



Portland Winemakers Club

December 2018

President's Monthly Rant

Scheduled Meetings

January 19th, 2019

Annual Gala – At Dennis & Marlene Grants new tasting room at Parrett Mountain Cellars

January 16, 2019

Crush Talk / Planning

February 20, 2019

Bordeaux Tasting

March 20, 2019

Speaker:

April 17, 2019

Barrel / Carboy Sample Tasting.

May 15, 2019

Speaker:

June, 19, 2019

Best practices; member demonstrations of tips & tricks

July 13 2019

Annual Picnic

July 27 2019

Tour

August 21, 2019

All Whites Tasting

August 24, 2019

Tour

September 18, 2019

Other Reds Tasting

October 16, 2019

Pinot Noir Tasting

November 2019

No Meeting

December 4, 2019

Planning, Tours, Speakers, Events, Elections



It has been my pleasure to preside over the PWC as president for the last six years, and now it's time to pass the baton. As we are at a time of transition with the move to a new meeting location, I feel that we need someone in the position that can provide steady leadership and who has solid experience with club matters, and I'm very pleased that Bill Brown has been elected president.

The club has seen a fair bit of change in these years, including fluctuations in the membership, new programs, new sources for fruit, changes in the venue for the gala, and of course the adoption of a new name. Changing our name has resulted in a significant increase in our visibility across the internet and has brought many new members into the organization. The new website provides readily accessible information about who we are and what we do as well as a list of our schedule of events, so anyone curious about the PWC can become acquainted quickly just by clicking through the pages. That is as it should be, and I hope we continue to focus on how we can grow the membership. Though not a lot, there is some flex time in our meeting schedule and I hope we can implement interesting new programs, further improving the club experience. January is our planning meeting, so bring your ideas!

So good luck to Bill, though hopefully he won't need it, and a big thanks to every one of you who took on committee chairmanships over the last six years. You are the wheels on which this club runs and I've been impressed with the job you have done.

Cheers,
Phil



Misc. Information

•Huneus Vintners Buys Benton- Lane Winery in Oregon

Purchases 140-acre vineyard planted predominantly to Pinot Noir clones, with some Pinot Gris, Pinot Blanc and Chardonnay from Steve Girard

• Bill Stoller Purchases Harry Peterson-Nedry's share of Chehalem

Transition in ownership allows Peterson-Nedry to devote full attention to Ribbon Ridge, continues involvement with Oregon wine industry.

• Washington Harvest Down

16 Percent in 2017

Price for Petit Verdot, Grenache Noir and Pinot Gris surges 11 percent.

• Domaine Serene Winery Founders Pledge \$6 Million to Linfield College

Grace and Ken Evenstad make the largest gift in support of wine studies in state history.

• The Growing U.S./China Tariff War Taking its Toll on Glass Industry

Now that an estimated 70 percent of the United States wine industry's glass bottles are sourced from China, the real and threatened 10 to 25 percent tariff on Chinese glass imposed by the U.S. Commerce Department has caused budgetary concerns for glass distributors and their winery clients.

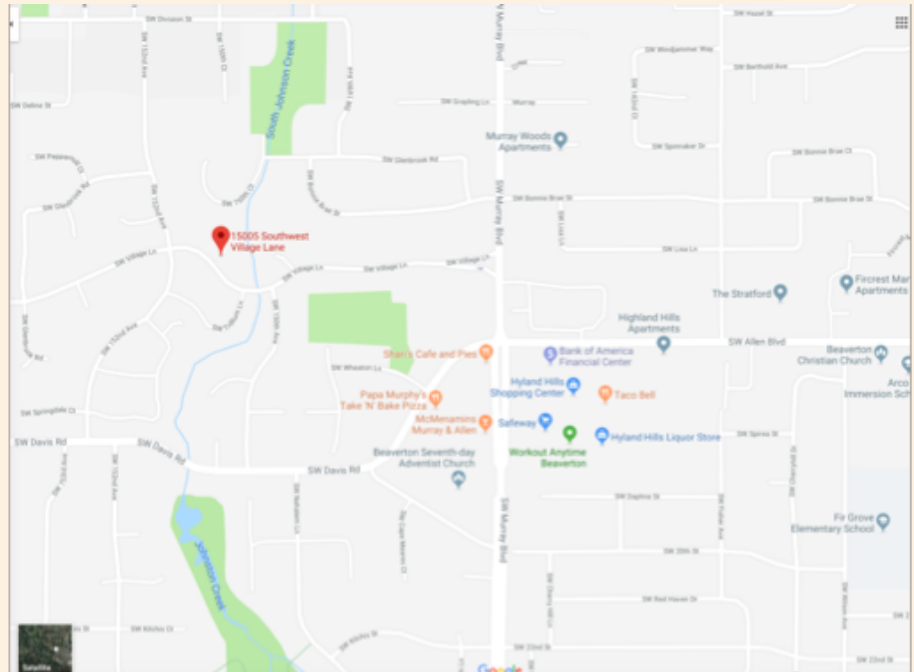
- Don't be deceived by all the colors in a bowl of Froot Loops cereal; despite the differing colors, every piece has identical flavoring.
- Never trust an atom. They make up everything.
- Well, another day has passed and I didn't use algebra once.
- Any fool can use a computer. Many do.
- Dear algebra, stop asking me to find your X. She's not coming back.

