

Portland  
Winemakers  
Club



# Portland Winemakers Club

September 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

Those of you who have been attending meetings know that we are searching for a new place to meet, as the time has come for us to relieve Marj of having to open and close Oak Knoll for us every month. It goes without saying, but I'll reiterate, we are hugely indebted to her for 50 years of participation in the club and her graciousness in offering up a free facility for our use. Our search for a new home is on! We have to find a place by January 2019, I've sent out guidelines for you in case you want to make some initial inquiries at places you think might be prospects. In a perfect world we would find somewhere on the west side of Portland proper but perhaps a bit closer to town as that likely would be most central for everyone. As traffic is an issue, I think staying outside of the downtown area would be best, but we have pretty specific needs that may not be easily found just anywhere.

At the next meeting we will continue our discussion on this and hopefully formulate a list of prospective meeting places which our relocation committee can explore in more depth. I encourage everyone to attend!

Finally, Marj is undergoing heart surgery on Sept. 17th. We wish her the best and a speedy recovery.

Phil



## Misc. Information

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

### • Large crop predicted in the Northwest

All signs are pointing to an above- average wine grape crop in the Northwest, and growers from British Columbia to Oregon were busy thinning clusters in mid-August as véraison kicked in.

### • Montinore hires viticulturist Karen Peterson

is the new viticulturist at Montinore Estate in Forest Grove, Ore. Peterson comes to Montinore Estate after working at Domaine Drouhin Oregon as a vineyard assistant and later at A to Z Wineworks as a viticulturist. Peterson will be responsible for Montinore's 250 acres of vineyards.

### • At Naumes Crush & Fermentation in Medford,

winemaker Chris Graves finds wine grape buyers are more likely now to have smoke taint clauses written into their contracts, a clause that might read as follows: "Buyer reserves the right to sample the fruit for smoke taint. If the test results are above 2 parts per billion, the buyer has the right to reject the fruit." The acceptable smoke taint level is negotiated between the parties and the buyer usually bears the cost of testing, approximately \$100 per block.

• **Wine doesn't pair well with weed**, according to a new lawsuit. "Wine Spectator" magazine, has filed a lawsuit accusing the operators of "Weed Spectator" of infringing its trademarks, and copying its familiar 100-point rating scale for wine to rate cannabis.

**Note: The next regular meeting will be Wednesday, September 19th at 7:00 PM at the home of Ken & Barb Stinger. The Address is: [15395 NW Troon Drive, Portland, OR 97229](https://www.google.com/maps/place/15395+NW+Troon+Drive,+Portland,+OR+97229). Let your smart phone guide you or Google map it. Reminders will be E-mailed.**

**September agenda: "Other Reds Tasting". This will be member produced red varietals blind tasting and scoring. Other reds are varietals such as Tempranillo, Syrah, Petite Sirah, Zinfandel, Sangiovese, Nebbiolo, Barbera, Grenache, etc., do not include Bordeaux varietals or Pinot Noir (e.g. *Bordeaux varietals are Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Malbec, Petit Verdot, Cabernet Franc & Carmenere*).**

**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. Also bring 2 wine glasses for tasting.**

**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/>**

## August Meeting Minutes

(30 present)

- Two visitors this evening.
- Marj informed us that Oak Knoll would not be available for our club meetings starting in January 2019. Everyone reminisced about our long history here at Oak Knoll.
- Phil led a discussion about possible new meeting locations. Members need to e-mail the Secretary with possibilities without committing at this time.
- Phil thanked Marilyn Brown & Alice Bonham for a job well done on this years picnic.
- Barb Thomson said we had about 35 people at the picnic. Many paid next years dues and we have about \$2400 in the account.
- Damon Lopez reminded everyone about our next tour at Chris James Cellars on on August 25<sup>th</sup>.

**Bill Brown & Barbara Stinger conducted this evenings tasting and judging of All White varietals. The tasting was done blind. Results are shown in the table below.**

#	Name	Varietal	Gold	Silver	Bronze	None	Total Score	Medal Score	Medal	Rank
1	Jon Kahrs	2017 Viognier Sparkling	4	25	1		63	2.10	Silver	4
2	Bob Juth	2015 Pinot Gris		4	22	4	30	1.00	Bronze	9
3	Hoffard/Hooson/Savage	2017 Pinot Gris	11	19			71	2.37	Silver	2
4	Alex Knotts/Bob Juth	2015 Pinot Gris			9	21	9	0.30	None	11
5	Ken & Barb Stinger	2016 Gewürztraminer		12	16	2	40	1.33	Bronze	8
6	Paul Rogers/Jim Oruda	2014 Riesling			8	22	8	0.27	None	12
7	Randy Morgan	2017 Riesling	1	11	18		43	1.43	Bronze	6
8	Barb Thomson	2017 Viognier	5	13	12		53	1.77	Silver	5
9	Hoffard/Hooson/Savage	2017 Viognier	10	18	2		68	2.27	Silver	3
10	Jon Kahrs	2015 Chardonnay	1	12	16	1	43	1.43	Bronze	6
11	Juliana Inman	2013 Merlot Rose			23	7	23	0.77	Bronze	10
12	Bill and Marilyn Brown	2017 Cab. Franc Rose	23	7			83	2.77	Gold	1

- **Despite what cartoons** have taught us, the coyote can run up to 43 miles per hour while the roadrunner can only run up to 32 miles per hour.

