

**Portland  
Winemakers  
Club**



# Portland Winemakers Club

May 2021

“Bill’s Meanderings”

## Monthly Events

**January, 2021**

Annual Gala **CANCELLED**

**January 20th, 2021**

Speaker, Mike Smolak,  
**ZOOM VIRTUAL MEETING**

**February 17th, 2021**

Speaker, Syncline, James  
Mantone, Rhone varietals  
**ZOOM VIRTUAL MEETING**

**March, 17<sup>th</sup>**

Speaker: Tyson Crowley from  
Crowley Winery, Pinot &  
Chardonnay  
**ZOOM VIRTUAL MEETING**

**April 21st, 2021**

Speaker: Bobby Rowett  
winemaker for Mellen Meyer  
Sparkling Winery  
**ZOOM VIRTUAL MEETING**

**May 19th, 2021**

To be determined  
**ZOOM VIRTUAL MEETING**

**June 16th, 2021**

To be determined  
**ZOOM VIRTUAL MEETING**

**July, Annual Picnic**

**CANCELLED?**

**July 21st, 2021**

To be determined

**August 18th, 2021**

To be determined

**September, 15th, 2021**

To be determined

**October 20th, 2021**

To be determined

**November 17th, 2021**

Crush Talk

**December 15th, 2021**

Elections, Planning for Next Year,  
More Crush Talk



**Greetings Everyone,**

This is my favorite time of year. Nearly everything is in bloom or has bloomed making it a colorful landscape. The vines have shoots about 3” to 4” giving the rows a neat green fringe that makes it exciting to see another vintage starting.

There’s been a lot of questions about when will the Club start meeting in person again. According to OHA statistics only 46% of Oregonians have been vaccinated with one shot and 32% fully vaccinated. I, personally, am not comfortable sitting in a room with 20 to 25 others half of which may not be vaccinated. I don’t think it would be a responsible decision to put others in the position of taking that risk. We have had some discussion of possibly having an outdoor meeting in late summer or fall but until we start seeing improvements in the number of daily cases it is hard to predict when that may happen. It’s a moving target and is something we would all like to see happen.

So, as I said that’s my position and I’m sure others may feel different so email or message me for any suggestions but as my role in this club I believe it is my responsibility for the club’s agenda. Until then, let's enjoy the coming warm days and hope for improvement of the present conditions.

**Club President  
Bill Brown**

**Drink Responsibly.  
Drive Responsibly.**



## Upcoming events / Save the date

**Club Meeting:** The next meeting is scheduled for May 19th. "Zoom" sign in will be at 6:45 pm. 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: To be determined**

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

## **Barb Thomson says, "The New GoVino wine glasses are here!!"**

Dishwasher-safe 16 oz. GoVino wine glass description:

All GoVino glasses are made with US-sourced polymers, which reflect a wine's color and project its aromatics much like fine crystal, Ergonomic thumb-notch and contoured base. Stemless, top rack dishwasher safe (turn off heated dry cycle), Shatterproof. Reusable, BPA-free, Made in USA, Plus our official PWC logo in white ink!

Price: \$6 each, minimum 2 glasses per order. Shipping costs will be free of charge for club members. Shipping via USPS. Glasses will be shipped when payment is received.

To order: Send me an email with this info:

Number of glasses to purchase, Total cost, Shipping name and address, Whether you are paying by check or PayPal (see below). My email is [bt.grapevine@frontier.com](mailto:bt.grapevine@frontier.com)

Payment options:

Pay by check via snail mail:

Make check payable to Portland Winemakers Club

Send check to: Barb Thomson - PWC; 14340 SW Lisa Lane; Beaverton, OR 97005

Pay by PayPal: Use the PayPal Personal app to send money to my email address, which is: [bt.grapevine@frontier.com](mailto:bt.grapevine@frontier.com)

Let me know if you have any questions. Thanks and Cheers! Barb Thomson - PWC Treasurer



Greetings from "Midnight in the Garden of Good and Evil"



Notice: the Buda's strategically placed "Big Toe"

**The legendary French wine company Champagne Bollinger announced that it has purchased one of Oregon's pioneering wineries, Ponzi Vineyards, which includes the 80-acre Aurora vineyard, planted in 1991.**





## *Debating Diam*

Andrew Jafford

Prior to a visit to the Diam production facility at Céret in Roussillon (one of two factories, the other being in Spain's Extremadura), I polled my Facebook contacts on the topic. The results were bewilderingly diverse.

