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# QUESTION FOR MAY: How can packaging | WINES&VINES

# enhance tasting room and DtC sales?



#### Jessie Poshepny Director of DtC, Hospitality and marketing communications **Trione Vineyards & Winery** Geyserville, Calif.

What the consumer sees when they open their box of wine is their first impression (at home) of that brand they loved and spent money on. The box has to be clean, the wine set in with labels face up, and any additional material, such as a brochure or a personalized note is set right in the center. It has to look as though the box was packed by hand with care.



#### **Raechel Sims Director of communications** and consumer sales **Cristom Vineyards** Salem, Ore.

Displaying unique packaging throughout the tasting room is a great "soft touch" approach in upselling, and also a way to ensure the visual component of your hospitality experience is in keeping with big-picture messaging. When we invested in luxury gift boxes from Columbia Corrugated Box for the holiday season, we saw a noticeable increase in gift set sales.



#### **Cynthia Cosco** Owner/Winemaker **Passaggio Wines** Sonoma, Calif.

A wine tasting should be all about the experience. From the wine bottle and label you have created, to the package you have just placed it in for them. Going a step further by wrapping it in tissue paper and placing it in a beautiful bag or box creates a sense of completion for their experience. If the package has your winery name or logo on it, it is a walking billboard.



#### **ON THE COVER**

Packaging suppliers are offering more services for smaller wineries. The three bottles on the cover reflect some of the decorative touches such as letter press, embossing and metallic inks that can make a wine stand out on retail shelves even if it's not a nationally distributed brand.

#### **CONTRIBUTORS**

In the second part of a two-part report on the role of thiols in Sauvignon Blanc wines (page 68), **Dr. Carien Coetzee** wraps up what researchers and winemakers in New Zealand have learned about these strong aromatic compounds, and especially how to enhance their sensory effects. She completed her Ph.D. at the University of Stellenbosch, South Africa and is currently employed at Vinlab, a laboratory supporting the South African wine industry.

Bill Ward retired as the wine columnist for the Minneapolis Star Tribune in 2014 and has since then contributed several articles to Wines & Vines and other publicatios. Living in the upper Midwest, Ward is close to wineries that mostly specialize in cold-climate grape varieties, so that subject has become a bit of a specialty for him. In this issue he contributes a piece on the new Itasca and Crimson Pearl varieties (page 82) based on a tasting and presentation at the recent Cold Climate Grape Conference.

For grape growers, especially in cold climates, the most important decision is location, location, location (as in any real estate transaction). In their article "Cold Hardiness of Grapevines" beginning on page 84, three researchers from Michigan State University, Paolo Sabbatini, G. Stanley Howell, and Josh VanderWeide, look at what it means for a grapevine to be cold hardy and how vines have adapted to survive in cold climates. The researchers discuss site and variety selection, and detail best strategies in managing vineyards.

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# Introducing the New Editor And the Annual Packaging Issue

THIS WILL BE MY LAST Editor's Letter for Wines & Vines as I am stepping back from the editor position after almost 12 years. It should be a very smooth transition for the new editor, Andrew Adams, because he's been here on the editorial staff since 2011 and is a familiar face to many of you.

Andrew is taking over my job and I am staying on the team as editor at large. I like the title because who wouldn't want to be "at large" as much as possible? One definition of the term is "free from restraint or confinement," which sounds super positive. Another is "representing the whole of a state, district or body," which also appeals to me. I will spend more time in wineries and vineyards, researching and writing articles that I hope will help the winemaking profession as a whole move forward.

The editorial content will be in great hands and I am proud to be passing to Andrew Adams a job I have truly valued.

As for Andrew, I think his life has been pointing him in this direction for a long time. He grew up in a quintessential wine town: Sonoma, Calif., where his father was a winery executive. He went to college in the wine-producing state of Oregon, studied journalism, and after graduation worked as a newspaper reporter and editor there. He migrated back to California to work in another traditional wine town, Lodi, where he became the city editor of the Lodi News Sentinel.

