Portland Winemakers Club

November 2026
"Bob's Blurb"

It sounds like everyone got the grapes everyone wanted and our orders topped last years.
I am trying a couple things I have not done before. I was fortunate enough to get Gamay Noir from Bill Brown's neighbor Dusty. In addition I am attempting to make Souzao port. I am looking forward to sharing it with you next year sometime.
Recently I have been busy waiting for my fermentations to complete. Mostly low and slow this year.
I have attached a picture of three pairs of grapes, from left to right, Cabernet Franc; Syrah & Souzao.
As I write this I have one more wine to press (Souzao) when the weather cooperates, hopefully on Nov 5.
November's meeting is Crush Talk and Tips and Tricks. We will spend half of the meeting for each topic. If you have anything you want to show/demo for tips and tricks please bring it if possible. I am looking forward to seeing everyone and hearing about this years crush.
- Bob





Portland Winemakers Club
Since 1968

2026 Monthly Agendas

January 17th
Gala – Parrett Mountain Cellars 5:30 – 8:30 pm, clean up 8:30 – 9:00, $15 per person

January 21st
#1-Tasting & judging member's other reds, no Bordeaux varietals or Pinot Noir

February 18th
Speaker: Winemaker, Ken Wright

March 18th
Tasting & judging, member's Bordeaux varietals

April 15th
Barrel Tasting, judging & discussion / problem solving

May 20th – Tasting & judging, member's White, Rose' & Sparkling

June 17th Discussion, techniques & products

July - No meeting

July 18th, Annual Picnic, $10 ea. Fee, 1:00 – 5:00; Jolie & Brian Bowles home.

August 19th
Speaker: Winemaker Greg Meyer from Columbia Ridge Winery

September 16th
#2-Tasting & judging member's other reds, no Bordeaux varietals or Pinot Noir

October 21st
Tasting & judging, member's Pinot Noir

November 18th
Crush Talk, Tips & Tricks

December 9th
Elections, Planning for 2027

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

Happy Thanksgiving

Upcoming Events / Save the Date

The next meeting of the Portland Winemakers Club is scheduled for Wednesday, November 18th at 7:00 pm in the lower level of the Aloha Grange. Crush Talk and Tips & Tricks.

Members are encouraged to bring a snack for the shared table, a tasting glass, and a bottle of your own wine for the exchange table.

• Visit the club website at portlandwinemakersclub.com to access archived newsletters dating back to 2007.

• The club maintains a public Facebook group under "Portland Winemakers Club" at facebook.com , all members are invited to join and share posts.

October Meeting Notes

Old Business
Grape Purchasing:
2026 was the highest year of purchases in recent memory. Club members bought over $21,000 worth of grapes totaling 15,800 lbs.
Overall, the process went smoothly. All members bought and picked up the grapes for which they committed.
Jamison was the largest vendor this year as he continued to deliver to the Portland area

Treasurer:
Still searching to find a replacement for the club liability policy. Existing quotes are 10X what the club currently pays. The quotes are more than the club currently takes in for revenue in a year. The liability policy is required by the Grange as a condition to use the facility.
Wisconsin winemaking club will visit Portland next year and asked to attend a club meeting. This will take place on April 21st and count as one of our speaker slots for next year.
A Texas winemaking club reached out via the website to inquire about how our club purchases grapes. They are looking to set up grape purchasing for their own club. Hank Armstrong will take the lead to follow up and share our practices.
Barb handed out Portland Winemaker Club pens.

Hospitality:
Jolie is reaching out to Dennis and Marlene at Parrett Mountain to see if they are willing to host the Gala again.

New Business:
Brian reported that based on his experience with the group buy in 2026, it seems like the club would benefit from having a private buy / sell page where members could list equipment, chemicals and other wine making items for sale. It was brought up that the club already has a private Facebook group page and that might be an option. Any club member with experience setting up such a site should contact Brian.
Chris Dix mentioned that the Potters Vineyard is organizing a river cruise in Bordeaux for April 2028 if members are interested.