Some of those using Diam were completely happy with the closure, including most of my European and North American contacts, though Champagne-producer and consultant Jean-Michel Jacquinet said that Diam corks (branded Mytik for sparkling wine closures) were 'too airtight' and the resulting lack of reactivity meant that he didn't recognize his own Champagnes. Australian and New Zealand correspondents were more skeptical about Diam, with one from New Zealand saying he 'frequently' found TCA in Diam-closed bottles and found "all of them dulled a little". Several, too, claimed that Diam corks left wines with a "gluey" note. Most preferred screwcap, suggesting that with a range of permeability levels now available with screwcap closures, any motive for using a cork product (other than customer resistance) had evaporated.

At least one Australian producer (James Tilbrook from the Adelaide Hills), in fact, said his customers did indeed prefer Diam-stopped wines over screwcap in blind tasting conditions, and there were other Australian enthusiasts from the Barossa (Matt McCulloch of Ch Tanunda) and Coonawarra (Sandrine Gimon of Rymill). Michael Dhillon of Bindi in the Macedon Ranges has almost ten years' experience with Diam – and is still happy with this closure for his Pinot.

The original research and patent for Diam corks belonged to Sabaté, formerly the world's second-largest closure manufacturer. Sabaté, though, was floored by problems (and ensuing litigation) concerning its 'hybrid' Altec corks – which were claimed to be TCA-free, but whose manufacturing process instead succeeded in evenly distributing low levels of TCA throughout entire batches. The company was acquired by the Hériard-Dubreuil family's Andromède holding company, principal shareholder in Rémy Martin, and in 2003 the Sabaté name disappeared; it is now known as Oeneo, and the subsidiary includes barrel-maker Seguin Moreau.

After a slow start (not least because Diam corks look like agglomerate corks, historically a 'cheap' alternative to natural cork), the company is now struggling to match demand. It is upgrading its Céret facility to full production status – and being more selective about those it supplies (by declining supermarket contracts). Its success has made it unpopular with rival, natural-cork suppliers, especially now that it's beginning to eat into the higher-margin, 'prestige' sector of the cork market.

**What is a Diam cork?** Some 95 per cent of it is processed cork; the rest is acrylate and polyurethane. Diam uses only finely milled, delignified, suberin-rich cork (around 40 per cent of the total raw weight of cork bark), which is then flooded with supercritical carbon dioxide. This is very hot, intensely pressurized carbon dioxide in liquid form which sluices out all the chemical impurities in the milled cork, including TCA (just one among around 125 chemical products extracted by the solvent). The cleaned cork is then mixed with talc-like acrylate microparticles (which expand when heated to fill the minute air spaces between the fragments of cork) and a binder to hold the cork together. This 'glue' is a similar polyurethane to that used to link the different parts of a traditional Champagne cork.



The corks are then ‘satinised’ with silicon (sparkling wines), paraffin (spirits) or a mix of the two (table wines).

Diam corks are available in three levels of permeability — and research director Christophe Loisel stresses that this permeability is right through the whole body of the Diam, not simply down the sides as tends to be the case for natural cork. Peroxide bleaching is available for those who want it – but, for example, Bouchard insists on no bleaching at all, and uses the most impermeable level of Diam. It’s recently launched a top-of-the-range ‘Diam 30’, guaranteed to perform faultlessly for 30 years.

Guaranteed? “We have sold,” says commercial director Pascal Popelier, “three billion corks since 2005 and haven’t had a single case of TCA coming from the cork itself.” What about the complaints I’d fielded? M. Popelier stressed that cork wasn’t the only possible source of TCA contamination. And those ‘gluey’ notes? The polyurethane binder, he said, was “completely neutral from a sensorial point of view”, thus the glueyness had to be “imaginary”.

