

**Portland  
Winemakers  
Club**



# Portland Winemakers Club

**December 2019**

**"Bill's Meanderings"**

## Monthly Events

**January 16th, 2020**

Crush Talk & Planning

**January 25th, 2020**

Annual Gala

**February 20th, 2020**

Bordeaux varietals and  
blends Blind Tasting

**March, 19<sup>th</sup>, 2020**

Speaker

**April 16th, 2020**

Barrel / Carboy Samples  
Tasting

**May 21st, 2020**

Speaker

**June 18th, 2020**

Best Practices; Member  
Demonstrations of Tips &  
Tricks

**July**

Annual Picnic

**August 20th, 2020**

All Whites Blind Tasting

**September 17th, 2020**

Other Reds Blind Tasting

**October, 15th, 2020**

Pinot Noir Blind Tasting

**November, 19th, 2020**

Crush Talk

**December 11<sup>th</sup>, 2019**

Elections, Planning for Next  
Year, More Crush Talk

**NOTE:** Tours, Gala, picnic &  
Dec. meeting may vary  
depending on availability.



Where Marilyn and I were a year ago, McLaren Vale Wine Region, South Australia.

It's the old "how time flies" expression, but it certainly has for me. The Portland Winemakers Club has passed it's 51st year and we are still modifying it's format. This year has had us move into a new venue and elect a new president. We have added another monthly meeting to the calendar dedicated to crush talk and added many new members. The new members is a good thing to bring in new ideas and methods and especially enthusiasm. With the enthusiasm comes those new ideas and suggestions on the direction of the club for the coming year. The next meeting we will cover planning for the new year and also elections for club positions and those ideas and suggestions need to be brought forward. So be sure to attend this meeting and bring those bright thoughts and possibly put forth your name for a position to help run this club. The club is only as good as the work put in by the volunteers and members so be engaged.



**Drink Responsibly.  
Drive Responsibly.**

## Upcoming events / Save the date

**Club Meeting: December 11<sup>th</sup>, 7:00 pm at Aloha Grange hall.**

**Agenda: Elections of officers and committee chairs. More crush talk questions & answers. Planning: We need ideas for tours, speakers and any other activities you think would benefit the club.**

**Renew your club membership and sign a new waiver for 2020. Bring something from the cellar to share.**

**Annual Gala: Saturday, January 25<sup>th</sup> at Parrett Mountain Cellars (see flyer page )**

**All regular meetings are potluck, bring a small appetizer to share. Also bring wine glass(s) for tasting.**

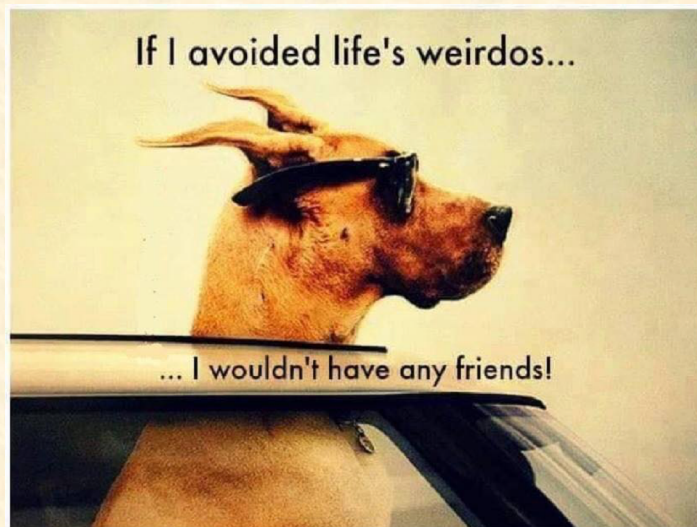
**The club meeting will begin at 7:00 pm and end by 9:00 pm. If you can, get there a little early to help set up. Please help put away chairs and tables at the end of the meeting.**

