

Portland
Winemakers
Club



Portland Winemakers Club

October 2018

President's Monthly Rant



Scheduled Meetings

January 12th, 2019

Annual Gala – At Dennis & Marlene Grants new tasting room at Parrett Mountain Cellars

January 17, 2018 Crush Talk / Planning

February 21, 2018 Bordeaux Tasting

March 21, 2018

Speaker: Marj Vuylsteke founder of Oak Knoll Winery and the Portland Winemakers Club.

April 18, 2018

Barrel / Carboy Sample Tasting

May 16, 2018

Speakers: Blair & Arabella Trathan, shea winemaker & Trathen Hall wines

June, 20, 2018

Best practices; member demonstrations of tips & tricks

July 14 2018

Annual Picnic at the home of Craig & Mindy Bush

July 28 2018

Tours at Resolu Cellars & Parrett Mountain Winery

August 15, 2018

All Whites Tasting

August 25, 2018

Tour, Chris James Cellars

September 19, 2018

Other Reds Tasting

October 17, 2018

Pinot Noir Tasting

November 2018

No Meeting

December 5, 2018

Planning, Tours, Speakers, Events, Elections

There's quite a bit of talk in the wine news about the cancellation of a 2000 ton order by Copper Cane Wines in Rutherford, California for fruit from Southern Oregon growers. Copper Cane claims smoke taint was the reason, but did not produce any test results supporting it, the vineyards did their own tests at ETS and found no significant evidence of taint. Furthermore Copper Cane waited until harvest to cancel, leaving fruit in a precarious position and at risk of rot. In response and as a gesture of support, a number of Willamette Valley wineries stepped in to purchase a portion the grapes at full market price. Willamette Valley Vineyards, Stoller and several others are receiving shipments as I write this, proclaiming their concern for the health of their southern brothers. The back story on this is that the Oregon Liquor Control Commission is investigating Copper Cane for potentially misrepresenting, in their marketing, the wines they produce from the Oregon fruit. Likely trying to capitalize on the cache of Oregon Pinot, the winery describes one of its wines as uniting "fruit from three regions along Oregon's coast, Willamette, Umpqua and Rogue Valleys," but Oregon winemakers are calling it deceptive because none of the regions are truly coastal, and on top of it, the wine doesn't contain the required percentages of product to label them as from the AVA's. The investigation proceeds, and larger vineyards that lost orders say they have been hurt but may be able to avoid bankruptcy because of the incident, but some smaller vineyards will apparently not survive.

So, even though their product isn't really for sale here, does anyone need advice on whether or not to purchase Copper Cane wines?

Drink Responsibly.
Drive Responsibly.

Misc. Information

• **The 2018 Scott laboratories Fermentation handbook** is available at: [Scottlab.com](http://scottlab.com)

• **In Oregon** The Great Oregon Wine Co., a division of Denver-based Integrated Beverage Group, announced it had purchased 70,000-case Duck Pond Cellars for an undisclosed sum.

• **A recent survey by the Walla Walla Valley Wine Alliance** found a 4.3% increase in the region's vineyard acreage in the past years to 2,933. Cabernet Sauvignon remains the leading grape variety, accounting for 36% of all acreage followed by Syrah at 18% and Merlot at 16%. According to the survey, the Walla Walla region is the fifth largest in Washington by planted vineyard acreage.

• **Linfield unveils bachelor's, master's combo.** The first interdisciplinary wine studies degree in the U.S. will now be the first in the nation with a five-year program leading to both bachelor's and master's degrees in wine studies. Grace and Ken Evenstad Center for Wine Education at Linfield College in McMinnville is teaming up with École Supérieure d'Agricultures (ESA) in Angers, France, for the initiative. Students who complete the program will receive a bachelor's degree in wine studies from Linfield and an international vintage master's degree from ESA

• **Wine dates at least all the way back to the Stone Age,** with the oldest known winery (from c. 4100 B.C.) discovered along the Arpa River in an Armenian village. More than six millennia later, the beloved intoxicant is still enjoyed around the world.

Note: The next regular meeting will be Wednesday, October 17th at 7:00 PM at Oak Knoll Winery. October Agenda: "Pinot Noir Tasting". This will be member produced Pinot Noir blind tasting and scoring. If you enter a wine in the tasting please bring 2 bottles with label attached with your name, vintage year & grape clone(s) if known. Bring 2 glasses for tasting.

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/>

September Meeting Minutes

(26 present)

- We have one visitor tonight; Aaron Price.
- Marj has had her heart surgery and is at home and doing well.
- We are still looking for a new meeting place. Possibilities mentioned tonight: Tualatin Historical Society (Barb Stinger); Steinbarts (Phil Bard); Boedecker Cellars (Jon Kahrs); Elks Club; Lake Oswego Wine Storage (Phil Bard); John's Landing Wine Storage (Phil Bard) and, mentioned after the meeting, Four Seasons Community Club House (Brian Bowles).
- Bob Hatt announced that Alboriño pressed juice and Malbec grapes will arrive for pick up Sunday morning.

