

Portland
Winemakers
Club



Portland Winemakers Club

September 2020
"Bill's Meanderings"

Monthly Events

January 15th, 2020

Crush Talk & Planning

January 25th, 2020

Annual Gala

February 19th, 2020

Bordeaux varietals and
Bordeaux blends, Blind
Tasting

March, 18th, 2020

Speaker **Meeting CANCELLED**

April 15th, 2020

ZOOM VIRTUAL MEETING

May 20th, 2020

ZOOM VIRTUAL MEETING

Speaker: Richard Holmes,
Ciel du Cheval vineyard

June 17th, 2020

ZOOM VIRTUAL MEETING

Speaker: James Osborne,
OSU Enologist

July, Annual Picnic

CANCELLED

July 15th, 2020

ZOOM VIRTUAL MEETING

August 19th, 2020

ZOOM VIRTUAL MEETING

September, 16th, 2020

ZOOM VIRTUAL MEETING

October 21st, 2020

ZOOM VIRTUAL MEETING

November 18th, 2020

Crush Talk

December 16th, 2020

Elections, Planning for Next
Year, More Crush Talk

NOTE: Tours, Gala & picnic date
& times may vary depending on
availability.



Chandler Reach Sangiovese

Clear the decks!

Let the excitement of crush begin. Clean and make room in the garage and get the fermenters cleaned and sanitized. Fruit is on the way. This weekend our first club group purchase allotment from Jameson will be delivered. The earliest varietals, being Viognier and Chardonnay, are starting to come in and some of the early reds like Syrah and Merlot will be next. If you haven't gotten your yeast, nutrients, and other supplies now is the time. If you wait until the fruit arrives you can expect to maybe not get your choice of yeast or nutrients like GoFerm and Fermaid K.

So keep things clean and punched down and most of all, be safe.

**Drink Responsibly.
Drive Responsibly.**

Upcoming events / Save the date

Club Meeting: The next meeting is scheduled for September 16th, "Zoom" sign in will be at 6:45 pm. This will be available on any device that can connect to the internet and has a camera and speaker capability such as a computer, iPad or smart phone etc. Jon Kahrs will again be the moderator. We will provide further sign in information and other details by e-mail prior to the meeting.

Agenda: We will go through introductions and pending club business. Any time left over will be used for general winemaking discussion.

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

August Zoom Meeting Minutes

Present: 23

- Zoom meetings will continue for at least 2-3 more months.
- Ken – Call Brenda at the Grange & see what their plans are.
- The American Wine Society still plan to hold their Amateur wine competition, see page 6 of this Newsletter.
- Ken showed a picture of a recreational vehicle type in-line water filter that may be of interest to winemakers. They remove most water chlorine among other impurities. Good for treating 1300 gallons of tap water. Amazon \$10 each. See page 8.
- We discussed the pro's and con's of buying a Club crusher for members to use.
- We had a discussion about pressing white & red grape must using a basket vs bladder press.
- The Nebbiolo from Red Mountain is expected early October.
- May contact Cana's Feast winemaker to be a speaker at one of our meetings (Italian grapes).

Everyday COVID check.

At 7 p.m. open the whiskey bottle and **smell it.**

if you can smell, you are not affected ..

then pour it in in a glass

Taste it. if you can feel the taste, you are definitely not affected.

Dr Johnny Walker

THREE WOMEN, TWO YOUNGER, AND ONE SENIOR CITIZEN , WERE SITTING NAKED IN A SAUNA.

SUDDENLY THERE WAS A BEEPING SOUND. THE YOUNG WOMAN PRESSED HER FOREARM AND THE BEEP STOPPED.

THE OTHERS LOOKED AT HER QUESTIONINGLY. "THAT WAS MY PAGER," SHE SAID. "I HAVE A MICROCHIP UNDER THE SKIN OF MY ARM."

A FEW MINUTES LATER, A PHONE RANG. THE SECOND YOUNG WOMAN LIFTED HER PALM TO HER EAR. WHEN SHE FINISHED, SHE EXPLAINED, "THAT WAS MY MOBILE PHONE. I HAVE A MICROCHIP IN MY HAND."

THE OLDER WOMAN FELT VERY LOW-TECH. NOT TO BE OUT DONE, SHE DECIDED SHE HAD TO DO SOMETHING JUST AS IMPRESSIVE. SHE STEPPED OUT OF THE SAUNA AND WENT TO THE BATHROOM. SHE RETURNED WITH A PIECE OF TOILET PAPER HANGING FROM HER REAR END.