**Website: <http://portlandwinemakersclub/>**

### November Meeting Minutes

Present: 30

- We are meeting tonight at the home of Craig & Mindy Bush. Thank for letting us use your home this evening. A Grange scheduling mix-up led to the Grange being used for another meeting when we arrived tonight.
- Welcome to new member, Adam Zabel.
- Paul Boyechco won 2 medals at the "Cellarmasters of LA" amateur wine competition. He won Gold for a 2018 Viognier and Silver for a 2018. Chardonnay.
- The secretary needs to contact the Grange scheduler and change our December meeting to December 11th.
- Marilyn Brown passed around a food sign-up sheet for the Gala. The Gala is scheduled for Saturday, January 25<sup>th</sup> at Parrett Mountain Cellars.
- Treasurer Barb Thomson is accepting dues for 2020, \$25 for the year.
- Mindy Bush suggested that future events refundable food list be enlarged to include 2 appetizers.
- The remainder of the evening was given over to "Crush Talk". Lots of questions were brought up about problems & concerns about this years crush. Discussions about Alberino, malolactic fermentation and affects of ML, resulting low numbers from our cool Fall, bird damage and sparkling wine.
- I'd grow my own food if I could only find bacon seeds.





## 2020 Newport Seafood & Wine, Amateur Competition

This wine competition is open to amateur winemakers only and offers an opportunity for these individuals to have their wines independently evaluated by a panel of judges. Wines are scored on a 20 point system based on sight, aroma, taste and overall quality.

Categories include: Dry Fruit, Sweet Fruit, Dry Berry, Sweet Berry, White Vinifera, White Non-Vinifera, Red Vinifera, Red Non-Vinifera and Specialty, a category which includes all wines not found in other specified divisions.

Further information at: [seafoodandwine.com](http://seafoodandwine.com)



**Congratulations to member Paul Boyechko who won two medals at the "Cellarmasters of LA" wine competition. He won a gold for his 2018 Viognier and a silver for his 2018 Chardonnay.**

## The Mysteries of Malolactic

*By Gabe Jackson & Robyn Rosemon*

Congratulations you have successfully turned your grapes into wine. The hard work is over and now you can relax! NOT! Fermentation isn't over yet. Now it is time to begin thinking about malolactic fermentation MLF (otherwise known as secondary fermentation). Malolactic fermentation is the process in winemaking where tart-tasting malic acid, naturally present in grapes is converted to softer-tasting lactic acid. Malic acid tastes mostly like green apples. By contrast, lactic acid is richer and buttery tasting. MLF enhances the body and flavor in wine, producing wines of greater palate softness and roundness.

Most malolactic fermentations are done on red wine varietals and barrel fermented *Chardonnays*. In some red wines the choice is optional such as *Zinfandel* or *Pinot Noir*. White wine varietals like *Sauvignon Blanc*, *Viognier*, and *Riesling*, for example, do not undergo any malolactic fermentation. These wines are recognized for their high acid levels and crisp finish. That is not to say that you can't experiment. In 2009 instead of inoculating her Syrah, Robyn accidentally inoculated her Sauvignon Blanc. (She says, "Don't judge me, it was dark.") The wine ended up being quite delicious so she called it Fumé Blanc and entered it in the *Harvest Fair*, where she received a silver medal! On the contrary, the first year that she made Zinfandel she chose not to inoculate with malolactic bacteria (otherwise known as *Oenococcus oeni*). We all really like fruit forward jammy Zinfandel so she made the choice to pass on MLF. That wine also received a silver medal at the Harvest Fair. The point is that the winemaker gets to decide whether or not to undergo MLF. Equip yourself with the following information on the ins and outs of MLF, so you can decide what to do on your next wine.

### THE TALE

There are three primary reasons to put your wine through MLF: stability, acid reduction and flavor. The stability of wine is improved by taking the wine through a complete MLF, ending with 30 ppm of malic acid or less. Residual malic acid above this level still has the potential for unintended fermentation, just as residual sugar in a wine could possibly cause a fermentation to restart in the bottle. Both situations may produce cloudy, effervescent wine in the bottle.