Note: The next regular meeting will be Wednesday, January 16th at 7:00 PM. Note that the next meeting location has changed and will no longer be held at Oak Knoll Winery. **The new meeting place will be a one time trial run to see how we like the facilities. January 16th meeting location: Four Seasons Home owners Association Club House at 15005 SW Village Lane, Beaverton, OR, 97007 (see google map or use your smart phone).** If you haven't already, be sure to renew your club membership and sign a new waiver.

The regular meeting will be a potluck, bring a small snack to share.

The 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>



Note: If you are traveling South on Murray Blvd, turn right on Village Lane just before the Allen Blvd intersection. If you are traveling North on Murray Blvd turn left at Allan Blvd onto SW Davis (at Sheris Restaurant"), turn right on SW 150th Ave, turn left on SW Village Lane.

December Meeting Minutes

(There was no Meeting in November)

Present: 32

- Meeting locations for the next three months will be at different locations. The Four Seasons HOA Club House in Beaverton in January, possibly the Scholls Grange in February & possibly Robinwood Station in West Linn in March, subject to change. Directions and maps will be e-mailed to members.
- Marilyn Brown passed around a protein sign up sheet for our Gala on January 19th.
- Elections for 2019 were held.

President-----	Bill Brown
Secretary -----	Ken Stinger
Treasurer -----	Barb Thomson
Grape purchases -----	Bob Hatt
Tastings Chair -----	Paul Sowray
Competitions Chair -----	Paul Boyechko
Events Chair -----	Marilyn Brown / Mindy Bush
Tours Chair -----	Damon Lopez
Speakers/Education Chair ---	Barb Stinger
Website -----	Alice Bonham

Tonight, January 5th, was the last meeting for the Portland Winemakers Club in the Oak Knoll Winery facility. Marj Vuylsteke, Oak Knoll founder as well as our club founder and mentor over the last 50 years, is finally hanging up her cleats. At the meeting Barb Stinger & President Phil Bard expressed our deep appreciation for all she has done for us over the years. Alice Bonham presented an appreciation poster from the club (to be framed). Barb presented her with gift certificates to a nice restaurant and to her favorite hairdresser so she can maintain that chick look. She also received a nice plant and numerous cards and other gifts.



Marj said she wants everyone connected with club, past & present, to know how much she has enjoyed being a continuous member of the club she started. The hundreds of people she has met, the number of commercial wineries the club has spawned, the friendships she has made and all of the budding winemakers she has helped along the way have been a joy filled with great memories. Many thanks to everyone!

November 1, 2017

All Questions Asked

Chad Stock challenges Valley's status quo

By Michael Alberty

Winemaker Chad Stock enjoys asking questions and challenging orthodoxy. Each wine under his Minimus label is an experiment beginning with the queries: "What if?" and "Why not?"

His projects, never repeated, started in 2011 with a Viognier-Sauvignon Blanc blend aged on the skins in acacia barrels for a prolonged period of time. Since then, 20 more wines have responded to inquiries such as: "What happens if I age Sauvignon Blanc grapes under a cap of flor yeast like sherry?" or "Is reduction in wine necessarily bad?"

Although based in Carlton, Stock resists making wines people imagine from a Willamette Valley winery. His latest experiments, No. 22 "Pinot" and No. 23 "Noir," combine to examine Stock's boldest query to date: "Is Pinot Noir, by itself, the Willamette Valley's best foot forward?"

"Marketing tells us a traditionally made Pinot Noir is the way to go when it comes to selling Oregon wine," Stock said. "I'd rather back off and create wines that make people say, 'Wow, it's delicious; I've never tried anything like that before.' Figuring out how to sell them comes last for me."

In the process, Stock rejects the valley's "Burgundian narrative."

"I'm an American winemaker, but I don't have American grapes to make great wines with, [so] I wrestle with how to make uniquely Oregon wines using European grape varieties," he said. "If I make a great Pinot Noir, the best thing I can say is that I made something like the real thing. Where's the honor in that?"

Furthermore, he thinks Pinot Noir a poor match for the Willamette Valley.

"Clearly, there are a few vineyards where it works, but the majority of it is mediocre," he said. "Our acidic soils matched with long, cool growing seasons, rainless summers and dry farming make for high pH Pinot Noir. High pH leads to premature aging, lack of freshness and the homogenization of taste across the region."

To remedy the situation, Stock claims many winemakers add tartaric or malic acids to their Pinot Noir.

"Nobody talks about acidulation," Stock commented. "The best winemakers do it all the time because they know it needs it. It's one thing to correct a wine imbalance, on occasion, due to a difficult vintage, but when it's done every year no matter what, that should tell us we have the wrong grape variety."