Bill Brown & Barbara Stinger conducted this evening's tasting and judging of other reds. The tasting was done blind.

		Wineries by U.S. State, Mar 31, 2018 Source: Department of the Treasury, TTB		
1 California	4,807		27 Tennessee	78
2 Washington	1,073		28 Idaho	74
3 Oregon	701		29 Connecticut	71
4 Texas	588		30 Vermont	66
5 New York	577		31 Maine	56
6 Michigan	461		32 Kansas	55
7 Pennsylvania	394		33 New Hampshire	53
8 Virginia	360		34 Nebraska	39
9 Ohio	355		35 Alabama	38
10 Missouri	233		36 West Virginia	38
11 North Carolina	220		37 South Carolina	37
12 Colorado	192		38 Arkansas	35
13 Illinois	156		39 South Dakota	35
14 Wisconsin	152		40 Montana	32
15 Iowa	140		41 North Dakota	22
16 Maryland	131		42 Rhode Island	21
17 Indiana	128		43 Utah	17
18 Florida	115		44 Louisiana	16
19 Minnesota	112		45 Hawaii	12
20 Massachusetts	110		46 Nevada	12
21 Kentucky	102		47 Mississippi	9
22 Arizona	100		48 Wyoming	9
23 Oklahoma	88		49 Alaska	8
24 Georgia	84		50 Delaware	8
25 New Mexico	82		51 Washington DC	7
26 New Jersey	81			

Last month we reported on the medals awarded by the Oregon State Fair to Portland Winemakers Club members. At that time we were told by Fair personnel that only ten medals were given out, three gold medals from each of three categories (red, white & fruit) plus one more selected from those nine as best of show for ten total. Turns out there were other gold, silver & bronze medals given, we just were not told about them. We were able to find an all inclusive list on-line containing fifty names all receiving a medal (bronze, silver or gold). It was not clear if there were other entries not listed that received no medal. **The table below shows the medals won by PWC members.**

NAME	VARIETALS	Region	NOTE	MEDAL
Ken & Barb Stinger	2016 Malbec	Yakima Valley	Estate	Gold
Ken & Barb Stinger	2015 Bordeaux 61% Malbec; 27% Cab. Sauvignon; 12% Merlot	Yakima Valley	Estate Field Blend	Gold
Ken & Barb Stinger	2016 Bordeaux 50% Cab. Sauvignon; 25% Merlot; 25% Malbec	Yakima Valley	Estate	Silver
Ken & Barb Stinger	2016 Merlot	Yakima Valley	Estate	Silver
Don Hoffard / John Hoosen	2017 Viognier	Oregon		Gold
Don Hoffard / John Hoosen	2016 Syrah 90%; Viognier 10%	Washington	Cote Rotie Style	Gold
Don Hoffard / John Hoosen	2016 Bordeaux 46% Cabernet; 28% Cab. Franc; 24% Malbec	Washington		Gold
Don Hoffard / John Hoosen	2017 Pinot Noir (Rosé)	Oregon		Silver
Don Hoffard / John Hoosen	2016 Cabernet Sauvignon	Washington		Silver
Don Hoffard / John Hoosen	2016 Merlot	Washington		Silver
Don Hoffard / John Hoosen	2015 Merlot	Washington		Silver
Don Hoffard / John Hoosen	2016 Pinot Noir	Oregon		Silver
Don Hoffard / John Hoosen	2016 Pinot Noir (Rosé)	Oregon		Silver
Don Hoffard / John Hoosen	2015 Bordeaux 48% Cabernet, 26% Cab Franc, 26% Petit Verdot	Washington		Silver
Don Hoffard / John Hoosen	2015 Bordeaux 46% Merlot, 23% Cab. Franc, 23% Petit Verdot, 8% Cab.	Washington		Silver
Don Hoffard / John Hoosen	2015 Petit Sirah	Washington		Silver
Don Hoffard / John Hoosen	2014 90% Syrah, 10% Viognier	Washington	Cote Rotie Style	Silver
Don Hoffard / John Hoosen	2015 Pinot Noir	Oregon		Bronze
Stephen Fine, / C.Larson /E.Roney /G.Bishop /M.Decesaro /S.Kuemper	2016 Bordeaux 76% Cabernet Sauvignon, 12% Malbec, 12% Merlot	Washington	Red Mountain	Silver
Stephen Fine, / C.Larson /E.Roney /G.Bishop /M.Decesaro /S.Kuemper	2015 Bordeaux 90% Cabernet Sauvignon, 10% Malbec	Washington	Red Mountain	Silver
Barb Thomson	2017 Viognier	Washington	Yakima Valley	Gold
Paul Boyechko	2017 Cabernet Franc	Oregon	Milton Freewater	silver
Paul Boyechko	2016 Merlot	Oregon	Milton Freewater	silver
Paul Boyechko	2016 Pinot Noir 115 & 777	Oregon	Momtazi	Bronze
Marilyn Brown	2015 Cabernet Franc	Columbia Valley		Gold
William Brown	2016 Pinot Noir	Oregon	Chehalem Mountain Pommard	Bronze
William Brown	2016 Sangiovese	Columbia Valley		Silver