With club business completed, the focus turned to tasting member-produced Pinot Noirs.

-----See the next page for the results of the Pinot Noir club tasting -----

	Winemaker	Year & Wine Type	Gold	Silver	Bronze	None	Score	Medal	Votes
A1	Chris Dix	2025 Pinot Noir 777		7	17		1.29	Bronze	24
A2	Jim Ourada	2024 Pinot Noir	0	0	4	20	0.17	None	24
B1	Craig Butler	2025 Pommard - Free Run	1	17	6		1.79	Silver	24
B2	Craig Butler	2025 Pommard - Press	11	13	1		2.40	**Gold**	25
C1	Eric Mireiter	2024 Pinot Noir	1	7	15	1	1.33	Bronze	24
C2	Bob Hatt	2020 Pinot Noir		2	17	6	0.84	Bronze	25
D1	Jan Walter	2022 Pinot Noir		9	15	1	1.32	Bronze	25
D2	Craig Bush	2024 Pinot Noir	1	16	5	2	1.67	Silver	24
E1	Mark Eklund	2024 Pinot Noir	8	11	4		2.17	Silver	23
E2	Jeff Irwin	2024 Pinot Noir	6	16	3		2.12	Silver	25
F1	Jolie & Brian Bowles	2024 Pinot Noir	2	7	16		1.44	Bronze	25
F2	Phil Bard & Ken Stinger	2018 Pinot Noir	17	8	0		2.68	**Gold**	25



Enter WineMaker's 27th Annual Home Wine Label Contest
Entry deadline: November 13, 2026

Enter your best home wine labels into magazine's 27th Annual Home Wine Label Contest and compete for a share of some great winemaking prizes from our sponsors! The entry deadline is one month away: **November 13, 2026**! There is no entry fee, and you can enter as often as you like, but you can only win one prize. Winners will see their artwork featured in the February-March 2027 issue of *WineMaker*.

Rules: Entrants may email us JPG or PDF files of your wine labels (not just a photo of the label on a bottle). All labels will be judged in one category, open to professional graphic artists and amateurs alike, so ultimate bragging rights are on the line. All other rules are made up, as always, by the editors of WineMaker as we go along. When submitting your labels, tell us a bit about the artwork and its inspiration (which may also be featured in a future issue of *WineMaker*). Is it original artwork? Created using AI? Made for a friend or have a funny story associated with it? Send us your best labels and good luck!

Below are a few photos submitted by member Chris Dix. Thanks! This is the crush party held at Bob Hatt's place in Buxton. The grapes are Syrah from the Rogue Valley group buy, Quail Run vineyard. The group buy consists of both members & non-members. Hopefully, we will have a comparison taste in a year or so.












Editor: Here is a revised barrel care article from "The Beverage People"

We reviewed all the available literature in our wine books and magazines, procedures recommended by our vendors, and popular sources of web content. In addition to that review of materials, we engaged in some testing and content development to incorporate a new "wet storage" technique for barrel storage when no wine is available to keep it filled. The results are a significantly updated Barrel Care Guide that we believe incorporates industry best-practices and better storage options than we previously provided in the old catalog version of our Barrel Care Guide.

Wine Barrel Care
Hydration, Rinsing & Cleaning Techniques, Wet & Dry Storage

by Gabe Jackson, Jane Jackson and Joe Hanson-Hirt of The Beverage People



Barrels take a commitment of that is greater than other storage vessels and barrel care can seem like a hobby of its own. Due to evaporation, the wine needs to be topped up every two weeks, and avoiding contamination is generally more challenging. Also, there is the physical space required to store barrels, and the difficulty in moving them. So why do we do it? The results, of course! Barrels allow the wine to mature slowly as the tannins experience "micro-oxidation" during aging while extracting delicious toasted oak tannins and vanillins from the wood. If you choose to introduce a barrel into your winemaking operation, this guide will help keep you out of too much trouble.