### THE CRYSTAL BALL

The fermentation of malic acid results in the production of lactic acid. As each molecule of malic acid is converted to lactic acid, the contribution to titratable acidity (TA) drops by half. In a wine that starts with 0.2% TA from the malic acid (with the remainder of the TA made up of stable tartaric acid), MLF will drop the 0.2% malic portion to just a 0.1% lactic portion. That represents a 0.1% drop in the overall TA. That is a significant change in acidity---the flavor profile of

the wine will be much different post-MLF. The combined effect of acidity reduction and change in acid type can turn a bright and sharp wine into a softer, more approachable wine.

## THE RITUALS

Our favorite time to perform MLF is at the end of primary fermentation. Most commonly we add the culture when 0 brix is reached. In reds, this means adding it just after pressing. If the culture is added early while sugar is present, there is a risk of producing volatile acidity. The malolactic bacteria can ferment sugar into VA, so it is best not to give them the chance. As long as you choose a strain that can handle high alcohol and is produced for direct addition, add it at the end of primary.

*Oenococcus oeni* are not the only strain of bacteria that will ferment malic acid. There are wild strains of *Lactobacillus* that sometimes infect our beverages. In brewing, it is a very common spoilage organism and can result in a complete souring of the beer. In wine, it is also best to avoid them. They do not ferment as cleanly as *Oenococcus oeni* and may contribute off- flavors that cannot be removed. A “spontaneous” MLF will likely result these undesirables. Using a laboratory produced package of malolactic bacteria is the most predictable option. Flavor profile, alcohol tolerance, SO<sub>2</sub> tolerance, and other factors are known and reliable. You don’t want to risk ending up with a funky and stuck MLF--- it’s a headache!

We have pure strains available. For large batches and barrels, use one of the options from Enoferm---we have both Alpha (WY51) and Beta (WY66) strains each intended for inoculating up to 66 gallons. For a carboy you can use the 125 mL package of liquid culture from Wyeast 4007 (WY32). Our most popular choice is Enoferm Alpha due to the high alcohol tolerance (15.5%) and general dependability.

Aside from your choice of culture, the main factors that will determine the success of your MLF are temperature, SO<sub>2</sub> levels, alcohol level and pH. For all of our cultures, temperatures must be above 60° F (65°-70° is best) or the bacteria will go dormant. Post-fermentation SO<sub>2</sub> additions must be avoided until MLF is complete. Alcohol tolerance of our cultures is in the 14.5-15.5% range (check your culture). You can see from those numbers that some wines, especially those big Zinfandels, can be difficult to get through MLF. There are rarely issues with pH. As long as you are above pH 3.2 it will be okay. We rarely see wines below that in Sonoma County.

## THE DIVINATION

Assuming that your numbers look good and you can keep the wine temperature warm enough for active fermentation, you should be able to complete MLF in 3 to 6 weeks. How do you know when it is done? Ask your winemaker friends, but you may want to sit down to really enjoy the answers you get. Everyone has a trick. None of them work very well. Most are either guesswork or something like divination. Here’s a few popular answers:

1: You can see little CO<sub>2</sub> bubbles in the wine when it is active. 2: You can hear it crackling by putting your ear to the barrel. 3: It smells like tennis shoes while fermenting. These all contain bits of truth, but also contain some winemaking myths. There is no way to know whether the CO<sub>2</sub> production is from sugar fermentation or MLF and none of these techniques gives you a way to decipher between a complete and stuck MLF. Of course, there is this next reply.

4: Oh well, a stuck MLF will finish in the spring when it warms up again. While it is possible and sometimes this strategy works, it requires you to forego your normal SO<sub>2</sub> additions that keep your wine protected through the fall, winter, and spring months.