A Walk Alongside Ripeness

Written by Alex Russan

How ripe your grapes are when picked is one of the most important factors in determining what your wine will taste like. Delicious wines of drastically different styles can be made from the exact same vines, simply as a result of harvest time (viticultural practices make a big difference as well). From a consumer perspective, you can see production trends these days shifting from the very ripe styles of the 90's and 2000's (big, lush, powerful wines), to much less ripe offerings (lighter, fresher, elegant wines), with many of these lighter wines being produced from the same vineyards that their bigger



from. As a home winemaker (and often as a commercial one), if you are purchasing grapes, pick time may be the one factor in the vineyard you can control, and, thankfully, it is a huge one!

This article is a journey in the life of a grape from under- to over-ripeness. From bright fruit to dark, earth to opulence, pyrazines to field oxidation. All grapes develop in their own ways, so to an extent these are generalizations that may not always be the case for all grapes of all sites, but it is a solid guide, aiming to help you harvest at the moment that will be most parallel with your stylistic goals as a winemaker.

Let's get something out in the open here: The concept of ripeness is a moving target, and, quite frankly, a bit of a mess! Ripeness does not progress in a simple linear fashion. All of the different factors that determine ripeness develop somewhat, or entirely, independently of one another, and each will have a different pace every year. Vineyard management practices will also affect the pace of many factors. Sugar levels, acidity levels, and grape taste are the most common parameters used to decide when to pick, but there are many more — 20 worth considering, according to the insightful *Winegrape Berry Assessment Handbook* by Winter, Whiting, and Rousseau!

If you're growing your own grapes, you're able to pick at will, and micromanagement of any and all ripening variables is an option. For the rest of us who are purchasing grapes, however, Brix and, perhaps, acidity levels will likely be the only indicators of ripeness we will receive prior to requesting a harvest date. That being the case, understanding the grape variety and site is crucial to understanding how "ripe" the grapes will be (and how close they will be developmentally) relative to those numbers — which, to be clear, are very important numbers, but do not tell the entire story.

For example, a Chardonnay picked at 21 °Brix in a hot climate will be very different than that of a cool climate: The hot climate will be well into tropical aromatics with lower acid, whereas the cool climate will remain on the stony and citric side and contain more acid. In the same vein, a Chardonnay picked at 3.1 pH in the hot climate would likely be grossly under ripe and green, with very low sugars, whereas the cool climate may be well developed with reasonable sugar levels. Understanding where the different ripening variables will be relative to one another for a grape in a specific climate is paramount to picking at the moment that will lead to the wine you want.

The same goes for vintage variation, although you cannot completely control the pace of the many ripening variables (and vertical tastings would be boring if you could!), you can choose to pick earlier or later, aiming to keep the wine in line with your style goals and for what would be best for that vintage.

A factor I rarely hear discussed, and one I consider of the utmost importance to pick decisions, is the stage of aromatic development of the grape at the time of picking. This, of course, is not a factor that can currently be measured and is also one of the only factors that cannot be directly manipulated post-harvest. Brix, acidity levels, tannin, and color can all be measured, as well as manipulated after harvest. Beyond what the grape provides, aromatics can only be imprecisely tinkered with via yeast selection, added to with oak, or, especially in whites, use of enzyme preparations high in beta-glucosidases. The type of aromatics a grape will yield change tremendously during ripening, and, I believe, so does the degree to which a grape can express its individual *terroir*.

Of course, matching an appropriate grape variety to a vineyard site is critical in growing grapes in which ripeness characteristics will come together harmoniously in most years. In vintages or areas where they do not, the aforementioned manipulations or additions may be necessary.

From Véraison to Raisin

Just before véraison — the French term for the onset of ripening, when grapes soften and begin to take on their eventual color — a grape is intensely acidic and bitter, lacking sweetness, hard, and not particularly aromatic. Green tasting pyrazines are at their most concentrated and powerful at this moment. From a grape's standpoint, its tasting this way is a great idea: Your seeds aren't yet viable and ready to create a new vine, so tasting terrible discourages potential seed dispersing fauna from eating you until your seed is ready to create a new vine (this is an instance where green means stop and red means go!). Seeds are the first part of the grape to mature (which, in the seed's case, means its viability), and this

happens just before véraison begins.