To explore new directions, Stock began co-fermenting multiple grapes.

"Our alternative varietal research has been isolating [each] as single-varietal wines to see what they produce," Stock explained. "In some cases, we have found other red grape varieties with the same pH problems, resulting in a discussion about whether or not a varietal belonged in a region if it didn't produce strong, stand-alone wines."

"Maybe there are lots of grapes with various problems, yet if fermented or blended with other grapes, they could result in something profound," he continued. "The goal should be to make the greatest possible wine, not force some narrative upon the region. We must be able to think objectively to identify what truly works here, and it's likely it will be multiple grape wine co-fermentations."

Minimus Wines No. 22 "Pinot" (\$40) is exactly such a wine. Back in 2010 and 2011, Stock was unimpressed by most of the white Oregon Pinot Noirs he tasted. "They were made with under-ripe fruit and lacked any depth or real character. I told myself, 'I would do this differently.'"

In 2016, inspired by the Grand Cru Mambourg wines Sylvie Spielman and Marcel Deiss make in Alsace with various grapes from the Pinot family, Stock did just that. His "Pinot" is a co-fermented blend of Pinot Gris, Pinot Blanc, Pinot Noir, Pinot Meunier and the ultra-rare Pinot Gouges grapes from John and Kathy Zelko's Z'IVO Vineyard. After a brief number of months spent resting in neutral French oak and chestnut barrels, it was recently released to the public.

The "Pinot" fills the glass with a bright moonbeam color, offering the aromas of Mirabelle plums, ripe raspberries, lemon peel and white tea. Its tannic structure and flavors, such as white grapefruit, lemon, lime and quinine, coat every nook and cranny of the mouth, while bursts of chalk and spearmint combine on a lengthy finish. The label reads 13.9-percent alcohol,



and given the wine's rich mouthfeel, I have no reason to doubt it. If you have labored like Captain Ahab in your search for the "great white Pinot," look no further than this wine.

No. 23 "Noir" (\$50) was inspired by a wine made by Jura's Jean Bourdy.

"I met Bourdy at a tasting here in Portland, and I loved his blend of Pinot Noir, Trousseau Noir and Poulsard. Bourdy said it was a perfect reflection of vintage and terroir and that he always tries to keep it an equal parts blend."

Stock suspected Gamay Noir might help offset the high pH woes of Pinot Noir; along with some Trousseau Noir from Omero Vineyard, he created his own three-way blend.

"Besides," said Stock, "we don't have any Poulsard here yet, so Gamay Noir it was."

The "Noir" tastes superb. If it's the kind of red Oregon becomes known for in the future, that's fine by me. First, consider the wine's color, a shade of magenta usually reserved for theater curtains. Savory aromas of bacon mingle with violets and fresh-cut hay as they waft from the glass, followed by scents of brambly red fruit, dark chocolate and orange peel. Once in the mouth, "Noir" hits you with laser-like acidity and tart red raspberries and dried cherries. The tannins are mild, but that tangy acidity will make your mouth water like you just popped a Jolly Rancher.

Stock and his wines are not shy. In fact, I liken him to a human hand grenade lobbed into the Willamette Valley. He's pushing the boundaries of what defines Oregon wine, and his Minimus experiments are often as tasty as they are provocative.

If he ever needs a winery slogan, these words from Captain Ahab's creator, Herman Melville, will do just fine: "It is better to fail in originality than to succeed in imitation."



**Reminder: The PWC annual Gala is coming up soon
so make sure you mark your calendar.**

**Saturday January 19, 2019
4-9 pm**

**Parrett Mountain Cellars
33434 NE Haugen Rd
Newberg, Oregon 97132**

More information to follow

A book report you might be interested in . Submitted by Jon Kahrs

The Faults in Our Wines

Tony Cenicola/The New York Times

The last thing many people want to think about are flaws and faults. Yet there they are: cork taint, oxidation, volatile acidity and other problems that can cause the most highly anticipated bottles to be poured down the drain.

In "**Flawless: Understanding Faults in Wine**" (University of California Press, \$25), Jamie Goode, a scientist and wine writer, surveys the myriad flaws that can bedevil even the finest wines.

Not all faults are created equal, Mr. Goode asserts. How they affect the wine depends very much on context. Some wines might benefit from a touch of Brettanomyces, a particular sort of rogue yeast, while others decidedly will not. Low levels of volatile acidity can lift a wine, but too much can be a very bad thing.

The perception of flaws can be subjective, he says, as not everybody has the same sensitivity to certain faults.

Mr. Goode is succinct and clear about how these various flaws are expressed in wines. This can be helpful to any wine lover who knows when a wine is not right, but doesn't know exactly what is wrong.

When Mr. Goode digs in deeper about causes, however, I sometimes got lost in the detailed discussion of chemistry. I learned about faults that I did not know existed, like eucalyptus taint, which apparently is not uncommon in Australia. How can it be prevented? By not planting vineyards near eucalyptus groves, and vice versa.

