



Portland Winemakers Club

May 2019

“Bill’s Meanderings”

Scheduled Meetings

January 15, 2020 Crush
Talk / Planning

January 18, 2020
Annual Gala – At Parrett
Mountain Cellars

February 19, 2020
Bordeaux Tasting

March 20, 2019
Speaker: John Davidson,
Walnut City

April 17, 2019
Barrel / Carboy Sample
Tasting.

May 15, 2019
Speaker: Jeremiah Deines
on cider production

June, 19, 2019
Best practices; member
demonstrations of tips &
tricks

July 13 2019
Annual Picnic

July 27 2019
Tour

August 21, 2019
All Whites Tasting

August 24, 2019
Tour

September 18, 2019
Other Reds Tasting

October 16, 2019
Pinot Noir Tasting

November 2019
Crush Talk

December 4, 2019
Planning, Tours, Speakers,
Events, Elections

Another Year

The 2019 vintage is off to a fast start. Bud break was 10 days earlier in my little vineyard compared to 2018. Does that mean harvest will be that much earlier? Not necessarily so. While it's a good start, with the dry warm weather there has been abundant growth, this is only the beginning. Luckily we dodged a bullet that sometimes happens with an early bud break, April 10th, with a late frost on April 28th. There will be many more milestones to reach before we can get a better idea like bloom, fruit set, and véraison. Only after these benchmarks are reached will we then have an idea of crush time.



Bud break in Bill Brown's vineyard, May 10th, Pinot Noir



Bud break in the “Old Farts Vineyard”, Selah, WA,
April 25th, Malbec

Note: The next regular meeting will be Wednesday, May 15th at 7:00 PM. This meeting will be held at the Aloha Grange #773, Box 6564 Aloha, OR 97007. See the google map below or use your smart phone. Parking is along side of building or in the the mall lots south of the building. We will be down stairs in the kitchen area. We will vote this evening to pick a permanent meeting place from those we have visited.

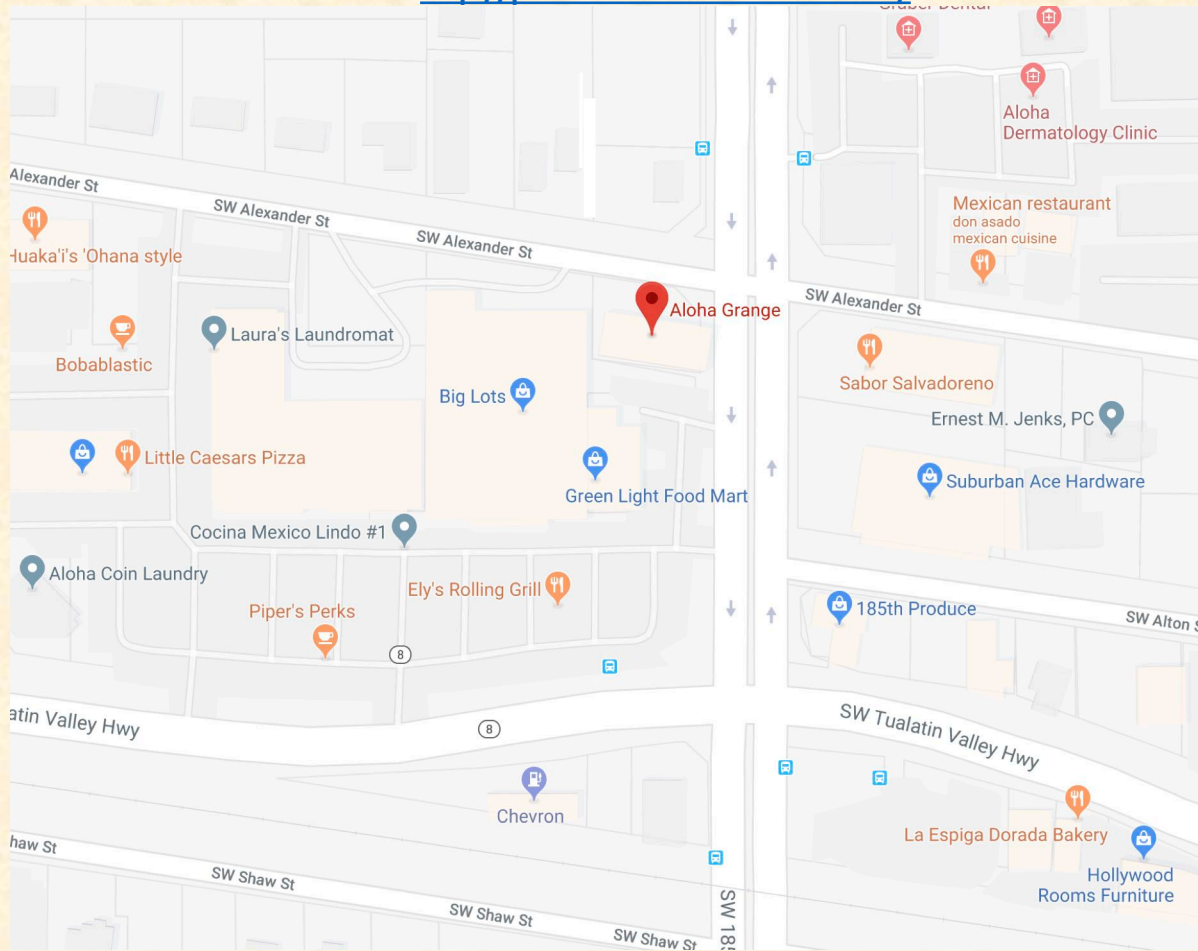
Agenda for May: Member Jeremiah Deines will have presentation on the art of cider making. Bring a bottle of your own cider or wine to share.