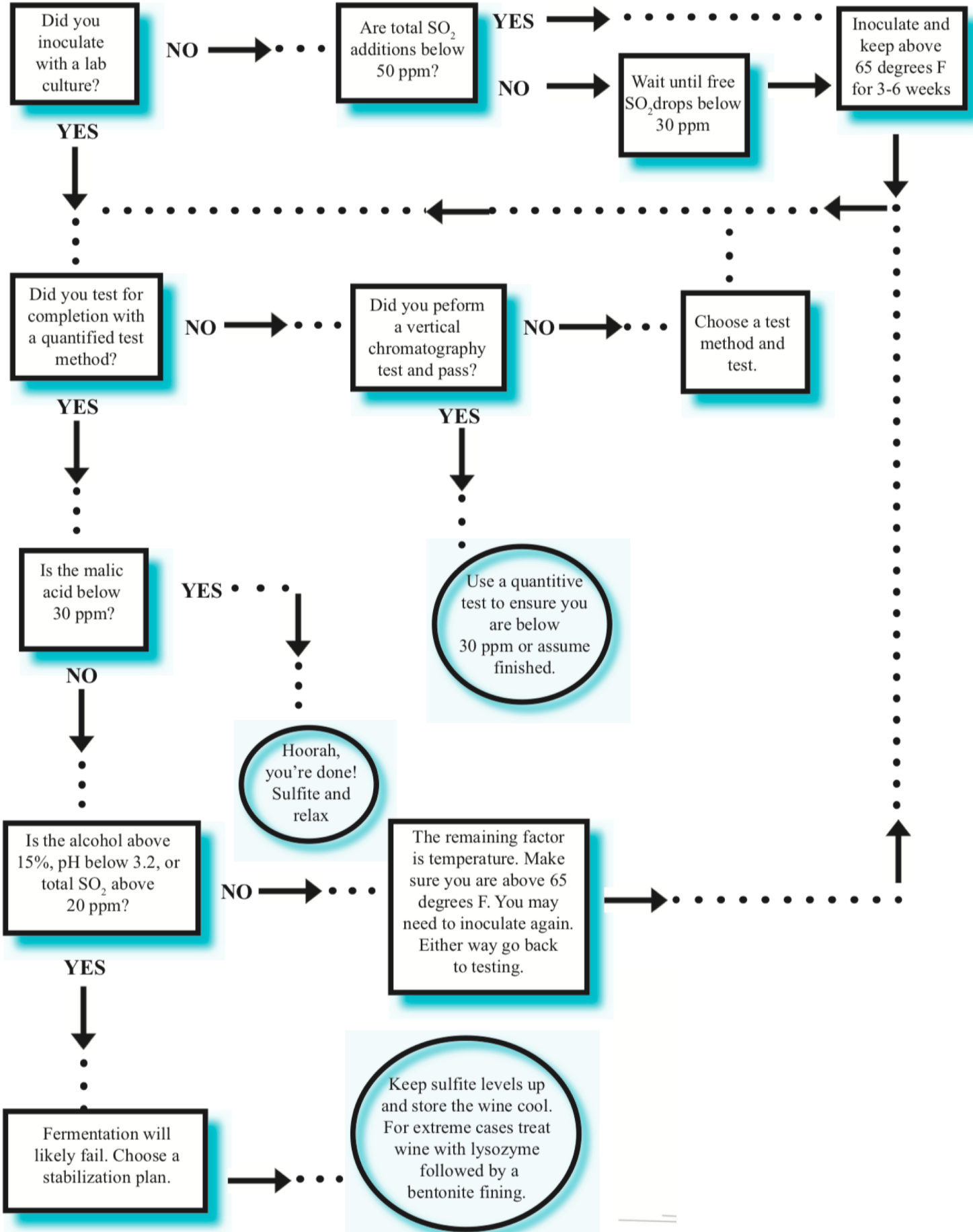
## THE DISCOVERY

Once you believe it is done, test it to confirm completion. The only reliable method is to perform a test or have a sample tested at a lab. For home use we have a Vertical Chromatography test kit. It is a fun test to perform giving you a colorful chart showing the presence or absence of malic, lactic, and tartaric acid in your wine. Unfortunately it does not give you quantified results. If you take a sample into a lab, you can run a malic acid test on a Reflectoquant meter (\$5 meter use fee plus \$6.95 per test you perform) and get your result in ppm of malic acid. Remember you want it to be below 30 ppm for assurance of stability. It’s a happy time for winemakers when the MLF is done and they can “put their wines to bed” for the winter.