To complete what turned out to be his preparation for joining the Wines & Vines staff, Andrew worked one crush at Beringer Vineyards and then three more at Starmont Winery, both in Napa Valley. He now knows wineries from the inside out, having written at least 300 articles on some aspect of winegrowing or winemaking

during the past six and a half years. The editorial content will be in great hands and I am proud to be passing to him a job I have truly valued.

Now let's get on with the business at hand. This edition of the magazine is our annual Packaging Issue. It reflects the continually growing interest by wineries in improving their brand appeal and sales by choosing great design and packaging materials. Contributing editor Jane Firstenfeld writes "Big Help for Tiny Wineries" (page 34), in which she gathers plenty of good advice on how to work with suppliers. Regular contributor Laurie Daniel interviews a long-time California wine marketing specialist, Lisa Ehrlich, on the interface between packaging and branding (page 44).

Adams reports on winemaking equipment in two articles. One is the monthly Technical Spotlight, this time on Tolosa Winery in California's Edna Valley, which has recently undergone a major overhaul (page 56). In the Product Focus article, he zeroes in on the latest innovations in cap management tools (page 64).

For growers and winemakers east of the Rockies, the issue has three substantive articles of particular interest: "High-Value Bordeaux Style Blends" on the East Coast (page 74), "Midwest Vintners Evaluate New Varieties" (page 82) and a timeless contribution by Michigan State University researchers on "Cold Hardiness of Grapevines" (page 84).

That wraps up my last Editor's Letter. I look forward to seeing more of you in your wineries and vineyards in the coming months. All of us here will continue to bring you the best possible news, information and analysis relevant to the North American wine industry.

—Jim Gordon



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# **Key Indicators**

Complete data is available at winesandvines.com/metrics.

#### **U.S. Wine Sales**

MONTH		
March 2018	\$3,686M	5%1
March 2017	\$3.525M	3% I

#### 12 MONTHS

March 2018 \$41,236M 1%↑ March 2017 \$40,890M

#### **Off-Premise Sales IRI Channels**

## **MONTH**

\$680M March 2018 4%1 \$654M March 2017

#### 12 MONTHS

March 2018 \$8,896M March 2017 \$8,651M

### **Direct-to-Consumer Shipments**

#### **MONTH**

March 2018 March 2017

#### 12 MONTHS

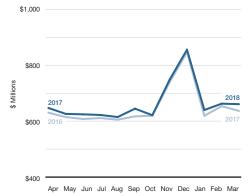
March 2018 \$2,758M March 2017 \$2.436M

#### **MONTHLY SALES**



Source: bw166.com, Wines Vines Analytics. Domestic table and sparkling

#### **MONTHLY SALES**



Source: Nines Vines Analytics. Domestic table and sparkling wine sales in multiple-outlet and convenience stores, four weeks ended Mar. 25, 2018

#### **MONTHLY SHIPMENTS**



Source: Wines Vines Analytics/ShipCompliant

#### Winery Job Index

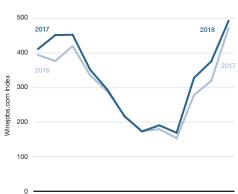
wine sales on-premise and off-premise

#### **MONTH** March 2018 497 4%1 March 2017 476 12 MONTHS March 2018 327 8%1

302

#### **MONTHLY INDEX**

March 2017



Apr May Jun Jul Aug Sep Oct Nov Dec Jan Feb Mar Source: winejobs.com

## **U.S. Wine Sales**

## U.S. Wine Sales Rise 5% in March

otal U.S. wine sales, both domestic and packaged imports approached \$3.7 billion in March, market research firm bw166 reported, up 5% from a year earlier.

Domestic wine sales, including bulk imports, gained 1% in the latest 12 months to reach \$41 billion. The increase stemmed from a mere \$347 million in additional sales in the period. Half the additional sales occurred in March, underscoring just how robust the month was relative to the rest of the year. Domestic table wines drove the growth, rising 4% on \$145 million in additional sales for the month; this contrasted with slightly weaker

sales for the segment over the past 12 months. Demand for bulk imports remained strong, rising 19% in the month with an additional \$10 million in sales. Domestic sparkling wines added little more than \$5 million in sales in March for a growth rate of 5%.

