

# Orangewood Wines

*Small Wineries, Great Wines*

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## Introduction

A Happy New Year to you - it's not too late to hope that 2021 will turn out better than 2020.

The Times (of London) quoted a binman (dustman in my day) that "the bins have been a lot heavier since the first lockdown began last March. Everyone's inside with nothing to do apart from drink and buy stuff on the internet." We have previously noted that wine consumption has increased. What we have also seen is that the normal profile (in Arizona) of a slow summer and gangbusters fourth quarter disappeared, replaced with more consistent month to month sales.

This month Leslie writes about yeast. Just one of the facets of winemaking.

## New Sales Person: Grant Gibson

Grant is the kind of enthusiastic sales representative that we love to have join Orangewood. He has experience in restaurants and wine shops, and will now continue with a restaurant position as well as representing Orangewood. He lives in Fountain Hills and will be addressing that area, as well as Mesa.

## Native and Commercial Yeast

### **Portfolio Notes - by Leslie Zellmer**

Yeast is everywhere. It is a fungus that lives on grapes, in the vineyard soil, on your skin, inside your intestines, everywhere. For over 8,000 years yeast has been spontaneously fermenting grape juice when left to its own devices. Louis Pasteur discovered in 1860 that yeast is a living organism and it is the reason why alcohol ferments and bread rises. Thirty years later, Hermann Müller figured out how to isolate strains and used them to make wine. These discoveries drastically changed the course of winemaking across the globe with thousands of yeast strains cultivated for commercial use.

Today, some winemakers have chosen to forgo the use of commercial yeast, using ancient winemaking methods that let the yeasts that are present on the grapes from the vineyard ferment the wine. Why would a winemaker choose one way over the other?

The process of fermentation, put simply, goes like this: yeasts gobble up the grape sugars and convert those into alcohol and carbon dioxide and many other compounds. Those compounds are things like amino acids, tannins, esters and sulfites. Each provide flavors, aromas and textures to the finished wine. When

using native yeast, you may not know which yeast strains are present and what flavor compounds will show up after fermentation. This could have a negative impact because some yeasts impart not so pleasant flavors and aromas. If you are a winemaker whose native yeast results in unpleasant aromas or flavors, you would be inclined to inoculate your juice with commercial yeast. If you have a large production operation that pumps out millions of gallons per year and your goal is to have consistency from vintage to vintage, commercial yeast is what you are using without a doubt.

Then who would use native yeast? There are many winemakers interested in producing a completely natural wine from the ground up. They farm biodynamically or organically, they use native yeasts to ferment their wines, and they do not add anything during the winemaking process. These are sometimes called "clean" wines. An example from the Orangewood portfolio is Zinke Wines. Michael Zinke's wines all say right on the label that the wines are "100% Bullshit Free", meaning that no additives and no commercial yeast are used.

In addition, using native yeast is the ultimate way to show terroir in wines. Each vineyard has its own flora of yeast. If you are making site specific wines, you can really drive that home, letting the native yeast on the fruit do the work of imparting its unique set of flavors. It would be difficult to get a similar wine from vintage to vintage this way. To some that is appealing and to others that is a nightmare.

Winemaking is full of complexity. Yeast selection is just one of the many choices a winemaker is faced with. All of these choices create diversity in wine. I celebrate it with every sip.

## The Rambler

We take our black Labrador, Lucy, on a walk in the mornings. There is not much traffic on the road, and we meet a lot of the same people walking or cycling or walking their dogs every day. Mostly we know their dogs' names - Duke, Scout, Raya... We have names for the folks we see, the Happy Cyclist, the man with dog (or without dog), the puffer, the other puffer, Rene (we do know some peoples' names). We also see some of the same wild animals. There is a Phainopepla who has read the guide book about always perching at the top of a tree. We see him most days at the top of a tree, the same tree. He deserved a name. The Reverend Spooner would have suggested Paino Phepler, which led us to, homonymically, to Pinot Noir. He's very black and silky.



But what I really wanted to ramble about is email. A couple of years ago, I wrote about Email Etiquette. (You can re-read it [here](#).) On reflection, it was less about etiquette than how to overcome the shortcomings of the email system. Having seen some emails recently that could have been improved, I thought to myself "a short ramble might do the trick". Because email does not try to constrain what you can do - you can send whatever you like to any email address that you know - it is very flexible and can be used to say hello, to pass some information, to ask for action or a combination of these things. A major value, to me at least, is that the email only goes where I send it and that I automatically

have a copy of what I sent and when I sent it. I also have a copy of any responses. This compares to social media where "they" can decide where things go and whether you can ever find things again. I could give you advice about structure and key points, but that suggests you should be constrained in an unconstrained communication. I have in the past had one piece of advice - do not write anything that you would not want your mother to read. This seemed sufficient until I got an email recently sent at about 5:30 pm. I add to my advice - do not write and send an angry email after several happy hour cocktails! Drink and operate internet connected devices with caution.

The Rambler rambles on...

Cheers,

Richard and Laurie  
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