



# Portland Winemakers Club

August 2025

## "Bob's Blurb"

### 2025 Monthly Agendas

January 15th

Tips and tricks, Garage sale

January 24th

Gala – Aloha Grange Hall,  
5 – 9 pm, \$15 per person

February 19th

Speaker: James Osborne, OSU  
Enology Professor

March 19th

Tasting & judging, member  
produced "Other Reds" #1  
(excluding Bordeaux, Pinot Noir,  
Italian reds)

April 16th

Barrel tasting; member  
produced, any variety

May 21st

Tasting & judging, member  
produced Bordeaux Reds

June 18th

Tasting & judging, members  
produced all Whites, Rose' &  
Sparkling

July - No meeting

July 19th, Annual Picnic, \$10 ea.  
Fee, 1:00 – 5:00

August 20th

Speaker: Patrick McElligott, wine  
sensory evaluation.

September 17th

Tasting & judging, member  
produced "Other Reds" #2  
(Italian reds)

October 15th

Tasting & judging, member  
produced Pinot Noir

November 19th

Crush Talk

December 10th

Elections, Planning for 2026

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



**It is that time of year. The sort of unpredictable arrival of grapes. Making adjustments to sugar and acid etc. Don't let that thwart you! I have gewurztraminer from Jim Jamison . Brix 21 , ph 2.68, TA .4 (slight acid add) and Grenache from Knox Road in Benton City. Will take numbers tonight and adjust as needed and start fermentations! Make sure to add nutrients, e.g. Goferm and Fermaid to make sure you have happy yeast. See you for the September meeting , bring your Italian varietals!**

**Bob**



## Upcoming Events / Save the Date

The next PWC meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, September 17<sup>th</sup> in the basement of the Aloha Grange starting at 7:00 pm. We will have a tasting, judging and discussion of member produced “Italian reds”. Please bring two (2) glasses per taster.

Don't forget to bring a bottle of your own wine for the exchange table and a snack for the potluck table.

- Take time to visit the PWC website: [portlandwinemakersclub.com](http://portlandwinemakersclub.com) where there are Newsletters archived back to 2007.
- Also, visit our public group Facebook page: “Portland Winemakers Club” [facebook.com](https://www.facebook.com/portlandwinemakersclub), give it a look, Join the group and enter some posts of your own.

## Meeting Notes

### Grape Buying Committee:

Jamison offering 250+ lbs of Gewurztraminer, 150 lbs of Roussanne – whole fruit, same price as other whites. First order gets the grapes.

Other members know of Pinot Noir grapes that are available – information will be passed along to the club.

### Treasurer:

PWC will host a booth at the Oregon State Fair. Volunteers are needed to staff the booth. Emails have been sent out with details.

Barb will have PWC hats available for \$20 – more information will be sent

**Tours:** Working to lock down a date for touring Ruby Vineyards. More details to come.

Speaker for the evening was Patrick McElligott. Members brought flawed wines and Patrick discussed causal factors and potential remedies. Patrick discussed the importance of measuring and monitoring SO<sub>2</sub> and preventing oxidation. One pro tip – do not use chlorine cleaners in your winemaking area.

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Wine Faults Table			
Wine Fault	Definition / Causal Factors	How to Detect	Potential Remedial Actions
Premature Oxidation	Early exposure to oxygen during winemaking, bottling, or storage. Leads to loss of freshness.	Brown color, flat aromas, nutty or sherry-like notes.	Minimize oxygen exposure, use inert gas, add SO <sub>2</sub> , proper bottling/storage.
Volatile Acidity (VA)	Caused mainly by acetic acid bacteria or yeast activity producing acetic acid/ethyl acetate.	Vinegar-like smell, nail polish remover aroma.	Maintain sanitation, control oxygen, use SO <sub>2</sub> , sterile filtration; blending may help.

White Surface Film	Often caused by yeast (e.g., Candida, Pichia) or bacteria growing on exposed wine.	White/grey film or pellicle on surface.	Top up containers, limit oxygen exposure, add SO <sub>2</sub> , rack off affected wine.
Hydrogen Sulfide (H <sub>2</sub> S)	Yeast stress, nutrient deficiency, or excessive sulfur use.	Rotten egg smell.	Aerate, add copper sulfate (carefully), add yeast nutrients, rack off lees. Measure YAN at crush and add proper level of nutrients.
Tartrates	Crystallization of potassium bitartrate due to cold storage.	Glass-like crystals in bottle, harmless but unattractive.	Cold stabilization before bottling, proper storage.
Cloudy Wine	Insufficient settling, microbial growth, or protein instability.	Wine appears hazy or turbid.	Fining, filtration, stabilization, sanitation practices.
Fizzy Wine / Refermentation in Bottle	Residual sugar with active yeast/bacteria in bottle.	Unexpected carbonation, spritz on palate.	Ensure complete fermentation, sterile filtration, add SO <sub>2</sub> , stabilize with sorbate.
Unpleasant Geranium Smell	Reaction of sorbic acid with lactic acid bacteria.	Strong geranium-leaf or crushed-stem odor.	Avoid using sorbate with malolactic fermentation, good microbial control.
Cork Taint (TCA)	Caused by 2,4,6-trichloroanisole contamination from corks, wood, or winery environment.	Musty, moldy basement smell, muted fruit flavors.	No effective cure once bottled; prevent by cork sourcing, sanitation.
Brettanomyces (“Brett”)	Wild yeast producing volatile phenols.	Barnyard, horse blanket.	Maintain SO <sub>2</sub> , sanitation, use sterile filtration.