The time between véraison and harvest is usually between one and two months. Heat spikes can cause great jumps in sugar accumulation, especially in varieties like Pinot Noir, particularly in later stages of ripeness. On the other hand, cold spells can easily add weeks, stalling sugar accumulation and, depending on the temperature, slowing acid loss and overall grape development. After the onset of véraison, if still picked “under ripe,” prior to pyrazine and acid loss, as well as tannin maturation, a wine will most likely have green, vegetal aromas, and be unpleasantly acidic and bitter. If you’ve ever tasted a grape in this stage of development, it is not a flavor that quickly leaves the mouth or memory.

At the beginning of reasonable ripeness, white wines (roughly 19.5–22 °Brix, 3.0–3.3 pH) will generally have more citric, floral, “mineral,” or stony aromas, and in reds (roughly 21–24 °Brix, 3.3+ pH) more earthy, meaty, herbal, and berry aromas. Grapes picked at this point have a more diverse aroma profile than most wines picked on the riper end of the spectrum, where complexities progressively become more fruit dominated. These wines will often have lighter bodies, be more lean (the opposite of fat) and “angular,” and may have more astringent tannins in their youth. Stylistically, these are the types of wines people refer to as “Old World.” They can be more elegant and finesse-focused and may show best at the dinner table (in part due to higher acid levels), whereas riper grapes would more likely yield “New World” wines that are bolder and fuller, lush and more powerful, and show best on their own. These earlier picked wines will be in the 12–14% alcohol range. Some may disagree, but I am of the opinion that wines in this ripeness range usually demonstrate best the effects of their origins (*terroir*).

At these earlier levels of ripeness, certain grapes — think the Sauvignon family — can still have higher pyrazine levels. This is an instance where weather and vineyard management — specifically leaf removal in the fruit zone — can make or break a vintage; ensuring grapes have had sufficient light and heat exposure to get pyrazines to the desired level is crucial. At equivalent levels of ripeness, Chardonnay, for example, in most climates will have negligible amounts of pyrazines, whereas Sauvignon Blanc may remain too green without cultural intervention.

Tannins at earlier stages of ripeness are less polymerized, and therefore more bitter (and less astringent), and seed tannins (smaller and more bitter) are more extractable as well. This means tannins in earlier stages of berry development are more aggressive, and wines may need a longer time to age both in barrel and bottle before being ready to drink. In the same way, cold vintages versus warm vintages may need the same treatment — more and less time to age prior to readiness, respectively — as the tannins will be less developed/polymerized in cooler years, and more in warmer years.

At further levels of ripeness in whites (roughly 22–24 °Brix, 3.4–3.6 pH), the citric, floral, and stony aromas metabolize into more tropical aromas. For reds (roughly 24–25 and 3.5+ pH), the range of aromas becomes increasingly fruit dominated. Earth and herbaceous aromas turn into cherry, plum, and darker fruit and spice aromas.

Malic acid declines as ripening progresses (in some varieties like Mourvèdre, pH quickly shoots up relative to sugar accumulation), leading to the perception of weight. (Higher glycerol production is often thought to have the same effect; however, concentrations higher than what is found in wine would be necessary for the presumed effect). A larger diurnal shift (a larger shift in temperature from day to night) helps retain acidity, but does not have the same effect on the pace of aroma development. The higher sugar levels mean higher alcohol levels, which, together with the fruitier aroma profile, can make a wine taste sweet. Both lower acid and higher alcohol may hinder a wine’s versatility at the table, but it is also what makes them much easier to enjoy on their own.

Acid loss — as well as aroma development and loss — can be slowed relative to the other ripening variables by creating more shade in the fruit zone. By having more shade on clusters, either by less leaf pulling above the fruit or by various vine training forms, grapes retain a pH of 0.1 or 0.2 lower at the time of harvesting. Additionally, this is a great way to slow the development of aromatic compounds/precursors (for example, keep them in the citric/floral or earthy end of the spectrum longer), as well as to retain more of them, especially in reds. Aromatic compounds and precursors reach their greatest concentration prior to that of phenolic maturity in grapes, and this technique can help to narrow the time gap between them. Of note, color development in the vast majority of grape varieties is not affected by sunlight, so this would not decrease color concentration.

At the more extreme end of ripeness (26+ °Brix), grapes often begin to dehydrate (raisin), and it is at this point that “overripe” and dried fruit character enter the picture. Wines this ripe are usually very lush, soft, and have a pronounced perception of sweetness and weight.

