

# Orangewood Wines

*Small Wineries, Great Wines*

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## Introduction

On Friday the weather delivered 3/4 inch of rain in an hour and knocked out our power for 17 hours as a way to let us know that the monsoon season has really started. We hope this wraps up the fire season, too.

This month Leslie responds to readers who thought that "umami" was a type of sushi.

## New Sales Consultant - Caroline Kennedy

In April, Caroline emailed Leslie and expressed interest in selling wine for Orangewood. With restaurants being closed, it wasn't until early June that Caroline joined the ranks to cover the Ahwatukee, Chandler and Tempe areas. She is on the last leg of her quest for a bachelor's degree in Retailing and Consumer Sciences from the University of Arizona. Caroline has a passion for wine that has allowed her to integrate well with our team.

## Umami (oo-mom-ee)

### Portfolio Notes - by Leslie Zellmer

In last month's newsletter I used the word "umami" to describe a flavor of a swordfish dish and marinade. That elicited the question from Laurie, "What is umami?". My first response was extremely basic, "it's savory". It was difficult to come up with a great way to explain the flavor phenomenon of umami. This time around, I will attempt to describe umami and discuss its relation to wine.

As you know our taste buds have receptor cells that send signals to the brain and tell us what we are tasting. These receptor cells correspond with five flavors: sweet, salty, bitter, sour and umami. Many describe umami as savory, and that is not wrong, but it doesn't quite explain the phenomenon fully. Umami, named by Japanese scientist Kikunae Ikeda in the early 1900's, means delicious in Japanese. It is glutamic acid or glutamate, an amino acid. Ikeda went on to develop Monosodium Glutamate or MSG, the flavor enhancer found in low grade Chinese food. Foods rich in glutamate are things like soy sauce, parmesan cheese, fish sauce, aged beef, salted fish, seaweed and shitake mushrooms. Aging, drying, fermenting, ripening, curing, slow

roasting or braising all have the effect of increasing the level of umami. In fact, many people in the world experience the flavor from the start of life in breast milk.

From a wine pairing standpoint, umami doesn't handle tannins very well. Umami seems to make tannic wine taste bitter and astringent. Wines with high acidity like Pinot Noir, Champagne, Cava or Sangiovese work great with umami due to its inherent saltiness. The salt makes your mouth water, making you want another sip. Additionally, salt tempers high acidity and gives a smoother mouthfeel.

Wine can have umami flavors. I recently had a conversation with a Cellar Master at AJ's who told me, "I like savory rosés!". I asked myself, what would make savory rosé? Ah, yes, fermentation and aging. That is umami! Not only does fermenting add that flavor, aging on the lees (dead yeast) and batonnage (stirring up the dead yeast) increase the umami flavor.

Here are some examples of wines exhibiting umami from our portfolio:

- Tribaut Blanc de Chardonnay – Romery, France
- Lingua Franca Estate Chardonnay – Eola-Amity Hills, Oregon
- Yamhill Valley Vineyards Estate Pinot Noir – Willamette Valley, Oregon
- Hendry Block 7&22 Zinfandel – Napa Valley, California
- Avennia Arnaut Syrah – Yakima Valley, Washington
- Zinke Kimsey Vineyards Syrah – Ballard Canyon, California
- Menéres 10 Year Tawny Port – Douro, Portugal

Now that we have that savory subject covered, here is the ramble.

## The Rambler

Locking down businesses and sheltering at home worked to slow the infection rate and avoid overloading the hospitals. The problem was that it also shut down major parts of the economy. Wearing facemasks also slows the infection rate. More and more people realize that. Laurie and I choose to wear face masks and we avoid places and businesses that have customers who choose not to. I'm just sayin'.

Enough. Time to address another issue. Have you ever called someone and heard a voice saying, "Please enjoy this music while your party is reached"; then some pseudo classical music starts to play? I have to think that cell phone service must have been very poor in days gone by so that we all liked to hear music for a while. Either that or someone had a great solution for a problem we didn't have. The implementation must have been terrible because no one managed to figure out how to change the music. It's always the same music. In these days of working from home, the phone is the primary method of contacting people. I have been doing it a lot more. I think that we should all try calling our phones to listen to what all our friends and

business contacts hear when they call us, especially the voicemail introduction. I know some people change their messages every day, but I think many people recorded something when they first got a cell phone and that message is still there. Maybe you won on "Wait Wait...Don't Tell Me" and Carl Kasell recorded your message - that would be a keeper. Otherwise, please consider my guidelines for messages

1. Keep it short. Your callers will likely hear this message a lot. Don't waste their time.
2. Skip the jokes. It may be funny once, but after a year or two...
3. Be informative. "This is Hilda, please leave a message." If your caller expected Gertrude, they will save you both time.
4. If you don't check messages, set that expectation. As Joe Walsh sang, "Just leave a message, maybe I'll call."
5. If your phone is also for business calls, mention the business. "This is Cindy at Mayo Clinic." If your caller planned on ordering pizza...

Next month I will suggest that businesses review their calling trees. A quick recommendation for them: "Please listen carefully because our menus have changed ... on March 1, 2016."

Life's been good to us so far...

Richard and Laurie  
Orangewood Wines