Note: Above table generated by ChatGPT. Never trust AI – verify with a human – Bob T.

# Role of Elemental Sulfur and Nitrogen in the Formation of Volatile Sulfur Compounds

Vine to Wine | May 2025

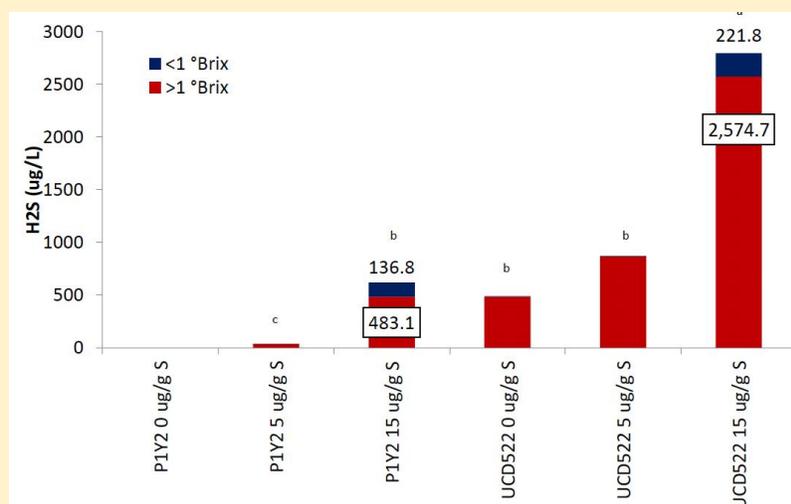
Dr. James Osborne, Professor and Enology Extension Specialist, Director of the Oregon Wine Research Institute, Oregon State University

An ongoing concern during winemaking is the formation of volatile sulfur compounds (VSCs) that can negatively affect wine aroma. These compounds can be produced during the alcoholic fermentation or during the aging of wine. The most common of the VSCs produced during winemaking is hydrogen sulfide (H<sub>2</sub>S). This compound is produced by *Saccharomyces cerevisiae* during fermentation and can be formed through the reduction of elemental sulfur. Many factors impact the formation of VSCs, but two of the most impactful are yeast strain (Linderholm et al. 2010) and concentration of yeast assimilable nitrogen (YAN) (Jiranek et al. 1995). Low YAN concentrations during fermentation have been linked to the formation of H<sub>2</sub>S. However, Ugliano et al (2009) reported that moderate and high diammonium phosphate (DAP) addition could also lead to increased H<sub>2</sub>S formation. Ugliano suggested that the type of nitrogen (inorganic vs. organic) may also play a role in the formation of H<sub>2</sub>S during fermentation.

Further complicating our understanding of VSC formation is the impact that elemental sulfur (S<sub>0</sub>) can play. S<sub>0</sub> is frequently used as a fungicide in the vineyard, and residual S<sub>0</sub> can be present on the grapes at harvest if late sulfur sprays are applied in the vineyard (Kwasniewski et al. 2014). During fermentation, the reductive environment formed can lead to the conversion of S<sub>0</sub> to H<sub>2</sub>S. In addition, the formation of more complex sulfur-based compounds can also occur, which may result in the formation of VSCs during barrel aging or in the bottle (Jastrzembki et al. 2017). Because of the importance of YAN concentration and composition and the potential role of S<sub>0</sub> in the production of VSCs, our lab investigated the impact of increasing amounts of elemental sulfur on the production of H<sub>2</sub>S and other VSCs during fermentation, as well as how YAN concentration and composition impacted their formation. This article summarizes the major findings from that study but the full study and findings can be found here in a recently published article.

