

#### **Monthly Events**

January 15th, 2020 Crush Talk & Planning

January 25th, 2020 Annual Gala

February 19th, 2020 Bordeaux varietals and Bordeaux blends, Blind Tasting

March, 18th, 2020
Speaker Meeting CANCELLED

April 15th, 2020

ZOOM VIRTUAL MEETING

#### May 20th, 2020 ZOOM VIRTUAL MEETING

Speaker: Richard Holmes, Ciel du Cheval vineyard

# June 17th, 2020 ZOOM VIRTUAL MEETING

Speaker: James Osborne, OSU Enologist

#### July

Annual Picnic CANCELLED

August 19th, 2020 All Whites Blind Tasting

**September, 16th, 2020** Other Reds Blind Tasting

October 21st, 2020
Pinot Noir Blind Tasting

November 18th, 2020 Crush Talk

December 16th, 2020 Elections, Planning for Next Year, More Crush Talk

**NOTE:** Tours, Gala & picnic date & times may vary depending on availability.

# **Portland Winemakers Club**

June 2020 "Bill's Meanderings"



Pommard vineyard this morning

Greetings, hope this finds all well. The year seems to be moving along well as we're almost at the halfway point. Bob Hatt has worked hard to organize the Club's fruit order, which has been submitted, vineyards are growing and bloom will be soon. Last year my small amount of Chardonnay started bloom on June 1st and my Pinot on June 6th. Due to I think the cooler spring the Chardonnay is yet to bloom and the Pinot is also delayed.

The club held it's second Zoom meeting to a great success. Thanks to the efforts of Al Glasby and Bob Hatt we were able to have one of the most esteemed Red Mountain AVA vineyard owners, Richard Holmes of Ciel Du Cheval speak to our club. Next month's Zoom meeting will also include a speaker and Rufus Knapp has asked James Osborne, an OSU Professor of Enology, to discuss wine microbiology.

Lastly, it is looking to be a very interesting vintage. Maybe a little later than last year and harvest and crush will be a challenge. It will be intriguing what some of the commercial wineries will label this year's vintage.

Be safe and stay well ... Bill Brown



# **Upcoming events / Save the date**

<u>Club Meeting</u>: The next meeting is scheduled for June, 17<sup>th</sup> at 6:45 pm. We are again going to hold the meeting using the virtual meeting service "Zoom". This will be available on any device that can connect to the internet and has a camera and speaker capability such as a computer, iPad or smart phone etc. Jon Kahrs will again be the moderator. We will provide further sign in information and other details by e-mail prior to the meeting.

**Agenda:** We will go through introductions and pending club business. This will be followed by our speaker, Oregon State Enologist, James Osborne, questions to follow. Any time left over will be used for general winemaking discussion.

Website: http://portlandwinemakersclub.com/

## **May Zoom Meeting Minutes**

Present: 20

- Ken Stinger: Contact Debra at the Aloha Grange. Make sure they understand that PWC will resume their meetings at the Grange as soon as it becomes possible.
- Bill asked Paul Sowray to help, from a medical standpoint, to establish a procedure for for when we re-start our meetings at the Grange.
- The State Fair has been cancelled. There is a question if they will still hold amateur & commercial competitions?
- The Winemaker magazine amateur competition is still on as far as we know.
- The June zoom meeting will feature James Osborn from Oregon State University Enology department as our featured speaker.
- It's probable that our July picnic will be cancelled for this year.
- Ken: Send e-mail to members about sending yearly dues to Barb Thomson.
- Bill introduced our speaker, Richard Holmes, from the Ciel du Cheval vineyard in the Red Mountain AVA.

Richard is a very interesting speaker. He described his family history, and how his father moved the family prior to 1975 to the center of what would become Red Mountain AVA. The soil has been affected by many basalt lava flows as well as repeated Missoula floods. Initially they planted white varietals, several basic reds and a half acre of Charbono.

