



Portland Winemakers Club

March 2025

2025 Monthly Agendas

January 15th

Tips and tricks, Garage sale

January 24th

Gala – Aloha Grange Hall,
5 – 9 pm, \$15 per person

February 19th

Speaker: James Osborne, OSU
Enology Professor

March 19th

Tasting & judging, member
produced "Other Reds" #1
(excluding Bordeaux, Pinot Noir,
Italian reds)

April 16th

Barrel tasting; member
produced, any variety

May 21st

Tasting & judging, member
produced Bordeaux Reds

June 18th

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

July - No meeting

Annual Picnic ? , \$10 ea. fee

August 20th

Speaker

September 17th

Tasting & judging, member
produced "Other Reds" #2
(Italian reds)

October 15th

Tasting & judging, member
produced Pinot Noir

November 19th

Crush Talk

December 17th

Elections, Planning for 2026

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



"Bob's Blurp"

I put the pressed juice in my stainless tank added malo and put the lid in place with an airlock.

Well, I knew malo was done in mid December but I did not rack the wine because I was out of large space and would have had to use 6 carboys. Here is the bad news. It developed an H₂S smell which I am now in the process of treating with ascorbic acid and copper sulfate to try and recover from this mistake.

My understanding is that this is a reductive/lack of oxygen problem. The take away from this experience is rack after malo is complete, get it off those gross lees. Even if it means using 6 carboys!

The wine will get some oxygen and the sulfites that are added will bind with the the oxygen and then it will go through the normal processes. Hopefully avoiding this problem.

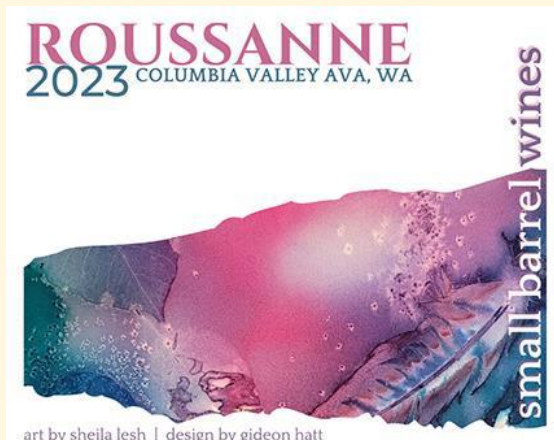
I am looking forward to our first member wines tasting of 2025 and the first one since October .

This starts the tasting/judging season in earnest and am looking forward to tasting wines from the "Other Reds" category.

See you at the meeting.

Regards, Bob

PWC President Bob Hatt was awarded an Honorable Mention in the 2025 WineMaker Magazine wine label contest.



art by sheila lesh | design by gideon hatt

Upcoming events / Save the date

The next PWC meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, March 15th in the basement of the Aloha Grange starting at 7:00 pm. Tasting & judging, member produced “Other Reds” #1 note: Does not include Bordeaux, Pinot Noir or Italian wines.

Note: If time allows after the meeting, Paul Rogers has 5 Tempranillo wines from Rioja he would like everyone to taste.

- Take time to 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 group and enter some posts of your own.

February Meeting Minutes

February’s meeting featured Professor James Osborne, OSU Enology Professor and Director of the Oregon Wine Institute. His talk concerned Microbial Wine Ecology and Spoilage. He discussed the micro-organisms that impact all phases of wine-making from the vineyard to bottle aging. His biography and contact information can be found at <https://owri.oregonstate.edu/users/james-osborne>.