A series of Pinot noir fermentations were conducted where different concentrations of S<sub>0</sub> were added, and either a high H<sub>2</sub>S-producing yeast (UCD522) or a no-H<sub>2</sub>S-producing yeast (P1Y2) were used. As the amount of S<sub>0</sub> added increased, so did the amount of H<sub>2</sub>S formed during alcoholic fermentation. This occurred for both the high H<sub>2</sub>S-producing and the no-H<sub>2</sub>S producing yeast. However, H<sub>2</sub>S production was significantly higher in fermentations conducted by UCD522 with increasing amounts of S<sub>0</sub> (Figure 1). In addition, higher S<sub>0</sub> concentrations resulted in higher H<sub>2</sub>S production late in fermentation. This is particularly important as H<sub>2</sub>S formation late in fermentation is more likely to be retained in the wine due to the reduced production of CO<sub>2</sub> by yeast. Higher S<sub>0</sub> also resulted in wines containing higher concentrations of methanethiol-acetate (MeSOAc) post-fermentation. MeSOAc is a compound that can be hydrolyzed in wine to form

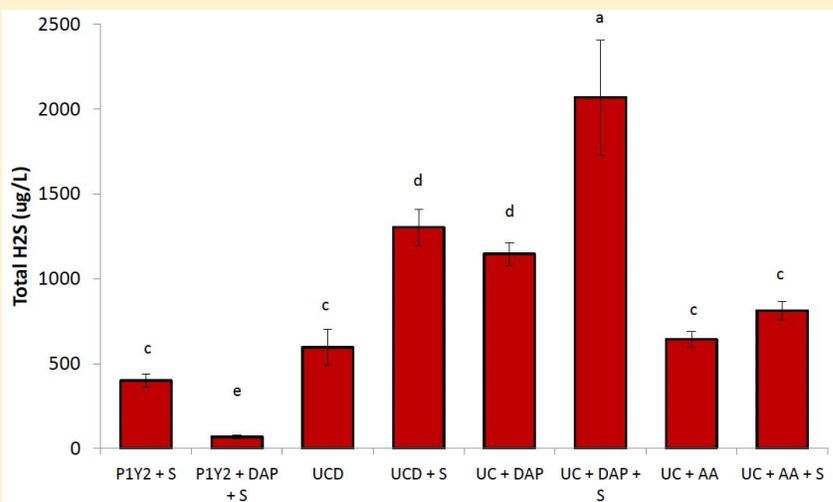
**Figure 1.** Total H<sub>2</sub>S produced by *S. cerevisiae* strain UCD522 or strain P1Y2 during fermentation of Pinot noir grapes with the addition of 0, 5, or 15 ug/g elemental sulfur.



methanethiol, a VSC that has rotten cabbage like aroma. These findings demonstrate an important role for S<sub>0</sub> in the formation of VSCs during and after fermentation, as well as the interactive effect with yeast strain. If S<sub>0</sub> was present on the grapes, then H<sub>2</sub>S was formed no matter what yeast strain was used, but much higher amounts were produced if a high H<sub>2</sub>S-producing yeast was used.

H<sub>2</sub>S production during fermentation was also impacted by the type of nitrogen present. DAP and amino acid additions were made to boost YAN from 110 mg/L to 250 mg/L. The addition of DAP resulted in an increase in H<sub>2</sub>S formation, while the addition of amino acid nitrogen decreased H<sub>2</sub>S formation, regardless of whether S<sub>0</sub> was added or not (Figure 2). Fermentations where DAP and S<sub>0</sub> were both added produced the highest amount of total H<sub>2</sub>S. Post-fermentation, YAN concentration, composition, and S<sub>0</sub> also impacted the concentration of VSCs other than H<sub>2</sub>S. In particular, S<sub>0</sub> and high YAN increased the concentration of MeSOAc in the wines post-fermentation. The type of nitrogen added (DAP vs. amino acid) had less of an impact on MeSOAc concentration than the increase in YAN. This may be related to the mechanism by which MeSOAc is formed during fermentation as well as the formation of methanethiol.

These results indicate that the type and amount of nitrogen present during fermentation can impact formation of VSCs as can the presence of S<sub>0</sub>. Based on results from this study, the best strategy to reduce formation of VSCs in wine is to first minimize the amount of residual elemental sulfur on grapes at harvest. Second, winemakers may use a low H<sub>2</sub>S-producing yeast. Third, measure YANs and do not add high amounts of only DAP when supplementing (use a mixture of DAP and organic nitrogen supplements). While low YAN has often been associated with increased H<sub>2</sub>S production, results from this study have demonstrated that high YAN (especially DAP) can also increase formation of VSCs.



**Figure 2.** Total production of H<sub>2</sub>S during fermentation of Pinot noir grapes by either *S. cerevisiae* P1Y2 or UCD 522 with the addition of 10 ug/g elemental sulfur (S), diammonium phosphate (DAP) and/or amino acids (AA).



## A couple of tips from Alison Crowe at WineMaker magazine

I really want to filter my Chardonnay like the big wineries do. Are there small-scale filters for people who only make a barrel of wine?