These discrepancies seem strange – but I’m sniffing an unused Diam cork as I write this, and even though the production process has a neutralizing effect, it is still clearly cork, and still possesses a warm, timber-yard presence, and thus offers something different and more interactive than the neutrality of screwcap. Cork-phobic tasters, consequently, are unlikely to be happy with Diam. I haven’t found a gluey note to any of the DIAM-stopped wines I’ve tried – but nor have I had a chance yet to make direct comparisons between the same wine stopped by a Diam cork and by screwcap, which might reveal such a character.

Australian wine marketer Brian Miller referred me to the 1991 Danny DeVito film ‘Other People’s Money’, in which the corporate raider played by DeVito suggests that the fastest way to go broke is by taking an increasing share of a declining market. “At one time there must have been hundreds of companies making buggy whips in this country. And I’ll bet that the last company around was the one that made the best goddam buggy whip you ever saw. Now how would you like to have been a stockholder in that company?” I put Miller’s gloomy point to Pascal Popelier.

“Diam is not better than screw cap,” he said. “It’s different. It may be that everyone uses screwcap in the end. I don’t know – but it won’t be in my lifetime. Cork still has two-thirds of the closures market. Many wine producers still want to use cork, and many consumers want cork closures in their bottles. Perhaps they always will. Our objective is just to supply the most neutral and reliable corks possible.”



## Evaluating Wine “Numbers”

**Q**

I was at a recent gathering with friends, some are in the restaurant business, some are pretty wine knowledgeable and some, like me, are wine-beginners. I also happen to be a beginner home winemaker, so am trying to learn as much as I can. My friends often talk about the harvest date, the pH, TA, residual sugar, and hang time as key information they like to see about a wine when they’re choosing something to bring into their restaurant, or when they’re out wine tasting. Can you tell if a wine is good just based on these numbers? I guess I’m wondering why sommeliers and wine buyers put so much importance on them and which of those numbers is the most important?

**A**

So, stick with me for a little bit as I get a little philosophical for this one as the answer isn’t straightforward but necessitates a little rambling. My frequent readers will know that I often say the most important decision a winemaker will ever make is when to pick. Guess what? All those numbers like pH, TA, and alcohol percentage come from one source — the state of the grapes when they were picked. I don’t mean that there are perfect days each year that are predictable. Unfortunately (or fortunately, if you like to think that every year is a new adventure), the perfect pick date is always different every year. As such it’s unlikely that, unless you’re as tuned-in to a certain area and vintage as the winemaker is, the actual harvest date is relatively meaningless. First off, much depends on the preceding growing year to set up the “macro” window of picking: Was the year cold in general, how much rain did we get, were there any heat spikes during the growing season? A date, in and of itself, speaks little to that totality.

As grapes ripen, sugar levels increase, tannins lose their harshness, and green notes (hopefully) go away. Naturally present compounds like amino acids and critical nutrients for yeast growth and healthy fermentations can start to decline while desirable “mature” flavor components are generally on the rise.



Hang time doesn't necessarily mean ripening time however, and is no magic formula for a quality wine in and of itself. Time on the vine, in the face of cold weather or a canopy that's shutting down with late-season senescence, doesn't equate to any substantial metabolic change within the grapevine or the grapes themselves. With a blind devotion to a certain hang time in heat or dry weather, you're only making raisins, not healthy grapes for delicious wine. After two rainstorms, you're toast, and definitely not of the tasty medium-plus barrel variety.

*Choosing the perfect moment to pick is perhaps more of an art than a science.*

I realize that the pick date is much, much harder for anyone else besides the winemaker and grower to put into proper context. Each vintage, from one AVA (American Viticultural Area) to the next and often vineyard to vineyard, has its nuances. Choosing the perfect moment to pick is perhaps more of an art than a science. We can use numbers (Brix, acidity, even phenolic data) as guidelines but the decision itself is a balance of a multitude of factors tempered by experience. Sometimes nature gets in the way with a late-season heat spike (and picking is accelerated) or the wineries just get so plugged up there are no empty tanks and you must let the grapes wait for a little bit. In wet years, the right decision, even if the numbers may not be ideal, often is to bring in your grapes before that second rainstorm hits.

