

Newsletter

June, 2003

Next Meeting: Thursday July 17, 2003 at 7:30 PM. Maplewood Community Center
Secretary: Phil Tochtrop, 1546 Virginia Ave., Ellisville, MO 63011 (636) 391-6937
Katherine_14846@msn.com

HAPPENING THIS MONTH

We will be having a picnic at Bernard and Anna Cleve's house this month instead of our regular Thursday evening meeting. The picnic is scheduled for Saturday, June 21 at 4:00. If you did not sign up at the last meeting, please R.S.V.P. by calling Bernard at 314-997-1766 or e-mail at drsaban@prodigy.com. E-mail's need to have "Wine Club" as a "subject", he gets a lot of spam. Everyone should bring a salad, vegetable or dessert. If you decide to bring dessert, it must be strawberry shortcake as we will be "tasting" wines to go with it. Bring your favorite wine to share. The club will provide the meat. Dave Anderson will be contacting people for wines to be sampled with our appetizer, main course, and dessert. Bring lawn chairs. It should be a great afternoon of socialization and wine tasting.

DIRECTIONS TO BERNARD'S

Their house is located in West County, near the intersection of Interstate 270 and US 40-61. From this intersection, travel East (toward the city of St. Louis) for approx. 1.5 miles to the Spoede Rd. exit. Travel north (toward the airport) on Spoede for approx. 1 mile to Villa Coublay, which will be found on your left. The address is Number 20 Villa Coublay.

SECRETARY'S CORNER

Reminder #1: \$3 per person in attendance is due to Alice Rau, Treasurer, upon arrival at each meeting to help cover the cost of cheese and bread for the evening's tasting. First-time guests do not pay.

WHITE WINE vs. RED WINE

By Judy Hon

Making white wine is very different from making red wine. You would almost think you were using two entirely different fruits when it comes to turning white grapes into wine. There are many nuances to making a good vs. an outstanding wine, but if you stick to the basics, you won't be disappointed.

The grapes should be at their peak ripeness when picked. This is hard to control when you rely on the one selling you the grapes. They have challenges of weather, birds, and availability of pickers, so they have similar problems to you. Buy from the most reliable source possible.

If you grow your own grapes, you are looking for a minimum Brix value of 21 and an acid level of 0.7 to 0.8. A Brix of 19 and an acid level of 1.2 would still be unripe. No matter what you

would do in the cellar, your wine would be perceived as sour. When you suspect the grapes are ripe, begin taking samples. You will notice a dramatic drop in acid when the grapes are ripe. Both reds and whites should be kept as cool as possible after picking, but whites are even more sensitive than reds. Some winemakers pick the grapes and keep them overnight in refrigerated trucks to cool the grapes down, then crush and press in the cool of the next morning.

With whites, no matter what, you crush the grapes then press off the juice right away. There are some that have the theory that you can cold soak some grapes (depending on the style of the desired wine) on the skins. Some even ferment the Chardonnay grape on the skins. This is risky business, and I don't recommend it. For purposes here, the best way is to press off the skins immediately. Oxidation is your biggest concern when it comes to white wine. If you think of how an apple turns brown the more it is exposed to air, you will have a good picture in your mind. The goal with white wine, in general, is a nice, pleasant, fruity wine. This will be best accomplished with a cool ferment and the addition of sulfites. Sulfite should be added at the crush at the rate of 30p.p.m. I use a spray bottle and spray the grapes just before I crush them. The crush and press should be done as quickly as possible to minimize exposure to heat and oxygen. After the press, I add gelarom or gelatin (some use betonite), and pectic enzyme.

Put the juice in five gallon buckets and refrigerate at about 38-40 degrees for 24-48 hours. If you don't have a way to refrigerate, keep the juice in your cool cellar no more than 24 hours for settling. Remove the juice from refrigeration, rack it off the sludge, and warm it to room temperature. Then, take your readings. Unless I am making a Chardonnay or Chardonnay wine where I am going to be doing a malolactic fermentation, this is the only time the juice is allowed to reach room temperature. At this time, take your readings of Brix, acid and pH. Adjust you levels accordingly. Calculate how much alcohol you want this wine to contain. With

most white wines you will want to stay in the 11-12 percent range. Even 12 percent can have a "hot" or medicinal taste with the lighter, fruitier grapes. So, be careful about adding sugar. pH is not usually a problem with whites, and not nearly the problem that reds have, but adjust if necessary. Acid is the usual problem with whites. Acid is most difficult to correct. There are ways down the line to correct it, and over compensation can lead to a flat, dull wine. If you are in that .8 range, that's good, and even a level of 1.0 is no cause for panic. Higher than that, you can add distilled water to bring it down, but I have an aversion to adding water to any juice. I would rather try to adjust later. You lose quite a bit of body when you add water.

When the juice is room temperature, it is time to add the yeast. Before the yeast I add diammonium phosphate, (or DAP, or Yeast Nutrient) and Fermaid. Yeast is a matter of preference, but D-47 is the one I like most. Make your starter the usual way, Add the yeast and once the ferment shows signs of starting up, I then slowly cool down the juice. The ferment is a cool one and can be accomplished in several ways. I like the ferment to go in the primary fermenter for a few days before moving over to carboys, so I float frozen gallon jugs of ice (with the cap sealed with electrical tape) in the primary fermenter to keep the temperature 60 degrees or below. This is what I call my "baby sitting" time, when I even get up in the middle of the night to check the temperature. I let the primary get going strong, but when I can no longer keep the temperature below 60 degrees, even by floating ice, I transfer to the carboys and set the fridge at 40 degrees, which keeps the must at around 50 degrees. Any colder and the yeast will die and your ferment won't finish. If you don't have refrigeration, do your best to keep the must at 60 degrees or below.