If you haven't already, be sure to renew your club membership and sign a new waiver.

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

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

Website: <http://portlandwinemakersclub.com/>



April Meeting Minutes

Present: 29

- One new member present: Tony Hertel.
- Bill explained the club rental situation. We may be at the Aloha Grange in May?
- The speaker for next month will be Jeremiah Deines on cider making. Jon Kahrs will make another attempt to get Rollin Soles of Roco Winery as a speaker.
- Tours: Damon Lopez – We may need a speaker for June. Bill spoke with Anderson Winery who were open for a tour.
- Marilyn said the Bush residence offered to hold our annual picnic either 20th or 27th of July.
- Bob Hatt will be requesting our grape purchases soon.
- The. Remainder of the evening was devoted to tasting & asking questions about member's wines from barrel or carboy. It was surprising how well our wines are progressing in only six months after fermentation. A few whites had already been bottled.

Adding Back stems during fermentation

• Vintage to vintage, winemakers need to assess how the quality of whole clusters determine the need for a boost in tannins derived from adding stems. The differences are often subtle, as winemakers **Gina Hennen** and **David Paige** at Oregon's **Adelsheim Vineyard** learned.

They fermented one tank with 25 percent whole-cluster (75 percent destemmed) and an identical tank with 25 percent stems added back (100 percent destemmed). In each case, the stems or whole clusters were at the bottom of the fermenter. Each had a four-day cold soak. Following that, the tanks were warmed, and the fermentations started (uninoculated). Cap management was the same for each fermenter, with one to two punch-downs per day. The fermentation curves were very similar throughout, with mixed temperatures ranging from 75° F to 80° F during the height of ferment. The tanks each had four days' post-fermentation maceration, and they were pressed on the same day, for a total of 14 days on the skins.

The goal for this experiment was to explore the difference in perceived tannin between the two treatments.

Conclusion: The winemakers perceived differences between the two treatments, finding the stem addition to at least mimic the tannin impact of a whole-cluster fermentation. Going forward, they will consider adding stems back to a fermenter when looking to add a whole-cluster effect to a given lot.



Since we are going to hear all about Cider at our next meeting here are 11 Very Important Things to Know About Cider! Editor



Forget the juice; we're talking about the hard stuff. Here are 11 facts everyone should know about good old-fashioned apple cider.

1. Back in the 14th century, it is believed that kids were baptized in cider since it was often more sanitary than water.
2. An apple beverage a day? President John Adams drank a tankard of cider every morning because he believed it promoted good health. And it must have—Adams lived to 90, making him our third longest living president, behind Ford & Reagan.

3. Cider was so important to early Americans that one in every ten farms in New England operated its own cider mill by the time of the American Revolution.

4. But why didn't the drink stay popular over the years? The Temperance movement killed the business. Fired up by speeches from ministers and politicians, many farmers destroyed their "demon orchards," sparing only the trees used for sweet juice. During the years when Prohibition was enacted, American cider production in the fell by 76%.