Absolutely. There are an increasing number of filters out there for the small-scale producer. From rough filters that'll just knock out large, visible particles all the way down to membrane filters that will exclude tiny things like yeast and bacteria cells, home winemakers can now filter like the big guys. Check online and with your winemaking purveyor of choice, but when I was last in my local boutique winemaking supply store I saw a couple of company's filters that I know are nationally available.

Most filters on the market are sold as a filter body (the better units are made out of metal and

weigh at least a few pounds) that holds the refillable pads or cartridges, which actually do the physical work of filtering out the solids. That way you only spend the big bucks (on the filter body) once and can re-order the cheaper filter media only as you need them.

I should mention here that filtration isn't always necessary in winemaking, even on a commercial scale. If you've got a dry red wine that has gone through malolactic fermentation, it's unlikely that you'll run the risk of a re-fermentation in the bottle because you've taken most of the food away for yeast and the lactic acid bacteria — the two most common microbes to be living in a corked-up bottle of wine. Unless you are bottling a sweet wine or one that is not malo-lactic complete (all the malic acid has not been turned into lactic acid), you certainly don't have to go through all the trouble of sterile (or even rough) filtering.

*On that note, one thing that did disturb me a little bit as I was browsing the shelves for filters — I saw one brand of membrane filter labeled with a 0.50 micron pore size rating (the size of particle it'll let through) and also labeled "Sterile Filter." Keep in mind that a filter's pore size must be 0.45 micron or smaller in order for it to exclude yeast and bacteria. (And some very recent enological studies have even suggested that 0.20 micron is the new "sterile" gold standard!) Anything larger and those "bugs" will be able to get through into your filtered wine, where they can cause re-fermentations and all sorts of unsavory mayhem. Read labels carefully and realize that some filter manufacturers may erroneously package their products.*

Also keep in mind that the word "sterile" is used advisedly. Unless you're a hospital or lab with an autoclave, you're never going to be able to get your winemaking instruments and environment sterile. (By definition, "sterile" means no microbes are present at all.) Even the biggest wineries in the world must contend with a certain microbial risk and rely on stringent sanitation, equipment monitoring and post-bottling quality control (QC) follow up to monitor their product and to keep microbial populations at acceptable levels. As a small-scale winemaker you should feel good doing what they do — filtering when necessary, coupled with good clean winemaking.

## Light Strike in Wine?

I've been a home/hobby winemaker for some years but last year I took a big leap with three new demijohns. The increase in volume caused me to move my aging wines to a part of the cellar where there is a small south-facing window. While the carboys and demijohns are in a drop-cloth tent, and there is a piece of paper covering the window, indirect sunlight still comes through. Question, can this indirect light affect the aging of the wine? In particular, any impact on the color profile? Instead of a deep red/purple color, it is bright but a lighter ruby shade. Any thoughts or concerns?

I would definitely try to store your wine in the dark if you can. Your wines are in what I'm assuming are clear glass demijohns and over the year or more aging you might want for the wine, it could be enough to be detrimental to your wine's quality.

Interestingly, it's not damage to your wine's color that I would worry about the most; it's damage to the wine's aromas and flavors. Clear glass blocks so little UV light that it essentially offers no protection at all. Though indeed high UV light exposure could contribute to premature oxidation of pigments, light can interact with amino acids and other sulfur-containing compounds naturally occurring in wine, resulting in dimethyl disulfide (DMDS) or other aromatic sulfides. These compounds are super stinky; think overcooked cabbage, wet cardboard, or rotten onions. Not aromas you'd really want to have in something you've invested so much of your time and effort.

This defect is sometimes called "light strike" and is the reason that dark green or dark brown bottles are so traditional as wine bottle colors. Ever heard of "skunky" beer? Beer and cider can also be victims of light strike when UV light cleaves off sulfur-containing molecules, rearranging them into stinky new compounds. For this reason, white wines (and rosés) that are meant to be consumed quickly without aging are typically the only wines bottled in clear (sometimes called "flint") glass bottles. It's also why wines are aged best in barrels, metal kegs, or stainless tanks. Glass carboys can be fine for temporary wine storage, but it's always best to keep them in a room where you can turn off the lights when you're not working with the wine.



# 10 Tips for a Successful Harvest Day

Written by Wes Hagen

For the home vineyardist, harvest day is the most important — or at least the busiest — day of the year. Planning and preparation is critical in order for everything to run smoothly. Let our harvest day tips guide you to great grape picking . . . and wonderful wine.

Harvest comes once per year and being prepared is vital. You can't make up for poor farming in the last week before harvest, but you can prepare your home vineyard for harvest just like the pros. An entire year's work in the vine rows can either pay off in delicious wine or it can produce wine that underperforms and makes you wonder why you went to all the trouble of growing grapes.