Particularly in the New World, if a wine will be 15% alcohol or higher, watering back the wine to reduce the alcohol percentage is common. Some producers, seeking this profile, may choose to leave their grapes on the vine until heavily raisined, reaching 30+ °Brix (this is due to water evaporation in the grape, as opposed to continued sugar production by the leaves, which may have fallen off at this point), watering back before beginning fermentation to more typical sugar levels (and levels that won’t kill the yeast before they finish their job).

This is as valid a stylistic choice as any, but from a structural or winemaking standpoint, grapes this ripe can prove problematic. More and more anthocyanins become oxidized while still in the grape (this is known as “field oxidation”) from the

extended hangtime. This means fewer and fewer anthocyanins can polymerize with tannins, therefore lower amounts of stable anthocyanins and tannins, leading to a wine that is fruit-forward and ready to drink young, but which will also see early browning, early tannin precipitation, and therefore a shorter life for the wine.

There are beautiful wines made in these ripeness levels from all over the world, though I personally feel at this level of ripeness much of what was unique about grapes from a particular site has been lost. Generic ripe fruit character takes over, and wines from very different origins and grapes taste fairly homogenous. Differences in processing and oak selections become more important quality differentiators. Philosophically speaking, I believe wines at these levels of ripeness are more a product of processing and winemaking than the fruit and vineyard site themselves (I'm reminded here of Randall Grahm's lectures on "*vin d'effort*" versus "*vin du terroir*"). Acidity is greatly diminished and where a higher pH would be less of a concern for a wine with a sturdy structure, much more able to absorb oxygen, it means a wine is at even greater risk for microbial attack.

Trying to decide when to pick? Head to your local wine shop. In this day and age, it should be easy to find versions of the same grape at different ripeness levels, perhaps even from the area you are sourcing or growing your grapes.

To compare apples to apples, it would be ideal to try at least two wines from the same vineyard and vintage, from producers of different styles (more and less ripe). Though this will likely be fairly expensive, as single vineyard bottlings from desired vineyards rarely come cheap. Another more economical option would be two Old World wines (where it is easier to find higher quality wines at a lower price point) from the same region and vintage, made in different styles. Ask the salesperson at your favorite shop to guide you toward two that contrast each other, one riper, one less ripe. Watch out for heavily oaked wines, as heavy oak influence would add another variable, making the effect on fruit ripeness less apparent.

Although not always possible to make the exact style of wine you want to make from the grapes you have access to, viticultural practices, winemaking techniques, and the all important moment of pick are powerful ways to goad style in the desired direction. The more familiar you become with a grape variety, vineyard, and region, the more complete a picture you will see from the information you are given.



Selecting Yeast Roundtable

There are many commercial yeast strains available for home winemakers to choose from. And that list doesn't even count the numerous other strains marketed and packaged for commercial wineries and then broken into smaller sizes suitable for home winemakers at some retail shops. With all of these options, how should a winemaker go about determining what strain they should choose? Sure, manufacturers recommend styles that their yeast strains may work best with, but that still leaves you with a handful of options. There are many factors to consider, starting with the characteristics you want the yeast to impart on your wine.

For tips on selecting the best strains to get the job done, we asked four experts with various wine and yeast-related backgrounds to give us a hand.



Shea A.J. Comfort helped start MoreWine! in 2000. Over the next four years he did intensive fermentation research on yeast, oak, malolactic bacteria, tannins, and oxygen. He has been an on-going contract winemaker for Lallemand since 2001, creating yeast and malolactic bacteria trials along with giving technical winemaking presentations throughout the country. Since 2007 he has been working with individual winemakers with his independent winemaking consultation business.



Michael Dawson is the Brand Manager at Wyeast Laboratories, Inc. in Odell, Oregon, which provides fresh, pure liquid yeast to hobbyists and professional winemakers and brewers around the world. Before coming to Wyeast, Michael worked as the Brand Manager and Senior Product Development Manager at Northern Brewer in St. Paul, Minnesota.



*Pat Henderson is the Senior Winemaker at Kenwood Vineyards in the Sonoma Valley of California. In addition to his work at Kenwood, he has been a winemaking instructor at Santa Rosa Junior College for more than two decades and is also the co-author of the textbook *About Wine* (Delmar Learning, 2007).*



Kevin Lane joined Fermentis (Red Star) in 2013 as the Technical Sales Manager for the United States and Canada. He has been working in the potable alcohol industries for suppliers or as a brewer for the last 10 years and has been passionately pursuing knowledge about all potable alcohol production.

How can yeast selection shape a wine or how can you use different strains of yeast to design a wine?