Packaged imports continued to challenge domestic wines, rising 6% in the latest 12 months to \$21 billion. The growth in dollar terms was \$1.3 billion, or nearly four times that of domestic wines. The growth helped push total U.S. wine sales in the period to \$63 billion, up 3% from the previous year.

—Peter Mitham

#### **TOTAL WINE SALES**

	\$ Millions			
	2017	2018	Change	% Change
Domestic Table, Sparkling & Imported Bulk	\$40,889	\$41,236	\$347	1%
Packaged Imports & All Other Wines	\$20,195	\$21,449	\$1,254	6%
Total Wines	\$61,084	\$62,685	\$1,601	3%

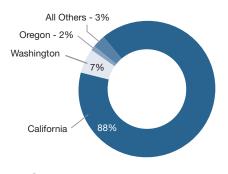
Source: bw166.com. Wines Vines Analytics, Consumer expenditures for all wines on-premise and off-premise. 12 months through March 2018. Excludes cider.

#### **Off Premise**

# Oregon, Washington Strong as Off-Premise Sales Rise 3%

ff-premise sales through multiple-outlet and convenience stores in the four weeks ended March 25, increased 4% versus a year earlier to \$680 million, market research firm IRI reported. Case volumes in-

#### **OFF-PREMISE SALES SHARE** BY WINERY STATE



Source: Ri. Wines Vines Analytics, Domestic table wine sales in glass packaging in multiple-outlet and convenience stores; 52 weeks ended Mar. 25, 2018.

creased 2% to 8,576,040. The activity lifted 52-week sales 3% to \$8.9 billion.

While sparkling wines rose 5% in the four weeks ended March 25, growth in table wines for the period was notable. With an additional \$25 million in sales for the period, March saw table wines garner more than 10% of the sales increase logged in the previous year. Sparkling wine sales lagged annual growth trends despite more consistent performance.

Drilling down into West Coast winery sales, Northwest producers showed strong growth in the latest 52 weeks. Oregon wines did especially well, with off-premise sales rising 11%. Washington wines rose 3%, with sales of cheaper wines dragging down exceptional performance in the higher price segments. Indeed, Washington logged 40% growth in the prime \$15-\$19.99 price segment, and averaged 25% for bottles \$20 and up. Oregon posted doubledigit gains at \$11 and up, led by 19% growth of \$25-plus wines.

-Peter Mitham

#### **OFF-PREMISE SALES GROWTH** BY WINERY STATE



Source: A IRI, Wines Vines Analytics. Domestic table wine sales in glass packaging in multiple-outlet and convenience stores; 52 weeks ended Mar

#### **Direct to Consumer**

## DtC Growth Marches Forward with 10% Gain

irect-to-consumer (DtC) shipments rose 10% in March versus a year earlier to exceed \$342 million, Wines Vines Analytics/ShipCompliant by Sovos reported. Case volumes increased 12% to 642,516, slightly less than the 12-month increase of 13%. The average bottle shipped had a value of \$44.38, a healthy premium to the 12-month average of \$37.25.

Northwest wineries continued to increase utilization of the channel, with volume gains outstripping the national average. Oregon, already enjoying the Northwest's largest DtC volumes, saw shipments rise another 35% to top \$163 million in the latest 12 months. Oregon's case volume was 345,654, up 30% from a year earlier. Washington was close behind with shipments growing 28% to near \$108 million. Case volume rose 23% to 267,958 cases.

The greater growth in value relative to case volumes pointed to wineries using the channel to ship more expensive wines. Oregon lead the region in terms of average bottle price, at \$39.37, a 3% gain from last year. Washington's average was \$33.57 a bottle, an even stronger gain from last year at 4%.