My job is to shove you gently toward the delicious and away from the disappointing. I've written articles on most aspects of backyard grape farming. (I've also met many of you and answered your questions at the wonderful WineMaker Conference.) However, I've never broken down my professional harvest experiences into a top ten list for what to do in the days leading up to harvest.



The take home message is this: farm smart all year and then make that hard work count by being fully prepared when the alarm clock goes off on harvest day. Happy snipping!

## The Week Before Harvest:

### 10. Get the weather report, check the numbers and taste the fruit.

Surprises are no good during that last critical week before harvest. To prevent them, check out your “point forecast” on this website: <http://www.nws.noaa.gov/>.

Under the Forecast header on the right side of the page, find the “Local” button. Click Local and choose the nearest location to you. After clicking the new map as close to your location as possible, you'll get a week's forecast. You're not done! There's a new map on the page called “Detailed Point Forecast” (DPF). You can click on your exact location, and the page will reload with the week's forecast at your exact locale. After this last step, bookmark that exact page with your detailed point forecast. I check my DPF at least twice a day, and the accuracy is excellent for everything except frost potential. The high temperatures and precipitation forecasts seem to be very accurate in my experience. It will also alert you to any special or dangerous weather conditions blowing in.

If you see that your “perfect day” for harvest is being threatened by torrential hail, you may have to tweak your plans. However, remember that a little rain — say, under an inch — will likely not be a big deal right before harvest. A big rainfall, on the other hand, may dilute the wine and cause the sugar content to drop a degree or two Brix.

Getting the fruit out of the field before a serious weather event may be a good idea, but don't let a little sprinkle freak you out.

Of course, we need to know how much sugar is in the fruit and how it tastes before deciding on a harvest day. Devices such as refractometers (which require only a drop of juice to give a reading) are accurate enough for most home winegrowing operations, as floating a hydrometer takes almost a glass of wine away from you later! Make sure to sample berries from various locations on a cluster and in the vineyard and remember that a red wine ferment will usually gain a degree Brix (or even two!) during cold soak.

After 11 harvests, I have a really good palate for guessing Brix and pH — mainly because of a game I play. I taste my samples, write down my guesses, and then run the tests to see how accurate I was. Play this game for 5–10 years and you may be able to pick strictly on flavor.

Ripe winegrapes should be almost candy-sweet. Unless the acid is dropping like Kobe Bryant's freethrows, don't pick until the fruit screams, “Make wine from me now.” Train your mouth to be a lab instrument and your wine will improve. You're growing and making wine first and foremost for your taste, not to be approved by a refractometer, a pH meter or your mother-in-law's palate.

## **9. Get the vineyard tidy.**

It's no fun picking in a vineyard choked with weeds, hoses, hoes, shovels, or equipment. The cleaner the vineyard floor the more efficient the picking will be. Make time to walk down each row, or at the least peer down each row carefully to check for impediments. It will likely be dark when the picking begins, and you don't want your precious volunteers tripping and hurting themselves over a grandkid's skateboard or walking through a massive spiderweb with a silver-dollar sized arachnid in the middle. (I once lost a picker, who freaked out big time, this way). You may want to mow between the rows, hoe out any invasive weeds, and fill holes that could trip a picker.

## **8. Call some friends and schedule pickers early.**

Unfortunately, fruit is rarely perfectly ripe on a weekend or a holiday. I know plenty of home winemakers who plan their harvest weeks, even a month in advance for the benefit of their friends, which may be a good idea socially, but is very poor viticultural practice. To make great wine, you need to harvest according to the fruit's needs, not yours. If harvest usually falls in September, put out an email or a postcard in August to all your friends letting them know that you are looking for help to harvest your backyard vineyard and make some wine. Make it sound romantic and offer a "vineyard lunch" as recompense. Detail the fact that a day of harvest and winemaking will forever change the way they think about (and taste) wine. Let them know the final decision will likely come within 48 hours of harvest, and you understand if some cannot make it, but you will be highly appreciative of those that can. A good professional picker can do a ton in a day. So your friends will likely be able to do a quarter ton before they fall over or make a comment like, "Darn, I'm sure glad I got an MBA and didn't have to do THIS for a living." For every 100 lb. (45 kg) of fruit you plan to harvest, try to have one picker. (Four full buckets per picker is easy stuff, even for kids or those of limited physical capacity.) That way the picking will be done in an hour — two at most and no one will have time to complain. If you start early enough, you will be able to harvest, sort, crush or press and still be on time for an early lunch or late brunch. When you finally decide on a day for harvest, contact your pickers personally and urge them to come for a morning of vineyard fun and wine education. If worse comes to worse, offer some neighborhood kids \$20 for an hour or two's work. "Many hands make light work," is a wonderful Chinese proverb.