I would have liked to have seen an exploration of whether it should be considered a fault when modern wines are sound but deadly dull. But in its focus on technical faults, this book will be highly useful to anybody who wants to understand the numerous obstacles that can intrude on pleasure.



This article has been in the Newsletter before but it never hurts to review good barrel care procedures.

Barrel Care Techniques

Written by Daniel Pambianchi

Do you yearn to create oak-style wines that rival Bordeaux first growths, Super Tuscans, or the so-called California cult wines, but have been hesitant to invest time and effort to care and maintain oak barrels? The perceived high maintenance and potential of spoilage problems in barrels may be a deterrent. However, once you establish a routine and acquire some basic experience in barrel maintenance, this "chore" will become a fun part of your home winemaking experience. And the benefits of oak-aged wines certainly far outweigh the associated effort and risks.

This guide provides instructions for many years of problem-free barrel use.

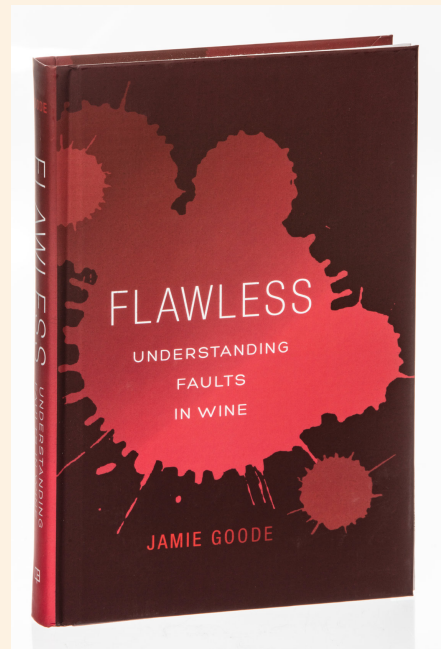
Buying a Barrel

When you first buy a barrel, new or used, thoroughly inspect the interior and exterior of the barrel for any potential problems. Visually inspect the interior by inserting a small light source through the bung hole. Look for any obvious wood defects, wide joint gaps, or excessively charred wood resulting from over-toasting. Barrels are toasted in an open fire during manufacturing. Toasted wood should have a smooth finish with a uniform brownish color. Charred wood will look damaged and can be easily detected because it has a very dark brown, almost black, color.

On the exterior, ensure that stave and head joints are narrow and tight, hoops are properly fastened, and the bung hole is tapered and not damaged — a source of spoilage problems. Old barrels may have a crack emanating from the bung hole, which may cause excessive oxidation of the wine.

New Barrel Maintenance

To minimize maintenance, wait to buy new barrels until you are ready to use them. Otherwise, store empty barrels in a cool and humid area, 55° F (13° C) and 65–75 percent humidity, respectively, and away from dampness, to minimize shrinkage.



If the wood shrinks, stave and head joint gaps will widen and barrels will require more preparation when ready to transfer your wine.

Protect empty barrels from spoilage organisms by burning sulfur inside the barrels to replace the air with sulfur dioxide (SO₂) gas. Barrels can be stored empty for an indefinite amount of time when properly preserved with sulfur. Once a month, gently sniff the inside of each barrel to determine if any SO₂ gas is still present. If detected, simply replace the bung; otherwise, burn more sulfur. Be sure to work in a well-ventilated area and avoid inhaling SO₂ gas.

A “sulfur bung” for burning sulfur sticks or discs can be used for this purpose. This device is used to hold burning sulfur and prevent sulfur deposits from falling into the barrel. Deposits left in the barrel will interact with wine during aging, causing hydrogen sulfide (H₂S) to form. H₂S will impart a rotten-egg smell and spoil the wine.

To prepare an empty barrel for storage, thoroughly rinse the interior with water and let it drain completely. No puddling of water should remain in the bilge; otherwise, it will cause sulfur dioxide gas to hydrate and form into sulfurous acid, and adversely affect the taste of wine and cause spoilage.

Light a piece of sulfur stick with a match and deposit it in the metal container at the bottom of the sulfur bung. If using a sulfur disc, place it on the hook over the metal container, and light it with a match. Insert the burning sulfur attachment in the barrel and seat the wooden bung in the hole. The sulfur will burn completely in a few minutes to fill the barrel with gas. Remove the sulfur bung and quickly insert a wooden bung to prevent gas from escaping.

New Barrel Preparation

A new barrel must be swelled with clean water before transferring wine into it; otherwise, it will leak. If wine leaks through stave or head joints, or the croze, there may be considerable wine loss. There may also be premature oxidation of the wine as air enters the barrel. Eventually, if untreated, mold will form on the exterior surface and will penetrate through the joints to contaminate the wine. By swelling barrels, all joints will tighten to eliminate any possibility of wine seepage and prevent spoilage problems.

You can swell a new barrel using a hot-water treatment or using an overnight water-soaking treatment. First, let all the SO₂ gas out and thoroughly rinse the inside of the barrel with lukewarm water.