THE OTHERS RAISED THEIR EYEBROWS AND STARED AT HER.

THE OLDER WOMAN FINALLY SAID....."WELL, WILL YOU LOOK AT THAT.....I'M GETTING A FAX!!"

Stemmy Wines? Let's Talk Whole Cluster Fermentation!

We hear about whole cluster fermentation more and more each year. Perhaps you've also heard how they can taste "stemmy." So, why is whole cluster so popular and how does it affect the quality of wine?

What is Whole Cluster Fermentation?

Whole cluster refers to making wine with whole bunches of grapes including their stems. (Normally, grapes go into a destemming machine before fermenting.) What might surprise you is wine was made this way for ages—before destemming machines were invented it was impractical to pluck off individual grapes by hand.

Why Ferment Whole Bunches?

Why ferment whole clusters? To make wines more complex by weaving in spicy and herbal flavors, to add candied and airy fruit notes, to add tannin structure, and to smooth out high acidity.

Beyond green and herbal notes, the stems impart a whole range of aromatic and textural qualities into wines. So, if whole cluster "stemmy" flavors have turned you off before, you might try them again. They actually help make many wines taste great.

Let's take a look at some common grape varieties that use whole clusters in the fermentation.

Pinot Noir

Pinot Noir produces very light and delicate wines. So, if you want to intensify the structure and age-ability it's not uncommon to ferment whole clusters. It's now more common in Pinot Noir from Burgundy, France where producers look to traditional customs practiced here for a thousand years. In fact, Henri Jayer popularized a radical pivot away from whole clusters in the 1970s, but the practice is coming back (and in the New World as well).

Examples:

Willamette Valley Pinot Noir – Big Table Farm
Sta Rita Hills Pinot Noir – Samsara

Syrah

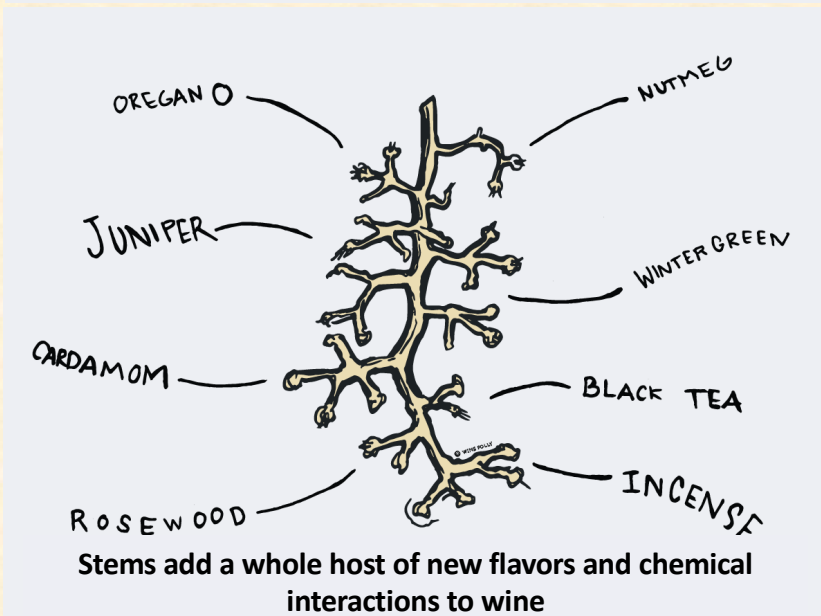
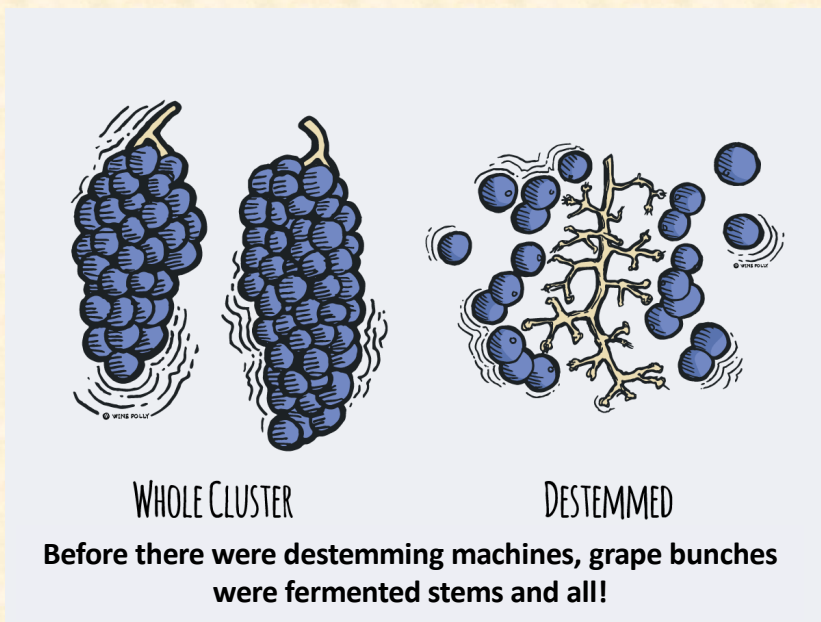
Syrah produces many wines with massive fruit flavors, but this varietal is also known for complex notes of peppery spice and savoriness (particularly when grown in cool climates). The technique is widely used in the Northern Rhône Valley (Syrah's homeland, just a bit South of Burgundy). Many winemakers choose to ferment Syrah with whole clusters to enhance the spice character in these wines.