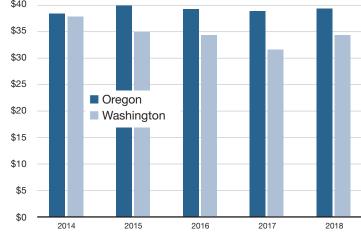
-Peter Mitham

#### DTC SHIPMENT VALUE

#### \$180 \$160 \$140 Oregon \$120 Washington \$100 \$80 \$60 \$40 \$20 2018 2015

Source: Wines Vines Analytics/ShipCompliant by Sovos; 12 months ended March 2018

#### DTC SHIPMENT AVERAGE BOTTLE PRICE



Source: Wines Vines Analytics/ShipCompliant by Sovos; 12 months ended March 2018

The month in perspective



#### China raises tariff on U.S. wines by 15%

U.S. wineries will find it more difficult to make a profit when exporting their products to China now that the Chinese Ministry of Commerce has raised its tariff on all U.S. wines entering the country. The move came in retaliation for the Trump administration's recent tariff hikes on Chinese steel and aluminum and puts U.S. wineries at even more of a disadvantage there versus some of their international competitors who already enjoyed lower tariffs. See page 13.

#### DiBuduo retiring from Allied growers

The Allied Grape Growers (AGG) announced that Nat DiBuduo is retiring as president and CEO of the group at the end of June. The AGG's board also announced vice president of operations Jeff Bitter as the next president of the statewide marketing group that has



more than 500 members. The AGG praised DiBuduo for his advocacy on behalf of its members as well as securing financial stability "with a solid grower base and excellent winery relations," and his "tireless" work on numerous industry boards and committees. "Serving

California winegrape growers since 2000 has been the pinnacle of my career," DiBuduo said in the statement announcing the change. "My previous roles in farm management, independent consulting and vineyard development positioned me to understand the challenges facing California grape growers and equipped me with the desire and ability to make a difference."

#### Sonoma Vintners pledge funds for housing

The Sonoma County Vintners Foundation has announced a pledge of \$600,000 toward the development of an affordable housing community comprised of modular cottages for individuals and families that lost their homes or were otherwise displaced by the October 2017 wildfires. The money will come from the foundation's Hamel/Fogerty Fund, and the group Homes for Sonoma will receive the gift. Homes for Sonoma is collaborating with architects, businesses and local planning officials to create neighborhoods of compact cottages clustered around outdoor communal areas, a soccer field and shared

garden. The group is working with the cities of Santa Rosa and Windsor to establish such a community. The group's goal is to raise \$4 million and build 40 cottages and has also received donations from North Bay Fire Relief and the International Interior Design Association. "Even before the fires, Sonoma County was a tight housing market. Our vision for modular homes not only meets the immediate housing needs of those impacted, but can also be part of a long-term solution," said Aaron Jobson, architect and a member of the group's executive committee.

#### Vintage receives \$75 million investment

Pat Roney, CEO and president of Vintage Wine Estates (VWE) in Santa Rosa, Calif., announced that AGR Partners, an investment firm focused on food and agribusiness, has provided growth capital through a minority equity stake in the company. According to VWE, the \$75 million investment by AGR and existing shareholders will help support future winery and brand acquisitions and expansion-related production efficiencies. Recent VWE acquisitions include Tamarack Cellars in Washington state, Firesteed Vineyards, in Oregon and the California brands Layer Cake, Cherry Pie and If You See Kay. AGR Partners' portfolio of investments in food and agribusiness companies includes Almark Foods, Ridley, Opal Foods, SEMO Milling, 3D Corporate Solutions, Icicle Seafoods and Tru-Test Group.

#### Foley buys Acrobat brand

Foley Family Wines in Santa Rosa, acquired the Acrobat wine brand from King Estate Winery in Eugene, Ore. The Acrobat brand, known for Pinot Noir and Pinot Gris, was expected to grow to more than 150,000 cases in 2018, according to the joint statement announcing the deal. Hugh Reimers, president of Foley Family Wines, said the deal, which did not include any real estate, gives the company a competitive brand in the fast growing \$15 to \$20 category. "There's a lot of opportunity to grow Pinot Noir in that \$15 to \$20 price point in Oregon, so it kind of fills that gap

for us," Reimers told Wines & Vines. "A to Z and Erath hold the number one and two spots, and we'd like to chase those guys."