Resources that James mentioned include:

- Wine to Vine Newsletter – signup for the monthly newsletter and copies of past newsletters can be found <https://owri.oregonstate.edu/owri/resources/vine-wine-newsletter>
- OWRI Grape Day will be April 8, 2025 in Corvallis.
- OWRI Website has links to a number of resources. <https://owri.oregonstate.edu/>

In a short business session, the following topics were covered:

- Treasurer: Barb communicated that the wine club will not be partnering with Washington County this year to manage a wine competition at the county fair. The club had requested that non-Washington county residents be allowed to enter (since a number of club members do not live in Washington County).
- Grape Buying: Mark indicated that they are reaching out to Eclectic to understand pricing for Touriga Nacional and Tinta Cao. Any members interested in purchasing these grapes should reach out to Mark / Hank. Additionally, they have secured a source for Zinfandel from Inland Dessert for members that are interested.
- Tasting: March will be tasting of Other Reds (everything except Bordeaux, Pinot Noir and Italian varieties)
- Speakers: Paul discussed an option of viewing a recorded lecture from Professor Meredith from the University of California on the topic of tasting wine and then doing a structured tasting. Discussion was held regarding the option of including a sommelier at the meeting to help guide the tasting.
- Secretary: Bob mentioned that members that wish to update their contact information or if nametags are missing to contact him.
- Activities: Lynne said that a tour and tasting has been scheduled for May 3rd at the Potters Vineyard in Newberg. The presentation will start at 10 am with an opportunity for wine tasting at 11 am. Details and sign-up will be sent via club email.

Competitions: Club members did extremely well in the Newport Wine Competition. Eric Mireiter was runner-up to Best of Show with a red blend. See the complete list of awards at this link <https://www.newportchamber.org/newport-seafood-wine-festival/wine-competitions/> and click on 2025 Amateur Wine Competition Results.

2025 Newport Seafood & Wine Festival

Amateur Competition Results

Once again the members of the Portland Winemakers Club dominated the Newport Seafood Festival Amateur Wine Competition. They took home 7 out of 14 Gold medals, 2 out of nine Silver medals and 3 out of 9 Bronze medals. Overall, 40% of the medals awarded. The winners are listed below.

Eric Mireiter	2022 Red Blend, 83% Cab. Franc; 17% Petit Verdot	Gold
Robert Marr	2020 Nebbiolo	Gold
Robert Marr	2022 Syrah	Gold
Robert Marr	2023 Viognier	Gold
Stephan Fine	2023 Chardonay	Gold
Wayne Moore	2022 Petit Verdot	Gold
Bill Brown	2023 Chardonnay	Gold
Robert Marr	2023 Rose' of Pinot Noir	Silver
Robert Marr	2023 Rose' of Grenache	Silver
Robert Marr	2023 Albarinio	Bronze
Wayne Moore	2022 Cabernet Franc	Bronze
Mark Harshfield	Mulberry	Bronze



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You can also enter online at:

www.winemakercompetition.com

Oregon Senator. Merkley

Introduces a Bill to End USPS ban on shipping alcohol. The "USPS Shipping Equity Act" would allow USPS to ship alcoholic beverages directly from licensed producers and retailers to consumers.



Editor: What about Amateur Winemakers shipping to competitions? Apparently not included.

Target Sugar and Acid Levels for Popular Wine Grape Varieties

Rick Haibach

Deciding when to pick grapes for wine can be challenging. There are many factors involved, but luckily two of the most important are easy to measure; sugar and acid. As the harvest approaches, sugar levels will increase, while acids will decrease to a manageable level. If you are lucky, sugar and acid will be where you want them both at the same time. If you are not so lucky, you can try to get as close as possible while minimizing trade offs. Depending on the variety that you are growing, the optimal sugar and acid levels will vary. This article is intended to provide some target numbers to get you into the ballpark for each popular grape variety.



At Harvest vs At Bottling:

The pH will generally rise .15 to .3 during primary fermentation and malolactic fermentation. To achieve the target balance at the time of bottling, the grapes will need to be picked with a bit more acid to compensate for this loss.

Grapes will be picked with very high sugar levels, but this does not mean they will be sweet. For a dry wine, nearly all of this sugar is converted to alcohol. More sugar means more alcohol. If you know the target alcohol number, divide it by .57 to get an estimate of the percent sugar needed to achieve the target.

Targets vs Reality

The targets provided are a great starting point if you are unfamiliar with the variety. There are great wines that are made outside of these target windows though. The winemaker style and the climate are driving factors that would lead one to make a wine that doesn't meet the norm for that varietal.