Examples:

"Roll Ranch" Syrah – The Ojai Vineyard
Crozes-Hermitage – Alain Graillot
North Coast Syrah – Pax Mahle Wines

Gamay

Gamay tends to be light like Pinot Noir, but more rustic profile with bitterness and acidity. Because of this, one of the traditional ways to make Gamay is called carbonic maceration, where whole clusters go into a tank sealed with carbon



Many winemakers choose to ferment Syrah with whole clusters to enhance the spice character in these wines.

dioxide. In this scenario, the fermentation starts inside individual grapes. The whole clusters are then pressed and fermentation finishes. This style of fermentation softens Gamay and gives it floral notes of peony, violet, and iris.

Examples:

Morgon – Marcel Lapierre

El Dorado Gamay – Arnot-Roberts

“GDG” Gamay – Stolpman Vineyards

Others

Often, red grapes with thinner skins and higher acidity benefit from the winemaker’s choice to include whole clusters. It’s quite common with Grenache. Thick skinned grapes can also benefit from whole cluster fermentation though, especially for winemakers seeking a lighter extraction from rich varieties.

Examples:

“The Third Man” Grenache – Gramercy Cellars

“La Bruja de Rojas” Grenache – Comando G

“Especial Old Friends Red” – Dirty & Rowdy Winery

“Shell Creek Vineyard” Valdiguie – Thacher

“The Other One” Mourvèdre – Paix Sur Terre

How Stems Make or Break a Wine

Stems are chemically complex, and radically shift the chemical profile of the wine.

Stems demand acidity. The stems add a wallop of potassium to fermenting must. Potassium binds with tartaric acid, so titratable acidity (TA) goes down and pH goes up. This is risky for wines with naturally lower acidity as it reduces that mouth-watering freshness and increases the risk of spoilage (from microbes).

Stems bring greenery, so they demand powerful fruit. The stems bring even higher levels of methoxypyrazines (MPs) than the berries. Thus, Bordeaux varieties (like Cabernet and Merlot) rarely ferment with whole clusters because they risk becoming too herbaceous.

Higher tannins require equally intense fruit. Stems contain a considerable amount of tannins and other phenolic compounds, many of them the same antioxidants found in chocolate and tea. Analysis reveals that, controlling for other winemaking factors, whole cluster usage drives a significant increase in tannin.

Stems bring a candied effect, so they demand minerality. The “candied” flavors associated with whole cluster fermentations are similar to those wines made with carbonic maceration (see Gamay above for a description). Some even liken the taste to a bubblegum-y fruitiness. Since it’s a distinct winemaking flavor, some argue that grapes with strong site character or “minerality” are needed to quell the cloying fruity notes.

Flavors in Wine From The Stems

Fresh green

Think of plants in their living form, still wet and filled with chlorophyll. You might smell this and think about tending your herb garden. Or you might be reminded of chopping vegetables.

- **Grassy:** alfalfa bales, pulled weeds, poor quality weed, green tea
- **Herbaceous:** wintergreen, fresh oregano, dill, fresh thyme
- **Vegetal:** green bell pepper, jalapeno, brassica stalk

Dried green

Here’s where things start getting less polarizing. Forget the veggies, ditch the grass. You’re thinking less of the live chlorophyll kind of greenery; instead, think about the different pungency that dried or roasted herbs.