The importance of the pick date, even if it's hard for anyone else but the winemaker to contextualize, is one of the reasons I always say that once the grapes are picked, the path to wine is already laid before you. Once you've committed to picking your Grenache at 22.5 °Brix you'd better be making a rosé because it's never going to lend much to a full-bodied GSM (Rhône-style) blend. Even if you picked your Oakville Cabernet on October 12 at 24.7 °Brix it's still going to be a better wine than one getting whipped around on a shut-down canopy after an inch and a half of rain.

Your wine's birthday, and the guidance and experience you used to choose that date, will always be the most important number for your wine as it dictates everything else. It will impact what your wine will grow up to be so much more than anything you do to it after it's picked. However, don't always expect the rest of the world to understand, or to be able to contextualize, the importance of your wine's "born on" date. That's why most people find it easier to hold on to numbers like acidity and alcohol levels, percentage new oak used and, especially, numerical scores from critics.

**Response by Alison Crowe.**

## Best barstools ever!!!





# Myth Busting

Every area of human endeavor has its own legacy of mythopoeia (Mythmaking), where stories accrete around the changing character of human action and accumulated knowledge. Myths and stories are the way human beings make sense of that which they don't understand, or things they long to put into proper context. In modern western society, we think of ourselves as terribly advanced and skeptical — well informed and shrewd enough to know the difference between fairy stories and the hard reality of the Way Things Work.



But are we really that clever? Up until 150 years ago, nobody knew why grape juice lost its sweetness and turned into wine. The English word for yeast was “godisgood,” which was less a noun describing *Saccharomyces cerevisiae* (the yeast of baking, brewing and winemaking) than it was an orison and a thanksgiving for the infinite mystery of god — who wanted people to be happy, so he took care of the transformation. Just 20 years ago, everyone worked as hard as they could to exclude oxygen from wines to preserve freshness and fruit. Now we work even harder to micro-oxygenate the same wines, to instill structure and tannin, and to prevent color loss. Every time we think of a new question, the answer turns out to be not just “yes” and “no” at the same time, but “maybe” as well!

Consumer winemakers have been around as long as there have been farmers with grapes or any sort of folks with sugary fermentables and a thirst. They evolved traditions, folk wisdoms, timely sayings and canny observations, many of them shrewd and based on good practices, others complete blather based on ignorance of the scientific method and faulty observations. But rather than swallow conventional wisdom or throw the baby out with the bathwater, the middle ground of looking for the truth in traditional practices can teach us not only some valuable winemaking techniques, but also give us some insight into the history of winemaking.

## **Bark at the Moon?**

The genesis of this article was a question about the old saw regarding racking your wine under the clear light of the full moon — or was it the new moon? There are ethnic traditions that swear by both phases, each with equal vehemence. Most do talk about the moons in late winter or early spring, when the moon is farther away from the earth than it is in summer. And it's not as though people have only recently been following the phases of the moon. The earliest lunar calendar was discovered in cave paintings in Lascaux, France. Dating back fifteen thousand years, it showed the phases of the moon with dots representing the days between full moons.

*Does this have basis in fact — was it done to avoid tides, which could roil the wine and bring sediment back into suspension? Or was it about racking during an extremely low tide, so the “forces of gravity” could pull the sediment to the bottom of the barrel? Or is it some mysterious force of the moon, penetrating the wine and increasing the flavor and aroma?*

The answer is none of the above. The gravitational influence of the moon does indeed have a profound influence on the tides, and at certain times of the year they are much higher and lower than at other times. But as anyone who has put a glass of water on the nightstand will note, it doesn't affect volumes much smaller than a decent ocean or a very large lake. Also, the measurable force of gravity doesn't change physical behavior on a macro-scale — meaning that in order for gravitational pull to hold wine sediment down on the bottom of a barrel, it would have to exert a force significant enough to be easily perceived. Since the cellar masters weren't flattened to the bottom of their tanks like so many wine-sodden pancakes, neither was the sediment in the wine compressed in any way.

Searching reveals that there are some compelling reasons for thinking about wine during the phases of the moon in the new year. Culturally, many Pagan traditions ranging from Norse to Wiccan and even Judean mysticism feature ceremonies offering wine and other goods of the harvest during full moon times, to encourage fertility and show thanks for a bountiful harvest.