5. The best cider apples seem to have the best names: Hangdown, Chibble's Wilding, Kentish Fill-Basket, and Glory of the West.

6. If you want to make great cider, be sure to practice your *wassailing*. The English custom, used to appease the deities of the apple trees, was believed necessary to ensure healthy crops. Here's how to honor the spirits: Place a jug of cider or piece of cider-soaked toast on the biggest apple tree. Then sing a chant or song. Finish by banging on kettles and blowing horns to scare away any evil spirits lingering in your orchard. It's that easy.

7. Also, you'll need lots of apples. It takes about 36 pieces of fruit to make one gallon of the good stuff.

8. When Caesar and his invading soldiers stormed through England in 55 BCE, they found Celts sipping a brew made from crab apples. The troops were quick to pick up the habit and take it back to Rome.

9. Other fruits can be used to make cider-like drinks, too. *Perry* comes from fermented pear juice, *cyser* is cider fermented with honey, and *plum jerkum*—made from plums—supposedly has some strange intoxicating effects. According to legend, it leaves "the head clear, while paralyzing the legs."

10. Looking for the proper way to care for a dead genius' brain? For more than 40 years, Einstein's cranium was stored in a box labeled Costa Cider. Actually, it was stored in two mason jars in the Cider box, under pathologist Thomas Harvey's sink.

11. Of course, if this moderately alcoholic beverage doesn't do it for you, it's possible to make hard ciders even harder. Apple brandy and applejack are distilled ciders, and applejack, in particular, is really potent. It's nicknamed the "essence of lockjaw."

Managing Oxygen and Sulfur in Red Wines Pre- and Post-ML

Kevin Sass, winemaker with **Halter Ranch** in Paso Robles, presented data from trials on SO₂ treatments on red wines that had completed malolactic fermentation (ML) and the effects on phenolics. The winery began working with the phenolic analytical company **WineXRay** in 2012 to get a better handle on phenolic composition and began running trials on Cabernet-based wines that had completed ML and went into barrels. Sulfur was added to individual barrels for comparison at three different levels: 0 PPM, 10 PPM and 30 PPM. The trial barrels were topped weekly to prevent head space with wine with no sulfur added. Analysis was run weekly for a 90-day period, and a final analysis was run after 90 days. Sass said the level of phenolic binding generally decreased significantly after 90 days.

A concern of the winery, and the main reason to add SO₂, is to prevent an increase in volatile acidity (VA) levels. Based on data from the final analysis, the wine with 0 PPM of SO₂ addition showed the highest levels of color, bound color and tannins, without a significant increase in VA. Sass said, "With no addition, we had an 11 percent increase in binding with a minimal increase in VA."

Sass provided a quote from the book by winemaker and scientist **Clark Smith** in *Postmodern Winemaking: Rethinking The Modern Science Of An Ancient Craft*, that he believes helps explain what is happening: "Because acetic acid bacteria are not inhibited by the pigment-bound SO₂, phenolic vigor is all that protects young red wine." Sass also explained that when red grapes are picked at adequate phenolic ripeness, they will have more tannic and phenolic structure to help protect them during winemaking, even though they have higher pH. Having quality vineyard sites, and the trend toward picking grapes at higher ripeness levels in recent decades have contributed to these changes and called into question the need for traditional sulfur addition practices in winemaking.

"The days of having a 3.30 or 3.40 pH in Cabernet Sauvignon are basically gone," Sass said, who noted that 3.7 pH is now fairly common in red wines, and Syrah is sometimes above 4.0 pH. He observed, "In our trial, we didn't have a big increase in VA because we had good 'phenolic vigor' in the grapes and wine. This begs the question, why are we adding SO₂ if it doesn't change the pH and if it's not really helping us? Is it really helping you or is it just making you feel better?"

Sass said he's also seen cases where sulfur was aggressively added to wine after ML, and there were still problems with VA. Thus, having and understanding "phenolic vigor" is important for good winemaking practices. Noting that the wine industry faces possible ingredient labeling requirements in the future that could include sulfur content, he suggested winemakers start decreasing sulfur use and find alternatives. He suggested the following needs for data and research from professional and academic peers:

- At what dissolved oxygen (DO) levels do spoilage yeasts and bacteria thrive and metabolize?
- Is there a tool (in barrel) we can use to test this?
- Is there a tool we can use to sparge out DO while in barrel?
- How much DO are we picking up through barrel aging?

