



Portland Winemakers Club

December 2023

“Bob’s Blurb”

Monthly Events

January 18th, 2023

Discuss plans and ideas for 2023

January 21st, 2023

Gala at Parrott Mountain Cellars

February 15th, 2023

Barrel sample tasting
Wine trading pool

March 15th, 2023

Tasting & judging, member produced Italian varietals

April 19th, 2023

speaker Sarah Linnemeyer

May 17th, 2023

Tasting & judging, member produced Bordeaux Reds

June 21st, 2023

Tasting & judging, member produced all Whites, Rose' & sparkling

July no meeting

July 22nd, 2023

Annual Picnic, \$10 ea. fee,
Craig & Mindy Bush

August 16th, 2023

Speaker: Marco Prete with
“Wines of Kings”

September 20th, 2023

Tasting & judging, member produced other Reds & fruit wines

October 18th, 2023

Tasting & judging, member produced Pinot Noir

November 15th, 2023

Crush Talk (canceled)

December 13th, 2023

Elections, Planning for Next Year

Wine related tours may be scheduled on non-meeting days.

It is that time of year again. The winter holidays are approaching. I assume the wine is done fermenting, and securely in barrels or carboys. The December meeting is the planning and elections meeting, which we will still do, but we missed the crush talk because of the unexpected cancellation of our meeting space at the Aloha Grange. But we will make up for it in our December meeting. Remember, we are all volunteers and that is what makes this club special. Run by members for the members. So planning is essential to meeting your needs as amateur wine makers. As a bonus to try and get you to come to the meeting, I know a lot of you do not have space to do multiple varietals, so at the December meeting I will be bringing several Portuguese varietals for the chance to do a blending and tasting after we have finished the planning. This not only gives us a chance to do blending, but of course, will help me with my attempt to make a tasty blend :) I am not afraid to take advantage of all of your palates. Isn't this what the club is for?

Oh. Here is a new tool that I found at the local Ace hardware store. I was looking for a paint scraper with a razor blade when I came across this tool that is just like that but uses a plastic blade. It is marketed for delicate items, but I am using it to scrape labels from bottles after they have been soaked. Better than fingernails and plastic scrubbers. I have found it very helpful. (also it was only about \$1.49)

Bob



Drink Responsibly ↩
↪ *Drive Responsibly*

Upcoming events / Save the date

The next PWC meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, December 13th in the basement of the Aloha Grange starting at 7:00 pm. The purpose of this meeting, besides discussing wine-making problems and successes, and attempting to make up for our canceled Crush Talk meeting, will be to hold elections for the President, Treasurer, Secretary, and committee chairpersons.

NOTE: There will be a pot-luck table for those who wish to participate. Bring a dish to share. If you would rather not participate feel free to bring your own snacks.

NOTE: *Bring a bottle of wine to put into a trading pool. Everyone who brings a bottle draws a number to pick from the wine trading pool. Numbers get picked until the pool is empty.*

• Please visit the PWC website: portlandwinemakersclub.com where there are Newsletters archived back to 2007.

• Also, visit our public group Facebook page: “Portland Winemakers Club” [facebook.com](https://www.facebook.com/portlandwinemakersclub). Give it a look, join the discussions, and enter some posts of your own. There are 33 members in the group so far.

November Meeting Notes

Members present:

• There was no November meeting due to a booking problem with the Aloha Grange.



Cream of Tarter Test for Checking pH*

A quick way to check your calibration and pH accuracy is to measure the pH of a saturated solution of Cream of Tarter which has a pH of 3.56 at 25 degrees Celsius:

1. Get pure cream of tarter (grocery store stuff is fine, provided it is pure) or reagent grade potassium hydrogen tartrate, also known as potassium acid tartrate or potassium bitartrate.

2. Place about 1/8 teaspoon in 20 ml of distilled water. Mix well for about 30 seconds. You want to be sure the solution is saturated, i.e., everything that can dissolve has dissolved. There should be some undissolved solids left.