The hot-water treatment method is very effective and requires little water. Pour approximately a 20 percent volume of very hot, steamy, clean tap water into the barrel. For example, use three gallons (11 L) of hot water for a 15-gallon (57 L) barrel. Bung the barrel and slosh it around to soak the entire interior surface. The vapor pressure and hot water significantly accelerate barrel swelling and “plug” any seepage through joints. Continue sloshing the barrel until there is no more leakage. Then place it upright and let the head area soak until there is no more leakage, and repeat with the other head area. When done, let the water drain completely and let the barrel dry and cool down before transferring wine into it. If the barrel does not stop leaking within one hour of pouring the hot water, proceed with an overnight treatment.

The overnight treatment will always fix any leakage (unless the barrel is defective) although it will leach out some of the oak flavor owing to the longer soak period. This is fine for new barrels because you may want to reduce the amount of oak that will be imparted to that first batch of wine. The overnight treatment is also the best method for swelling a barrel that has been in dry storage for a long time.

Fill the barrel to the top with cool water and let it soak overnight. Initially, the barrel may leak but it should stop after a few hours or a day, or up to several days for very dry barrels. The soak period should never exceed 24–36 hours with the same water to avoid mold developing and penetrating the barrel. If there is still leakage, empty the barrel and fill it again with clean cool water, and repeat again until leakage stops. If leakage does not stop after four to five days, the barrel is defective and should be returned to your supplier. When leakage has stopped, drain the water out of the barrel by placing it in the bung-down position. Let the barrel stand for an hour or two and then fill it immediately with wine.

The barrel’s exterior surface requires no special preparation, although you should inspect it regularly for any mold. Optionally, it can be treated with Mildewcide to inhibit mold and wood borers by applying two coats with a paintbrush. Mildewcide is available from winemaking shops or coopers at a cost of under \$10 for a 16-ounce (454 g) container.

Used Barrel Storage, Maintenance and Preparation

Used (sound) barrels must also be properly stored and maintained; however, since these previously contained wine, a different maintenance program is recommended.

If used barrels are to be stored empty, rinse them several times with clean water, drain and then burn sulfur inside. Check for the presence of SO₂ gas once a month, and replenish as required. The disadvantage of this method is that the barrel wood will dry and shrink over time, and will therefore require to be swelled again when transferring wine into it.

An effective alternative is to fill and store barrels with a sulfur-citric holding solution. This holding solution will promote

sterility, keep the barrels swelled and smelling sweet. It is not recommended for new barrels or barrels less than one year old as precious oak extract would be stripped.

The holding solution is prepared using 1 tsp of citric acid and 1.5 tsp of potassium metabisulfite for each gallon (4 L) of barrel volume. For example, for a 15-gallon (57 L) barrel, use 15 tsp of citric acid and 23 tsp of potassium metabisulfite. (Note: 3 tsp = 1 tbsp) Dissolve these in one gallon of hot water. Fill the barrel two-thirds with water, add the holding solution, top up the barrel with cool water, and bung the barrel. Top up the barrel with a holding solution once a month to replace solution lost by evaporation and absorption into the wood. The barrel can be stored indefinitely without the risk of spoilage. During storage, rotate the barrel 45° in either direction every time you top up to keep the bung area soaked. This will prevent the bung area from drying out and protect it from spoilage organism growth. Caution: The sulfur-citric holding solution will etch a concrete floor. Rinse the floor with water to prevent this.

Used barrels require no special preparation beyond a simple water rinse, if desired, when transferring wine out and in immediately. If the barrel has been stored with a holding solution, drain the barrel and rinse it thoroughly with clean water before transferring wine into it.

Types of Barrel Spoilage Problems

Oak barrels will not cause any problems when properly maintained. In improperly maintained barrels, however, spoilage problems can occur because wood is a good breeding medium for bacteria and other spoilage organisms, especially in the presence of water or wine.

Penicillium mold — a blue-green fungus causing foul-smelling odors when it interacts with wine — is the most common spoilage problem and can be very difficult to eradicate if widespread. Typically, it will grow through stave or head joints, or the croze, and around the bung hole in barrels that have not been properly swelled prior to transferring wine.

Another common source of spoilage is Acetobacter (acetic acid bacteria), which cause alcohol to be converted to acetic acid when wine oxidizes in barrels having a headspace. Acetic acid will cause volatile acidity (VA) and can be detected as the familiar vinegar smell.

The spoilage problem can also occur in empty barrels that have not been properly rinsed or sulfured during barrel storage, and where some wine residues were left behind. As this problem grows, the acetic acid combines with alcohol residues to form ethyl acetate, which smells distinctly like nail-polish remover and is very difficult to eradicate.

Brettanomyces yeasts resident in barrels are another source of problems. These spoilage yeasts can metabolize extremely low levels of sugar in wines, even wood cellulose sugars in new barrels. They result from insufficient sulfiting of wines or insufficient sulfuring of empty barrels during storage. Advanced yeast spoilage will cause a wine or barrel to take on a “medicine cabinet” smell.