He summarized, "There is a lot of movement toward getting away from sulfur and SO₂, and I think the technology is out there to help us do this."



Exploring Oregon's Other White Wines

Pinot Gris is still Oregon's signature white wine, but producers are creating unique bottlings from Chardonnay, Riesling and Pinot Blanc.

BY PAUL GREGUTT

For decades Oregon's white wine reputation depended almost exclusively on Pinot Gris. Good as those wines have become, vintners have made stunning progress in both the north and south of the state with a variety of white grapes.

Chardonnay and Riesling, age worthy and vivid with juicy acidity, abound in the Willamette Valley. Examples like the High Wire Chardonnay from Bethel Heights Vineyard offer textural wines that are a testament to the

power of old vines in the area. Some producers are looking to the past for inspiration, like with Keeler's Terracotta Amphorae Riesling, which uses clay vessels during fermentation to offer a new take on the variety. These stalwarts are joined with sappy, mineral-driven, food-ready wines such as Auxerrois from Björnson Vineyard and Carlton Cellars, while Treos explores an unusual style of Dry Muscat.

Brooks goes a step further with its 2017 Amycas, an aromatic blend of Riesling, Pinot Blanc, Muscat, Gewürztraminer and Pinot Gris, which, remarkably, amplifies the strengths of them all.



In Southern Oregon, Albariño, Viognier and white Rhône-style blends are catching on, notably in the Applegate Valley American Viticultural Area (AVA), where Troon is also working wonders with Vermentino. From the Elkton and Rogue Valley AVAs come even more unusual bottlings, such as a lush, ripe Sauvignon Blanc from River's Edge or a floral yet dry Gewürztraminer from Foris.

Amid all this dazzling exploration, Pinot Blanc may prove to be Oregon's next best white wine. The grape isn't new in Oregon, but its reputation was tarnished from the start due to a mislabeling of nursery vines back in the 1980s which mistook Melon de Bourgogne for Pinot Blanc. Once that had been untangled, genuine Pinot Blancs were relegated to being the "poor man's Chardonnay," kept in check by low price points which in turn dampened experimentation.

Jason Lett, winemaker at The Eyrie Vineyards, was an early proponent of Pinot Blanc, but kept it dry and very crisp in style. It wasn't until just a few years ago that winemakers such as Lett and Ben Casteel, co-owner, director and winemaker at Bethel Heights Vineyard, began to emphasize the floral aromatics as well as the underlying minerality. Meanwhile, Ken Wright Cellars tried barrel fermenting and extended lees contact to add texture and spice.

Adam Campbell, owner and winemaker at Elk Cove Vineyards, believes he can gain complexity and concentration by planting on steep slopes and shallow soils, naturally cutting down on yields. "We also pick the grapes when they are just beyond simple citrus flavors yet before they get to the tropical realm," he says. "Stone fruit flavors are the key to what I am after."

Bill Sweat, founder of Winderlea Vineyard and Winery, seeks complexity by fermenting in clay amphora, neutral oak and stainless steel, then blending the wines together into a single cuvée. "We like the mouthfeel from the amphora (viscous with some salinity) and oak (a little richness) with the structure and freshness of the stainless steel" he explains.

At Harper Voit, winemaker and proprietor Drew Voit is producing three different versions of Pinot Blanc, which he describes as "a re-approachment to the grape through the lenses of Burgundy and Champagne. I've got a point to make with Pinot Blanc," he says. "I think it's a misunderstood and forgotten noble grape variety."

Along with a sparkling version, Voit produces Surlie, which is barrel fermented and spends nine months on the lees, and Élevage, which spends 21 months on the lees and goes through full malolactic. Bethel Heights has one of the valley's oldest plantings of Pinot Blanc, dating back to 1992. With the release of the 2014 vintages, Ben Casteel introduced his Élevage bottling, which exhibits lots of barrel toast, honey and butterscotch richness.

These experiments and many more are creating a bright future for Oregon's white wines.



Reconfiguring the Palate & Properly Adding Acid to a Barrel

Written by Alison Crowe

Q

I've been what you might call a "wine consumer" for many years. My husband and I like to go to wine tastings, we usually order wine when we go out to eat, and we have a pretty nice collection at home. What we have never ventured into is the world of making our own. My friends (who are trying to get me into the hobby) tell me that tasting new and young wines is very, very different than the wine-enjoying experience I'm used to as a seasoned "consumer". I'm worried I won't know what to look for as the wine is fermenting, going through malolactic fermentation as well as during aging in the barrel. Can you give me advice on how to taste new and young, unfinished wines with an eye to what it will eventually become — what should I focus on? Fruit, structure, tannins, acid?