Several club members are interested in obtaining Nebbiolo from the vineyard if possible. In Italy's Piemonte region, because of it's tannic structure, this grape is aged for 2 years in barrel and up to 4 years in bottle before release and might be blended with a few other local red varieties. Richard said for Nebbiolo Ciel du Cheval uses all neutral barrels and wait 6-8 months before any adjustment. He said grapes from Red mountain are naturally low in nutrients (think 40).

Richard said that for the 2020 season there might be a glut of grapes on the market and they would commit to sell our club from a minimum of 1.0 to 1.5 tons maximum this year only.

• After the meeting the word from Bob Hatt is that we filled our allotment of Nebbiolo grapes from the Ciel du Cheval vineyard at 2075 pounds.



# Nebbiolo is a tough wine to get right — but worth the effort

By Andy Perdue



Paul Beveridge, owner and winemaker for Wilridge Winery in Seattle, has been making nebbiolo for many years. He now grows the noble Italian red grape in his estate...

Not many winemakers in Washington are crazy enough to even try to produce nebbiolo. Recently, though, a few have found success making this maddening, complex variety.

THOSE WHO GROW and make pinot noir know it to be a fickle mistress, a maddening grape that prefers a region on the distant edge of viticultural viability. It barely ripens and only rarely results in a wine that exudes greatness and makes it all worthwhile.

Nebbiolo is for those who find pinot noir a little too easy to work with.

You want maddening? Try growing nebbiolo. Too much hair on your head? Try making nebbiolo. Want a wine with a light red color backed by tannins that would just as soon rip your tongue out? Open a bottle of nebbiolo.

But when it's right, oh my. Nebbiolo can become one of the greatest wines in the world. That's why an intrepid few winemakers follow a quixotic quest for perfection.

Even Timothy Egan's novel "The Winemaker's Daughter" makes Washington nebbiolo a centerpiece of the plot.

Nebbiolo originates in the Piedmont region of northwestern Italy. While such grapes as Barbera and dolcetto are grown there, nebbiolo is the star. And the two most famous wines made from nebbiolo are Barolo and Barbaresco.

In fact, these are among the world's greatest and most expensive wines, rightly referred to as "the wine of kings and the king of wines."

Nebbiolo is a crazy wine. It's light in color, not unlike pinot noir. Its flavors tend toward red fruits that lead to unfathomable complexity. Then the tannins come out of nowhere, beating on your palate like a thousand jackhammers.

Which means nebbiolo will age for an incredible number of years. Thirty? Forty? A half-century? No problem.

Like many European wine grapes, nebbiolo has been brought to the New World. But unlike cabernet sauvignon, merlot, riesling, chardonnay and even pinot noir, nebbiolo is rarely tamed here on the West Coast, not like it is in Piedmont.

Yet those tangled up in their pursuit for nebbiolo Nirvana continue to try — and are beginning to succeed. Small amounts of nebbiolo are grown throughout the Columbia Valley, from the hot bench land of Red Mountain to the cool plateau of Naches Heights.

These heroic efforts intrigue me and require me to taste and collect Northwest nebbiolos. Wineries such as Lost River in Winthrop, Cascade Cliffs in Wishram, Cavatappi and Wilridge in Seattle, Wind Rose Cellars in Sequim, Côtes de Ciel on Red Mountain and Kitzke Cellars in Richland all aspire to craft truly magnificent nebbiolo.

It's an infuriating crusade that I am only happy to join, if only to savor the possibilities.

#### Two to try

**Cavatappi 2012 Maddalena nebbiolo**, Columbia Valley, \$30: This expressive Washington nebbiolo reveals aromas of cherry, cinnamon and sweet pipe tobacco, followed by gorgeous cherry and pomegranate fruit. The elegant fruit is backed by classic sturdy tannins.

**Wilridge Winery 2012 estate nebbiolo**, Naches Heights, \$30: Aromas of cocoa powder, Bing cherry and raspberry give way to flavors of bright red fruit, including Rainier cherry and pomegranate. The tannins are solid without overwhelming the fruit.