Lactobacillus and Pediococcus (types of lactic acid bacteria) resident in barrels can also cause spoilage in wines with a very high pH (above 3.7) and a very low level of sulfite. They can also cause spoilage in wines with residual sugar. These bacteria thrive in such an environment and can impart a sour-milk taste to wine. They are best inhibited by maintaining at least 70 mg/L of free SO₂ in wines and by periodically racking the wine from its lees.

Dealing with Spoilage Problems

To treat any of the above spoilage problems, first fill the barrel two-thirds with cool water. Prepare an alkaline solution by dissolving either sodium carbonate or sodium percarbonate in water at a rate of 1 tsp per gallon (or use 1 g/L) for mild spoilage problems or up to a maximum of 3 tsp for more serious problems. Add the solution to the barrel and then top up with water.

Let the barrel soak overnight, empty it and neutralize any remaining alkaline residues using a citric acid solution. Trace residues of sodium carbonate or sodium percarbonate are not harmful but they will affect the taste of wine if allowed to come into contact with it. Prepare the citric acid solution by dissolving citric acid powder in one gallon of water. Use 1 tsp of powder for each gallon of barrel volume. For example, dissolve 15 tsp for a 15-gallon (57 L) barrel.

Fill the barrel two-thirds with cool water, pour in the citric acid solution, top up with cool water, and let the barrel soak overnight. Then, empty the barrel and rinse it thoroughly. Drain the water completely and let the barrel dry. Smell the barrel for any off odors to ensure the treatment worked. If the barrel does not smell completely clean, repeat the treatment as required. Discard the barrel if the problem cannot be eliminated. Don't risk spoiling a perfect batch of wine.



Barrel of Possibilities

Oak programs a matter of personal taste

By Tamara Belgard



It's no secret: Winemakers take their barrels very seriously, which makes the following true story sound almost comical. When asked which is his most important tool in barrel selection? Steve Girard, owner of Benton-Lane Winery, replies: "My cheese grater.

The longtime winemaker told the story about how his cooperage, the company that makes barrels, started sending him different barrels from what he'd selected. On his next barrel trip to Burgundy, he brought a cheese grater with him. Walking among the impressively tall stacks of

drying staves, he rubbed them with his grater. He noted the aromatics, which he later compared to the barrels he was shipped. If they didn't match his descriptions, he returned the barrels.

Much like an artist's palette adds vibrancy and dimension to a canvas, a winemaker's choice of barrel has a significant impact on wine. And like the painter's range of color, there's a multitude of options in a cooperage. From the type of wood (oak, acacia, chestnut...) to the wood's origin (Oregon, France, Hungary, Russia...), to the grain, the toast, the size of vessel and whether the barrel is new, used or neutral, all these elements impart specific aromas, flavors and textures to a wine.

"Speaking to winemakers about barrels is like talking politics or religion," said Anne Amie Vineyards winemaker Thomas Houseman. "Conversation can quickly get heated, as each winemaker feels their particular view on barrels is the Holy Grail."

Each has an opinion on oak, toast, coopers, etc., that will likely vary greatly from one to the next. No one is necessarily right or wrong, but the decisions play greatly into what becomes a winemaker's signature style.

Nicholas Keeler is the North American sales director for Tonnellerie Allary, a French cooperage making barrels since 1953. Keeler understands each cooper has a distinct style and may work with different forests. His 11 years of experience selling barrels, along with his knowledge as a winemaker for Authentique, has shaped his preference for French oak, which he considers the most elegant and refined on the market.

Some believe forests exhibit their own personalities — akin to terroir. Coopers sourcing from prestigious French forests, such as Tronçais, Fontainebleau and Jupilles demand higher prices. Comparing French oak to American, the former is more porous and must be split by hand, along the grain. The latter is less porous and richer in tyloses, which seal the xylem vessels so it may be quarter-sawn. American oak from Minnesota, Missouri and Indiana fit the bill, while white oak from the Southeast is generally used for whiskey. Oregon white oak is its own species and can be used in wine barrels, but it does contain higher tannins, requiring longer seasoning.

Cody Parker, wine director of Melrose Vineyards, doesn't care to taste the wood in his wines.

"If the barrel can be tasted, the wine is generally out of balance," he said. "A well-balanced wine is one where all its components — fruit, acidity, structure and alcohol — neither overwhelm nor diminish [one] another. The success is in finesse and restraint, but how to get there is up to interpretation."

Parker emphasizes a wine should be about the fruit, not the oak program — which can translate into ego if not kept in check.

“Producers that think their [wine’s] density balances with 200-percent new oak — sorry, Napa — miss the mark showcasing the fruit and terroir.”

Houseman says it was not so long ago when people wanted, and even expected, to taste the barrel in a wine. In fact, if you examine highly reviewed and collectible wines, this is still often the case. Not all winemakers agree with that notion, but many have chased the scores.