Annette Parillo

Bellingham, Washington

A

I apologize in advance for the lengthy response but this is a fantastic question and I really wanted to flesh out my answer for you and readers that are following along. You are absolutely right to realize that tasting new and developing wines is vastly different than tasting bottled wines. Especially, as wines gain bottle age, they change even further, developing secondary and tertiary "bottle bouquet" aromas. Before bottling is a whole different world. In general, over time, new wines, both red and white, increase in clarity as sediment falls out and decrease in acidity. Harshness also decreases as malolactic fermentation (MLF) occurs and dissolved carbon dioxide evolves out of the wine. Wines become rounder and more "together" in the mouth as tannins condense and fall to the bottom of the aging vessel. Aromas develop from very primary fruity and funky during fermentation to more mature and seamless aromas one associates with finished, bottled wine. The finish of a new wine tends to be shorter and the finish will lengthen as the wine ages.

Unfortunately, the only way to be able to consistently predict what a new wine will "grow up to be" is through experience. Happily, it's a fun journey and making your own wine, tasting your friends' projects, and doing barrel tastings at wineries, then tasting the wines when they are in bottle are all great ways to gain some valuable expertise. Here are some more details about what to look for and when at various stages of a wine's life, and what those attributes can tell you about the developing wine.

Color

Fermenting wine: Newly-crushed wines have the highest amount of turbidity and sediment they ever will, due to all those bits of grape pulp and skin floating around and as such, the true color of the wine-to-be is quite masked. White wine fermentations can look brown, brownish green or even yellow-green, depending on variety. Rosé wines can look muddy-pink. Red fermentations (always with skins included) transform from a chunky pinky-green soup with brown seeds mixed in to a (usually) darker blue-red spectrum must over the course of a couple of days. Highly-colored varieties like Petite Sirah turn dark purple/blue/black within a few days of the start of fermentation whereas naturally lower-color varieties like Pinot Noir can take up to five or seven days to start looking like a red wine. Due to the turbidity and sediment, this is not a very pretty stage for any wine and it's difficult to judge what the pressed-off and settled color will be. Again, experience working with the same grapes over many harvest seasons will help.

1-6 month old wine: Once a wine is dry and reds have been pressed off and settled, it's easier to get a look at the color. Very young whites will still be very turbid so samples need to be centrifuged in order to really get a good look.

6-12 month old wine: Color is very stable and most reds exhibit the kind of color they'll carry through the next five years or so. Well-settled whites will exhibit the color they'll have for about the next two to three years; white wines oxidize and become more brown-hued after about five years in the bottle. White wines on a lees-stirring program (see page 63) will still be turbid, making color difficult to judge.

Clarity

Fermenting wine: As mentioned earlier, fermentation is the most turbid a wine will be. Grape skin, pulp particles, and yeast cells all contribute to a juice or must that is impossible to see through. Don't worry, time and gravity will take care of most if not all of this turbidity. Experienced tasters and winemakers will know but general consumers will often be very turned off by cloudy wine.

1-6 month old wine: The wine will still be very turbid, especially if ML fermentation happens and the weather is cold; suspended bacterial cells will continue to make the wine appear cloudy or hazy.

6-12 month old wine: Wine should be “falling bright” as gravity causes particulate matter to fall to the bottom of the barrel. It’s still unlikely the wine will be completely clear at this point, especially if lees are kicked up due to purposeful lees stirring or even during routine monthly sulfur dioxide additions and topping.

Aroma

Fermenting wine: This is a fun stage to experience as many ranges of smells from fabulous (think loads of fruit boiling out of the fermenter) to funky (think of a microbial house party with wildly reproducing yeast and bacteria). The finished wine smells almost nothing like a wine during active fermentation.

1-6 month old wine: Experienced tasters and winemakers know what to look for but general consumers are often very put off by wines at this stage. Malolactic fermentation can confuse and obfuscate positive and typical finished wine aromas. Compounds like hydrogen sulfide (rotten eggs) or other sulfur-containing compounds can contribute to a reduced (slight hydrogen sulfide) aroma during the early stages of a wine’s life. Carbon dioxide gas from secondary fermentation or retained in the liquid phase can make one’s nose “burn” when CO₂ gas is released upon swirling the glass, exacerbating the potential unpleasant sensation of smelling really young wine. This is a very awkward stage for most wines.