Target Values for Red Wines:

Cabernet Sauvignon

Harvest pH 3.3-3.4, 24-26.5° Brix, .6-.7 TA
Final pH 3.6-3.7

Cabernet Franc:

Harvest pH 3.2-3.4, 23-25.5° Brix, .65-.8 TA
Final pH 3.55-3.6

Pinot Noir:

Harvest pH 3.2-3.3, 22-25° Brix, .65-.8 TA
Final pH 3.5-3.55

Grenache:

Harvest pH 3.3-3.45, 25-27° Brix, .6-.75 TA
Final pH 3.65-3.75

Merlot:

Harvest pH 3.2-3.4, 23-25.5° Brix, .65-.8 TA
Final pH 3.55-3.65

Malbec:

Harvest pH 3.2-3.4, 23-26° Brix, .65-.8 TA
Final pH 3.55-3.65

Zinfandel:

Harvest pH 3.3-3.45, 24-28° Brix, .6-.75 TA
Final pH 3.65-3.75

Petite Sirah:

Harvest pH 3.3-3.5, 25-27° Brix, .6-.7 TA
Final pH 3.6-3.75

Tempranillo:

Harvest pH 3.3-3.5, 24-27° Brix, .6-.7 TA
Final pH 3.65-3.8

Sangiovese:

Harvest pH 3.2-3.4, 23-26° Brix, .6-.75 TA
Final pH 3.65-3.8

Normal Range for Dry Red Wine:

Harvest pH 3.2-3.4, 22-27° Brix, .6-.7 TA
Final pH 3.55-3.7

Target Values for White Wines, Native Wines, and Rosé

Riesling:

Harvest pH 2.9-3.2, 20-24° Brix, .7-.9 TA
Final pH 3.1-3.4

Sauvignon Blanc:

Harvest pH 2.9-3.3, 20-24° Brix, .7-.9 TA
Final pH 3.2-3.4

Chardonnay:

Harvest pH 3.0-3.3, 22-25° Brix, .7-.9 TA
Final pH 3.3-3.45

Niagara:

Harvest pH 2.9-3.3, 14-18° Brix, .8-1 TA
Final pH 3.2-3.45

Gewurztraminer:

Harvest pH 2.9-3.2, 20-24° Brix, .7-.9 TA
Final pH 3.2-3.4

Pinot Grigio:

Harvest pH 2.9-3.2, 20-24° Brix, .7-.9 TA
Final pH 3.2-3.4

Concord:

Harvest pH 2.9-3.3, 14-19° Brix, .8-1 TA
Final pH 3.2-3.45

Rosé:

Harvest pH 2.9-3.3, 18-23° Brix, .7-.1 TA
Final pH 3.2-3.5

How to Measure Sugar and Acid in The Field

The easiest way to measure sugar in the field is with a portable refractometer. They work by bending light through the solution and are handy because they only require a drop or two of juice to take a reading. Keep in mind, they are only accurate, if the juice is not already fermenting and does not already contain alcohol. Perfect for when you are popping a few berries with your fingers. Make sure to take several readings and average them before committing to picking.

As for acids, I prefer to focus on getting pH right and using the TA for reference only. To measure the pH in the field you will need a good portable pH meter that is capable of reading to two decimal points. Nice pH meters will include a replaceable probe and three-point calibration. To calibrate, you will need pH buffer solution.

What to do when the Sugar and Acid are Out of Whack

Sometimes things just won't be optimal in the field, especially if you are not in the perfect climate zone. You do have some options to dial things in though. If acids are too high, you can choose a yeast strain that moves the pH needle a little more than usual like Lalvin 71B. Encouraging Malolactic Fermentation by adding an aggressive strain of malolactic bacteria will help bring the pH up. CH35 will handle most situations. Adding water to dilute the must is another method. In more extreme cases, calcium carbonate or potassium bicarbonate can be used to reduce the acid.