## **7. Revisit last year's wine and winemaking/harvest notes.**

This is important stuff! Try to keep a winery and vineyard notebook with dated journal entries with what you've done each day in the vineyard and in the winery. Reading the narrative of last year's harvest and winemaking process may bring up issues that are easily resolved with a little tweaking. Example: last year you forgot to have SO<sub>2</sub> handy at the crusher or wanted to try using enzymes but forgot to order them. Maybe you picked at a level of ripeness that was a little too ripe, and you can check what the exact Brix and pH were and you can change this year's pick to compensate. While you are actively writing your journal, I suggest a short, one-sentence addition to each day's entry: "How to Improve This Process Next Year." Decide how to make your growing or winemaking easier through experience, take some notes, read them actively before the next crush and adapt! If you are "reinventing the wheel" with each vintage, your mistakes and hardships will make the wines worse instead of better.

### **The Day Before:**

## **6. Confirm Brix and pH, taste the fruit one last time.**

Twenty-four hours and counting! Things are getting exciting. Whether you are trying to beat a storm or the fruit is in perfect condition for winemaking, it's always a good idea to do one last test to make sure you have an accurate reckoning of ripeness. Brix and pH are only numerical tools for understanding a range of ripeness appropriate for winemaking. The final decision as you become more and more expert in tasting the fruit will depend more and more on the flavors you taste in the fresh grapes.

I take tasting notes on fresh grape samples and have found, over the past decade, I notice references that lead me to a picking decision. For example, when I taste kiwi notes in my Chardonnay, I know that it is not yet time for picking. When the kiwi yields to pear and melon, I know we are getting very close. In Pinot Noir, I want to taste a certain candy sweetness in the grapes that usually occurs around 24 °Brix or slightly lower. The way I describe it in my harvest notebook is: If you ask yourself

if the fruit is ripe, it probably isn't. Wait for the moment that you exclaim, "Damn that's sweet!" Of course, I have the rare privilege of growing fruit in an area that allows amazing levels of acidity even at elevated ripeness. (A producer surprised me in 2007 with these numbers after a 24-hour soak in a Pinot Noir fermenter: 27.2 °Brix at 3.18 pH!). You may have to pick the grapes a bit earlier if the acid begins to plummet or get yourself a nice bag of tartaric acid for adjustments — every winery should have a 50 lb. (23 kg) bag stashed away just in case.) I start worrying if white grapes climb over 3.3 pH and if my red grapes are harvested at a pH above 3.5. But I should admit I like to make structured wines with solid acidity. Make sure your pH meter is calibrated each week, and if you get weird readings, ask a winemaker friend if you can run numbers in their little lab to double check your results. For home winemaking, a refractometer reading of juice samples should be accurate enough to make a Brix-based harvest decision.

#### **5. Wash buckets, sharpen and oil clippers and clean/sanitize all winemaking equipment.**

You may get dirty looks from your picking volunteers if you spend the whole morning in the basement cleaning your equipment. It's your fruit and you should enjoy the picking! Use the day before to wash, sanitize and rinse all equipment so it's ready to go when the fruit starts rolling in. Picking lugs or buckets should be clean and dry the morning of the pick, and your picking snips (don't use those clunky bypass pruners for harvest) should be sharpened with a stone or grinder. A touch of olive oil can be dripped on the base of the blades, worked into the snips and then softly wiped. (Do not use WD40 or anything that could leave residue on the fruit.) If the buckets are going to be stored outside, turn them upside down so they don't collect dew or MOG (material other than grapes) overnight. Keep the sharp, lubricated clippers in a bucket and bring them out in the morning. Have a few extra pair of snips in case a spring pops out or a pair becomes unusable. Cotton picking gloves can be purchased at a local Ag Supply store for a few bucks per dozen and they do a good job protecting hands against small cuts and from bee and yellowjacket stings. Have a small first-aid kit handy with various sizes of bandages. If the weather is hot and the nights are warm you may want to find some food-grade dry ice to cool the must or the juice when it is pressed or crushed.

#### **The Night Before:**

#### **4. Remove bird netting, stage buckets/picking bins, confirm with your pickers and get the vineyard ready to start harvesting immediately.**

Nothing helps you sleep on an exciting night better than a bit of hard physical labor. If you follow my advice and bird-net your vineyard, it is a general best-practice to untie, roll up and store the nets the night before harvest instead of doing it the morning of. Whatever critters may lurk in your neighborhood, they have become accustomed to your netting and will likely stay away one night without knowing the fruit is unprotected. Never wear any clothing with buttons when you do net work and always wear long sleeves and gloves. With your buckets clean, you may want to turn a picking bucket over on each end post, on both ends of the row. Keeping a steady supply of empty buckets available to the pickers is vital to an efficient pick. If you use a picking bin, turn it upside-down in a safe, clean area that will make it easy to flip upright and dump into as picking commences in the last dark hours of morning. The last thing to do before you are ready is to confirm who is coming to help in the morning. Just like in business, you'll get more traction with some time on the phone making personal contact.