3. Decant or filter the solution off the solids if possible.

4. This solution has a standard pH of 3.56 at 25 degrees C (78 degrees F). It should be within 0.02 pH from this value at temperatures from 20 to 30 degrees Celsius. We are usually OK with a value between 3.50 and 3.60. Discard after 24 hours.

* **Article submitted by member Rob Marrs.**

Competition Winners

Only two club members submitted wines to the Cellarmaster LA annual International Amateur Wine Competition. Ken & Barb Stinger won “**Best of Show, Red Wines**” as well as “**Best of Show, Estate Wines**” for their 2018 Boke’ Merlot. They also won a “**Gold Medal**” for their 2019 Boke’ Malbec.



Every Painstaking Step It Takes to Make the World's Best Wine Casks

Superior grapes require superior oak casks. Radoux uses old-school and high-tech methods for the best barrel results.

By MIKE DESIMONE AND JEFF JENSSEN



Just as great wine is a product of the vineyard, exceptional wine barrels start in the forest. Continuing a tradition that has been in practice for two millennia, the artisans at Tonnellerie Radoux rely on both experience and technology to select oak trees that will be handcrafted into some of the world's finest wine casks. In 1947, Robert Radoux established a barrel-repair

workshop just northeast of Bordeaux, in Jonzac, France; 30 years later, his son, Christian, took over and expanded the business to encompass production, before formally founding Tonnellerie Radoux in 1982.

Now one of the globe's preeminent barrel makers, Radoux in 1998 became the first in the category to trade on the Paris Stock Exchange. A decade later it launched Oakscan, technology that instantly measures the level of polyphenols—which have a crucial impact on wine's tannic structure and flavor—contained in barrel staves (the strips of wood that form the vessel). The company was acquired by industry leader François Frères Cooperage in 2012.

Although some Radoux casks are made in California's Central Valley with American oak, the majority come from Jonzac, in the heart of the Cognac region, from old-growth oak harvested in the center of the country. In the same way that fine wine is still largely made by hand, barrel-making is a manual process, performed by artisans with an average of 20 to 30 years of experience.

Radoux's clients include such notable wineries as Napa Valley's Peju, Château Mouton Rothschild, in Bordeaux, Italy's Marchesi Antinori and Spain's Vega Sicilia. "We know from over seven decades in the industry," says Craig Holme, national sales manager for Tonnellerie Radoux USA, "that our meticulously sourced wood and our handcrafting of that wood into barrels is an extremely important part of fine winemaking for our clients."

1. Finding the Ring Leaders



2. Map it out



After the trees are cut and transported to the cooperage, Radoux uses laser-mapping to produce the highest yield of staves from each log. Depending on a tree's age and size, it can furnish between one and three barrels. After the staves are milled, the wood's grain is evaluated. More tightly-grained oak, sourced from trees with thinner growth rings, is typically reserved for the highest-caliber casks, while looser-grained wood might end up holding less noble wines.

4. Level Up (or Down)



The cut staves are left to mature in the open for up to 36 months, stacked in alternating rows to optimize air and rain exposure. The elements help rid them of the most astringent tannins, allowing for softer wood notes to develop in a wine's profile as it ages.

Workers assess every stave with Oakscan (Radoux's proprietary infrared-light system) to determine the level of polyphenols in each, then barcode and sort the pieces according to those amounts.

After the rough-cut staves are milled into their final convex form, the cooper chooses those required to make the cask—the average is about 30. The pieces are then laid out according to size and placed vertically inside metal hoops to create a “rose.” This is the first step in fashioning an actual barrel.

5. A Rose Begins to Bloom



6. Shaping Up



7. Don't Forget the Toast



The loosely formed barrel is heated by placing it over an open flame, which temporarily makes the wood more flexible. This allows for the staves to be tightened at the bottom and for the positioning of additional hoops that form the desired shape.