# Winemakers Turn to Hybrid Barrels to Express Individual Styles

L.M. Archer

**HOLD ON TO YOUR** barrel bung: That old axiom about Spanish producers "always" using American oak may no longer be true. A few pioneering Spanish winemakers are now using hybrid barrels, those crafted from different wood types, to age their wines. The movement isn't exclusive to Spain, either. A growing number of winemakers worldwide actually prefer hybrid barrels, too.



#### **Trailblazers**

Bodegas LAN in Rioja started its hybrid barrel program nearly a generation ago. "About 20 years ago, we began to try different types of oak," said winemaker María Barúa, who studied differences among oak types at the Government Research Center of La Rioja, part of the Instituto de Ciencias de la Vid y del Vino (ICVV).

mainly American oak. We began to test with the French oak to see the differences, and we considered working with barrels that would combine these two types of oak. This way, the wine could be nourished by the qualities that each type of oak provides, developing a wine with different personality," Barúa said.

Barúa discovered that American oak staves from the Appalachian forests of Ohio and Missouri offer "intense" aromas of coconut and vanilla while French oak heads from different forests in central France (Allier, Troncáis, Jupille and Blois) yield more aromatic complexity, with notes of black pepper, clove and cinnamon, as well as touches of menthol, smoke and cocoa.

Using French oak for the barrel heads also offers more tannins, resulting in greater structure on the palate. "With the combination of

the two oaks, we give more complexity and structure to the wine while maintaining the respect for the fruit," Barúa said. "The use of hybrid casks started with the LAN Crianza, and it has now been extended also to the LAN Reserva."

LAN isn't the only producer with a hybrid barrel program in Rioja. "Back in the 1990s, we were looking to get much better integration of French and American oak into Beronia wines during the aging process," said winemaker Matías Calleja of González-Byass' Beronia Rioja in Ollauri. "I lighted on the idea that if we could combine both oaks in one barrel, we might produce wines with the best of both: the smooth vanilla tannins from the U.S. oak, blended with the spicy, savoriness of the French oak."

Calleja admits some of his coopers thought his idea was "odd," at first. Experimentation, however, revealed that using American oak staves with French oak heads produced wines expressive of the "Beronia style": smooth and sweet with body and reserve.

#### **Tradition**

Other hybrid barrel programs from around the world reflect cultural traditions. Marco Tebaldi of Tebaldi Group in Verona, Italy uses hybrid barrels sourced from cherry and chestnut. It's a concept born from the Sicilian tradition of wine-aging that became the basis for Marsala DOC liqueur. Cherry wood yields strong aromas while chestnut—a typical wood from the Etna volcanic area—proves aromatic, hard and elastic.

The Veronese families Cristoforetti and Delibori of Vigneti Villabella reintroduced cherry wood barrels in 2001 as an homage to local tradition. "Cherry trees are part of the landscape of [the] Verona region," said winemaker Edoardo Lessio, "Therefore, cherry wood was widely used in the past." The slightly aromatic cherry wood enhances the typical fruity flavor of the region's native Corvina grape variety. "Our barrels are partially made of oak [the front and back part], just for a matter of resistance," he said. "The rest is made of cherry wood. The porosity of the cherry wood helps the polymerization of the tannins."

Others cite customers as the impetus behind their hybrid program. In the United States, Duane Wall and Jean Jacques Nadalié, partners and founders of Tonnellerie Française (now Nadalié USA) in Calistoga, Calif., tried hybrids in the

1980s after receiving "multiple requests" from winemakers.

"If we have a winemaker that wants to try something new, and we can produce it within our production process, then we're happy to do it...it's all about listening to them and being open to innovation," said Mark Evich, a regional sales manager for the company.

#### **Typicity and Integration**

Hybrid barrels offer other benefits as well. "We chose these barrels because it allows us to keep the typicity of the grape varieties and keep the quality of our terroir," said Vincent Guillemot of Domaine Pierre Guillemot in Savigny-lès-Beaune, France. Guillemot uses hybrid acacia and oak barrels for short to medium aging times (between 10 and 12 months). He finds the acacia retains freshness and imparts sweetness while oak provides more depth and complexity to the wines.