On August 25, nine members of the PWC drove to the West of Carlton and toured Chris James Cellars with owners Chris and Beth. We started the tour by tasting a couple of their white wines then continued the tasting while touring the vineyard. Chris concentrates on whites & Pinot Noir but wants to produce some heavier reds in the future. He is presently producing about 2500 cases per year. We tasted an unusual sparkling, a blend of a dry cider and Gewürztraminer that was surprisingly good also a varietal named "Legrein" that I had not heard of. His straight Gewürztraminer was superb. Pictures below.



Our helicopter arrived as we ended the tour to whisk us away to our next adventure.

# Portland Winemakers Club, Oregon State Fair Results

Chemeketa Community College Northwest Wine Studies Center conducted & judged the Fairs amateur competition. They picked the top 3 wines in in each category (Reds, Whites & Fruit wines) and awarded them all Gold medals that were ranked 1st, 2nd & 3rd place golds. They then picked the best of the 1st place golds & awarded that wine “Best of Show” (won by a Pinot Gris). About 50 entries total. PWC won 5 out of the 10 medals awarded

## The winners are:

Marilyn & Bill Brown	2015 Cabernet Franc	First place Gold (Reds)
Ken & Barb Stinger	2016 Malbec	Second place Gold (Reds)
Ken & Barb Stinger	2015 Bordeaux Blend	Third place Gold (Reds)
Don Hoffard, John Hooson	2017 Viognier	Second place Gold (Whites)
Barb Thomson	2017 Viognier	Third place Gold (Whites)



## Cabernet Sauvignon: Master Class

Written by Wes Hagen

*Welcome, winemaking students, to the Master Class on Cabernet Sauvignon. To begin this class we will go over the syllabus and start with a brief history, an introduction of the guest lecturers, the curriculum overview, and hammer home the most important facts about making Cab Sauvignon that I want each of you to take away and put to use in your home wineries. The focus in this article will tiptoe, dance, and stomp around the three concepts of **source**, **ripeness**, and **tannin management** — as they are of the highest importance to the Cab Masters who will contribute to this class.*

### A short, savage history of the world’s favorite grape:

- Many wine drinkers are ignorant of the fact that Cabernet Franc is a far older wine varietal than Cabernet Sauvignon. Cabernet Sauvignon seems to be the rock star of the Bordeaux wine firmament — especially after Merlot was caught lip-synching in the movie *Sideways*. But truth is sometimes stranger than fiction. In the 1600s in the area between the Languedoc and Bordeaux (southwest to south-central France), an accidental cross was created hybridizing Cabernet Franc and Sauvignon Blanc. Yes! That’s right, Cabernet Sauvignon is a cross between a red and a white grape, and of course has been genetically modified by farmers/winemakers for almost 500 years by field (massal) and clonal selection.
- Cabernet Sauvignon gained popularity in Bordeaux, France after Mouton’s properties had great success with the grape and were able to share cuttings and help the area build their acreage of planted Cabernet Sauvignon. From a few acres at Mouton, Cabernet Sauvignon has now eclipsed every other wine grape in the world for global dominance, with more than 850,000 acres dedicated and producing in 2018.
- Cabernet Sauvignon is not considered a “noble grape.” Noble grapes are those that are rarely, or never, blended and are considered to make a perfect and “whole” wine with no added blending components. (Examples commonly posited are Pinot Noir and Riesling.) It took until 1976 for varietally-labeled Cabernet Sauvignon to launch into the rarified air of global fine wine when a Stag’s Leap Cabernet Sauvignon received the highest score in a blind, French wine competition hosted by Steven Spurrier: The Judgement of Paris. Being chosen by French wine experts over first growth Bordeaux changed the wine world dramatically and gave Cabernet Sauvignon a spotlight (and blue chip brand name) that has yet to dim.
- As the muscle in red wine blends (Bordeaux, Super Tuscans, and Meritage being the most famous examples), there is nothing in the wine world as popular as Cab Sauvignon. Its popularity among growers increased exponentially in the varietal’s youth (and maturity) because of a durable skin, resistance to foul weather like hail and rain, its deep color and tannin structure, its love for a French/Gallic tradition of storing/aging wine in oak barrels, its propensity for long-term aging, and how fantastically it was received with cuisine. Cabernet Sauvignon is now blended with almost every red grape on the planet to add tannin, depth, structure, color, and density.



### Meet the Professional Winemakers of the Cabernet Sauvignon Master Class

#### Clay Brock:

After growing up in the Napa Valley where his dad managed vineyards, Clay Brock seemed destined for a life in wine. He wasted no time in building his credentials, starting with earning a degree in Agricultural Business Management from

California Polytechnic State University located in the heart of the Central Coast. Clay fell in love with the region, which was just beginning to gain a reputation for the quality of its wines. So, after graduation, he put down Central Coast roots when he accepted the post of Assistant Winemaker at Byron Winery. He later became Winemaker at Edna Valley and then spent seven years at Zaca Mesa as Vice President of Winemaking.

In 2008, destiny called again when he took over as Winemaker at Wild Horse Vineyards and Winery in Paso Robles where he was given freedom to craft his own approach to winemaking. His accomplishments were recognized in 2010 when he was named Winemaker of the Year by the Paso Robles Wine Country Alliance and the Central Coast Vineyard Team.