#### Willamette Valley auction surpasses \$800,000

The Willamette Valley Wineries Association's third annual Willamette: The Pinot Noir Auction on April 7 in Newberg, Ore., raised \$737,000



through bidding and brought in more than \$800,000 in total revenue for the trade group. The 2018 auction total surpassed the previous year's auction by 56%. The auction included 78 lots of unique Pinot Noir wines and three collaborative lots of Chardonnay from the 2016 vintage. Each lot included five, 10 or 20 cases of wine. The average winning bid in the auction was \$9,099 with an average bottle price of \$124. The top-selling lot was a five-case offering by winemaker Maggie Harrison and Antica Terra winery that sold for \$33,000. The top collaborative Chardonnay lot was five cases produced by Bethel Heights and Walter Scott Wines and sold for \$12,000.

#### Breakthru affiliate buys **New England distributor**

Connecticut Distributors Inc. (CDI), an affiliate of Breakthru Beverage Group, announced it acquired New England Wine & Spirits. With this acquisition, CDI will now have state-wide exclusivity for Barefoot Cellars, Bogle Vineyards, and Wente Vineyards. The deal takes effect May 1, and CDI plans to establish the New England Division, a new retail sales division that will continue to represent many of the brands that are currently sold by New England Wine & Spirits.

#### LATEST NEWS

More detail on the news at winesandvines.com.

**TOP STORY** 

# Tariff Hike Complicates Exports to China

.S. wineries that have been laboring to improve their export business in China now face an extra hurdle, as the Chinese government announced a tariff increase of 15% on American wine imports effective April 2 in retaliation for U.S. trade actions on Chinese steel and aluminum that President Donald Trump ordered March 8.

The cost to enter the mainland China market was already high at 48.2% in tariff and taxes but effective April 2 it rose to 67.7%, which is levied on the price importers pay the wineries. In one winery's case the effect was immediate, as LangeTwins winery of Lodi, Calif., lost — at least temporarily — an order from a new Chinese client for several cases of its high-end Zinfandel.

"It's on a wait and see kind of hold," said Joseph Lange, head of international sales for the 100,000-case winery. "We don't do a lot of business with China, so this is just about the potential. It throws a roadblock in the way for the short term but it may be too early to tell just what effect these increased tariffs will have on our family winery."

China is the fifth largest market for U.S. wine exports when the European Union is considered as

one market. China received 1.6 million cases worth \$79 million in 2017, according to Department of Commerce data analyzed by Gomberg Fredrikson & Associates. The value of those exports has increased by 449% from a low base since 2007 but dipped from 2016 to 2017. Volume peaked in 2013 with 2 million cases.

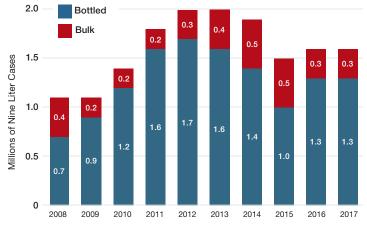
#### U.S. exports decreased in 2017

U.S. wines were in sixth place behind other countries exporting to China in 2017, led by France with \$862 million, Australia with \$638 million, then Chile, Spain and Italy. All of these increased their export value in China in 2017 while U.S. value dropped by \$2.8 million, paralleling a trend for U.S. exports to all countries, which decreased 5% in value and 8% in volume in 2017, according to California's Wine Institute.

However, in terms of price per case sold to China, U.S. wines beat the other seven biggest exporting countries with an average of \$49.89 that incorporates both bottled and bulk wines, compared to \$41.71 for Germany, \$38.29 for Australia and \$36.11 for France. "It's certainly a bright spot," said Jon Moramarco of Gomberg Fredrikson.

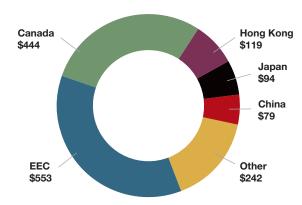
Wine was hardly the only U.S.

#### AMERICAN WINE EXPORTS TO CHINA 2008 TO 2017



Source: Gomberg Fredrikson & Associates, U.S. Department of Commerce. Bulk gallonage converted to 9-liter equivalent cases

#### **VALUE OF US WINE EXPORTS**



12 months ended December 2017. Source: Gomberg Fredrikson & Associates, U.S. Department of Commerce.

agricultural product to be targeted by China. Retaliatory tariff increases also went into effect for U.S. pork and dozens of types of nuts and fruits.

