

Orangewood Wines

Small Wineries, Great Wines

Orangewood Wines' Newsletter

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Introduction

We are moving into the season, OND (October-November-December), as it is known in the trade. We are slightly ahead of where we were this time last year, and we are positioned to take advantage any time we shake off the Great Recession. That we have not shaken it off is demonstrated by restaurants and wine stores going out of business and many others are still reticent about adding new wines to their lists.

Box Score

New Restaurants:	0
New Retail/Wine Bar Outlets	0
New Sales People	0
New Wineries/Importers	0

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Wine Topic of the Month – Wine Knowledge

On one of networking sites I visit I saw a thread with the title “Do you need to ‘know about’ wine to enjoy it?” While the conversation was oriented towards “no”, which I agree with, I think they are missing the point. There are lots of interesting beverages that are quite enjoyable, but very repeatable. That is, when I buy XYZ vodka or V8 juice or Coke, I will be surprised if they are not identical to what I bought last week, last year or 10 years ago. I heard that at one micro brewery they put the local water through a reverse osmosis process so that it is tasteless, then they add the minerals that make it identical to that at Burton-on-Trent or wherever and the use this water with their recipe to make a particular beer. Wine has that additional element of variability that adds a dimension to the pleasure. I have been in the wine business now for nearly 12 years and I have learned a lot in that time, but I learned in particular how little I know. There is always more to learn. There are so many questions that can be explored. Why does this wine taste different after I have eaten something/cleaned my teeth, sucked a lemon...? Why do wines have different alcohol levels? Why is wine aged in different kinds of things – oak barrels, stainless steel, concrete...? What is malolactic fermentation and why is it used?

What is a grape varietal? What varietals are there? Why are some wines a blend of varietals? Why does Merlot taste different from different places? Why do winemakers drink beer? What is the difference between oak from different places? Why do some people prefer screw caps and others cork? What about these plastic corks? What is a tannin? What is the difference between a duck? (One of its feet are both the same. Sorry, it's one of my favorite questions). What is brix and why does it get measured? Why do wine growers worry about pruning and canopies and dropping fruit? What is dry farming?

This is not a quiz. I am merely trying to whet your appetite for additional wine knowledge. Some of these questions may interest you. There are lots of questions that I have not thought of yet. The point is that wine making is an art. Repeatability is impossible given the different challenges year to year. No matter what winemakers do to remove the variables, there will still be vineyard to vineyard and year to year differences. So, again, the answer is you don't need to know anything to enjoy wine, but learn something every day – it will keep you young!

Follow up

Following up on a couple items from previous newsletters (which can be found [here](#)):

1. In last month's newsletter, I said that Patton Valley Vineyard had no dog on their website. I was quickly corrected by Danielle (thank you) who sent me a link the [page](#) that includes a picture of Penny.
2. Also in last month's newsletter I gave my opinions about the origins of the punt. I soon received two more opinions:
 - a. Danielle at Patton Valley (thank you again) mentioned she was reading a book about the history of wine in *Making Sense of Wine* by Matt Kramer. It talked about the punt and why it existed. It did start with Champagne, according to Kramer, and was a discovery of Dom Perignon that allowed for champagne to ferment in bottle. The punt gives extra surface area that disperses the atmospheric pressure created by the fermentation and keeps the bottle from exploding.
 - b. Jim Wallace shared his own opinion (thank you Jim) and segued into the derivation of an interesting expression. Jim says that the original reason for the "punt" was to collect sediment in a readily identifiable location that could be tracked during decanting. Perhaps by using a candle. When the punt first came about all wines had sediment. Drinkers of old would not completely empty their glasses. Instead, they would simply toss it over a shoulder (most had dirt floors in those days). It also gave birth to the expression, "here's mud in your eye".

Rambling

Last week we had a special day. The date was 10/11/12. (In Britain this day is celebrated in November.) What is extra special about the date is that if you add these three numbers together, subtract 30 and cube the result, the number is the anniversary that Laurie and I celebrated on that day. It's almost as if we planned it!

My son Julian is continuing his quest to run 50 Half Marathons in 50 states before he exceeds age 50. I ran along (behind would be a better word) with him and his friends in one of these races and have signed up to do another next month. Feeling that hiking every morning, running once a week and shoveling the product of our 4 horses twice a day was a good basis for being able to complete 13.1 miles, I have been trying to build on that. I first built up to running 5 miles twice a week. Now I am extending one of those runs by a mile each week. Unlike last time, the creek that Cave Creek is named after is dry, so I can run along the track that used to be New River Rd, from when it actually ran from Cave Creek all the way to New River. Back then an act of Congress decreed that the road run through the creek bed. However, this was overruled by an Act of God which washed out the road, so now the first couple of miles are not for motor vehicles. Continuing past those two miles, I pass the road that Steve and Amy live on (thanks for the wave yesterday, Amy). The roads undulate somewhat. There are a lot of little arroyos and I always seem to be puffing my way out of one. This week my longer run was 7 miles. Overall the route runs down to the creek, across it and up the other side. Then there is a slow drop disguised with arroyos until I turn around and find I have a long up hill before dropping down to the creek and then, oh joy, a final climb back home. I think this regimen will stand me in good stead next month – but standby for next month's newsletter.

The Rambler rambles on...

Richard (newsletter writer), Laurie (editor) and Jim Wallace (another writer and editor)
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