If the sugar is too high, water can be added to bring it down. Most commercial wineries will use reverse osmosis to avoid losing flavor concentration. If the sugar is too low, table sugar can be added in a process called chaptalization.

A great solution is blending when you can. If you have a wine that is out of balance, you can bring it around by blending with a wine that compliments it. At the end of the day, you are just trying to make the best possible wine from the grapes you have.

Final Thoughts

Some things to keep in mind when working outside of the box are; Tannin and acid work together on the palate. If your acid is high (low pH), you are going to want to keep your tannin at a lower level or it may be overpowering. Sugar and alcohol go hand in hand. Dry wines do better with a little more alcohol because of the subtle sweetness it provides. Sweeter wines, generally have lower alcohol.



Top-Up Carboys to The Neck

Rick Haibach

Carboys come in many sizes, but all of them have generally the same shape and features, including a small neck. The small neck of the carboy may make them difficult to clean but it has one huge benefit. Small surface area. Six gallons of wine in a more traditional vessel, like a bucket will have a surface area of over 100 square inches, which is exposed any gas that happens to be in your carboy. Another six gallons of wine topped up to the neck of the carboy will have a surface area of less than 1.5 inches. This small surface area dramatically slows the rate of oxygen absorption into the wine.



But my carboy is full of CO₂... what's the big deal if I leave some space?

A lot of home winemakers go by this train of thought, but a lot of home winemakers occasionally make wine bordering on sherry or vinegar. While this is true for a while, don't bank on a pure carbon dioxide blanket for any extended period of aging. Wine produces enough inert carbon dioxide gas to protect it during the active fermentation, and it is highly saturated with CO₂ for a short while after. During the first month or so of a wine's life, the yeast activity creates enough of a reductive environment and

CO₂ that oxidation is not much of a concern. The wine is essentially saturated with CO₂ and contains a good bit of oxygen reactive elements like tannin and sulfides. Racking will degas much of this CO₂, and by about the third month of aging, don't expect to have much of any CO₂ in saturation. Once the wine is mostly degassed, it is extremely important to limit the exposure to oxygen to a minimal and topping up is one of the best strategies to do so.

You would think that by not ever opening a 3/4 full carboy, the heavy CO₂ gas would protect the wine and never escape. This is true to some extent but don't bet on it for more than a month or two. Both the wine and the gas above the wine will expand and contract with small changes in temperature. This allows the airlock to push out CO₂ and pull in air which becomes a problem over time. Though CO₂ is heavier than air, it is also soluble with air. Any air pulled into the carboy will mix with the CO₂, creating a blend which now includes a small amount of oxygen. Over time, this will cause negative oxidation effects in the wine. By topping up to the neck, you limit the total amount of air that can ever enter the carboy and also limit the surface area, making it much slower to dissolve

into the wine. A topped-up wine in bulk can last a very long without much concern of oxidation.

What is the best way to top up to the neck of the carboy?

There are some options. If you are close to the neck, you can use a similar wine from a previous vintage or a store bought wine to top up (just make sure that it is a healthy wine!). Another option is to add marbles to the carboy until the wine rises to the neck, but that is a bit of a clumsy solution. On some wines that often need watered back (Like Concord), you can usually get away with topping up with water or acidulated water. If your wine has more than a half gallon or so of airspace, usually the best bet is to use a combination of different sized containers rather than one un-topped carboy. I like to use various sized carboys (3gal, 5gal, 6gal, 6.5gal), growlers (1/2gal), 1gallon jugs, and even wine bottles on occasion. For instance, if you have 5.75 gallons of wine, you can use a 5-gallon carboy, a growler, and a wine bottle with topper. This gives you some smaller batches to use for future top-ups which can be very handy.

Words of Caution...

Do not top up an actively fermenting wine unless you are looking to create a volcano. Wait to top up until after things have settled down. A little oxygen during fermentation is actually a good thing and will help to keep the fermentation healthy.

When topping up, be sure to leave 1 to 1.5 inches of space between the bottom of the bung and the wine. This allows ensures that any expansion does not push wine up into the airlock.