"I believe we get much better integration in the wines when they have been aged in mixed oak barrels," Calleja said. "We avoid the shock of having to blend two separate wines post-aging in separate woods. It's not a matter of speeding up the process, [but] more about giving the wine an opportunity to meld and blend, in both oak styles, in one barrel."

#### Cost

For Guillemot, hybrids also prove economical. "The cost of a hybrid barrel is 515 HT (\$575 U.S.), against 635 HT (\$709 U.S.) for 100 percent oak. For us, it is very good value for the money." Guillemot orders his new barrels one week before harvest, but instructs his cooper, Tonnellerie Fouailly in Ladoix Serrigny, to toast during winemaking, which allows for adaptions to the wine and its vintage.

At Beronia, costs run a bit higher. "The cost of mixed oak barrels is around 15 percent more than the U.S. barrels in general," said Calleja, who works with a broad range of coopers. "Order times are about the same—we have been using them for so long now that when we replace barrels, the coopers are already prepared."

In Italy, Villabella pays about 30 percent more for its hybrids, which the winery orders from Faßbinderei Klaus Pauscha & Partner GmbH in Austria. Marco Tebaldi also pays more for his Marsalbotti-sourced barrels from Sicily, chiefly due to unique construction issues: different woods bend at different temperatures over fire, therefore varying assembly times. In the end, Tebaldi reports, his hybrid barrel costs about 320 HT (\$357 U.S.), plus shipment costs. Order fulfillment typically takes 30 days, plus shipment time.

For Nadalié, prices are mixed. "Cost depends on the combination of oak choices and regions of the sourced oak," said Evich. A standard 225 L barrel with an American or Hungarian oak body and French oak head runs between \$600 and \$700 while a French oak body with either American oak or Hungarian oak heads ranges from \$800 to \$900. "Since we hand-craft our hybrid barrels at our cooperage in Calistoga, where our American and Eastern European oak barrels are also produced, there is no special lead time for making [hybrids]," Evich said.

LAN orders require careful planning and choreography with a broad range of coopers. "For example," said Barúa, "We are now thinking what barrels we are going to need for next year since, after the malolactic fermentation, the wines will be moved to barrels to carry out their corresponding aging process."

Ultimately, it's not the cost that matters for Barúa and her team. "Hybrid casks are cheaper than the French oak barrels but more expensive than the American oak barrels," she said. "It's mainly because of the cutting system, where you get more staves from the American than from the French. Apart from that, we are not looking at the cost when selecting the oaks. We look at the quality, at the style of wine we want after being aged in this type of barrel."



# **New World**

**TRYING TO WRITE ABOUT** a fast moving, real-time news story, when you know your story won't be printed for a couple of months presents the real possibility of making you look like a fool. Then again, in the face of this world-wide pandemic there has been no shortage of fools, but there has been a shortage of toilet paper.

It is hard for this detective to wear a mask. After all, masks are symbolic of robbers or waiters when they approach your table with the "By-the-Glass" list. Private eyes are supposed to be the good guys. Not only that, but there is a shortage of masks. I don't even know where to buy one, yet everyone else has managed, because they are all wearing them whenever I go out. Instead, I take one of the brightly colored bandanas I got from my zydeco dancing days in New Orleans and fashion it into a triangular face covering. I don't know if it will protect me from the virus, but it makes me look like a psychedelic Jesse James. I am careful not to take my gun with me when I'm wearing the bandana facemask. The butcher might get the wrong

idea and think I am a robber. The virus is bad enough. No one wants to get taken out being clubbed to death by a desperate butcher wielding a turkey leg.

In my past life, Jake Lorenzo has always travelled. I like live music, take every opportunity to sample food prepared by talented chefs, and enjoy walking through a vineyard with the owner listening to him talk about grapes. I love spending time with friends, especially eating food and drinking wine, but I know that this virus is changing things, probably for the rest of my life.