“Making wine is a balancing act,” Clay says. “Yes, there are things we can do once the fruit is picked to bring out the best in the grapes. But it’s also critical to not interfere with the magic that takes place in the vineyards.”

In 2013, Clay became the General Manager and Winemaker for Estancia in Monterey County. Having vast vineyards while working for Estancia gave Clay more leeway to make wines that expressed the Central Coast.

In March 2016, Clay assumed the role of Director of Winemaking for Turn Key Wine Brands. In his new role Clay can work with fruit from prestigious sources and a wide array of varieties from sought-after appellations.

After 30 years in the wine industry, Clay continues to say “I still believe I have the coolest job on the planet.”

### **Clay’s Experience with Cabernet Sauvignon:**

- “I worked a single vintage (1991) at Robert Sinskey Vineyards as Cellar Master (Stag’s Leap Estate fruit and a little Carneros AVA from Truchard Vineyard) and was able to work with some amazing Cab fruit at this point in my career. The winery is on the famed Silverado Trail in Napa, California.”

- “In 1997 I made the Edna Valley Reserve ‘Simpson Vineyard’ Westside Paso Robles Cabernet Sauvignon, about 300 cases if I recall correctly. This would be in San Luis Obispo County, California.”

- “From 2008–2012 I was able to make five vintages of Wild Horse Core Cabernet Sauvignon –About 40,000 cases annually of the broad market wine, and the “Unbridled” Reserve was around 1,000 cases annually. This was in Templeton, California, just south of Paso Robles, San Luis Obispo County.”

- “While winemaker at Estancia I made two vintages of Cabernet Sauvignon for the broad market, 2013 and 2014 vintage. The production was about 230,000 cases annually of Cabernet Sauvignon, and we also produced a Meritage (containing Cab,) at about 30,000 cases annually. Estancia’s production facility is near the Lodi-Woodbridge area in Northern California, between Sacramento and Stockton.

### **The Essence of Cabernet Sauvignon is . . .**

“For me it is adequate weight or density, without being heavy. Black fruit, cassis, cedar, balanced alcohol. I believe extended time on the skins provides opportunity (not guaranteed) for longevity. Site trumps viticulture.”

### **Clay’s Cabernet Sauvignon Home Winemaking Protocol:**

- Harvest around 25.5 °Brix
- Gently crush fruit
- 40 ppm SO<sub>2</sub>
- Inoculate 1 gram/gallon BDx yeast, prepared as instructions dictate
- Manage the cap by punching down 2–3 times per day
- Seal fermenter at about 0 °Brix and gas daily
- Allow 40+ days total skin contact
- Drain and combine basket pressed wine to barrel (all second fill Taransaud French Oak)
- Age 18–24 months
- Bottle unfinned, unfiltered

### **Thomas Fertel:**

Throughout his childhood in Louisiana, Fertel was surrounded by fine wines and exquisite cuisine. He earned his degree in Chemistry at Louisiana State University, as his paternal grandmother had done before him, but it was this lifelong appreciation for the world of food and wine that then led him to California.

There he worked as a harvest intern for renowned wineries such as Peachy Canyon Winery and Frank Family Vineyards, all while pursuing his masters in Crop Science and Viticulture from Cal Poly San Luis Obispo.

With multiple vintages under his belt, including harvest, cellar, and vineyard work in both California and Burgundy, France, Fertel took a position as an Enologist at Frank Family Vineyards of Napa Valley in Calistoga where he focused on the production of Chardonnay and Cabernet Sauvignon.

After four years there he moved on to work as Harvest Winemaker for Wild Horse Vineyards in Templeton.

In February 2017, Thomas joined Turn Key Wine Brands as the Blending Winemaker bringing experience in both the science and the application of winemaking to the team.

### **Thomas’ Experience with Cabernet Sauvignon:**

- “My first experience was with Paso Robles Cabernet at Peachy Canyon Winery.”
- “I then worked in the Napa Valley at Frank Family Vineyards for five years. We made various tiers of Cabernet from Napa Valley to Rutherford Reserve and a single vineyard hillside Rutherford Cabernet from the estate grown Winston Hill Vineyard.”
- “I was fortunate to purchase a home that had 10-year-old Cabernet Sauvignon vines and I was able to make some garage

wine as well. My tip to garage winemakers would be to take a look at the WineEasy (Blichmann Engineering). I purchased one my second year of garage winemaking and wished I made the purchase a year sooner.”

### **The Essence of Cabernet Sauvignon is . . .**

“To be mindful of the fruit quality and to understand how much oak the wine can handle. I don’t want to over oak a Cabernet just because I can. Another important factor is to be mindful of crop levels, but maybe not in the traditional sense. My master thesis covered crop levels in Cabernet and found that depending on your location, soil content, and water availability, you might be able to hang more Cabernet on the vine at an equal, or even increased, wine quality.

“Cabernet is also very vineyard-driven. The site and farming play a big role in the final wine. On tannins, I think picking decisions go a long way in getting the desired tannins.”