From a practical winemaking standpoint, three or four months after harvest, counting by moons, is a pretty good time to be doing a clarifying rack on barrels of the last vintage. But if there isn't any evidence that supports moon-phase racking, why do people do it? Partly out of a nod to those old pagan traditions. (Heck, we still say “gesundheit” when people sneeze, in case their soul shoots out of their nose and is stolen by evil spirits!) But also partly because of an eminently practical side-effect of waiting for the clear light of the moon (whether full or new). Very clear nights in winter are symptomatic of high-pressure weather systems. When the moon's phase can be clearly seen through limpid skies, the barometric pressure is high. Barometric pressure is the pressure exerted by the weight of the column

of air above a given point.

Generally speaking, when the barometric pressure is high, the air is sinking, usually resulting in fair weather. When the barometric pressure is low or falling, air is rising, usually resulting in cloudy skies and precipitation. For winemakers, when the barometric pressure is high, that means the weight of the air is pressing more firmly against everything — including their wine. Under this pressure, dissolved carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) gas leftover from the fermentation process is crushed and squeezed, so that bubbles do not form in the liquid or in the lees below. If the pressure were low or falling the action of the bubbles could stir lees sediment back into suspension, making the wine cloudy and defeating the purpose of racking.

Note also that new winemakers will occasionally see their wine begin mysteriously “refermenting” after a few weeks in the carboy. A quick check with a hydrometer will show that it is in fact unmoved from terminal gravity and merely out-gassing trapped CO<sub>2</sub> under the influence of a cloudy day’s lowered barometric pressure.

While it’s actually tangential to the phase of the moon, there is still a slim connection to reality for moon-based racking. But what about other winemaking myths and traditions? A survey of home winemakers turned up a few juicy ones, including some that have a little less connection with reality.

### **Free the Sulfites**

It’s rarely worth starting a discussion on sulfites and human health. Sulfites are almost totally benign, but some people are unwilling to accept this or the science that backs it up. And so, many people want to make a sulfite-free wine. The thing to remember is that sulfites occur in all fermented products, as a by-product of yeast metabolism. Even if a wine is made with unsulfured grapes and none is added to the must or the fermentation, it will still always contain sulfite. Wines without sulfites added contain between 6 and 40 ppm of sulfite — less than that in most wines made with added sulfites, but still present in non-trivial quantities. So, the only way to truly avoid sulfites is to stop drinking wine!

### **Professional Winemaking is Glamorous, Cool and Financially Rewarding**

Some people who make wine on a commercial basis certainly are cool, and glamorous, and seem to be getting along in the world, but most of these folks own the vineyards and were rich before they started. The hard truth for 99% of all the people who make the wine is that it’s a challenging way to make a living. Ninety percent of the job is janitorial — cleaning tanks, hoses, barrels, floors, pumps and equipment on a constant basis — working around the clock during harvest and snatching meals and sleep when they can. Rather than shopping for Ferraris, most winemakers are hoping for a really comfortable pair of rubber boots.

### **Natural is Not Better**

This stems from the millennial traditions of pre-Pasteur winemaking in Europe. Before his research in the 1850s, grapes were simply crushed into vats and fermentations started spontaneously, driven by the indigenous yeast clinging to the grape skins. To some modern winemakers, this seems like a more honest or natural way to approach things, and they eschew the addition of cultured yeast. This may work fine in the old country, in traditional grape-growing regions, but it has a real difficulty in North America.

In European vineyards, many areas have been growing grapes and making wine for centuries — in some cases for thousands of years, in the same areas, on the same land. When fermentations were finished and the grapes were pressed, they didn’t take them to the garbage dump (there being no such thing). Instead the grape skins, pulp and yeast were composted and returned to the vineyards as fertilizer.

Over time, the yeast that were able to breed fastest and ferment the most alcohol tended to prosper, so they were the ones that got returned to the vineyard. After a few generations of this type of selection, the vineyards would be saturated with a strong culture of well-adapted yeast and the cycle would continue.

In North America, vinifera grapes were not successfully planted in any quantity until the 19th Century, so the yeast found here have not had the millennia of adaptation seen in European vineyards. When yeast companies and biologists go looking for new strains of yeast that deliver the flavor profile associated with a specific wine region, they travel right into that region and sample the local vineyards and wineries, culturing the yeast cells found in the area to make up their little packets of beige powder.