#### **Harvest Day:**

#### **3. Get a very early start or consider night harvest.**

Bringing in cool, fresh grapes is a must! If your yard is well-lit, consider having a night-harvest party with music and food. Most night picks start after midnight, but if it gets cool early in the night, you can do it a bit earlier to the same effect. Remember that the fruit will need some time to cool after a warm day, so the longer you wait, the cooler the must or juice will be in the winery. Keeping the fruit fresh and cool until crushing/pressing is important in that it reduces potential volatile acidity (VA) and the chance a native fermentation will begin unexpectedly. Cold fruit is safe fruit. You spent the entire year farming those precious clusters, so you might as well bring them

into the winery cold! My rule: if you can see the clusters, it's not too early to pick. Night picking with those neat flashlights on headbands works well, too!

## **2. Consider safety and picker protocol.**

Here's my Golden Rules of Harvest that I announce every morning in a loud voice to my crew before we start picking: Never cut what you can't see — because usually it's your finger.

Punish the vine, pamper the clusters. This means the pickers should pull and push on the canes to get a better position to clip out the bunches.

Never yank on the clusters to get a better position on the stem. If berries are falling off the cluster, you are being too rough.

Don't pick any green fruit. You will have to show the pickers an example of a cluster that is appropriate for picking and one that isn't. (Show rot, mildew, unripe fruit and the difference between a primary and a second-crop cluster.) In general, never use second crop (those small clusters high in the canopy). In general, we only make wine from primary clusters. If you have tons of second crop, wait a few weeks until it's above 23 °Brix on average and make a carboy of rosé.

Once a bucket is full, show the pickers where you want it placed or dumped. Never push down on the clusters in your bucket to make more room. Clusters should arrive at the crusher/press in pristine condition.

Only pick clusters that look good enough to eat right off the vine. If a tiny bit (I usually say a quarter or less) of an otherwise clean cluster is messed up, cut off the bad part and toss the good part in the bucket.

Never place your snips in your bucket and never place any material other than grapes into the bucket. Everything in the bucket goes into an expensive piece of machinery. Some of the more interesting objects I've kept from sliding into the crusher: burritos, cell phones, pocket knives, small coolers, a gopher snake and a soiled bandaid.

Clip bad clusters onto the vineyard floor and leave them there so they don't overwinter and add to mildew/rot pressure next year. A clean cluster dropped on the ground can be picked up, blown off, and put into the bucket.

Watch for bees and stinging insects on the backs of clusters. They sometimes spend the night there.

Be careful walking with full buckets. It's very easy to hit a bump or hole and sprain an ankle.

If you need a bucket, a new pair of snips or a bandaid let me know. If it bleeds after a few minutes of direct pressure, you may need a stitch.

## **1. Spend the first moments of the pick watching the pickers and fine tuning.**

Take your snips and bucket and pick a few clusters with each of your pickers to make sure they are doing what you have asked. Remember that your neighborhood vineyard helpers may know nothing about winemaking or vineyard practices. It's a lot easier to fine-tune the management than to sort every cluster. With the right education, every cluster that goes into a bucket will make it into the wine.

I call my wife — who is also my co-winemaker here at Clos Pepe — my "Bin Angel," because (besides being angelic) she rides the picking bin behind the tractor and sorts out less-than-perfect clusters. She keeps snips handy too, so she can cut out bad parts of otherwise good clusters to keep yields decent.

## **0. Bonus tip: Have fun — and maybe a drink!**

Harvest is (generally) the only time I drink in the morning. One of our producers started a ritual where we take a big shot of grappa or high-end tequila before hitting the rows, and I have to admit that seeing the first streaks of sunlight over the Santa Rita Hills with a slight tequila buzz is a transcendent experience. Some winemakers shoot back a little wine from the previous harvest and some start the day with a flute of bubbly. Remember the old term "eye-opener?" It may not be politically correct today, but that makes it all the more enjoyable. I should mention that I don't drive the tractor or go beyond that first shot of Cesar Monterrey Reposado Reserva. Well, some mornings I do . . . but that's a story for another article.



## Reference Library

(updated 3-25-2025)

Here is a list of hobby winemaking manuals and other materials in the editor's file. They are available for downloading by e-mail or via an internet transfer service. Some are downloadable from the source such as Scott Lab. All are in PDF format.