While some Oregon Pinots from the early-, mid-, and even late-2000s taste heavily of oak, a new generation of winemakers is emerging, rebelling against oak, perhaps in response to the excesses of the past.

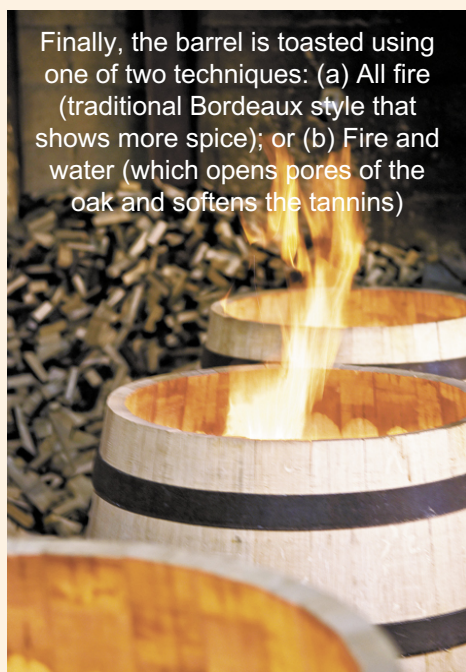
“It’s never cool to like what your parents liked, and the millennials are looking at other styles,” Houseman remarked. “Though I find myself somewhere in the middle.”

It’s all about style and decisions made in the cellar.

“Wines that are aged with a high percentage of the correct new oak may still be elegant and balanced. It depends both on the wine and the cooperage,” Keeler said.



The wood is then heated and shaped into curved staves, which are stacked inside a hoop, tightened with lasso, and another hoop is positioned on the bottom. The barrel is then pre-heated and shaped under fire to make the wood pliable before the hoops are pounded down to tighten the vessel



Finally, the barrel is toasted using one of two techniques: (a) All fire (traditional Bordeaux style that shows more spice); or (b) Fire and water (which opens pores of the oak and softens the tannins)

At Anne Amie, Houseman uses about 20-percent new oak in the cellar, and he is shifting from fire-bent barrels to water-bent versions. The process of soaking the staves before bending protects the wood from the flames, producing steam as it heats rather than allowing the wood to burn, or toast. Houseman believes this method helps fill out the wine, providing the desired body without overwhelming it.

Though French oak is still a dominant player in most Oregon cellars — and for good reason — one wood does not fit all. Local winemakers are looking globally for inspiration, incorporating techniques and styles common to other regions. Remy Drabkin of Remy Wines chose chestnut barrels to finish her Nebbiolo, producing more spice and mid-palate depth to the wine.

Chestnut barrels, now rare in the U.S., were commonly used in Europe before the chestnut blight of the 1950s wiped them out worldwide. Chad Stock of Minimus Wines has found that less aromatic varieties like Chardonnay, Vermentino or Pinot Blanc — and even lighter reds such as Pinot Noir, Cabernet Franc or Gamay Noir — respond well to this type of wood.

Because chestnut lacks the vanillin and lactone compounds of oak when it’s toasted, it doesn’t turn sweet the way oak can.

“The wood is decidedly nutty,” Stock explained, “which sounds cliché, but it really has a dry sensation, similar to the skin of an almond or walnut.”

Instead of making the wines rich and broad-textured like oak, they become more focused and fresh, with dusty fine tannins. Since chestnut is more porous than oak, the wine sees more oxygen through the walls of the barrel and ages a little faster — a technique, if used correctly, can become a strategic tool for early wine release.

Winemaker Herb Quady of Quady North feels excited about acacia; he uses it for aromatic varieties like Viognier. “Fermenting in barrel always adds texture and creamy notes to white wines, but aromatic wines like Viognier tend to lose their profile in oak,” he said. “Acacia is more subtle and promotes the desirable tropical notes in my wine.”

Acacia is also commonly used in Grüner Veltliner and Sauvignon Blanc, which benefit from the high wood tannins that integrate into the wine, adding tension where it might show a natural tendency to be broad in texture. Acacia is known to add floral and spice characteristics, such as orange blossom and rose hip, as well as peach pit, clove, cinnamon and allspice.

Only a few cooperages currently make acacia barrels, but Quady is so happy with the results, he purchases more every year. Several other Oregon wineries, like Anne Amie, Leah Jorgensen Cellars, Montinore, Minimus and Raptor Ridge, have also discovered the benefits of acacia barrels.

Next time you walk into a cellar and notice a stack of barrels, remember, not all barrels are created equal, and the choice of barrels directly affects a winemaker's expression of taste. Today, many Oregon winemakers rely less on what is expected — breaking the rigid traditions of yesteryear — in favor of instinct, experimentation and embracing individuality, in large part, through their choice of barrels.

How It's Made

Making barrels at Tonnellerie Allary in France.