6-12 month old wine: The wine will only now begin to take on more of the character of finished product. The longer malolactic fermentation goes on, the younger and more unfinished the wine will seem. This is because the dissolved carbon dioxide and reproducing bacteria will keep it in a fermentative and unsettled state. In later months, the wine is “growing up” and turning slowly into what it will be in the bottle. Aromas go from fresh and very fruity to more complex and integrated, especially if oak extraction is involved. In barrel-aged red wines, look for vanilla, clove, leather, and black tea notes beginning to make an appearance. Aromas may still seem sharp and fruit characteristics may be more raspberry and strawberry rather than black currant and blackberry.

Taste, Mouthfeel and Finish

Fermenting wine: As in the Aroma category, this is a really adventurous stage to taste! You’ll get sweet, sour, and everything in between as the yeast turn the grape sugar into ethanol and carbon dioxide. As you might expect, wine during primary and secondary (malolactic fermentation) can carry a large amount of dissolved carbon dioxide gas, such that it will feel harsh on the palate and not smooth at all. Be sure to spit at this stage because fermenting wine, if swallowed in quantity, can really wreak havoc with the digestive system. Wine isn’t poisonous at this stage of course, just very acidic and full of lots of microbes that may or may not sit well with your tummy.

1-6 month old wine: If the wine is going through MLF, it will still taste sour at this stage, though now the sugar is most likely all gone and alcohol has come into the equation. When tasting at this stage you really have to use your imagination, to mentally remove the spritziness on your tongue and the sharpness of malic acid that still may be there. The wine will taste disjointed, as if the parts have not really begun to hang together yet. It takes a lot of mental gymnastics to try to get a sense of what a wine will become at this time. At six months, the barrel, especially if new wood, will have begun to make its presence felt.

6-12 month old wine: By now the elements that will make the final wine have begun to really come together. Because so much has “settled down” (carbon dioxide levels have subsided, malolactic fermentation is over, etc.) it’s easier to pick out the elements that will stay with the wine as it ages further as it’s bottled and bottle-aged. The wine will feel smoother in the mouth. The finish will start to lengthen, though it’s nowhere near what it will be at 18 months to two years.

At these early stages in a wine’s life there still may be a lack of richness, satisfaction, and the pleasure you associate with appreciating a wine that’s been in the bottle for five years. These consumer traits will sometimes seem far to find. Don’t lose heart! With every wine you take care of from start to finish, you’re laying the foundation of experience that is critical to being able to assess a wine from its inception to its final form. Be sure to take as detailed notes as you can along the way. It’s a journey, not a destination, for both you and your treasured wine.



Carbonation and the pain of Champagne

Sparkling wine – or beer, or soda, or seltzer* – triggers an unmistakable set of sensations, addictive or repellent depending on your predilection. But is that sensation a taste? A physical sensation? Something else? Probably some combination of the above, though figuring all of that out is trickier than you might imagine.

First, the bubbles in sparkling wine are carbon dioxide, either the product of yeast fermenting a last little bit of sugar in the bottle or mechanical carbonation with a tank of pressurized gas. Carbon dioxide plus water makes carbonic acid: $\text{CO}_2 + \text{H}_2\text{O} \rightleftharpoons \text{H}_2\text{CO}_3$. Acids, by definition, are molecules with hydrogens which can and do pop on and off when dissolved in water. If the hydrogens tend to disassociate themselves easily, you're dealing with a strong acid (e.g. hydrochloric or sulfuric) best used for cleaning glassware or dissolving an inconvenient corpse. If only a small number of hydrogens hop off at any one time, you're dealing with a weak acid. Carbonic acid, needless to say, is a weak acid, or else seltzer water would be an industrial solvent rather than a cocktail mixer. Chemists were associating the perception of sourness with those free hydrogen ions back at the turn of the twentieth century, but they're not sufficient to explain sourness alone, and twenty-first century chemists are still trying to work out the remainder. The ongoing search for a complete explanation of sourness is one of those excellent examples of how very simple daily phenomena can end up being unexpectedly complicated when scientists try to explain them in terms of chemistry and biology.