The cask is returned to the flame to toast the interior. Depending on the client's winemaking style, barrels can be fired to light, medium, medium-plus, or heavy levels of char. In general, the toastier the barrel, the less wood influence will be noted on the

palate when tasting the final product. Modern-day toasting is a combination of high-tech and traditional methods: It involves an infrared pyrometer with a laser sight but is performed over braziers tended by a single worker feeding them leftover oak.

8. Top and Bottom



9. Under Pressure



The cooper cuts a channel—called a croze—into each end of the staves. Two flat barrelheads are then built to fit into the channels and pounded into place with a mallet.

At this point, the bunghole—the entry and exit point for wine—is drilled and cauterized. Coopers then pour about three gallons of scalding water into the barrel and subject it to high pressure to check for leaks. Once this initial test is passed, the temporary hoops are removed, the wood is sanded, and the final galvanized steel (or, in some cases, for decorative purposes, chestnut) hoops are fitted into place.

10. Signed, Sealed, Delivered



The finished cask is laser-marked with the Radoux logo, as well as the client's name if requested. After a final quality-control check, including a visual inspection, it's then carefully packed and sent to its new home.



Sweet Finnish

Written by David Cohen

Berry delicious wines

It was 2003, and I asked my wife, Paola, to pick out a kit for me at the homebrew shop near Boston, Massachusetts. I figured if I made beers she was interested in, she would be more accepting of my new homebrew hobby.

“I found it,” she said, holding up a box. Looking at it, I told her, “Riesling is not a beer.” “But you can make it with the same equipment you already have and this is what I want.”

Taking it home, it was surprisingly easy to make. It was drinkable and it got me thinking, could I make better wine? Thus began a journey down the slippery slope well known to fellow hobbyists; to make better wine from quality concentrate kits, whole juice kits, fresh juice in season, and finally whole grapes, and then better quality grapes. Our wines got better with each step.

Wanting to continue the hobby, I looked to see what I could get, and in Finland that meant berries.

In 2008 we moved to Finland for my work, and in the back of my head I thought, “This is an opportunity to get good Italian grapes.” But it was not to be — there is no infrastructure to support home winemakers in Finland, so obtaining grapes or even good-quality kits was just not possible. Wanting to continue the hobby, I looked to see what I could get, and in Finland that meant berries. The local berries were extraordinary . . . but how to work with them?

That began a new project, and after only a few years Paola realized the fruit wines we were making in Finland were better than the wines we made in the U.S. and the key was the quality of the fruit. She also realized no one was making wines like us locally and, looking to go back to work, she decided that starting a winery was an opportunity. I would make the wine in the evenings and weekends (while continuing my day job as an engineer) and she would sell the wines. In 2014 we founded Ainoa Winery (translation: Ainoa = unique; pronunciation: “I know a winery”).

What we didn’t understand before starting though was that many people in Finland looked down on berry wines. It was almost impossible to get people to even taste our wines, and after a year we were ready to give up. But a friend from work told us to get an independent evaluation of the wines first. So we sent two wines to the East Meets West Wine Competition in Sonoma County, California, and our blueberry wine became the first Finnish wine to win a gold medal in an international competition (cloudberry wine got a silver). We realized that our wine was good . . . we just had to communicate better.

Over the next year, we worked on our brand, our packaging, and our message. Our wines were subsequently accepted into the alcohol monopoly shops (state-owned liquor stores).



In 2017 we sent samples to the Vinalies Internationales, the premier tasting of the Oenologues de France and one of the most prestigious wine competitions in the world. Vinalies had never previously been awarded a fruit wine, yet our raspberry wine received a gold medal, a Vinalies Trophy (their highest honor), and was rated the 11th best overall of the 3,500+ wines from 45 countries that year. The Oenologues have since awarded 7 more gold medals to fruit wines — all of them to Ainoa.