Initial Barrel Hydration

Barrels should be hydrated and used almost immediately upon receipt---dry storage always comes with the risk of dehydration. A new barrel must be filled with water to make the wood swell and eliminate leaks. These leaks will often seal themselves in only a few hours, but may take a couple of days. There are different approaches to hydration depending on the water supply and equipment you have available. Commercially, steam and ozone are commonly utilized. At home, however, the cost of this type of equipment is prohibitive. The following techniques do not require them.

Before we start, it is important to consider the water itself that you will be using to care for your barrel. Regardless of the source of your water (municipal, a well, etc.), it is important to make sure that it has no chlorine or chloramines. The ideal water source would be reverse osmosis water (RO water) that has been dechlorinated and has little to no mineral content. However, you can use water that starts out with chlorine and simply remove the chlorine using the techniques listed below.



• Hot Water Technique – Requires at least 180° F water

This method is a best practice which we have adopted from our cooperage, re-coop Barrels. It is more effective at hydration than the cold water technique and also has the effect of pasteurizing the wood before use.

Stand the barrel upright on the head. Pour hot water, which is at least 180° F, on top of the head and let stand for 1 hour. Ideally, the water should be de-chlorinated (see discussion below). At the same time, fill the barrel half-way with the same source of water to hydrate the bottom half of the inside of the barrel. Insert a silicone bung snugly in the bunghole.

After one hour, flip the barrel over and repeat the process on the other head for 1 hour. Drain the barrel and proceed with acidification and/or filling with wine.

• Cold Water Technique

Fill the barrel completely with cold water. Ideally, the water should be de-chlorinated (see note below). The barrel should be continually refilled until the leaks stop, and the water should be changed each day to prevent off flavors caused by rancidity or mold growth.

• Why and How to De-Chlorinate Your Water

The chemical compound 2,4,6-trichloroanisole (TCA), commonly known as “cork taint”, can flourish in barrels and cause moldy, musty odors. TCA can be produced when two things are present---naturally occurring airborne fungi, and chlorophenols compounds (created from chlorine and chloromines) which they convert into TCA. Due to this risk, it is best to remove chlorine from the water which will contact your barrel. If you are working with chlorinated water, there are two common approaches to remove the chlorine from you water supply.

Mechanical Filtration – In-line carbon block filters can be used to remove chlorine compounds in transit to the barrel.



in-line 10” cartridge filter housing



Editor: I am using an In-line RV cartridge filter on a 25’ potable water hose, good for about 800 to 1300 gallons.

Chemical De-chlorination – Chlorine and chloramines can be removed by adding sulfur dioxide to the water, a common practice in waste water treatment. The theoretical dosage for de-chlorination requires 0.9 ppm (parts per million, or mg/liter) of sulfur dioxide for every 1 ppm of total residual chlorine to be removed.

In most operating situations, the rate used in practice will be 1:1 to ensure all chlorine is removed. The contact time, assuming good mixing, is only about 2minutes.

Municipal water will generally have a residual of 0.5 – 4 ppm of chlorine. If testing the chlorine level is not possible, it may be safest to estimate the chlorine level to be on the high side. Excess sulfur dioxide will generally not present an issue for the wine. The simplest practical treatment is with campden tablets, which offer 250 ppm of sulfur dioxide when added to one liter of liquid. We can expect one campden tablet, therefore, to neutralize 4 ppm of chlorine in approximately 62 liters, or about 16 gallons of water.

So, to neutralize 4 ppm of chlorine, a:
15 gal barrel needs 1 campden tablet
20 gal barrel needs about 1.5 campden tablets
30 gal barrel needs 2 campden tablets
60 gal barrel needs 4 campden tablets

• Acidifying a New or Used Barrel

It is recommended that an acidic environment be created in a new barrel, which is about to receive

wine for the first time, or a used barrel that may need conditioning. Dissolve in water 1.5 grams Citric Acid for every 1 gallons of barrel capacity. Alternatively, you can use tartaric to avoid contributing residual citric to your wine. Tartaric is more expensive but is not metabolized by bacteria such as MLF bacteria. Fill the barrel and check to make sure it is properly sealed. If you can slosh the acidified water around inside the barrel, you can use much less water. In that case, 5 - 10 gallons of acidified water may be appropriate to acidify a 60-gallon barrel. After all internal surfaces have been exposed to the acidified water, drain the water and fill the barrel with wine.