Shea A.J. Comfort - Next to the actual fruit, yeast strain selection is the most important element that will determine the quality and style of the wine. Each strain has its strengths and weaknesses par rapport to their ability to structure, express fruit, and ferment. If we take the time to understand these, we are creating a very powerful base to draw from when we set out to create our wines.

Michael Dawson - Depending on choice of strain and fermentation protocols, yeast can be used to enhance or accentuate varietal or process-driven character (as in a big, complex, oaky red); or it can basically just do the work of fermentation and then get out of the way (as in a light, crisp, approachable white).

Pat Henderson - The type of yeast that you use will certainly affect the flavor of your wine. Think of yeasts as one of the tools in a winemaker's kit that can be used to tweak the flavor in a certain direction or avoid problems that might develop during fermentation.

Kevin Lane - Yeast by itself does not make a good or bad wine. The quality of the raw material is the essential point. In this context, yeast can contribute to design the wine we want and to create some value. One example is the aromatic richness. Yeast can contribute with fermentative aromas, mainly esters, or contribute to release some others, like volatile thiols or terpenes. Neutral yeast is not necessarily a bad choice. Sometimes the richness of the varietal would not like to be altered. In addition, yeast can contribute to polyphenol and color extraction, and some sweetness with producing different levels of glycerol. Some yeasts are more prone to autolyze and contribute better to mouthfeel than others.

Why is it important to match a yeast strain to grape variety, and how should a home winemaker go about doing it?

Shea A.J. Comfort - Each strain has a certain type of ester profile, both in how much of the fruit is expressed, as well as the actual qualities of the fruit itself. To illustrate: If a yeast is known for strong tropical aromas of pineapple and guava, you may not want to pair that with Cabernet Sauvignon.

Michael Dawson - If I could suggest a slight rephrasing: It's important to match yeast strain to desired outcome — the winemaker's vision of the finished product. There are certainly some tried-and-true combos of yeast strain with a specific varietal or style, but there may be occasions where we want or need to color outside the lines too.

If we have a vision for the finished wine before the grapes are even picked — flavor, color, mouthfeel, etc. — then the choice of strain (or strains, because maybe we're blending), and all the organoleptic qualities it provides, along with other techniques like cold maceration, malolactic fermentation (MLF), barreling, etc., is a means to help realize that vision in the glass. So: Visualize the wine, then use the manufacturer's specs to select the strain(s) that best matches it.

Pat Henderson - Although there are no hard and fast rules, some strains of yeast work particularly well with individual varieties. Some yeast will promote fruity or varietal character useful when making wines from aromatic varieties like Gewürztraminer or Sauvignon Blanc. If making wine from high-Brix grapes, using a yeast strain that can handle high alcohol will help to avoid a stuck fermentation.

Kevin Lane - We think it is important to match a yeast strain with the type of wine we want to produce and not to strictly base our decision on the grape variety. What does this mean? When you go through a chart with recommendations, you normally see many yeast strains matching with different grape varieties. That way of presenting the information limits our creativity and our possibilities. We encourage winemakers to base their decisions on yeast characteristics and type of wine they want to produce. What are the important characteristics to consider? Fermentation kinetics, production of fermentative aromas, aromatic neutrality, nitrogen dependency, capacity to reveal primary aromas (coming from grapes), temperature tolerance, contribution to mouthfeel, autolysis capacity, etc.

What is the most important thing a home winemaker should consider when choosing between similar yeast strains that both have the ability to ferment to dryness?

Shea A.J. Comfort - Most strains, when following good fermentation protocols (balance the must before you inoculate, proper nutrition with organic forms of nitrogen, temperature control, etc.) will ferment to dryness. Best to choose complementary strains that will create greater complexity than similar ones, no?

Michael Dawson - Which one better suits your vision for the finished wine? Which is most suitable for the style or varietal? Which will work best with your equipment and process? Is one better adapted than the other for your specific must conditions (e.g., nutrient level, planned fermentation temperature, etc.)? What's worked well for you in the past?

Pat Henderson - Assuming the yeast you are using will give you a complete and clean fermentation, look for a yeast strain that will bring out the best in your wine by emphasizing the grapes' varietal character. Also it is best not to use a yeast that is a vigorous fermenter if you don't have a high-sugar must because it will ferment too quickly, this will reduce the final wine's aroma and may cause problems with excess heat from the fermentation.

Kevin Lane - Focus on the type of wine you want to produce, and then select the most appropriate yeast. Openness is essential. Try to focus your decision on the yeast characteristics. This concept is challenging, because you can arrive at

interesting conclusions. For example, if you want to make a high quality Chardonnay fermented in oak barrels, why not choose a red wine yeast promoting mouthfeel and yeast autolysis. If temperature is not an issue, why not? Typical questions to base our decisions are: Do I want to promote polyphenol extraction? Do I want to increase the aromatic complexity with fermentative aromas? Do I want to reveal specific aromas from grapes? Do I want a fruity, fast consuming wine or an oak aged wine? Of course, all the decisions are made assuming we have the correct grape.