Restaurants in Finland realized we had something special, sales picked up, and recognition followed. In 2018 we were honored for our contribution to advancing Finnish cuisine, and in 2019 we were awarded the Embla Nordic Food Artisan trophy for creating world-class wine using native Nordic ingredients. By 2020 Ainoa was successful enough that I switched from being an engineer to a professional winemaker.

Looking back 20 years, my strategy worked. These days Paola fully supports my homebrewing winemaking.



2024 WineMaker[®] International Amateur WINE COMPETITION

ENTER YOUR BEST HOMEMADE WINES
IN THE WORLD'S LARGEST COMPETITION
FOR HOBBY WINEMAKERS!

**DON'T WAIT — SEND YOUR ENTRIES NOW!
ENTRY DEADLINE: MARCH 15, 2024**



Enter your wines and compete for gold, silver and bronze medals in 50 categories awarded by a panel of experienced wine judges. You can gain international recognition for your winemaking skills and get valuable feedback on your wines from the competition's judging panel.

Entry Deadline: March 15, 2024

5515 Main Street • Manchester Center, VT 05255
ph: (802) 362-3981 ext. 106 • fax: (802) 362-2377
email: competition@winemakermag.com

You can also enter online at: www.winemakercompetition.com

Potassium Sorbate Post-MLF

Q

I have some Cabernet/Merlot and old vine Zinfandel fermenting. After fermentation completes I am going to do a malolactic fermentation, although I have never done this before. When it is time to bottle I usually add potassium sorbate to my wine. Will it affect the flavor if I do a malolactic fermentation?

A

If your primary fermentation (sugar to alcohol) is complete you shouldn't have to add any potassium sorbate to your wine. In fact, adding sorbate to wine after performing malolactic fermentation (ML) can cause an unwanted effect on the finished wine — potassium sorbate reacts negatively with lactic bacteria and results in a geranium-like off-odor. The alternative to using sorbate when you plan to use an ML in your wines if you are worried about refermentation is to stabilize the malolactic-fermented wine with sulfite followed by a fine filtration, then monitor the wine during bulk aging to ensure that fermentation does not restart.

I am also personally not a big potassium sorbate fan as it sometimes can have a pineapple-type off-aroma that I don't find attractive. Similarly, I'm not really into adding things to my wine when I don't have to. Will ML fermentation affect the flavor of your wine? Definitely, and that is one of the main reasons why winemakers do it. ML fermentation always de-acidifies the wine a little bit and sometimes, depending on the strain of ML bacteria you use and the components in your initial wine, you can get some cheesy or buttery notes in the aroma and a general rounding-out of the flavor profile and mouthfeel. I find all of these effects to be positive, especially in red wines, and perform MLF on all my red wines, as do most of the commercial winemakers I know. Good luck with your wine and new procedure!



Calculating ABV

Q

I have been making wine for about a year using kits and grapes. I currently use the method of determining alcohol by the measurement of Brix. I have seen many times after fermentation the Brix level falls below zero. My question is, when calculating alcohol content would I need to include the negative factor in Brix? For example, if my starting Brix is 18, I would usually calculate this by 18×0.56 to determine potential alcohol and get a figure of 10.08% ABV. However, if my ending Brix were -2, would I need to figure it as follows: $20 \times 0.56 = 11.2\%$ ABV?

A

This is a great question. Luckily the answer is simple. You still only calculate potential alcohol based on the original Brix reading. "Negative Brixes," or when the density of your fermented solution reads below the 0.00 °Brix mark on your hydrometer, happen because they are just that: Fermented. Alcohol is much less dense than water and when we come to the end of the fermentation and the sugar has almost all been converted to alcohol, Brix is truly only a measurement of solution density. As the relatively more dense water and sugar solution (grape juice) gets transformed into a water and ethanol solution (wine) the new alcohol content skews the results artificially lower. There is a significant contribution from the alcohol to the ending Brix reading, which means that

by the end of fermentation, the Brix “reading” itself is artificially low. This means that when calculating potential alcohol we do not count negative Brix degrees as actually contributing to the alcohol level. In a way, they are like “phantom Brix units” that are really meaningless.