Jakelyn's mother and I have been home since March 11. We have gone shopping twice, been to the bank once and obtained the services of a notary to update our will. We have not gone out to restaurants, movie theaters or sporting events. We have canceled our trip to New York to see Judy Kaye on Broadway in the new play, Diana. We have also cancelled our planned two-week visit to New Orleans in May. We hoped to visit the Fonsecas in Guadalajara in June, but I've stopped looking for flights.

Jakelyn's mom talks to Jakelyn every day. Our daughter is busy sewing masks for healthcare workers near her Woodinville home. Her youngest daughter is helping her. The older daughter continues to work as a veterinary technician caring for pets, and Jakelyn's husband keeps busy with his work at Microsoft, but he does it from home. They are all baking cookies and bread and making pancakes for breakfast, trying to live a normal life, but it is a new world.

Jake Lorenzo still cooks, but it is just for the two of us. Last night I made a turkey pot pie, when I weighed it, it topped out at eight pounds. We ate some hot from the pan with a delicious 2014 Cune Rioja Reserva. A bunch of individual left-over portions now reside in the freezer. The same is true with all three-dozen enchiladas Jakelyn's mom made the other day. We started with a glass of crisp, perfumed 2018 Zolo Torrontes to eat the enchiladas followed by a bottle of 2016 Guerrilla Vino Pinot Noir. Earlier in the week, we had a lovely lamb neck stew that we served over egg noodles with a 2016 Abacela Barrel Select Tempranillo.

Thankfully, this detective has a strong wine cellar. Since we can't have company, the amount of wine we have will surely get us

through this pandemic.

Our days are spent mostly weeding the garden and going for short walks. I listen to music while I read books and I talk with friends on the telephone while I sit on the porch sipping wine. Chuy Palacios occasionally drops off a container of birria or carnitas and we swap it out for some homemade sausages or some of Jakelyn's mom's cinnamon rolls. We wistfully wave at each other and talk across

the driveway, but we maintain distance. Even though we speak on the phone most days, I miss the contact. It's just not the same, but we're living in a new world. Dr. Iggy Calamari is trying hard to discover a remedy for the virus. His approach is unique, and there is no way a simple private eye can explain the complicated science of it, but Iggy wants to attack the corona virus with sound. He plays certain sounds continuously for several days projecting special sound waves that make those little red crowns you see on the virus explode like the heads of Martians in Mars Attacks and rendering them unable to spread. Unfortunately, the only sounds he's found that explode virus coronas are the Disney song, It's a Small World and Pat Boone's rendition of Smoke on the Water. Jake Lorenzo thinks having to listen to either of those songs for extended periods of time might be worse than contracting the virus itself, but I'm just a simple private eye. Not only that, but Calamari says there is a serious side effect. Not only do these songs explode virus coronas, but for some unexplained reason they also render yeast incapable of normal activity. So, there may be a cure to corona virus, but it's like Moses leading us through the Sinai: there would be no bread, only Matzah. Jake Lorenzo could probably live with that. After all, we are talking about the survival of the planet, but what if it also effects wine yeast and we are left with

nothing but grape juice? Imagine a future when we can no longer make wine. If Calamari doesn't correct the side effects of his cure, it could happen. Famous restaurants are already auctioning off their wine cellars. Thankfully, this detective has a strong wine cellar. Since we can't have company, the amount of wine we have will surely get us through this pandemic. In fact, tonight Jakelyn's mother has insisted I grill her a ribeye steak. I'm going to serve it with a 2017 Little Hill Pinot Noir from Rochioli. Why Pinot with beef you ask? Because it is Boeuf Bourguignon, not Boeuf Bordeaux. Some things don't change, even in a new world.





# **Actually, What is Vermouth?**

Becky Sue Epstein May 14, 2020

To celebrate Vermouth Day, I decided to open a couple bottles of La Pivón from Madrid. But maybe I should talk about what Vermouth is, before I get specific about this one. Because I've found that most people don't really know what Vermouth is, even if they have a bottle at home.