## THE TRUTH REVEALED

At *The Beverage People*, we have hundreds of conversations each year about these fermentations. We have heard all the problems and helped people complete MLF successfully year after year. We have seen winemakers struggle at it, especially when they get stuck. Our conversations with winemakers always follow a definite decision making course. So we decided to lay it out for your use---we created a MLF flow chart! Our first recommendation is to inoculate as discussed above, keep the temperature up and finish successfully in 3-6 weeks. If things should go awry with your MLF, take a tour of the flowchart. It will help guide you to a successful finish.

# The Secret Guide to Malolactic Fermentation





# Stabilizing Wines in the Cellar

By: Denise M. Gardner

The long months post-harvest require regular attention by cellar staff and winemakers to ensure that wine quality is upheld through storage conditions. Wine stability, while somewhat nebulous, is essential to obtain in order to ensure the wine's quality will be upheld post-sale. Below is a list of cellar maintenance practices that are recommended in preparation before the growing (and bottling) season.

## Monitor Sulfur Dioxide Concentrations

Now (i.e., the winter and spring months) is a good time to regularly check sulfur dioxide concentrations of wines sitting in tanks and barrels waiting to get bottled. At minimum, wines should be checked once a month for free sulfur dioxide concentrations. Some winemakers opt to check barreled wines every other month in order to minimize frequently opening the barrel.

Proper sanitation and sampling is required for best analytical results:

Use clean sampling bottles when taking wine samples.

Make sure that you sanitize any valves or sampling ports **before and after** releasing a sample from a tank. At the very least, you can use a food-grade alcohol solution spray or a citric acid-sulfur dioxide mix as a sanitizing agent.

Properly clean and sanitize wine thieves or other sampling devices each time you use it to take a sample from a barrel or the top of tank. **Warm water is not enough to sanitize a wine thief.** We recommend using a citric acid-sulfur dioxide mix for quick dipping in between barrel sampling.

For wines that have completed primary fermentation and/or malolactic fermentation, maintaining a molecular free sulfur dioxide concentration is helpful to reduce the risk of yeast and bacterial spoilage.



**It is essential to clean and sanitize your wine thief in between sampling from barrels.**

## Cold (Tartrate) Stabilization

Cold stabilization is often utilized to avoid the precipitation of tartrate crystals, which is common in instable wines at cooler temperatures.

In 2012, Virginia (Smith) Mitchell, now head winemaker at Galer Estate Winery, wrote a primer on cold stabilization techniques available for wine producers. This primer covered everything from how to analyze for cold stability to the use of carboxymethylcellulose (CMC) to avoid tartaric acid crystallization in wine.

Prior to putting a wine through cold stabilization, it is worth the time and effort to analyze the wine for cold stability. Not all wines end up having cold stabilization problems.

For those wines that do not, going through the cold stabilization process can actually minimize wine quality by stripping out delicate aromas and flavors, or altering taste or mouthfeel attributes of the wine. This doesn't touch upon the amount of wasted time and effort to cold stabilize wines that are otherwise cold stable.

With the relatively warmer 2015-2016 winter, many winemakers needed to turn to artificial chilling in order to cold stabilize their wines properly. Again, this could be used as an argument to test wines prior to cold stabilization to minimize the use of electricity and to better manage the flow of wines in and out of the cold stabilization tank.

Wines that do undergo cold stabilization will likely have changes in pH and titratable acidity (TA) that can ultimately affect other parameters of the wine: protein (heat) stability, color, sulfur dioxide concentrations, and volatile acidity. It is prudent to check these components analytically following the cold stabilization process.