Scott Lab 2025-2026 Winemaking Handbook – 26.8 MB – 144 pages

Scott Lab 2024 - 2025 Cider Making Handbook – 6.2 MB – 96 pages

Scott Lab 2018-2019 Sparkling Handbook – 8 MB – 58 pages

Scott Lab 2022 Craft Distilling Handbook – 5.2 MB – 26 pages

Anchor 2021 – 2022 Enology Harvest Guide 2.6 MB - 104 pages

A Guide to Fining Wine, WA State University - 314 KB - 10 pages

Barrel Care Procedures - The Beverage People - 100 KB - 2 pages

Barrel Care Techniques - Pambianchi – 42 KB – 3 pages

Enartis Handbook – 5.1 MB - 124 pages

A Review Of Méthode Champenoise Production - 570 KB – 69 pages

Sparkling Wine brief instructions - 20 KB - 3 pages

Sacramento Winemakers Winemaking Manual - 300 KB - 34 pages

The Home Winemakers Manual - Lum Eisenman - 14 MB – 178 pages

MoreWine Guide to Red Winemaking - 1 MB - 74 pages

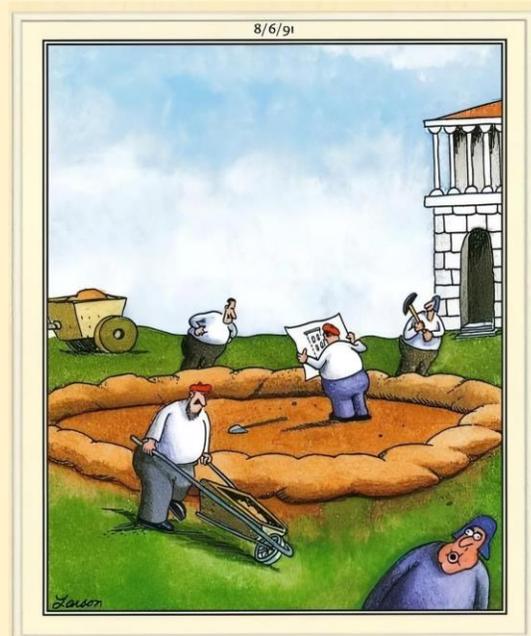
MoreWine Guide to White Winemaking – 985 KB – 92 pages

MoreWine Yeast and grape pairing – 258 KB – 9 pages

Wine Flavors, Faults & Taints – 600 KB, 11 pages

Daniel Pambianchi wine calculator set – 13.5 MB, 10 calculators

**Last night I ordered a glass of wine with my dinner, and the waiter asked for my ID. I replied "do I look that young?" and the waiter said "No. I just wanted to see if you qualified for the Senior Citizen discount."**



In 12th-century Pisa, Italy, the construction firm of Morrelli and Sons, whose members were all afflicted with a genetic disorder in which the left leg was considerably shorter than the right, begin work on a new tower.

# Portland Winemakers Club

## Leadership Team – 2025

President: **Bob Hatt**

[bobhatt2000@yahoo.com](mailto:bobhatt2000@yahoo.com)

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

Treasurer: **Barb Thomson**

[bt.grapevine@frontier.com](mailto:bt.grapevine@frontier.com)

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

Secretary: **Bob Thoenen**

[pwc\\_secretary@outlook.com](mailto:pwc_secretary@outlook.com)

- Communicate regularly about club activities and issues
- Keep an updated list of members' email, name tags, and other club information

Chair of Education / Speakers **Paul Natale**

[paulnatale6@gmail.com](mailto:paulnatale6@gmail.com)

- Arrange for speakers & educational content for our meetings

Chair for Tastings: **Mike Sicard / Steve Fine**

[msicard@willamettehvac.com](mailto:msicard@willamettehvac.com)

- Conduct club tastings

[steve.fine@comcast.net](mailto:steve.fine@comcast.net)

- Review and improve club tasting procedures.

Chair of Winery / Vineyard Tours: **Lynn Hilbert / Jeramiah Deines**

- Select wineries, vineyards, etc. to visit

[lynn@lynnhilbert.com](mailto:lynn@lynnhilbert.com)

- Arrange tours

[mycothused@live.com](mailto:mycothused@live.com)

- Cover logistics (food and money)

Chair of Group Purchases: **Mark Hernandez / Hank Armstrong**

- Grape purchases and make the arrangements

to purchase, collect, and distribute

[mark\\_hernandez14@comcast.net](mailto:mark_hernandez14@comcast.net)

• Supplies – These should be passed to [HANKARM@gmail.com](mailto:HANKARM@gmail.com)  
the President or Secretary for distribution

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

Chairs for Social Events: **Mindy Bush / Marilyn Brown**

- Gala /Picnic/parties

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