Second, the bubbles in sparkling wine are mechanical stimulation. If you stick your hand into a glass of sparkling water, you'll feel the "prickle" of bubbles bursting along your skin, and your tongue and the interior of your mouth receives the same sensation. That's not surprising.

A third component of how we sense carbonation *is* surprising, or at least it's surprising to me as a carbonated beverage-lover. Carbonation appears to trigger nociceptors, the specialized receptors we have for sensing pain. Carbonation is, physiologically speaking, irritating.

Maybe it's *not* surprising to find that Champagne belongs on the list of painful foods along with super-spicy cuisines and overly hot tea. Or, rather, a goodly number of people seem to find Champagne painful for numerous different reasons. Drinking Champagne and enjoying it is a social skill, but everyone seems to know at least someone who really doesn't like the stuff. Some are folks who don't enjoy wine or alcoholic beverages at all, and some are surely like me in liking sparkling wine but having mainstream Champagne sullied by thoughts of what other, more interesting wines could have been purchased for the same \$40. Perhaps some of them are also troubled by unusually high sensitivity to the negative sides of carbonation. A recent study of how consumers perceive small differences in degree of sparkling wine carbonation attests that individual tasters have different thresholds for feeling – and maybe feeling discomfort from – carbonation. Occam's razor still says that "Champagne"**-haters are more likely suffering from a combination of low-quality bubbly, ill-advisedly sweet food pairings, and excess consumption. But heck; the simplest answer isn't always the correct one. Just look at the sensation of sparkling.

As for me, I'm strongly in the pro-carbonation camp. I also eat 100% unsweetened chocolate straight-up, take strong tea and coffee black, and eat bitter greens for breakfast all of which, I'm told, are rather painful suggestions to many people. Perhaps these statements are not unrelated?



What is Modern vs. Historic Winemaking Techniques?

OLD-WORLD (Historic):

- Allows Malolactic fermentation to occur spontaneously, rather than conducting it yourself, allowing the wines to evolve more slowly that favors aromatic complexity and texture over giant fruit and acidity over softness. The wines are getting racked when most other producers are bottling.
- Expresses Terroir (pronounced tehr/wahr), a reflection of the place where the wine is grown. Or...it tastes like the dirt it's grown in.
- Employs the concept of the Vigneron, where the winemakers who tend their own vines live next door to their vineyards. Or...as the old French song says, the best fertilizer in the vineyard is the footprint of the owner.

- Some of these Old-World producers may also produce their wines Bio-Dynamically.
- Traditional (Historic) European red wines have dusty, dry tannins, a subtle use of oak and lower levels of alcohol and acids. Historic techniques tend to be true to both the vintage and their geographical origin, are austere and elegant in character and lead with their soil character, not their fruit character.

Many of these 'Old-World' wineries will also do blends, which keeps them mellow, approachable and food-oriented. Some 'Old-World' wineries include J. Christopher, Lemelson, Lachini & Domaine Pouillon in the Columbia R Gorge.

Contrast this wine style to New World wines that emphasize the fruity character of the grape, possess higher alcohol & place more emphasis on newer (stronger) oak. Many believe that a lot of the time the modern techniques are masking terroir, and geographical character.

Many Oregon wineries employ modern techniques as opposed to the French style historic techniques.

NEW-WORLD:

- Modern wines are deeply colored, fruit-driven, and extract-rich. They become deeper colored through extraction.
- New oak is used because it often results in cleaner, more textured wines with suppler tannins. Wine producers tend to go through a cycle, first of all underutilizing new oak, then suddenly overdoing it, and finally settling down and getting it right.
- And perhaps most important, adding Malolactic fermentation in the barrel, whose effect you would taste much more early on than later on. Malolactic fermentation (MLF) may sound mysterious, but it's a technique every modern winemaker should master. It's quite different from "regular" fermentation, in which yeast convert sugar into alcohol. MLF involves bacteria instead of yeast, and it usually begins when primary fermentation is complete, around 0-2 Brix.

Malolactic fermentation is conducted by Leuconostoc bacteria cultures. These bacteria convert malic acid, which is naturally present in fruits like grapes and apples, to lactic acid. This reduces the acidity of the must and improves the flavor of your wine. After MLF, the wine's flavor profile is more smooth, round and complex. Malolactic fermentation can occur spontaneously, as in historic winemaking, or you can conduct it yourself.