## Protein (Heat) Stabilization

Proteins in wine can elicit hazes in wines post-bottling that may be off-putting to some consumers. While the proteins cause no effect on wine quality, they do cause an alteration in the appearance of the wine. Some varieties, like Gruner Veltliner, have naturally high concentrations of proteins, and, therefore, require a more aggressive approach to protein fining. Other varietals, however, may not require protein fining with bentonite at all.

Wines should undergo protein (heat) stability **after** they are cold stabilized due to the fact that cold stabilization will affect the acidity (pH and TA) of the wine, and therefore, alter protein stability properties of the wine. Again, winemakers are encouraged to check the wine for protein stability prior to treating a wine with bentonite.

Bentonite is a fining agent used to bind any proteins in a wine that would otherwise be considered unstable. However, if the addition of bentonite is unnecessary (i.e., the wine is protein stable and does not provide a component for bentonite to bind to, bentonite can bind to other components in the wine, most specifically: aroma and flavor active compounds. While this has been shown in the research literature, it is unclear how detrimental the loss of aromatic compounds is to the wine. Additionally, bentonite additions have been noted to strip color out of rosé and red wines.

Finally, if wineries are conducting their own bench trials, they are encouraged to use the same lot of bentonite in both the trials and the commercial application. This is due to the natural variability associated with most bentonite products. Finally, unless otherwise stated by the supplier, bentonite should always be blended in chlorine-free, hot (60°C, 140°F) water and allowed to cool to room temperature so that the bentonite can swell. Allowing the slurry to cool will ensure that the wine is not exposed to a hot slurry.



## From Barrel to Bottle

When I write about a wine's flavor profile, I usually include whatever a winemaker's tech sheet states about barrel aging, how many months in barrel, how old those barrels might be, and often the country of origin. I include this information because it very generally suggests to what extent those barrels have contributed to the flavor and texture of the wine. The newer the barrel the more it imparts flavor and texture. So to some extent, the information is a clue in part of what we'll taste when we pour the wine into a glass. But what flavors and what texture are we talking about?



After researching the subject, I'm in awe of the complication that a winemaker considers when he or she decides which barrels to use for a particular wine because the contribution the barrel makes to the wine is enormous. And this is exactly the reason that some winemakers of both red and white wines avoid barrels altogether and ferment and age their wines in stainless steel tanks when they want to present only the authentic flavors of the grape.

In an older time, winemakers would have given no thought to barrels because barrels would have been made from whatever tree type grew locally, and anyway barrels would have been little more than storage containers for the wine among other commodities like olive oil or even earlier salt. Not so today. Winemakers choose barrels made from particular wood from particular forests in different parts of the world, the wood seasoned or aged for a particular amount of time before being made into barrels of differing sizes, and those barrels toasted to varying degrees. The final consideration would be how many years the barrels had contained wine from new to one, two, three, or many more years.

Many techniques now exist for softening the tannins in red wine, that gritty sensation that in the extreme can be entirely unpleasant. But its absence would be a smoothness that is typical of fruit juice, which would not have the palate cleansing effect, together with acid, that makes wine so compatible with food. Barrels tame tannins because wood is porous and admits a very controlled amount of air, which in turn oxidizes the wine over time and softens it. When we decant a younger tannic red, we do so because pouring the wine from the bottle into a decanter exposes it to oxygen and hopefully provides a quick oxidation that smooths the wine. Allowing wine to sit in the glass does the same thing. And of course in an opened bottle of wine, noticeable oxidation will occur until the wine eventually tastes like vinegar.

Once the world decided that oak was the best wood for aging wine, forests in the U.S., France, Croatia, and Hungary among other countries provided the most wood for wine barrels, French oak being the least porous and most prestigious because it allows longer and slower aging. So if a particular grape, Cabernet Sauvignon for example, is more

tannic than another one, Pinot Noir for instance, it will require more time in barrel.

Wine undergoes clarification and stabilization in barrel. As solids drop out of solution and collect at the bottom, the clearer wine is racked into other barrels, leaving behind the sediment. Racking from one barrel to another also oxidizes the wine a bit more and further softens the tannins. Additionally, the time spent in barrel intensifies wine color, especially red wine.