It is indeed possible to allow an indigenous yeast fermentation with North American grapes, but the results are not



necessarily predictable. Typically, spontaneous fermentations proceed slower and the wine may not reach dryness. Such fermentations may require a lot more intervention than they would if the winemaker had chosen to sprinkle a packet of cultured yeast.

**Wines Needs to “Breathe”** Since wine doesn’t have lungs, spiracles or gills, breathing isn’t really an option anyway. But does exposing every wine to oxygen for a period of time before service improve them? Not necessarily. First, just pulling a cork out of a bottle does very little. It’s like trying to get some fresh air by sticking a soda straw out through a hole in a wall — you just can’t get enough oxygen exchanged through that little opening. In order to properly transfer oxygen into the wine, it needs to be decanted into a vessel that has a configuration that exposes a large surface area — about the size of a dinner plate — to outside air.

Second, it’s usually only tough, tannic, robust red wines that significantly benefit from decanting, or wines that are a little bit rocky from being confined in a bottle. Hard young wines will soften their tannins and express a bit more aromas after an hour’s decanting, and if a wine has a bit of trapped gas, a whiff of hydrogen sulfide (rotten-egg bottle stink) or a tiny bit too much sulfite, airing it out can do a world of good.

However, older reds may fall apart under such treatment, losing their fragile fragrances. Some of the volatile compounds that make up delicate aromas can be lost in only minutes, so decanting should be saved for stinky or young reds.

Whites rarely respond in any net positive fashion to decanting, plus it’s difficult to keep a wide-bodied decanter upright in an ice bucket.

### **Homemade Wine is All Bad, Sour Stuff . . . And it Can Even Make You Blind**

Unfortunately this comes up as a myth amongst otherwise normally intelligent people. Some of them are conflating consumer-produced wine with moonshine or counterfeited alcohol derived from dubious sources. The truth is that no matter what it tastes or looks like, wine fermented in food-grade containers will always be safer to drink than tap water (assuming you don’t drink enough to feel the negative effects of too much alcohol). No pathogenic (disease-causing) organism can live in wine due to its low pH and high alcohol content. For most of human history, and up until the medical revolution of the 20th Century wine was the only tool in the physicians cabinet. It was an antiseptic for wounds, a pain-killer for injury and surcease for troubled minds.

Tarring all consumer-produced wines as sour or inferior does have a basis in unfortunate reality. We all have an uncle or a friend-of-a-friend who makes eye-wateringly bad dandelion wine, or poorly vented grape wines with “unique” character. But just because you’ve had a bad oyster once in your life doesn’t mean that they’re all bad. Modern winemakers have access to a vast amount of knowledge, tools and scientific processes that let them make award-winning wines on a consistent basis.

### **Rack Early and Rack Often!**

One of the unfortunate urges that beginner winemakers get is the unseemly desire to fiddle with their wine. Even when the wine is perfectly adjusted, finished fermenting, fully stable and now needs only time to show its glory, they want to intervene.

Some sources urge winemakers to rack wine immediately off of any visible sediment to avoid H<sub>2</sub>S contamination. Since racking has the goal of separating the wine from sediments, thus leaving it clear, frequent rackings are a good way to satisfy this urge. However, in winemaking as in life, more is not always better.

In the first year of a wine’s life, four rackings is probably too many. Even red wine fermentations from grapes — which can throw very large amounts of sedimented pulp, stem material and yeast cells — only need to be racked three times to achieve decent clarity in the first year. Extra rackings should only be attempted if the wine begins to show off flavors and aromas that can be attributed to lees contact, and only then after careful analysis shows that this is the best course of action. In the words of the sage, “Don’t just do something, sit there!”

### **Wine Improves with Age**

Wine is like a living organism. It goes through phases of “growth,” stability and decline. But some of it is best enjoyed fresh, young and zippy. A light delicate white like Trebbiano will benefit from six months to a year in the bottle, but simply doesn’t have the structure or fruit character to improve beyond a second year. The same applies for light reds like Gamay or most carbonic maceration (Beaujolais-style) wines: fresh juicy fruit characters don’t get happier with



age any more than some human beings do. On the commercial side, any wine purchased for under \$30 a bottle is almost certainly intended for consumption within a couple of years, and only wines in the \$100+ range warrant a decade or more of age before drinking.