It's easy to be confused about Vermouth, which is a fortified local wine enhanced with herbs and spices. Traditionally, both red and white styles of vermouth are made with white wine.

White vermouth can be dry or sweet: the label will tell you. Red vermouth is always a little sweet. The red coloring comes from some of the dozens of herbs and spices in this fortified wine. Because vermouth is so complex, you can simply pour it over ice, and you've got an invigorating aperitif. Or you can use it in a cocktail.

Vermouth was invented in Turin, Italy, in the late 1700s. Contrary to many internet postings, vermouth was not originally a medicinal wine. Instead, it was one of the first entertaining drinks. From the beginning, people have sipped it at the end of the day with a few snacks, using the occasion to have a little pause at the end of the day, before dinner. But rather than dulling the senses, vermouth's spicy flavors and fragrances serve as a stimulant, opening the palate and renewing one's energy for the evening. More cocktails than you can imagine have originated with vermouth: the Manhattan, the Martini and the Negroni are a few of the classics.

By the early 1800s demand for vermouth was skyrocketing. Many of today's top Vermouth companies were founded during the 19<sup>th</sup> century in Italy as well as in France. Each used their local white wine along with both regional and imported herbs, and many of these vermouths were exported around the globe.

Vermouth production also spread to northern Spain, where producers put their own spin on vermouth in terms of wines and herbs. Soon the concept of a daily "vermouth hour" (*la Hora del Vermut*) became embedded in the culture of Barcelona, Tarragona, Reus and other northeastern Spanish cities.

Local bars created their own proprietary blends, and gained local followings – a custom that has been re-energized with vermouth's worldwide explosion in popularity in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

However, Spanish vermouths were rarely exported. Until now, when some of the enterprising sherry producers in Jerez, in the south of Spain have begun making really lovely vermouths with the same wines they use to make sherry – which they do have



the capacity to export, so we may be seeing more of them in the US and UK in the near future.

Madrid is another city where in-house (or in-bar) vermouth production has, once again, become increasingly popular – though these vermouths are rarely found outside the local area. But one particular Madrid vermouth producer has begun to export a line of vermouth called La Pivón, which is a slang term for a very attractive person (sometimes written *la pibón*). And the La Pivón producers recently sent me their *blanco* (white) and *rojo* (red) styles to taste (retailing for around \$27).

Red vermouth was the first style of vermouth ever produced. It is called *rojo* in Spanish, *rouge* in French and *rosso*in Italian, and its color comes from the herbs and spices traditionally macerated and then blended with white wine. La Pivón Rojo has a rose floral aroma and a substantial body, but it is lighter in feel and flavor than many other

PIVON

vermouths. Its lengthy finish carries vermouth's signature bitter tones, still lightly held. Good on its own over ice, with orange or tangerine or lemon. Or in cocktails — though I would minimize any other ingredients in the drink so they don't overwhelm the La Pivón Rojo.

There is a "dry" style of white vermouth, but the traditional "white" vermouth is lightly sweet. It's called *blanco* in Spanish (*blanc* in French and *bianco* in Italian), and is also made with a dozen or more different herbs and spices. Rounded and flavorful, it works well both in cocktails and on its own. This particular white vermouth, La Pivón Blanco, has orange and herbs in the aroma, a solid mid-palate with herbs, florals and cinnamon-spice flavors, and a very light, short finish. I would recommend La Pivón Blanco as an aperitif: poured over ice, enhanced with mandarin orange slices and a touch of sparkling water.



# The 2020 Oregon State Fair is canceled

No Mass Gatherings to be allowed during the Fair dates



Update: Winemaker International Amateur Wine Competition Judging still taking place, but delayed.

# Portland Winemakers Club Leadership Team – 2020

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: Rufus Knapp Rufus.Knapp@fei.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. <a href="mailto:dlopez5011@yahoo.com">dlopez5011@yahoo.com</a>

- 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 & Mindy Bush <a href="mailto:brown.marilynjean@gmail.com">brown.marilynjean@gmail.com</a>
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