Wine is alive while in barrel, the yeast and other substances extracting flavors from the wood itself. And different wood from different forests in different places produces different flavors or different proportions of flavor. Certain aromas like coconut can increase with barrel time. The amount of toasting that the barrel has undergone amps up this flavor, and the flavor of vanillin increases with the amount of toast. Other components of the wood can contribute spice and caramel. Yet other elements in the wood contribute smoked meat and leather or in white wine clove and coffee. We've heard these descriptors countless times. But once we recognize that they are barrel flavors, not grape flavors, we understand that winemakers need to control all of these influences so as not to obscure the flavors of the fruit itself and leave it vulnerable to the ruinous descriptor, too oaky.

When we consider all of these contributions that oak makes, it becomes clearer that winemakers need to match the flavors of the barrel with particular grape varieties. They need to regulate how much of these flavors ends up in the wine by choosing a particular barrel size. Generally, Europeans are less partial to oak flavors than Americans and age their wines in larger casks so that the larger volume of wine has less contact with the surface of the wood. Or they might mitigate oak influence by using not just larger barrels but also older barrels whereas new world winemakers are likely to use newer barrels or at least subject a larger portion of a particular batch of wine to newer barrels and less to one, two, three or older barrels where flavor components have already been extracted by previous wines. Newer wood barrels also have tannin. So a ripe and higher alcohol California wine for example, made from very ripe fruit may lack tannin. So aging it in new oak barrels would benefit the wine and give it texture that it wouldn't otherwise have. Winemakers also need to determine how long to leave wine especially in newer barrels.

I don't know about you, but my head is spinning at this point, and I'm glad that I don't have to make any of these decisions. But I do have to choose wine for your table and mine, and hopefully knowing something about barrel aging will help both of us understand what we can expect in the glass. But in your case, you're not likely to see a tech sheet when you reach for a wine on a shelf. Good luck to us, who love wine but maybe not all of it. Ultimately, buying a bottle is an act of trust. But like everything else, each bit of knowledge helps.

## Seenager

I **JUST** discovered my age group! I am a **Seenager** (senior teenager).

I have everything that I wanted as a teenager, only 55-60 years later. I don't have to go to school or work. I get an allowance every month. I have my own pad. I don't have a curfew. I have a driver's license and my own car.

I have ID that gets me into bars and the wine store. I like the wine store best. The people I hang around with are not scared of getting pregnant, they aren't scared of anything, they have been blessed to live this long, why be scared? And I don't have acne. Life is Good!

Also, you will feel much more intelligent after reading this, if you are a **Seenager**. Brains of older people are slow because they know so much. People do not decline mentally with age; it just takes them longer to recall facts because they have more information in their brains. Scientists believe this also makes you hard of hearing as it puts pressure on your inner ear.

Also, older people often go to another room to get something and when they get there, they stand there wondering what they came for. It is **NOT** a memory problem; it is nature's way of making older people do more exercise.



# Portland Winemakers Club

## Leadership Team – 2019

President: **Bill Brown** [bbgoldieguy@gmail.com](mailto: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](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/Speakers: **Barb Stinger** [kbstinger@frontier.com](mailto:kbstinger@frontier.com)

- Arrange for speakers & educational content for our meetings

Chair for Tastings: **Paul Sowray & Barb Stinger** [davids1898@aol.com](mailto:davids1898@aol.com)

- Conduct club tastings [kbstinger@frontier.com](mailto:kbstinger@frontier.com)
- Review and improve club tasting procedures

Chair of Winery/Vineyard Tours: **Damon Lopez**. [dlopez5011@yahoo.com](mailto: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](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: **Paul Boyechko** [labmanpaul@hotmail.com](mailto: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 & Mindy Bush** [brown.marilynjean@gmail.com](mailto:brown.marilynjean@gmail.com)

\* Gala / Picnic / parties [mindybush@hotmail.com](mailto:mindybush@hotmail.com)

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