Rinsing a Barrel at Each Wine Racking

At each racking, rinse the barrel thoroughly with water to remove lees debris. A barrel washer fitted with a high-pressure spinning head is very helpful with this step. After the debris is removed, rinse the barrel with an acid wash to reacidify the barrel.

• **Acid Wash**
Dissolve 8 grams (or about 2 tsp) Citric Acid in 5 gallons of de-chlorinated water. Alternatively, you can use tartaric to avoid contributing residual citric to your wine. Slosh this mixture around the interior surfaces of the barrel for 5 to 10 minutes. Drain and refill the barrel with wine.

Preparing a Barrel for Storage

If a barrel needs to be stored without wine for a period, additional cleaning and sanitation measures will be needed. Please take note that the best practice is to keep a barrel full of wine at all times. Storage without wine introduces risk of dehydration and/or contamination. The following techniques should be deployed only when storage with wine is not possible.

• **Cleaning a Used Barrel**
Start by removing the organic matter that has penetrated into the surface of the wood. This is done with a solution of Proxycarb, a peroxide based cleaner. Again, a barrel washer fitted with a high-pressure spinning head is also very helpful with this step.

Use 4 oz. of Proxycarb for every 15 gallons of barrel capacity. Dissolve in a small amount of de-chlorinated water and funnel the mixture into your barrel. Fill the barrel the rest of the way with de-chlorinated water. You may leave this mixture in the barrel for as little as 20 minutes or as much as 24 hours. If the barrel has VA (volatile acidity), double the amount of Proxycarb and leave for 24-48 hours. In the case of a VA barrel, you should take additional steps. The best choice is to retire the barrel from wine use. If you decide to continue using a suspect barrel, plan to use Bactiless and very high levels of SO2 to inhibit the wild organisms from spreading from the wood grain into your wine.



Drain and rinse the barrel several times with de-chlorinated water, or rinse using a barrel washer. Re-acidify the barrel using the acid wash instructions above. Next, prepare the barrel for either wet or dry storage.

• **Wet Storage – Long term with required maintenance**
Wet storage will require you to create and maintain a holding solution which has similar anti-microbial properties to a stable wine. It will require topping the barrel and monitoring the holding solution for stability by occasionally testing pH and free SO2 levels. Use of this technique is only recommended if you have the ability to perform these tests. The holding solution should be made from de-chlorinated water, which has been acidified below 3.7 pH. Additionally, sulfite should be added to the holding solution and the free SO2 level should be maintained above 50 ppm for the entire storage period. Over time, the holding solution will evaporate, and more solution will need to be added at least once per month.

Note about pH and SO2: If the pH rises above 3.7 pH, the effectiveness of the sulfite at maintaining microbial stability is seriously diminished. Even with a proper pH level below 3.7, the free SO2 will become depleted over time as it binds oxygen and other compounds and evaporates. Therefore, continual monitoring of the pH and free SO2 levels will be necessary to avoid spoilage of the

holding solution and contamination of the barrel.

·Creating and Maintaining a Holding Solution
Ingredients Needed:
De-chlorinated water
Citric acid (Alternatively, you can use tartaric to avoid contributing residual citric to your wine)
Potassium metabisulfite.

Equipment Needed:
pH meter and calibration solutions
Free SO2 testing equipment (or access to a wine lab)

Mix Instructions: Fill the barrel with de-chlorinated water. Acidify below 3.7 pH by dissolving Citric or Tartaric acid into water and then mixing into the water in the barrel. Add an initial addition of free SO2 of at least 100 ppm.

How much acid is needed to reach 3.7 pH?
This will depend on what is in your water. A water with very little to no ion content, such as distilled or reverse osmosis water, will take much less acid to reach 3.7 pH than a water with high ion content, particularly alkalinity. You might use our staff table-top experiment as a guideline as follows.