### **Thomas’ Cabernet Sauvignon Home Winemaking Protocol:**

- 26.5 °Brix and water back to 24.5 or 25 depending on the site. Adjust acid to roughly 3.7 pH or 6 g/L titratable acidity.
- Destem but keep whole berry if possible, 40 ppm SO<sub>2</sub>
- Inoculate 1 gram/gallon BDX yeast
- Punch down 3–4 times a day
- Drain and lightly press off when dry. If able, press harder and keep the fraction separate as topping wine.
- Keep topped for months as it goes through malolactic fermentation. If you don’t have the means to test the malic acid levels, taste and listen to the wine over time, you will get a feel for it. Add SO<sub>2</sub> when it tastes rounder and the wine quiets down. If it ever starts to head south, don’t be afraid to pull the SO<sub>2</sub> trigger early.
- Bottle when ready, this is done by taste and means something different to everybody. But a 1-year-old lightly oaked Cabernet is unique in my eyes, especially if you only have a small amount to make.

### **Chuck Gower and Cheryl Dipanfilo**

Meet the (200+!) medal award-winning home winemakers chosen for the Cabernet Sauvignon Master Class. Chuck and Cheryl grow Chardonnay, Pinot Noir, and Cabernet Franc near Boulder, Colorado. They are currently managing and cultivating their third

vineyard of a long and successful home-growing career. Even though they don’t grow Cabernet Sauvignon, they have been very happy purchasing frozen Cabernet Sauvignon from Brehm Vineyards. “We are not bonded, and we never will be,” Chuck says. “That would screw everything up. We like paying our friends and helpers in wine and maintaining a large group of folks we call ‘friends of the vineyard.’”

### **Chuck & Cheryl’s Experience with Cabernet Sauvignon:**

- Have been making wine for 38 years and have been awarded over 200 medals, many of them gold and double-gold. Many of these wines include Cabernet Sauvignon.
- Have won many gold medals at the WineMaker International Amateur Wine Competition for their varietal Cabernet, Cabernet/Merlot blends, and other wines over the years.

### **The Essence of Cabernet Sauvignon is . . .**

“We feel that most commercial Cabs are so dry that the fruit never shows. This really turns off people, especially women. We think that great Cabs should be dry, 14% ABV, and have an identifiable fruit, cherry, blackberry flavor that should linger on the palate. Our wines are a little “come hither” and “flirtatious,” fruit-forward and ripe enough that we get lots of very positive feedback, especially from the ladies.”

### **Chuck & Cheryl’s Cabernet Sauvignon Home Winemaking Protocol:**

- Fruit ripeness: 26-28 °Brix (We don’t pick by numbers except for Brix)
- After the grapes thaw, sulfite to 50 ppm, add RC212, Lallzyme EX, Opti-Red
- Go for hot fermentation at around 85–90 °F (29–32 °C), add Fermaid K on days 1 and 3, rack at 1.005 specific gravity, usually around day 4 or 5.
- Hard stainless steel press to glass, add liquid malolactic culture
- At 1 week, rack with hard splash
- A hot and short fermentation with a very hard press, turns out dry and jammy at 14% ABV
- 3 weeks later, rack, hard splash, sulfite to 50 ppm, no need to check malolactic conversion, it is always done
- 1 month later, fine with egg whites. The following week, rack using #3 plate filter into 2-year-old French oak barrel.
- After 6 months in barrel check sulfite, which is usually around 5–10 ppm. Adjust sulfite back to 50 ppm.
- After in barrel for 1 year check sulfite, which is usually around 5 ppm, and sulfite to 10 ppm, bottle with #1 corks. They’re expensive but worth it.
- We have used this recipe to excellent results: Best of Show, Best Red of Show, and more gold medals than you would find on Michael Phelps’ shelves.

## Take-Home Lessons From Our Master Class:

### Source

- With Cabernet Sauvignon being the most widely grown wine grape on the planet, it cannot be overstated how important the vineyard source is for producing balanced and delicious Cabernet Sauvignon wine. Both Thomas Fettel and Clay Brock included the importance of source in their descriptions of what they thought was the “essence” of Cabernet Sauvignon. It’s important! Frozen juice from a great Cab region is far better than perfectly grown fruit from a climate inhospitable to growing world-class Cab Sauvignon.
- If grown in too cool of a climate, Cabernet Sauvignon wine is thin and green. In too hot of a climate, Cabernet Sauvignon can be flabby and alcoholic.
- Likely no one reading this article knows Tuck Beckstoffer, so getting ToKalon or Beckstoffer Napa Valley Cabernet Sauvignon (starts at \$10,000 a ton, by the way) is not in your future. But it is pretty surprising and encouraging how easy procuring quality Cabernet Sauvignon grapes or frozen must can be in the modern world. Choose a region that is well-known for the quality of Cabernet Sauvignon fruit, and then find a well-respected vineyard that will sell you fruit for a price at or near your budget.
- I strongly believe that spending more money for quality fruit is the single best way to improve the quality of wine — whether a carboy or a 5,000-gallon (19,000-L) tank!
- For value growing regions I love Lodi and Paso Robles. For quality to price ratio, I would add Washington State and Sonoma County — especially Knights Valley and Alexander Valley AVAs. Napa is king, of course, but you’ll be paying extra for the fancy crown.
- Thinking of growing Cabernet Sauvignon in the Midwest or East Coast? 99% of the time, Norton will make a better wine.