Estimating potential alcohol is tough, even for veteran winemakers. Things like yeast strain, fermentation temperature, and dried-up grapes can make it hard to first get an accurate initial Brix reading and to subsequently translate an initial Brix reading into final alcohol. Though in a lab we may say that for every degree Brix you’ll get X amount of ethanol, in reality, it’s never that simple. You can certainly help yourself, though, by only using your hydrometer to help you calculate potential alcohol at the beginning of the fermentation, where it will most accurately reflect what you’ll be getting from the sugar in your juice or must.

Response by Alison Crowe.



Reference Library

Here is a list of hobby winemaking manuals and other materials in the Secretary’s file. They are available for downloading by e-mail or via an internet transfer service. Some are downloadable from the source such as Scott Lab. All are in PDF format, e-mail Ken Stinger at kbstinger@frontier.com

- Scott Lab 2023 Winemaking Handbook –18.4MB – 140 pages
- Scott Lab 2022 - 2023 Cider Handbook – 2.1 MB – 73 pages
- Scott Lab 2018-2019 Sparkling Handbook – 8 MB – 58 pages
- Scott Lab 2022 Craft Distilling Handbook – 5.2 MB – 26 pages
- Anchor 2021 – 2022 Enology Harvest Guide 15.7 MB - 16 pages
- A Guide to Fining Wine, WA State University - 314 KB - 10 pages
- Barrel Care Procedures - The Beverage People - 100 KB - 2 pages
- Barrel Care Techniques - Pambianchi – 42 KB – 3 pages
- Enartis Handbook - 4.8 mb - 108 pages
- A Review Of Méthode Champenoise Production - 570 KB – 69 pages
- Sacramento Winemakers Winemaking Manual - 300 KB - 34 pages
- Sparkling Wine brief instructions - 20 KB - 3 pages
- The Home Winemakers Manual - Lum Eisenman - 14 MB – 178 pages
- MoreWine Guide to Red Winemaking - 1 MB - 74 pages
- MoreWine Guide to White Winemaking – 985 KB – 92 pages
- MoreWine Yeast and grape pairing – 258 KB – 9 pages
- Wine Flavors, Faults & Taints – 600 KB, 11 pages
- Daniel Pambianchi wine calculator set – 13.5 MB, 10 calculators
- Wine flavors, faults, and taints - 88 KB, 11 pages

(updated 6-28-2023)

Portland Winemakers Club

Leadership Team – 2023

President: **Bob Hatt**

bobhatt2000@yahoo.com

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

Treasurer: **Barb Thomson / Jim Ourada**

bt.grapevine@frontier.com
jmourada57@gmail.com

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

Secretary: **Ken Stinger**

kbstinger@frontier.com

- Communicate regularly about club activities and issues
- Monthly newsletter
- Keep an updated list of members, name tags, and other data

Chair of Education / Speakers: **Rob Marr**

mdbmarr@live.com

- Arrange for speakers & educational content for our meetings

Chair for Tastings: **Brian Bowles / Jolie Bowles**

bowles97229@gmail.com
jolie97229@yahoo.com

- Conduct club tastings
- Review and improve club tasting procedures

Chair of Winery / Vineyard Tours: **Andy Mocny.** acmocny@gmail.com

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

Chair of Group Purchases: **Al Glasby / Bob Thoenen**

alglasby@gmail.com
bobthoenen@yahoo.com

- Grape purchases and makes the arrangements to purchase, collect, and distribute
- Supplies – These should be passed to the President or Secretary for distribution.

Chair of Competitions: **Rob Marr**

mdbmarr@live.com

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

Chairs for Social Events: **Mindy Bush / Marilyn Brown**

mindybush@hotmail.com
brown.marilynjean@gmail.com

- Gala /Picnic/parties

Web Design Editor: **Barb Thomson**

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<http://portlandwinemakersclub.com/>