How important is it to consider a yeast strain's fermenting characteristics in winemaking? I.E. how important are: Rate of fermentation, volatile acidity (VA) production, SO₂ production, malolactic (ML) compatibility, nutrient requirements, etc.?

Shea A.J. Comfort - If you have control over the basics, and understand how to care for the yeast, then all strains are possible, and problems are avoided (usually). If you don't or can't do so, then adjust accordingly: Pay attention to temperature tolerances and nutrition ratings especially. However, even "easy" strains will make better flavors and aromas if you care for them well and feed them correctly. It's best to learn to take care of the fermentation in any case.

Michael Dawson - I think it's very important — but I'm fussy, and I work for a yeast lab, so YMMV (your mileage may vary). I think it's important to know what you're getting into (particularly in terms of nutrient requirements, SO₂, and the other factors you mention) so you can be prepared to provide the yeast with what it needs for a successful ferment. Will you need to supplement with nutrients? Will you need to cool the fermentation to keep the fermentation rate from ripping or can it free rise, or does it even need external heat? And so on.

Pat Henderson - As mentioned earlier, fast fermenters will help you to get your wine dry but can cause problems if they are used on a wine that does not really require one. As far as the other parameters like (VA, SO₂, etc.), they are usually not a worry with commercially available yeast. However all yeast, whether native or purchased, will benefit from nutrients.

Kevin Lane - Extremely important. If we know how our yeast behaves, we can implement the proper process in order to achieve the desired wine. However, we always need to consider that the values provided by suppliers are just references. These values are obtained under certain specific conditions and just inform the relative behavior within the different strains. In general, these values do not contemplate the influence of some other parameters. For example, a yeast strain characterized as a low volatile acidity producer will probably produce high volatile acidity when must conditions favors its production.

What are your thoughts on selecting a yeast strain based on the ideal conditions where a winemaker will be fermenting (temperature, etc.) vs. selecting the ideal yeast strain for the wine style they are making?

Shea A.J. Comfort - If you are fermenting in a situation where you can't control the temp (don't have the proper cooling equipment), choose the strain that is best rated for heat tolerance and a lower/medium fermentation rate that is appropriate for your grape and style. Everything else is easy to correct for and adjust, so there is no excuse for any other issues.

Michael Dawson - This is a bit of a nature vs. nurture question . . . choosing strain based on style vs. actual conditions — both important, both fairly situational. I would say that in most cases a "non-ideal" or nontraditional strain that enjoys ideal fermentation conditions would trump an "ideal" strain for a varietal or style that's coping with non-ideal conditions. For example — a Riesling must inoculated with a traditional German white strain (an ideal choice on paper) that's fermented at 85 °F (29 °C) (non-ideal) is probably going to be further from the Platonic ideal of a Riesling than the same must fermented with, say, a Champagne yeast at 60 °F (16 °C).

Pat Henderson - Obviously you want to make the most flavorful wine possible so you would like to use the yeast strain that showcases the best of the variety, just remember that if fermentation has problems they might outweigh any positive aspects you might get. I would recommend if you are using a yeast strain that might have a hard time fermenting be sure to baby the yeast with lots of nutrients, a large inoculum, and a gentle rehydration.

Kevin Lane - Both are essential and the best is to consider both approaches to make the right decision. Choosing the ideal conditions where the winemaker will be fermenting will contribute to obtain predictable and good fermentations, which is essential to avoid undesirable attributes in the wine. Fortunately, usually there's more than one option. Some of them can contribute to shape the wine in the correct direction you would like to go.

If time is not an issue, when/why might you want to choose a slower fermenting yeast strain from a faster fermenting one?

Shea A.J. Comfort - Temperature is more important than time. If you have a fermentation that is moving along and the temperature is not out of your ideal range, then that will make nice wine. If you have higher temperatures or a heat spike that creates more volatile sulfur compounds (H₂S, etc.), this makes a poorer wine. It is worth remembering that organic forms of nitrogen (Fermaid-O, for example) are more complex and are broken down slower than Di-ammonium Phosphate (DAP), so by using them you can really limit heat spikes and run away fermentations. This is a nice bonus you get from using proper nutrition.

Michael Dawson - To ensure preservation of bouquet and varietal character in a cool white wine fermentation, or to help

interesting conclusions. For example, if you want to make a high quality Chardonnay fermented in oak barrels, why not choose a red wine yeast promoting mouthfeel and yeast autolysis. If temperature is not an issue, why not? Typical questions to base our decisions are: Do I want to promote polyphenol extraction? Do I want to increase the aromatic complexity with fermentative aromas? Do I want to reveal specific aromas from grapes? Do I want a fruity, fast consuming wine or an oak aged wine? Of course, all the decisions are made assuming we have the correct grape.