### Ripeness

- For those just learning about winemaking, longer hangtime before harvest will generally increase sugar content and lessen acidity.
- Cabernet Sauvignon is picked worldwide between around 20 °Brix (for “White” or “Rosé of Cabernet”) all the way to 30 °Brix (or 30% sugar by weight) to make a hyper-ripe fruit bomb of a wine that would require watering back to ferment to dryness. (30 °Brix Cabernet Sauvignon would produce a wine with 18% alcohol if the yeast weren’t destroyed by ethanol toxicity.)
- Brix is not just about sugar though! Ripeness is a seesaw that we have to wait to balance. Rarely do we get a perfect vintage where the fruit hangs to 25.8 °Brix at 3.6 pH and 6.5g/L of titratable acidity (my ideal for a perfect Cabernet harvest if the flavors were perfectly developed). We are forced to pull the trigger at some point when we balance where the sugar and acids are, where the flavor development is, and importantly: The weather forecast. If a heat spell is coming, the Brix might spike. Deluge of rain? Lose Brix and intensity of flavor, and increase rot.
- Clay Brock suggests around 25.5 °Brix without mentioning pH/acid, but Thomas Fettel likes 3.7 pH and 6 g/L TA in his finished Cab, which would be around 3.55 pH and 6.5 g/L TA at harvest with around 27 °Brix watered back to 24.5. Remember to acidulate your water additions to about 7 g/L (30 g/gallon) tartaric acid to keep the wine in balance.
- Being involved in the farming will make you a better winemaker, but is generally not an option for a home winemaker. If allowed, try to walk the rows where your fruit is being sourced once before pruning, once after shoot thinning, once at véraison, and a few times before harvest to see the fruit, taste and do your own sampling, if allowed. Crush a berry between your fingertip and palm and squish it for 10 seconds in small, macerating circles. Blood-red color should start to leak from the skins if the fruit is ready to make red wine.
- If you can only get your homegrown Cabernet Sauvignon to 17–22 °Brix in most vintages then you chose the wrong grape. If you really want to keep the vineyard, make rosé wine from under ripe fruit.
- Take this with a grain of salt, but I would say, after 25 years of making wine, that my Golden Rule of Cabernet Sauvignon is to let it hang until the weather turns ugly and threatens the crop, or the fruit hits 27 °Brix. Acidulate the must to around 7 g/L TA at 3.6 pH, get a cold-soak for a few days while the must is still chilled, and then rehydrate your BDX yeast and get ready for punch downs!

### Tannin Management

- 90% of tannin management in Cabernet Sauvignon is related to how the fruit comes into your winery.
- Using the same fruit for multiple vintages will let you fine-tune how differing levels of ripeness impacts the tannins in your final Cabernet Sauvignon wines.
- Generally, the riper end of Cabernet Sauvignon will produce softer, more round tannins.
- Under ripe Cabernet Sauvignon will produce harsh, green tannins that no one wants.
- A balanced ripeness, around 24–26 °Brix usually produces Cabernet Sauvignon that has both grippy tannin and enough softness to be consumed within a few years of production.
- Cabernets made at lower Brix, 22–24, often show amazing age-worthiness, but can be a bit angular, tannic, and stubbornly austere when young.
- Tannins soften with time on the skins, time in the barrel, and time in the bottle.
- Consider using an extended maceration. Many first growth Bordeaux wines are made in a hot-room (90 °F/32 °C), where the wine goes through both primary and malolactic fermentations before pressing — with skin contact sometimes lasting 30 days or more! This is an advanced technique that can ruin a wine with volatile acidity (VA) and ethyl acetate if done incorrectly, so be careful!

- If your finished Cabernet Sauvignon is still too hard and tannic before bottling, consider fining or filtering to add some smoothness to your vintage.
- If the wine is too soft/flabby, consider a measured addition of liquid tannin — although I strongly believe that additions beyond yeast and yeast food can be classified as a fruit-sourcing problem more than a winemaking problem. In other words, work as hard as possible to bring in perfect fruit that doesn't need fixing.
- Take notes on ripeness, acid, yeast, ferment times and specifics, vineyard source, etc. and correlate those notes to the final wines. Which vintage was your favorite or won the most awards? Try to replicate what you do in great vintages, and minimize what you do in years the wine comes up short.



## **Aurum Wines Winemaker Experiments with White, Rosé and Amber Pinot Gris**

*Elaine Chukan Brown*

In the Cromwell Basin of Central Otago in New Zealand, **Aurum Wines** grows 1 hectare of Pinot Gris. The vineyard sits in the Pisa flats, near the town of Cromwell, and includes some of the youngest soils of the region, consisting of silt-based, wind-blown loess over schist gravels. The Pinot Gris was planted to a field blend of various clones in 2007. Vintage 2011 offered the first fruit from the planting. Compared to a previous planting of the variety, the **Lawrence** family, who own and operate Aurum, have found that the better plant material, as well as the plant diversity of the field blend have improved both the interest and quality of the resulting wine.

In appreciation of this, winemaker **Lucie Lawrence** chose to experiment with the fruit in the cellar. Over time she settled on dividing it into separate lots to make Pinot Gris three different ways: as a white wine, Rosé and what she calls an “amber” wine, which has some skin contact. The resulting wines are quite distinct and stand out as hallmark examples of the variety from New Zealand.

As she explained, in making each of the wines, her focus was on texture and aroma even if she wanted varying sorts of textural interest between the three. To produce the trial, the Pinot Gris for the three wines was picked simultaneously; the hectare of fruit is brought into the winery over the course of two days based on logistical need for the boutique-sized operation. Picking times were determined based on acid retention, with the fruit usually coming in at 3.2 pH and around 23° Brix.