Be wary of natural cork and silicone bungs. Natural cork can be very permeable to air, depending on the grade. Silicone is one of the most air permeable elastomers, which is especially concerning when the silicone bung has a thin one way breather on top. Solid bungs are really the best but just be careful that they don't blow off under pressure. I personally prefer standard rubber bungs with airlocks and just stay topped up. When I do open the carboy to check on things, I give a little spritz of my homemade sulfite and acid sanitizing solution to scavenge any air that I may have introduced.



Homemade Sanitizer for Wine Equipment

Rick Haibach

When making wine it is extremely important to follow good cleaning and sanitizing practices. General cleaning removes any organic materials from the equipment but it is still important to eliminate any bacteria, yeasts, or other spoilage microbes from your equipment before using it. This is where sanitizing comes in handy. Racking canes, bottles, carboys and other equipment should be always go through a quick sanitizing step before introducing wine to them. Even if they seem otherwise perfectly clean, there could be a few bad bacteria that could later become a problem. Below is an easy recipe to get you on your way with sanitizing.

Easy Wine Sanitizer:

Ingredients

- 1 quart of chlorine free water
- 1 teaspoon of citric acid
- 1/2 teaspoon of potassium metabisulfite

Mix thoroughly. If using extensively, be sure to have proper ventilation because the potassium metabisulfite in high concentrations is a strong respiratory irritant. If you have ever smelled potassium metabisulfite, you will be familiar with the strong burnt match aroma.



If using on stainless steel, be sure to rinse off afterwards because the sulfite and acid combination can create rust and pitting on lower grades like 304. 316 stainless has a much higher resistance to rust.

Variations

The acid in this mix can be substituted for acid blend, or tartaric acid if that is what you have around in your wine cellar. Potassium metabisulfite is much more effective when mixed with an acid to bring the pH of your solution

down. Other home brewed sanitizers call for as much as eight teaspoons of potassium metabisulfite per gallon of water but without any acid, which is also effective but the fumes from a few spritzes will clear out a room. I much prefer the k-meta and acid version.

This recipe works great and can be kept in a spray bottle or jug for easy access when you need it. Because it contains potassium metabisulfite, it can also help prevent oxidation when checking in on your wines. A quick spray on the bung and opening of the carboy can help scavenge any oxygen that you may have introduced by removing the airlock. Another advantage is that it can give your wines a couple ppm of SO₂ boost if used in bottles before bottling. This can help to offset the air introduced in the bottling process.

Reference Library

(updated 4-5-2024)

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.

- Scott Lab 2024 Winemaking Handbook –13.3MB – 144 pages
- Scott Lab 2024 - 2025 Cider Making Handbook – 6.2 MB – 96 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 2.6 MB - 104 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 – 5.1 MB - 124 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



Portland Winemakers Club

Leadership Team – 2025

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** bt.grapevine@frontier.com

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

Secretary: **Bob Thoenen** pwc_secretary@outlook.com

- Communicate regularly about club activities and issues
- Keep an updated list of members' email, name tags, and other club information

Chair of Education / Speakers **Paul Natale** paulnatale6@gmail.com

- Arrange for speakers & educational content for our meetings

Chair for Tastings: **Mike Sicard / Steve Fine** msicard@willamettehvac.com

- Conduct club tastings steve.fine@comcast.net
- Review and improve club tasting procedures.

Chair of Winery / Vineyard Tours: **Lynn Hilbert / Jeramiah Deines**

- Select wineries, vineyards, etc. to visit lynn@lynnhilbert.com
- Arrange tours mycothused@live.com
- Cover logistics (food and money)

Chair of Group Purchases: **Mark Hernandez / Hank Armstrong**

- Grape purchases and make the arrangements to purchase, collect, and distribute mark_hernandez14@comcast.net
- Supplies – These should be passed to HANKARM@gmail.com the President or Secretary for distribution
- 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**

- Gala /Picnic/parties mindybush@hotmail.com
brown.marilynjean@gmail.com

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