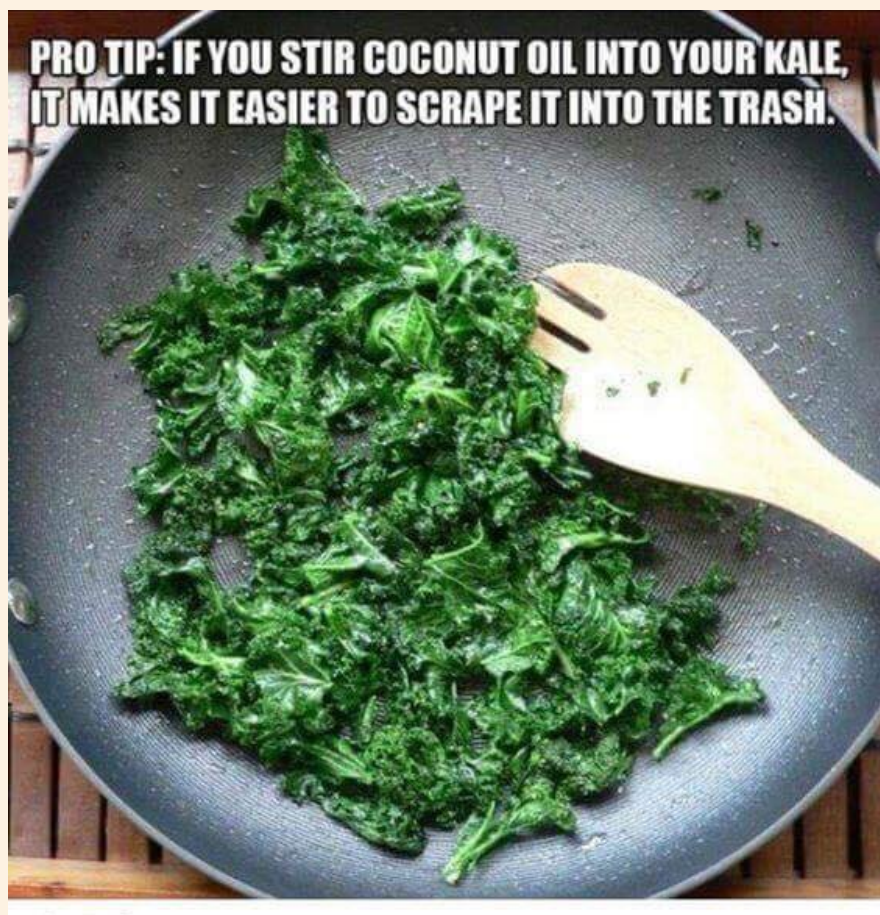
1. First, the log is either split or quarter-sewn, depending on the type of wood. 2. Next, the wood is air-dried for an average of 12 to 36 months. Rain and weather extract the tannins; the drier the wood, the less tannins it will have and the longer it will take for the wine to integrate with the oak. 3. The wood is then heated and shaped into curved staves, which are stacked inside a hoop, tightened with lasso, and another hoop is positioned on the bottom. The barrel is then pre-heated and shaped under fire to make the wood pliable before the hoops are pounded down to tighten the vessel. 4. Finally, the barrel is toasted using one of two techniques: (a) All fire (traditional Bordeaux style that shows more spice); or (b) Fire and water (which opens pores of the oak and softens the tannins).

Size Matters

Barrels come in a wide variety of shapes and sizes: The standard Burgundy barrel is 228 liters, but they can be as small as 1-liter (for hobby winemakers). A puncheon holds 500 liters; a demimuid, 600; and oval-shaped foudres, 1,000 to 6,000 liters. Upright oak tanks can offer the most volume, ranging from 600 to 30,000 liters. Note: the larger the vessel, the less oak flavor is imparted on the wine.

Oregon Made

Oregon Barrel Works, located in McMinnville, is the only cooperage in the Pacific Northwest. Combining Old World traditions with New World innovations, they custom-craft barrels and puncheons from Oregon, French and Hungarian oak.



Portland Winemakers Club

Leadership Team - 2019

President: **Bill Brown** bbgoldieguy@gmail.com

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

Treasurer: **Barb Thomson** bt.grapevine@frontier.com

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

Secretary: **Ken 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/Speakers: **Barb Stinger** kbstinger@frontier.com

- Arrange for speakers & educational content for our meetings

Chair for Tastings: **Paul Sowray & Barb Stinger** davids1898@aol.com

- Conduct club tastings kbstinger@frontier.com
- Review and improve club tasting procedures

Chair of Winery/Vineyard Tours: **Damon Lopez.** dlopez5011@yahoo.com

- Select wineries, vineyards etc. to visit
- Arrange tours
- Cover logistics (food and money)

Chair of Group Purchases: **Bob Hatt** 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: **Paul Boyechko** labmanpaul@hotmail.com

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

Chairs for Social Events : **Marilyn Brown & Alice Bonham** brown.marilynjean@gmail.com

- Gala / Picnic / parties alice@alicedesigns.org

Web Design Editor: **Alice Bonham** alice@alicedesigns.org