- New World wineries tend to separate the vineyard and winery where you have winery people and you have vineyard people and you have very few wineries where the the people who make the wine are also the people out in the vineyard.

More...

Just as modern gem cutters use lasers to perfect time-honored diamond cuts and unleash the brilliance of a gem, wineries thoughtfully introduce new winemaking tools to remove imperfections and reveal the varietals true beauty and character.

In such Old World trades, tools are critical, yet secondary to the artistry, skill, judgment and experience of the craftsman. The winemakers intimacy with each of the barrels he procures from various parts of French oak forests, for instance, allows him to thoughtfully match vessel to vineyard, revealing the sites best fruit profile. Drawing on intuition and scientific sensibilities, they quantify myriad factors □ soil variations, clone selections, weather, barrel personalities □ and wields them into quality wine, year after year.

Across all of the tiers, from premium barrel and estate selections to the value-priced wines, winemaking remains focused on bringing out the best characteristics of the vineyard.

Quality Oregon wine begins with quality fruit, which is why the winemaker's actively farm vineyards throughout the Willamette Valley and Oregon to achieve consistency in style. However, it is their embracement of new technologies that has allowed them to transform thin-skinned Pinot grapes into memorable, critically acclaimed wines that are also affordable.

There are pros and cons to each of the 2 techniques. Overall, wines are becoming easier to enjoy, and perhaps that just reflects a phenomenon. I suppose the ideal is a combination of traditional and modern, and many producers manage that: they are able to make more attractive wines than their parents did without losing their own innate character. Many argue that current tastes are beginning to value a different sort of wine more highly. These other regions that are making wines that lead with their fruit as opposed to their soil character might be prized more highly among many

consumers than their French counterparts. Also, there are markets that have firmly rejected traditional French styles. They want the fruitiness, perhaps a bit more simplicity and more obvious character. In the old days, many got onto wines they knew they were supposed to admire, they were always French. Now they might just as well be Californian or Oregonian for Americans.



The Minerality Debate

Wine professionals are lately debating the word minerality, commonly used to describe a particular flavor in wine. Is it a real flavor derived from the mineral content of the soil? The science says “no,” at least the existing science. Is it even a real word? The dictionary says “not.” So is it just another obtuse descriptor that attempts to isolate a flavor, which may or may not exist? Who even knows how minerals taste?

One thing is clear. We all recognize not only the word but also the flavor it describes when we taste it in a glass. Interestingly, a recent lab analysis of wines that tasters described as exhibiting minerality shared particular chemical compounds. But the source of these compounds is a mystery. At least we know that minerality is an objectively real flavor although it may have nothing to do with the actual minerals that the vine could be leaching from the soil.

Similarly, the aroma of freshly cut grass associated with some Sauvignon Blanc is unmistakable but has nothing to do with grass. Instead, the flavor is the result of trellising the vines in a certain way that produces more pyrazines, which then render that grassy flavor.

In my experience, minerality is also associated with acidity. The higher the acid content in a wine, the more likely that we will taste something that we can call minerality, but not always. Many crisp whites tend toward fruit, flowers, or almonds instead of the stony sensation that we associate with minerality. Reds can obviously exhibit stony mineral flavors, too.

While it may be a good idea that wine professionals talk about wine in a more accessible and precise way, they need not argue about whether minerality is a legitimate descriptor if it clearly describes a flavor that we recognize even though minerals are probably not the source of that flavor.

The term is also important because it may have a negative connotation for certain people, who would prefer to avoid such wines in favor of those with fruity flavors.

If the discussion seems ridiculous, you may be right. The primarily important aspects of wine are always going to be flavor, acid, and tannin texture, and how they are balanced together in a given wine. All three are worthy of focused attention if we want to understand wine and determine what we like, which can then guide our purchases more efficiently.



Portland Winemakers Club

Leadership Team – 2019

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

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

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

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

Secretary: **Ken Stinger** kbstinger@frontier.com

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

Chair of Education/Speakers: **Barb Stinger** kbstinger@frontier.com

- Arrange for speakers & educational content for our meetings

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

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

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

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

Chair of Group Purchases: **Bob Hatt** bobhatt2000@yahoo.com

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

Chair of Competitions: **Paul Boyechko** labmanpaul@hotmail.com

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

Chairs for Social Events : **Marilyn Brown & Mindy Bush** brown.marilynjean@gmail.com

* Gala / Picnic / parties

mindybush@hotmail.com

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