As the program has evolved to include both Rosé- and Amber-style wines, the skin ripeness has also become a more important aspect of the picking decision. By picking on acid and pH levels, she has been able to rely on natural acidity rather than using acid additions to balance the wine. Once the fruit enters the winery, it is separated into three lots: one lot goes straight to the whole-cluster press for the white wine, while the rest is sent to the destemmer before then being separated into a Rosé lot and an Amber wine lot. Lawrence explained that she has not previously done any trials on stem inclusion from her site. She is currently doing a small lot trial of whole cluster-fermented Pinot Gris with the 2018 vintage.

At least two cellar conditions of Aurum's winery influence some of the choices Lawrence makes in aging each of the three styles of Pinot Gris. Central Otago experiences significant diurnal shift and also quite cold winter temperatures. The winery's ambient temperature is allowed to change with these outdoor temperatures and plays a role in how Lawrence prepares for bottling. This is explained further in relation to each of the wines. Also, Central Otago is a desert environment with minimal rainfall, and the dryness of the region plays a role in how long the wine is aged before bottling, as well as the vessel in which it is aged. This is relevant more especially in relation to the Amber wine.

### **Making White Pinot Gris**

In making a white wine expression of Pinot Gris for Aurum, Lawrence's goal is to capture aromatic purity, flavor complexity and pure fruits. The resulting wine offers pleasing orchard fruit flavors combined with a crunchy minerality and silken mouthfeel through a mouthwatering long finish, as there are layers of complexity as well as impressive freshness. Fruit destined for the white Pinot Gris is put straight to press as quickly as possible in order to avoid extracted skin phenolics. The fruit from the site naturally includes layers of spice, nuttiness and minerality, as well as texture. As a result, even minimal skin contact has not been necessary for the white wine. Lawrence selects a long, slow press cycle, taking three to four hours for around 3 tons of fruit. It is then settled cold overnight in a stainless steel tank, and then moved to another tank and fermented as cold as possible without inoculated yeast or added nutrients. Juice starts at around 14°C to 15° C and is then cooled to 12° C. During fermentation, the temperatures increase slowly, until near the end of the fermentation, when it reaches between 16° C and 17° C. Lawrence has found that the slow fermentation at cool temperatures helps preserve aromatics and fruit character for the wine.

Nutrient levels in the site are strong, but Lawrence has experienced difficulty doing an ambient ferment in tank. In previous years she experimented with barrel-fermented Pinot Gris. Though she prefers not to use the approach for the white wine, she did find that barrel fermentations more readily went through without assistance than with tank ferments. Even so, ferments



since the 2014 vintage have been done entirely without yeast inoculation. The ambient ferment consistently takes between six weeks to two months to finish.

“It ticks along slowly and gets there eventually, but it always get there. I prefer the slow approach to protect the aromatics and fruit flavor,” she said. Lawrence leaves a small amount of residual sugar to help balance the good natural acidity of the site. “At the end we are very careful to taste the wine three to four times a day to get the balance of acid to RS just right.” In 2014 the wine finished just under 4 grams RS, and 13.5 percent alcohol.

Once fermentation has finished, the wine is cooled. It is then sulfured and racked to another tank, off the gross lees, for extended fine lees contact in tank. The duration of the lees contact depends on the conditions of the particular vintage. During this period, the lees are stirred every day or two with a large stainless steel plunger to bring the lees from the bottom to the top of the tank. The wine is tasted daily. Lees contact is stopped when the desired texture in the wine is achieved.

“We want the acidity to still be the leading element in the wine, but we also want enough texture to give it interest,” Lawrence said. The choice to use tank rather than barrel has come from experimentation with both options, and then finally finding a balance of freshness and texture through extended lees contact in tank. “We usually stir the lees for around a month. We choose to use stainless steel rather than barrel as we have found it works more effectively to retain the acid purity and focus of the wine, and then the lees stirring helps it to gain textural interest since it is not done in barrel,” she said. Once the desired texture is found in the wine, the wine is left in the same tank until bottling, still on its fine lees but without any additional stirring.

Four to six months remain until bottling, depending on the rest of the year’s winery logistics. The naturally cold winter temperatures of Central Otago lower the winery temperatures as well. As a result, the wine goes through what is essentially a natural cold settling. Lawrence has found that the longer the wine is left on lees, the less need for protein stabilization; and so when possible, it is preferable to wait longer before bottling. Bottling is always done before outside temperatures warm again in order to avoid having to mechanically cool the wine. Some protein stabilization with bentonite is done prior to bottling. The last steps are to check protein, do a minor bentonite addition for stability and then adjust the sulfur for bottling. The wine goes through a light filtration on the bottling line since there is a small portion of residual sugar, as well as malic acid. There is no fining and no malolactic. After about a year in bottle, the wine is released.

### **Making Pinot Gris Rosé**

The second lot of Pinot Gris goes through the destemmer and is split into two subsequent lots, one for Rosé and another for Amber wine. The white Pinot Gris and Amber wine, however, have both gained such a following that in lower yield years it is the Rosé that is sacrificed in favor of the other two expressions. In 2017, for example, yields were down 25 percent, and the Rosé was not made. The white wine serves as one of the winery’s flagship bottlings, as well as one of its commercial drivers, and cannot be sacrificed as a result. While the Amber wine has less impact on overall commercial sales, it has become one of the key wines of interest for the winery.