- **Resinous herbs:** roasted thyme, rubbed sage, herbes de Provence, dried mint, juniper

Green-brown

The most intriguing and delicious contributions of fermenting whole cluster tend to be bundled in this category. The pleasant aspects of “dried green” often coexist with green-brown, yet the latter is distinct in its sexy, resinous kind of earthiness.

- **Spicy:** nutmeg, cinnamon stick, cardamom, incense, green peppercorn
- **Woody:** sandalwood, palo santo, rosewood, cigar box, black tea

Can The Percentage of Whole Cluster Tell Me How Stemmy a Wine Is?

Short answer: no.

How much the stems actually infuse their stemmy flavor into a wine varies a great deal. Some wines taste green with 20% whole cluster and others are subtle even with 60% stem inclusion.

For example, carbonic maceration doesn't allow juice to mingle too much with the stems. While some berries get crushed under the weight of others, the vast majority of the juice remains inside the berries. A wine might be 100% whole cluster but you won't know it.

On the other hand, a wine that is 100% whole cluster and is foot-stomped (think Lucy & Ethel) will have quite a bit more juice percolating through all those stems. Depending on the fruit you're talking about, you may find a husky expression of stemmy-ness. Maybe not though!

Green Stems vs Brown Stems

Next time you buy fresh market grapes, take a look at the quality of the stems. Are they flexible and green or stiff and browning? Winemakers refer to the browning of stems as lignification. As you can imagine, the quality of the stems greatly affects how the wine will taste.

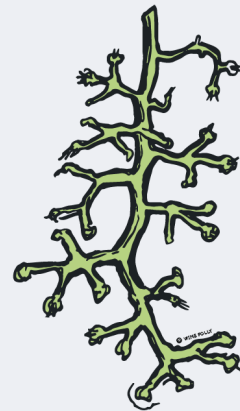
There's a lot of disagreement among winemakers about what constitutes lignified. Some believe stems must be browned. Others assess stem hardness more than color. What matters is that it signals to the vintner that the vine has fully pivoted away from maintaining its canopy (the leaves) to fully ripening the grapes.

Winemakers may chew on the stems to taste and decide whether they can include them in the fermentation. Others simply embrace the potential herbaceousness and trust aging to diminish it.

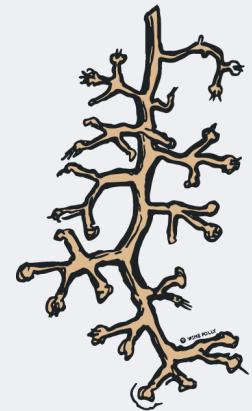
Cellaring Whole Cluster Wines

If you've tried a wine that was a touch too stemmy for you, consider that maybe it just wasn't ready. Even though science shows that pyrazines (green notes) persist chemically in wine, they don't seem to in terms of human perception—they seem to age into that spicy, woody territory.

What stems do add is structure (tannin), botanical complexity, and they are a great tool to soften acidity naturally without the use of additives. Some winemakers also believe stems improve color stability, so even if stems take away some color from a young red, the color will hold its vibrancy longer. So, the next time you say hello to a winemaker in a Tasting room ask them more about what they do with their Stems. They'll be delighted to tell you more about it!



GREEN STEMS



BROWN STEMS

The lignification of the grapes stems affects wine in whole cluster fermentation





2020 National Amateur Wine Competition

Details at:

awscompetitions.com/online-entry

DEADLINES:

- Paperwork can be submitted now. Deadline is October 15, 2020. Online registrations are preferred (less chance for copying errors), but we can accept mail and fax registrations
- Delivery of wine is accepted from September 1st and deadline October 22nd to: Effingham Manor Winery ; 14325 Trotters Ridge Pl Nokesville, VA 20181

COMPETITION INQUIRIES: Vincent Williams (618-363-3015) awc@americanwinesociety.org



Homemade Sanitizer for Wine Equipment

When making wine it is extremely important to follow good cleaning and sanitizing practices. General cleaning removes any organic materials from the equipment but it is still important to eliminate any bacteria, yeasts, or other spoilage microbes from your equipment before using it. This is where sanitizing comes in handy. Racking canes, bottles, carboys and other equipment should be always go through a quick sanitizing step before introducing wine to them. Even if they seem otherwise perfectly clean, there could be a few bad bacteria that could later become a problem. Below is an easy recipe to get you on your way with sanitizing.