Take your Brix readings once a day to make sure you are finishing. When Brix reaches 1.0 take the carboys out of the refrigerator and finish at room cellar temperature. This will avoid a stuck ferment. Some vinters add different yeasts

at different times as the ferment progresses, but for the average winemaker this isn't necessary. Ferment to complete dryness. Rack off the lees. You may want to do a malolactic fermentation on a Chardonnay or Chardone1 but not on any others. In that case, you should leave the Chardone1 or Chardonnay on the lees, do not add sulphite, let it warm and do the ML stirring the lees every few weeks.

For all others, sulfite to 30ppm and take your readings. PH should be in the 3.2-3.4 range, alcohol around 11-12 percent, acid may still be high. In that case, you should cold stabilize the wine. That is done, again by refrigeration. This time the temperature should get to 28-30 degrees and leave the wine in for a minimum of 2 weeks. Even if the acid isn't high, I like to do this to avoid crystallization in the bottle. When you chill it to serve. Rack the wine as soon as you remove it from the cold, or the acid crystals will dissolve back into the wine when it warms up. This should take care of bringing the acid within acceptable levels. Let the wine clear for several months and avoid air contact. Fining of whites is usually necessary. You can use bentonite followed by Sparkaloid. There are several fining agents, just don't use gelatins or egg whites. Filtering is an option, but most don't have the equipment. Personally, I avoid filtering because I think it takes away from the wine. Tasting is the thing to do next. How do you like it? If it is still too dry for you, now is the time to back sweeten. You can sweeten as much or as little as you like. I think back sweetening, even if just a little, will bring out the fruitiness of your wine, so do bench trials with small amounts, keeping careful records of what you like best, then multiply according to the size of you batch. Remember, if you back sweeten, you must add Potassium sorbate before bottling. After you add sugar, be sure to let it dissolve for a few days before adding more. It takes time for the sugar to truly dissolve and you can go overboard. Make sure you have checked you sulfite levels one more time. I also like to add a small amount of ascorbic acid to my finished wine. It just keeps the color a little better. You can bottle the

wine when all these steps are finished. Drink your wine within a year to 18 months. Most whites are best in this range with only the Chardonnays, Gewerts and Rieslings keeping longer

BUSINESS MEETING MINUTES

OLD BUSINESS

- ? Minutes were approved as reported in last month's newsletter.
- ? The Treasurer reported that the MWS treasury is solvent. .

NEW BUSINESS

- ? Planning for future events is to be discussed at a board meeting at Bernard Cleve's house.
- ? Paul Hendricks brought in the chemical spray chart that was published in the January newsletter with conversion measurements per gallon for the chemicals that were listed. If you are interested in this information, contact Paul at yokus@aol.com or 636-379-0722.
- ? Dave Anderson brought in the "gadget of the month". He showed us his wedges that he uses to tilt his carboy. It keeps the carboy stable while siphoning. Bernard Cleve will bring the gadget for the next meeting
- ? We welcomed one guest, Sue, to our meeting. She is a teacher with Steve Schmitt.
- ? We also have a new member to welcome: Katarzyna Lager from Collinsville, IL. We hope to meet you at our picnic.

MAY PROGRAM

Our guest speaker for the May meeting was Bob Mueller from Robbler Winery in New Haven,

MO. He is both the owner and chief wine maker. The winery is located one mile south of the Missouri River and was begun in 1988.

He brought two wines to share with the club. His Traminette recently won a gold medal at the San Diego National Wine Contest. He is the first winery in MO to produce a traminette wine. At present he is able to produce 250 gallons of traminette wine a year. The wine is noted for a flowery aroma. The traminette grape is a gavertzgameiner and seval hybrid. It was developed at Cornell in 1965 but was not named for 30 years.

He also shared his Seval wine with the club. This wine won a silver medal. They did not grow the grapes for this wine, but rather purchased the juice from Hermanhoff Winery.

Bob discussed some of his planting techniques with us. When he plants a vine, he digs a 4-6ft. deep hole, adds 1/2lb. of 12-12-12 fertilizer to the bottom of the hole. He then backfills about 8" of loose soil and plants the vine. He waters the vine generously after planting.

He noted that he had yellowing on the leaves of his Vignole and Norton grapes. He added Epsom salts for magnesium at the rate of 6 lbs. per acre for 500 plants. He also sprayed boron at the rate of 4lb. per acre.

In his fertilization program, he uses urea in a sprayer at the rate of 10lbs. per acre. He feels that nitrates or nitrites will burn.

WINE TASTING

Our May program consisted of tastings from Robbler Winery. Below is a listing of some of the wines tasted along with a description of the wine.

- ? Seval- a dry wine- some of the wine's measurements follow; juice measured 18.5 Brix- sugar added to 21.5 Brix- yeast used was CY3079

- ? Traminette-an off dry wine- 21 Brix- yeast used Lalvin R2
- ? Spiced Wine from Ferriguo Winery

THIS AND THAT

- ? Wine tools can be found at www.wineenthusiast.com or 1-800-295-2226
- ? Several interesting web sites are; www.winemakermag.org and www.mtngrv.smsu.edu/grapenews.htm