

# Orangewood Wines

*Small Wineries, Great Wines*

## Orangewood Wines' Newsletter

Volume 4 Issue 35 December 27, 2013

### Introduction

This is the time when I thank all of you who sent us Christmas cards. We would like to apologise that we have sent out none – though our newsletter is a partial substitute. We wish you all the best for a happy, healthy and prosperous New Year. We think, perhaps, a little more wine could help.

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### New Restaurants

#### [Bluewater Grill](#)

1720 East Camelback Road  
Phoenix, AZ 85016  
(602) 277-3474

#### [The Henry](#)

4455 East Camelback Road  
Phoenix, AZ 85018  
(602) 429-8020

### New Wine Stores/Wine Bars

#### [Grapeables](#)

12645 North Saguaro Boulevard #9,  
Fountain Hills, AZ 85268  
(480) 816-5959

#### **Wine Warehouse**

17025 North Scottsdale Road, Suite 140  
Scottsdale, AZ 85255  
(480) 284-8840

## **New Wineries**

### **Curvature Wines**

Curvature Wines was founded by Cristie Kerr, LPGA golfer, and Suzanne Pride-Bryan, co-owner of Pride Mountain Vineyards. The wines are made at the Pride winery by Sally Johnson, the Pride Winemaker. The net proceeds from the sale of the wines are given to breast cancer research. Suzanne is a breast cancer survivor; Cristie's mother and two of Sally's aunts have also had breast cancer.

While the story behind the wines is itself compelling, the wines successfully ran the gauntlet of the Orangewood sales team evaluation. We found the wines delightful.

### **Hiatus Cellars**

Mark Davidowski's dad was an avid oenophile and passed along that passion to his son. Before becoming a wine producer, David started up a wine store in San Diego. There he was the kind of wine merchant everybody should have. He listened to his customers requests, steered them towards wines that could work for the occasion the customer described, and listened to their feedback. As a wine producer, he has adopted a Negotiante style. He knows the vineyards that produce good fruit, and he knows who makes good wine from those vineyards. He has a selection of wines, and each one has its own source and its own winemaker. In addition, he targets his wines for particular purposes. Examples are his Sauvignon Blanc, which is intended to be Bordeaux Blanc style, and his Napa Valley Red wine, intended to be paired with grilled Tri-Tip. With his consumer and retailer background, Mark's wines are a break from the ordinary, which is why he calls them "Hiatus".

### **Workman/Ayer**

Workman/Ayer began years ago with the joining of two great families. The Workman family has a long and broad history in the northern California wine business. The Ayer family has deep roots in agriculture in Iowa and California. Michel Ayer and Stacy Workman are married and live in Moon Valley – Phoenix, Arizona. They are the principals in pulling these two families together to produce their "de facto" red wine and "ipso facto" white wine. You might wonder where these names come from. "De facto" sounds Chicagoan, but is actually a Latin language legal term meaning "the real thing". "Ipso facto" is another legal expression meaning "in and of itself". Michel's day job is as a lawyer. The wines Workman/Ayer produces are Rhône style wines made from Central Coast California grapes.

## **Wine Topic of the Month: Concrete**

When Mark Davidowski was introducing us to his Hiatus Cellars wines, he explained that the Chardonnay is fermented and aged in concrete eggs. “What?” we said, “what happened to oak or stainless steel?” So he explained the benefits and results, but, meanwhile, Lisa (this year’s top sales person) suggested that I might perhaps consider this as a topic for the newsletter. Perhaps!

I had thought concrete was something that had been used as a cheap alternative to barrels, but I was wrong. While concrete has been used for centuries as a convenient way of fermenting or aging wine, only recently (2002) has the notion of concrete being used seriously for fine winemaking been explored. So what is a concrete “barrel”? While there are various shapes and sizes, the predominant shape looks like an egg with legs. The vessel is perhaps 6 feet high and has the capacity of about 10 regular barrels. The concrete is thoroughly rinsed with tartaric acid to remove any of the alkalinity inherent in concrete. Concrete is slightly porous, allowing a little bit of oxygen through to provide micro-oxygenation to the fermentation or aging of the contents. The egg is somewhat thick, providing a thermal mass to slow down temperature changes from the outside (weather) or the inside (chemical fermentation). The concrete may also be plumbed with pipes to allow more control of the wine temperature. Finally, intriguingly, the egg-shaped interior encourages convection flow of the wine – essentially mixing up the wine and left over yeast (known as batonage or stirring the lees). The characteristics of these concrete eggs do not necessarily make it superior to stainless steel or oak, just different. The egg provides the winemaker with one more weapon to apply during fermentation and/or aging – should he or she have a concrete reason for using it.

## Rambling

2013 is drawing to a close. It has been an extraordinary year. No month has been normal, in the sense of predictable, given the history we have. Some months were way better – like August (twice what we did in 2012), others not so much. Overall however, we have grown substantially. This is the time when we look back on what we did and why we did it and ask if it made sense. Two important areas in which we made changes during 2013 concerned suppliers and sales people. We added wineries with the capacity and reputation to improve our portfolio, as well as supporting fledgling wineries who are finding their way. We continued to add sales people to improve our coverage of customers and prospects in Arizona. We will continue with these strategies in 2014. Our foundational philosophies continue – representing wines that we are proud of and will drink ourselves (and do) and providing stellar customer service that we would like to get (and do get) from our suppliers.

The Rambler rambles on...

Cheers,

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

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