Easy Wine Sanitizer:

Ingredients:

- 1 gallon of chlorine free water
- 4 teaspoon of citric acid
- 1 teaspoon of potassium metabisulfite

Mix thoroughly. If using extensively, be sure to have proper ventilation because the potassium metabisulfite in high concentrations is a strong respiratory irritant. If you have ever smelled potassium metabisulfite, you will be familiar with the strong burnt match aroma. If using on stainless steel, be sure to rinse off afterwards because the sulfite and

acid combination can create rust and pitting on lower grades like 304. 316 stainless has a much higher resistance to rust.

Variations

The acid in this mix can be substituted for acid blend, or tartaric acid if that is what you have around in your wine cellar. **Potassium metabisulfite is much more effective when mixed with an acid to bring the pH of your solution down.** Other home brewed sanitizers call for as much as eight teaspoons of potassium metabisulfite per gallon of water but without any acid, which is also effective but the fumes from a few spritzes will clear out a room. I much prefer the potassium metabisulfite and acid version.

This recipe works great and can be kept in a spray bottle or jug for easy access when you need it. Because it contains potassium metabisulfite, it can also help prevent oxidation when checking in on your wines. A quick spray on the bung and opening of the carboy can help scavenge any oxygen that you may have introduced by removing the airlock. Another advantage is that it can give your wines a couple ppm of SO₂ boost if used in bottles before bottling. This can help to offset the air introduced in the bottling process.





How Often Should You Rack Your Wine?

Racking is simply the process of transferring a wine from one container to another while leaving behind any sediment or "lees". Why do you rack your wine? Over time fruit particles and dead yeast cells will settle out of the wine and pile up on the bottom of your container. In the first days after pressing a wine, this layer will be very thick and particularly troublesome. This thick layer of yeast and fruit crud is referred to as the gross lees, whereas the thinner sediment later on is known as the fine lees. The main purpose of racking is to separate the clean wine from these decaying lees to eventually form a crystal clear and ready-to-bottle wine... but the question is... How often should you rack your wine?

Racking Equipment

No crazy equipment needed here. A simple 3/8 inch stainless steel racking cane and some 5/16 inch food grade tubing are my go-to racking equipment. A 5/16" tube will stretch over the 3/8 cane nicely with virtually no risk of falling off or leaking on you. The stainless racking cane will last longer than you and the tubing can be replaced with very little cost. This size is good enough to handle most home winemaking transfers and will go a little faster than the plastic canes due to the thin walls and larger inside diameter. I have a 1/2 inch racking cane, but it is generally a little too aggressive and can really disturb the lees during a racking. Larger canes can be used for larger transfers like barrel to barrel.



What if you don't Rack?

Leaving the wine on a stagnant, thick layer of lees for too long can cause some serious problems with the wine. A pile of angry, unfed yeast cells will generally start creating hydrogen sulfide (rotten egg smell), which can morph into the dreaded organosulfur compound, mercaptan (burnt rubber taste). Any leftover nutrients that may have fallen out of the wine after fermentation can also feed unfriendly bacteria and yeasts. These are obviously not good things...

*Occasionally, some long term lees contact is welcome but on fine lees, not the gross lees. This means, you still need to rack after pressing the wine. If making a kit, you can wait quite a while to rack since you really won't have much for gross lees. The process of stirring the lees (aka Bâtonnage) is commonly used when making wines like Chardonnay and can create a bit more mouth feel.

What if I Rack too Many Times?

Getting a little too ambitious with your racking frequency will generally diminish aromatics to some extent, and often cause full blown oxidation. Each time you rack the wine, a small bit of oxygen will be absorbed which can react with

volatile aroma compounds. To scavenge this oxygen and maintain protection against oxidation, 20-40 ppm of sulfur dioxide (SO₂) are generally added at each racking. This helps to prevent things like VA (Vinegar), nasty aldehydes or ethyl acetate (acetone smell). To prevent these faults, it requires a lot of total SO₂ if you rack many times. I have heard a lot of novice winemakers racking five, six, or seven times to "improve" the wine, but usually will do the opposite when done excessively.

When or How Often Should I Rack?

The first racking should occur shortly after pressing the wine.

If it is a red wine, pressing will usually be after the primary fermentation is complete. Let the wine settle out for one or two days, then rack off of the thick layer of gross lees. This is the most critical racking and can be a make-or-break situation for the wine.