We treated two very different water sources with Citric Acid until they dropped below 3.7 pH. One was Santa Rosa city water with about 160-180 ppm of alkalinity, the other was Reverse Osmosis water with only about 5 ppm of total dissolved solids. Here were the results:

<u>Santa Rosa Municipal Water (160-180 ppm alkalinity)</u>
0.4 grams citric acid per liter of water to reach 3.61 pH

<u>Reverse Osmosis Water (about 5 ppm TDS)</u>
0.1 gram citric acid per liter of water to reach 3.33 pH

In reviewing these results it should be apparent---each water source will require a different level of acid addition to reach 3.7 pH or below. We recommend a calibrated pH meter and some patience in your effort to acidify the water. Municipal and well water sources can vary widely from day to day and year to year. Some testing will be required to ensure your water source is properly acidified below a pH of 3.7. For this reason, we recommend using RO water.

Maintenance of the Holding Solution: Once per month, test the pH and free SO2 of the holding solution. Add sulfite and acid as necessary to keep the pH below 3.7, and the free SO2 level above 50 ppm. The barrel should be topped up each month as well so it stays full.
If testing cannot be performed at any point, at least perform the following. Remove the bung every week or so and smell to make sure sulfur can still be detected inside the barrel. The sensory threshold for most people to detect free SO2 by smell is around 50 ppm. If you cannot smell the SO2, which smells like burnt match sticks, then the level may have dropped below 50 ppm and the holding solution may be unstable.

• Temperature of the barrel during wet storage will be important.
Just as with wine storage, high temperatures will lead to oxidation of the SO2 and potential microbial growth. Temperatures during the entire period of wet storage should be maintained below 60° F.

• Dry Storage – 2 months maximum
If it will be less two months before the barrel is used again, drain the barrel and burn a Sulfur Strip or Sulfur Disc in it. Remove the Strip or Disc after about 15 minutes, and bung the barrel tightly. Burning sulfur releases sulfur dioxide gas into the barrel's interior. Repeat every two weeks, as needed, until a flashlight reveals no shiny dampness in the bottom of the barrel. Bung up the barrel and store it in a dry place until needed, allowing enough time to soak up the barrel before use. Extended dry storage will make it more difficult to rehydrate the barrel later. After 2 months, we

recommend the barrel be either filled with wine, or rehydrated before beginning the dry storage preparation steps again.

- **Temperature and Humidity**

At all times, the temperature of the barrel should be maintained below 60° F. Ideal cellar temperature is traditionally about 55° F, but at least below 60° F to minimize the chance of bacterial spoilage. If you can monitor and maintain humidity, the ideal range is 65-75% relative humidity.

Winemaking basics: Can you trust your pH meter?

OSU Extention Center

The pH meter is arguably the most important piece of laboratory equipment you have in your winery. It is used for many routine analyses such as pH, titratable acidity and as part of the analysis of volatile acidity. Accurately knowing your grape and wine pH is also critical in the management of microbial stability.



Figure 1. A basic pH meter setup with probe and stir plate.
Credit: James Osborne

Spoilage microorganisms such as Pediococcus and Brettanomyces are less acid-tolerant than beneficial microorganisms such as Saccharomyces cerevisiae and Oenococcus oeni. Lower pH, lower microbial spoilage risk; higher pH, higher microbial spoilage risk.

Furthermore, there is a key relationship between pH and free SO. At lower pH, a greater proportion of free SO is present as molecular SO , the most effective antimicrobial form of SO . Because of this, free SO concentrations should always be evaluated in conjunction with pH when considering target SO levels.

A pH meter will provide you with a pH value, but how do you know that the value is accurate? The consequences of using a pH meter that is not functioning properly can be significant.

For example, an inaccurate pH meter may lead to overestimation or underestimation of SO additions needed to achieve a target molecular SO concentration and/or what acid adjustments are required pre- or post-fermentation.

How to ensure accurate and reliable results

So how can you ensure you are getting accurate and reliable results from Your pH meter? Firstly, make sure you are using an appropriate pH electrode probe for grapes and wine. Not all pH electrode probes are suited to the unique physical and chemical composition of grape juice and wine.
Many manufacturers have pH probes specific for grape and wine analysis, ensuring you are using the right tools for the job.