In making the Pinot Gris Rosé, the goal is to produce a more savory-focused, still-light style. The resulting wine offers delicate, lifted aromatics, a lighter, drier expression of Pinot Gris on the palate, with mouthwatering acidity, savory zestiness and the phenolic presence to be palate-stimulating and do well with food. The color is a pale, apricot pink.

The fruit for the Pinot Gris Rosé goes through the destemmer and straight into a very cold, open-top tank. The fruit then macerates for around three days. The duration is determined by carefully tasting the juice daily to make sure as much potential color is extracted without extracting green or bitter phenolics. This balance is also part of why harvesting at a balance of fresh acidity and skin ripeness is crucial. While extraction from skins is not extensive, the maceration time still provides some interesting phenolic character that gives shape to the wine, along with the color. Lawrence has found that allowing the tannin character to be present in the wine brings additional body to the resulting wine and a sense of creaminess that means the Rosé can actually be a drier expression of Pinot Gris than the white. The phenolic presence offers balance to the acidity in place of the residual sugar. As a result, the Rosé has less residual sugar than the white wine while still carrying a sense of balanced acidity. In 2014, the wine had between 2 and 3 grams of residual sugar and 13.5 percent alcohol. After the maceration is complete, the wine is put to press. The juice is drained and followed by a long, gentle press cycle. The Rosé is given a similar press cycle as the white, taking about four hours and never going above 1.2 bars for 3 tons of fruit. As Lawrence explains, while the wine might lose some potential must, the gentle press cycle means they can avoid fining the wine. The approach means they are not getting a lot of solids into the wine. The juice that is taken from the press goes immediately into the same tank as the free run to settle together.

Once the Rosé is pressed, it is treated in a similar fashion as the white wine without the lees stirring. After settling, the wine is racked off its gross lees into a new tank on its fine lees but without lees stirring. The wine goes through its same slow, cool process of ambient fermentation and then a natural cold settling, like the white wine. At the end of its aging process, the wine is checked for proteins and stabilized. Sulfur is adjusted for bottling. There is no fining and no ML. The white and the Rosé are generally bottled on the same day with the same aging period.

### **Pinot Gris with Skin Contact: Amber**

The final lot of fruit goes toward making Pinot Gris in what Lawrence calls an Amber wine. For the Amber wine, the Pinot Gris

is fermented on skins, though without extended maceration after fermentation, and goes through ML. The result is a dry wine that retains the distinctive aromatics and mineral site character of the Aurum vineyard while gaining something like the rounder mouthfeel of a barrel-fermented ML Chardonnay and the lightness of a Pinot Noir. Lawrence has also made careful cellar choices to retain freshness. It is quite versatile at the table and also evolves positively with time in bottle.

The fruit for the Amber wine comes in and goes through the destemmer. It is then put in an open-top fermenter typically used for red wine. No sulfur is added. The wine is left alone until it starts fermenting on its own. How fermentation starts is very vintage-dependent, based on the ambient temperature of the cellar that year. The wine is closely monitored, though intervention has not been necessary at this stage.

Cap management is minimal for the wine. It is pushed down by hand or kept wet with a watering can to keep it clean, but the wine is not punched down or pumped over. Management is kept minimal in this way to allow natural extraction without rough or bitter tannin, or excess fruit matter extraction. Lawrence explains that it ferments much like a Pinot and takes around three weeks to finish.

The wine is pressed near the end of fermentation based on the tannin character and overall balance of the wine. Lawrence has experimented with varying lengths of extended maceration. In the 2017 vintage she left a portion of it on skins for three months before pressing. To decide when to press, Lawrence tastes regularly and looks for a balance on the reductive—the skin and lees—and oxidative effects on the wine. As she explains, she is looking to see how the tannins are evolving—how they feel in the mouth. “There is no sulfur added to the wine yet, so we are just relying on the tannins and lees to protect the wine. It is always a mind set to get out of your comfort zone, so it is probably better to go a bit further than you would expect because once you press, the wine is not done. So, you have to think, what do I do now and what is going to happen in the next nine months? The wine is protected by a lot of CO<sub>2</sub> still naturally present in the wine, and the tannin, skin and lees all naturally protect it.”

The Amber wine goes through ML. Once pressed, it goes to its aging vessel and is essentially left until next harvest. When the wine has been put to old oak barrel, it is topped but without any stirring. The Amber and Pinots go through ML naturally when temperatures warm again in the spring.

Recently, Lawrence has shifted her approach from aging simply in barrel, to instead using tank. In 2015, she explained, about halfway through aging, the tannin was getting drier than desired. It had been a particularly dry season that year as well. As a result, Lawrence moved the wine from barrel to a variable capacity stainless steel tank with the fine lees. She found that the change helps preserve more delicate aspects of the aroma and flavor in the wine. She preferred the results and now relies on this approach for aging the wine. It also allows lees contact without oak tannin and helps protect the aromatics without creating a drying tannin structure.

Once the wine finishes ML, it is left alone until the barrels or tank are needed again. The wine undergoes a pretty clean racking and settling, and then is sulfured for the first time and bottled. As the wine has been on lees for about nine months, it does not need protein stabilization. There is no fining. As the wine is completely dry and there is no malic acid, it is also left unfiltered. In these ways, the wine is essentially finished like a Pinot. As Lawrence explained, the wine is allowed to go through ML, not as an acid management technique but instead to make a complete wine without need for filtration. There is usually a small amount of sediment in the bottle, depending on vintage. While tasting the 2014 vintage, sediment was not actually apparent.