If it is a white wine or rose, the first racking will occur after pressing but before fermentation. The gross lees at this point consist mostly of fruit pulp. It is nice to get some of this separated if you can. If you can chill or "cold settle" the juice, it will buy you a bit more time to let the pulp settle out. Get what you can, but you don't need to get too crazy at this point. A little bit of solids can help the fermentation.

The second racking should occur when the lees pile up to an uncomfortable level once again. For me, I consider any lees over about 3/8 of an inch thick to be a little risky for the long haul. Over one inch thick is an urgent concern. Sometimes the lees can ride up the sides of a carboy and look a lot thicker than they really are. Give it a little swirl to agitate the lees every once in a while to get a better read on the situation.

For a red wine, this second racking should ideally occur after malolactic fermentation has completed. If the lees get to a slightly uncomfortable level before malolactic fermentation has completed, give them a swirl about once or twice a week but don't rack yet. Once you are done with malolactic fermentation and the lees have begun to pile up again, then it is time to rack the wine and dose it with some SO₂ to get through the upcoming aging period. If you plan to cold stabilize the wine, it is ideal to do it right before this racking. Once racked, this is a good time to add any oak products like cubes, staves, or spirals. If you really don't have a whole lot of lees after malolactic fermentation, then you don't necessarily need to rack.

*For a white wine, the second racking is generally after fermentation has completed and things have settled out for about two days. At this point, the wine should be topped up and sulfited to prevent malolactic fermentation (unless you want that buttery taste like in a Chardonnay).

The third and final racking should occur at the time of bottling. Three rackings usually does the job. At this stage, the wine should have no visible haze and no off smells. This racking is generally a two stage racking for me. I will rack the wine off of the remaining lees into a temporary blending vessel, like a bucket or carboy. If you have access to inert gas, like argon, go ahead and blanket the storage vessel with gas before transferring to minimize oxygen contact. Any final blending also occurs at this stage. Sulfites are checked and adjusted at this stage. If making an off dry white or rose wine, I will perform the sweetening and stabilizing now. Then it goes right into the bottle.

There are occasionally exceptions that would require another racking at some point along the way. If you want to pull the wine off of the oak, the easiest way is to rack it off. If you are getting some reductive/swampy smells, you may want to splash rack to introduce a little air to the wine. If you are stealing wine for a blend, you may need to downsize to a smaller carboy to reduce head space. You know what they say... when you gotta rack, you gotta rack...

As a general rule, don't rack unless you have a reason to rack. While you are racking, make sure to give the wine a taste and smell to make sure things are going in the right direction. Sanitize your equipment with a no rinse sanitizer like Star San when racking. If you want to minimize oxygen contact, consider blanketing both wines with argon during the racking process. Whenever you transfer to a new container, make sure to top up. You can use a previous vintage of a similar wine, or a store bought wine that is similar. That's about it to the racking process!



Editor: I was wondering if any of our members have used these 20 micron, activated carbon filters to remove chlorine from tap water for use in their winemaking. They claim to be affective for about 3 months in a recreation vehicle setting or about 1300 gallons. They are readily available locally or Amazon at about \$10 each. Might save some money over buying distilled or purified spring water. What has been your experience? Let Ken Stinger know at kbstinger@frontier.com.



Winemaking References

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

Scott Labs Winemaking Handbook - 21 mb - 59 pages

Scott Labs Cider Handbook - 24 mb - 49 pages

Scott Labs Sparkling Handbook - 8 mb - 58 pages

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

Barrel Care Procedures - 100 kb - 2 pages

Enartis Handbook - 4.8 mb - 108 pages

A Review Of Méthode Champenoise Production - 570 kb - 69 pages

Sacramento Winemakers Winemaking Manual - 300 kb - 34 pages

Sparkling Wine brief instructions - 20 kb - 3 pages

The Home Winemakers Manual - Lum Eisenman - 14 mb - 178 pages

MoreWine Guide to red winemaking - 1 mb - 74 pages

MoreWine Guide to white Winemaking - 985 kb - 92 pages

MoreWine Yeast and grape pairing - 258 kb - 9 pages



Portland Winemakers Club

Leadership Team – 2020

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

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

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

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

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

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

Chair of Education/Speakers: **Rufus Knapp** Rufus.Knapp@fei.com

- Arrange for speakers & educational content for our meetings

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

- Conduct club tastings
- Review and improve club tasting procedures

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

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

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

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

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

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

Chairs for Social Events : **Marilyn Brown & Mindy Bush** brown.marilynjean@gmail.com
* Gala / Picnic / parties mindybush@hotmail.com

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