientific and the pH meters had just been calibrated. Of course, perhaps the best way to know if I'm performing accurate measurements as well would be to send off my sample to a testing service.

Isn't it human nature for growers to make their grapes look more attractive by working some bias into their measurements; by sampling the best looking berries and clusters and targeting the usually more mature grapes at the end of rows? Probably, the ultimate goal of most grape growers is to sell all of their grapes and have them priced well enough to make a reasonable profit. Of course they have to balance that goal with trying to satisfy buyers enough so they return to purchase grapes the following year. Unless they are a large commercial vineyard, I wonder what percent of growers utilize good sampling and measurement techniques.

As we all know, accurate measurements throughout the winemaking process are critical for any adjustments that may be necessary. On last year's Club purchase of Chandler Reach Syrah, most of us measured a high Brix of 25.5 to 27, but we had a huge range in the TA. I and some others measured a TA around .45% while others were as high as .75%. I ended up adding water and acid, while those who showed the higher TA may have done nothing.



President's Musings (continued)



We winemakers have a different goal at harvest. We want to delay harvest until the precise moment when the grapes exhibit the exact characteristics we're looking for. Since such criteria can vary widely among makers, this certainly adds to the tension surrounding the growers and the buyers.

Growers may also pressure buyers to harvest sooner rather than later because of weather concerns. As the tension mounts when weather is taking a downturn near harvest, I've observed that all of a sudden all growers and makers have become 'expert' meteorologists! Like clockwork, every fall, the tension between growers and buyers will rise, but when the tension reaches equilibrium, it's time to harvest!



At our recent gala, many of the winners of this year's local and national winemaking competitions showed-off their victorious vintages. As I tasted through the incredible samples, I was reminded of the sizable number of very talented winemakers we have amongst our membership. Obviously, these winners know how to do their measurements. Congratulations!



A great big thanks to Mindy Bush for leading the efforts of this year's fabulous Gala, and thanks to her hardworking crew of Luna Hauser, Craig Bush, and Bill Spiller!

See you at our next club meeting on October 15th for our annual Pinot Noir tasting.



Cheers,

Don Robinson
President, Westside Wine Club
971-219-1553

Newsletter Submissions

If you have a piece you wrote and would like to share in the newsletter, please send it to:
Luna Hauser
WSWC Secretary
HauserWine@comcast.net

Westside Winemakers Club

Leadership Team – 2008

President: **Don Robinson** don_robinson_pdx@yahoo.com 971-219-1553

- Set agenda for the year
- Establish leadership team
- Assure that objectives for the year are met
- Set up and run meetings

Treasurer: **Bill Spiller** nrac@msn.com

- Collect dues and fees
- Pay bills

Webmaster: **David Ladd**

Web Content Editor: **Rick Kipper**

Secretary: **Luna Hauser** Hauserwine@comcast.net

- Communicate regularly about club activities and issues
- Monthly newsletter
- Keep updated list of members

Chairs of Group Purchases

The chairperson makes the arrangements to purchase, collect, and distribute.

- Chandler Reach Vineyard – **Mike Fredd** Split_cane@netzero.net
- Del Rio Vineyard – **Craig Bush** pnoir1@verizon.net - **CANCELLED**
- Supplies – These should be passed to the President for distribution

Chairwoman of Competitions: **Miriam Schnepf**

- Work with Washington County Fair staff
- Encourage club participation in County Fair
- President will be the contact for the Oregon State Fair.

Chairperson of Education: **Don Robinson** don_robinson_pdx@yahoo.com

- Arranges for speakers for our meetings

Chairs for Tastings: **Craig Bush** pnoir1@verizon.net
and **Jim Merdink** james_merdink@yahoo.com

- Conduct club tastings
- Review and improve club tasting procedures

Chairs of Winery Tours: **Mike Smolak** SmolakM@DimensionResources.com

- Select wineries to visit
- Arrange tours
- Cover logistics (food and money)
- Winery Tour 1 – **Chemeketa**
- Winery Tour 2 – **Sokol Blosser**

Chairs for Social Events: **Open**

- Summer picnic – Oak Knoll **Craig and Mindy Bush** pnoir1@verizon.net
- Awards Gala – **Craig and Mindy Bush** pnoir1@verizon.net
- January Holiday Party at Bill and Jane Spiller's – **Dana Blizzard and Elissa Fenske**