The wine then is aged a year in bottle before release. Aurum is working toward being able to hold the wine two years in bottle before release. Tasting through multiple vintages, the tannin integration becomes more graceful with the second year in bottle without losing the fresh aromatics. Its development in bottle is similar to a light-bodied red rather than a white wine. The resulting wine retains some of the delicate aromatics, mineral crunch and savory character seen in the white and Rosé style Pinot Gris, while picking up additional depth, complexity of flavor and a zesty, incense element on the palate. The bright acidity here is balanced by the creamy tannin character, offering a simultaneously refreshing and palate-cleansing style that does well at the table. The 2014 Amber wine finished completely dry at 13.5 percent alcohol.

Through a series of trials in the cellar over time, Aurum wine has created three distinct styles of the same variety. The three wines each appeal to different palate preferences, as well as different types of experiences, while retaining a sense of site expression at the same time.



# One winemakers take on Pinot Gris

Editor: I read an interesting article the other day where eight winemakers shared their pick criteria and their production process for Pinot Gris. The winemakers were from Oregon, California & Italy. The article is too long for this Newsletter but one of the winemakers was Luisa Ponzi of Oregon's Ponzi Vineyards. Her take on the Ponzi Old Vine Pinot Gris was considerably different from the others so I thought you might want to read about her procedures.

## Ponzi Vineyards

2014 Old Vine Pinot Gris, 13.1% alc.

"The grapes for this wine are exclusively from original vines planted in 1970 at the Ponzi Estate Vineyard and then grafted to Pinot Gris a few years later. The vineyard sits in the sandy soil of Hillsboro loam. Elevation is just 180 feet, and the vines are spaced in 10x5 foot plantings, about 900 vines to the acre. Vines are own-rooted, and the clone is 152. The crop can be difficult because of pronounced vigor. Trying to control crop in the face of so much vigor wasn't really working. It wasn't until we went to the Scott Henry trellis system that the grapes came into their own. Now, we get close to 6 tons per acre of this incredible fruit. Evidently, these vines just needed to run wild a bit.

"We plant cover crops, primarily of rye grass and clover, cultivating every other row. We leaf-pull mid-summer and do some fruit thinning if bunches are lagging behind. Pinot Gris is not overly susceptible to sunburn. We tuck canes three times each growing season.

To determine when to pick, we look at numbers. We focus on the numbers for Pinot Gris more than any other variety. Since we prefer low alcohol wines we try to pick between 20.5 and 21 brix which gives us a TA of 0.8 and 3.2 pH. We also focus on flavor. We want that early leafy, stemmy character to evolve into green apple and citrus. We wait for skin bitterness to diminish and the skin itself to soften.

Grapes are hand picked and sorted if necessary and then whole cluster pressed. We press to about 1.1 PSI and use all of the juice making no press cuts. We follow the phenolics to determine when to stop pressing. Often the juice is brown, but that drops out post bottling. We add no SO<sub>2</sub> until post malolactic. We use no nutrients nor do we add acid. The juice settles for 24 hours at 53° F before getting racked to 15-year-old neutral oak barrels. The juice goes in fairly dirty. We fill the barrels and place fermentation locks on them. Once native/house yeast fermentation begins, we remove a bit of juice from the barrels to allow fermentation space. Juice ferments around 55° F, and fermentation proceeds slowly, often lasting two to three months.

"We allow the wine to undergo native malolactic in barrel, stirring the lees weekly for six months. We make a 50 ppm SO<sub>2</sub> addition post-malolactic. At the one year mark we rack the wine, but keep it on the lees without stirring for another 10 months. We chill the wine to 34° F to achieve cold stability and use bentonite for heat stability. The wine is cross-flow-filtered, but not sterile-filtered. We bottle with cork, because I am more comfortable with cork and it is traditional. The wine got six months of bottle age before release."



**From our history trunk:** Our first meeting minutes. For lack of a better name, the founders initially called the club "1541 Raleigh #1" which had something to do with the State form they had to fill out limiting how much wine each individual could make. Name later changed to West Side Wine Club.

April 21, 1969  
1541 Raleigh #1 met Monday,  
April 21st at the home of Don &  
Mary Vuytstek, 100 S.W. Meadow  
Drive, Beaverton.  
Those attending were Chuck  
Coey, Dick Erath, Don Larios, Dan  
Shattuck, Larry Shattuck, John  
Bradshaw, Ann & Jack McCallum  
and Don & Mary Vuytstek.

# Portland Winemakers Club

## Leadership Team - 2018

President: **Phil Bard** [phil@philbard.com](mailto: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](mailto:bt.grapevine@frontier.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: **Barb Stinger** [kbstinger@frontier.com](mailto:kbstinger@frontier.com)

- Arrange speakers for our meetings

Chair for Tastings: **Bill Brown & Barb Stinger** [bbgoldieguy@gmail.com](mailto:bbgoldieguy@gmail.com)

- Conduct club tastings [kbstinger@frontier.com](mailto:kbstinger@frontier.com)
- 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** [bobhatt2000@yahoo.com](mailto: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](mailto: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](mailto:brown.marilynjean@gmail.com)

- Gala / Picnic / parties [alice@alicedesigns.org](mailto:alice@alicedesigns.org)

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