How important is it to consider a yeast strain's fermenting characteristics in winemaking? I.E. how important are: Rate of fermentation, volatile acidity (VA) production, SO₂ production, malolactic (ML) compatibility, nutrient requirements, etc.?

Shea A.J. Comfort - If you have control over the basics, and understand how to care for the yeast, then all strains are possible, and problems are avoided (usually). If you don't or can't do so, then adjust accordingly: Pay attention to temperature tolerances and nutrition ratings especially. However, even "easy" strains will make better flavors and aromas if you care for them well and feed them correctly. It's best to learn to take care of the fermentation in any case.

Michael Dawson - I think it's very important — but I'm fussy, and I work for a yeast lab, so YMMV (your mileage may vary). I think it's important to know what you're getting into (particularly in terms of nutrient requirements, SO₂, and the other factors you mention) so you can be prepared to provide the yeast with what it needs for a successful ferment. Will you need to supplement with nutrients? Will you need to cool the fermentation to keep the fermentation rate from ripping or can it free rise, or does it even need external heat? And so on.

Pat Henderson - As mentioned earlier, fast fermenters will help you to get your wine dry but can cause problems if they are used on a wine that does not really require one. As far as the other parameters like (VA, SO₂, etc.), they are usually not a worry with commercially available yeast. However all yeast, whether native or purchased, will benefit from nutrients.

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Michael Dawson - Co-inoculation of yeast and malolactic bacteria can be a time-saver by eliminating the sometimes leisurely duration of a post-alcoholic fermentation MLF; and it helps the bacteria avoid some adverse post-fermentation conditions like alcohol concentration, nutrient depletion, etc. Conversely, you have to be careful about initial sulfite additions to avoid inhibiting the ML bacteria, which can create some risk of other microbes taking hold in the must; and there can be a risk of acetification by the ML bacteria if the yeast slows or stops mid-fermentation.

Pat Henderson - We have been doing this for a while at our winery and have found it works very well, just be sure to inoculate with malolactic after the alcoholic fermentation is going strong.

Kevin Lane - The MLF concurrently with the alcoholic fermentation (AF) can reduce the vinification time and can help protect the wine from spoilage. It is well accepted that bacteria inoculated in must performs better than those inoculated after AF. ML bacteria can adapt better to increasing levels of ethanol in the must and complete the MLF faster. However, interferences with the AF should be seriously considered, since ML bacteria can affect it negatively. In addition, there is a risk of potential increase in VA. We believe that co-inoculation could be a useful tool for winemakers, but not necessarily needed in most cases, and is sometimes very risky. We strongly suggest not to follow this practice without any experience.

Do you have any other advice about choosing winemaking yeast strains?

Shea A.J. Comfort - Take the time to run trials and you will be rewarded.

Pat Henderson - Try a lot of strains and figure out which work best for the wine you are making.

Kevin Lane - Have fun with it! There are no regulations on what you can and cannot try when choosing a wine yeast (or other yeast) at home. Home wine is not subjected to the same, strict legal guidelines as commercial wine. The important thing for a home winemaker, is to enjoy the process and the end results. Take into consideration as much information as you can about different wine yeast strains and apply that to what you want in the end!



**2018 National
Amateur
Competition**
Hyatt Regency Buffalo
Buffalo, NY
Oct. 30 - Nov. 1, 2018

We invite you to submit your homemade wines to the 2018 American Wine Society Amateur Winemakers Competition. The AWS has conducted this prestigious Amateur and Commercial wine competition annually for over 40 years. More info at: <http://awc@americanwinesociety.org>



Deadlines

Paperwork can be submitted now.
Deadline is October 21, 2018

Delivery of wine is accepted from September 1 and
deadline October 24, 2018 to:

Leonard Oaks
ATTN: AWS-AWC
10609 Ridge Road
Medina, NY 14103

Competition Inquiries

Melissa Bartlett

Email: awc@americanwinesociety.org

Call: 703-969-4752

On September 29th a few Portland Winemakers Club members attended the Grand opening of "Parrett Mountain Cellars" near Newburg. A dream come true for members Dennis & Marlene Grant.



Portland Winemakers Club

Leadership Team – 2018

President: **Phil Bard** phil@philbard.com

- Set agenda for the year
- 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: **Barb Stinger** kbstinger@frontier.com

- Arrange speakers for our meetings

Chair for Tastings: **Bill Brown & Barb Stinger** bbgoldieguy@gmail.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 & Alice Bonham** brown.marilynjean@gmail.com

- Gala / Picnic / parties

alice@alicedesigns.org

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