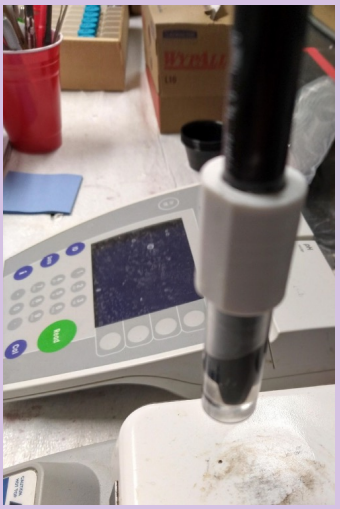


Figure 2. Always store the pH probe in an appropriate pH electrode storage solution.
Credit: James Osborne

Secondly, instigate a regular calibration schedule in the winery lab. It should be standard practice to perform a calibration the first time the pH meter is used for the day. A logbook kept by the pH meter can be used to keep track of when calibration has been conducted and the result. If you have multiple people using the pH meter, they can quickly see when the last calibration occurred and know whether calibration is needed.

It should be standard practice to perform a calibration the first time the pH meter is used for the day.

Keeping track of the calibration results can help indicate if the probe may need to be cleaned or have other recurring issues.

Typically, you will have a small vial of each buffer for the calibration. These vials of buffer should be regularly changed out for fresh buffer solutions biweekly or monthly, depending on how often you use them.

Make sure the buffers you are using match the built-in calibration set points for your pH meter. Most commonly, you will be using pH 4.0 and 7.01 set points, but some pH meters use pH 3.0 and 7.01. A buffer of 10.01 can also be used as a third calibration point, although in wine, you will be mainly

measuring between pH 3.0 and pH 4.0, so this is where the greatest accuracy is required. The slope should be within ±5% of the ideal (100%), while ± 10% or greater is considered out of range.

Make sure you store the probe in an electrode storage solution (typically a KCL solution). A dried-out probe slows the exchange of ions between the probe and the solution you are measuring and results in false readings. Do not store in water or pH 7.01 buffer as this will result in leaching of the electrolyte solution from the pH probe. Some pH probes allow refilling of the electrolyte solution, so keep an eye on this level if this is the case and refill when necessary (see manufacturer recommendations).

A dried-out probe slows the exchange of ions between the probe and the solution you are measuring and results in false readings.

Cleaning the pH probe

If you are starting to see pH drift and/or calibrations are challenging to conduct or have low accuracy, your pH probe may need cleaning. The build-up of grape and wine deposits on the outside of the pH probe bulb will cause fouling of the membrane and interfere with the interaction of ions in your juice/wine and the electrolyte solution.

During heavy use, it may be necessary to clean your pH probe weekly or biweekly. This involves soaking the probe in a probe cleaning solution (often provided by probe manufacturers) for 30–60 minutes, followed by rinsing with DI water. This will improve the accuracy of your data as well as extend the life of your pH probe.

Keep track of when cleanings occur in your pH meter logbook. By following a regular calibration and cleaning schedule for your pH meter/probe, you can ensure reliable and accurate pH data and improve the lifetime of the probe.



Portland Winemakers Club
Leadership Team – 2026

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, amateur competitions & other club 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.

Chairs 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: **Paul Natale** paulnatale6@gmail.com
- Arrange & manage tours.
- Select Wineries, Vineyards, etc. to visit.
- Cover logistics (food and money).

Chairs of Group Grape Purchases: **Mark Hernandez / Hank Armstrong**
Arrange for member group grape purchases. Distribute information to the membership. Manage arrangements to purchase, collect and distribute. Provide written rules. mark_hernandez14@comcast.net
HANKARM@gmail.com

Chair of Group Supplies Purchases (consumables). **Brian Bowles**
- TBD bowles97229@gmail.com

Chairs for Social Events: **Jolie & Brian Bowles / Barb Thomson**
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