### **Sorbate Kills Yeast**

Because sorbate is included in many kit wines, to be added during the fining and stabilizing process, some consumers have assumed that its purpose was to kill yeast to prevent “refermentation” in the bottle. Actually, the only practical way to kill yeast is by Pasteurization. It’s a terrifically hardy organism, and can even survive being frozen, desiccated or entombed for centuries, under the right conditions.

The actual mechanism for the action of sorbic acid (sorbate’s real name — the form sold to winemakers is a stable salt of sorbic acid, usually potassium sorbate) isn’t fully understood, but the big picture is that it prevents yeast reproduction. It’s really birth control for yeast and gram-negative microorganisms. This includes yeast, but not certain classes of spoilage organisms like lactic acid bacteria, which is why sorbate can’t be used by itself to stabilize wine.

So, if it doesn’t kill yeast, why is it included? Because kit manufacturers recognize that there is a spectrum of expertise that will be applied to their products. Some consumers will not follow the directions or good winemaking procedures closely enough to ensure that the wine is completely stable and free of yeast and other organisms before bottling. By using sorbate, sulfite and fining agents all at the same time the wine is cleared of 99%+ of live yeast.

With sorbate in the mix, the remaining yeast can no longer breed back to “culture strength,” the point at which they switch from breeding to converting sugar to alcohol. So, despite the presence of a few live yeast, the wine will remain stable and unchanged, with no fizzy bottles or sediment down the side of the bottle as it ages.



## **References**

Here is a list of Hobby Winemaking Manuals and other materials in the Secretary’s digital file available for downloading by e-mail or via an internet transfer service. All are PDF format E-mail Ken Stinger at [kbstinger@frontier.com](mailto:kbstinger@frontier.com)

Scott Labs 2020 Winemaking Handbook - 21 mb - 59 pages

Scott Labs 2018 Cider Handbook - 24 mb - 49 pages

Scott Labs 2018-2019 Sparkling Handbook - 8 mb - 58 pages

A guide to Fining Wine, WA State University - 314 kb - 10 pages

Barrel Care Procedures - 100 kb - 2 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



# Portland Winemakers Club

## Leadership Team – 2021

President: **Bill Brown** [bbgoldieguy@gmail.com](mailto:bbgoldieguy@gmail.com)

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

Treasurer: **Barb Thomson / Jim Ourada** [bt.grapevine@frontier.com](mailto:bt.grapevine@frontier.com)  
[jmourada57@gmail.com](mailto:jmourada57@gmail.com)

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

Secretary: **Ken Stinger** [kbstinger@frontier.com](mailto:kbstinger@frontier.com)

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

Chair of Education / Speakers: **Rufus Knapp** [Rufus.Knapp@fei.com](mailto:Rufus.Knapp@fei.com)

- Arrange for speakers & educational content for our meetings

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

- Conduct club tastings
- Review and improve club tasting procedures

Chair of Winery / Vineyard Tours: **Damon Lopez.** [dlopez5011@yahoo.com](mailto:dlopez5011@yahoo.com)

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

Chair of Group Purchases: **Bob Hatt / Al Glasby.** [bobhatt2000@yahoo.com](mailto:bobhatt2000@yahoo.com)  
[alglasby@gmail.com](mailto:alglasby@gmail.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 / Michael Harvey** [labmanpaul@hotmail.com](mailto:labmanpaul@hotmail.com)  
[mharvey767@gmail.com](mailto:mharvey767@gmail.com)

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

Chairs for Social Events : **Marilyn Brown & Mindy Bush** [brown.marilynjean@gmail.com](mailto:brown.marilynjean@gmail.com)  
\* Gala / Picnic / parties [mindybush@hotmail.com](mailto:mindybush@hotmail.com)

Web Design Editor: **Alice Bonham** [alice@alicedesigns.org](mailto:alice@alicedesigns.org)

Zoom Moderator: Jon Kahrs. [jekahrs@aol.com](mailto:jekahrs@aol.com)