The higher wine tariff is disappointing to Wine Institute, other U.S. regional marketing groups and individual wineries. "It's certainly not a good thing," Linsey Gallagher, Wine Institute's vice president of international marketing, told Wines & Vines. "The playing field there already was not level, and this has made it worse."

She referred to countries such as Australia and Chile that have negotiated lower tariffs in China recently. Australia's rate decreased to 2.8% this year and will go to 0% in 2019, highlighting China's position as the leading export market for Australian wine and following on a free trade agreement the two countries signed in 2015.

"China is a very important market for us and our members have been investing time and money there for the past 10 years," Gallagher said. "Sales have increased essentially exponentially. Still, China represents under 5% of our exports, while 30% of our wine goes to Canada, roughly half a billion dollars' worth."

#### Tariff is newest of challenges

Honig Vineyard & Winery in Ruth-

erford, Calif., ships up to 1,000 cases per year to China, and has been seeking to expand sales in the market for 10 years. "We are very optimistic from a generational perspective, and we are in this business for the long haul." said Michael Honig, president of the 75,000-case Napa Valley operation. "We have a building market there. This increase in tariff is the most recent challenge but there have been other challenges including the crackdown on gifting when the new premier came in.

"Before that the challenge was building the culture of food, wine and enjoyment. Typically, in China wine was used as a toast to good fortune, a new son in the family and so on, not as a beverage to match and complement the meal. That was originally the biggest challenge. Now they are more interested in wine as a beverage and not just something to get inebriated from."

Honig observed that the tariff on U.S. wine is going in the opposite direction of many other countries. "Those that have strong agreements with China, their tariffs are going away. That's unfortunate. There is almost a \$400 billion trade deficit with China and that's not good, but with wine only accounting for \$80 million dollars of that we are the flea on the back of the elephant.

He said the wealthy in China will not be deterred by the new tariff, but it's the middle-class or newly affluent that is his target customer. "If they see two wines they like, one from California and one from Australia, both at \$50, and one goes to \$65 and one goes to \$45. What are they going to do?"

"I don't agree with the president's view that trade wars are easy to win. But this is a small bump in a long road. And I think the Chinese look at things generationally, too. We'll survive and cooler heads will prevail," Honig said.



Joseph Lange, left, and Layne Montgomery of m2 Wines promote exports in Hong Kong.

#### Saving the family farm

Lange, who had his Lodi Zinfandel order put on hold, described the tariff as a small part of an existential challenge for American farmers, and also talked about a generational viewpoint. Reached by phone while he was making sales visits in Canada (which also requires stiff protectionist markups on imported wine) he didn't blame President Trump, but did say, "We make wine to save the family farm. That's really the truth."

In the mid-2000s the Lange family decided to move from being simply grape growers to creating their own winery and brand to capture more of the potential value of their farmland, which now totals 1,250 acres of vines in Lodi and Clarksburg.

"That meant leveraging every single piece of land we own, and that risked all the work that my dad, my mom, and my aunt and uncle worked 45 years for," Lange said. "That's the kind of doubling down and risk that small family



For LangeTwins Family Winery & Vineyard in Lodi, Calif., export sales are part of an existential challenge since the family leveraged its land to build a state-ofthe-art production facility.

farms and family farms in general are having to risk as they go from generation to generation. We hope those in positions of influence can understand how many challenges a family farm can face."

—Jim Gordon

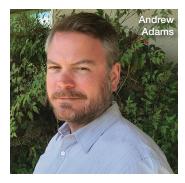


## **Wines & Vines Promotes** Adams to Editor Position

an Rafael, Calif.—Wines & Vines magazine promoted its senior editor, Andrew Adams, to the editor position to take over from Jim Gordon who has relinquished the editor post after 12 years. Adams has been with the North American wine industry publication since 2011 and brings to the job a wealth of experience in journalism and the winemaking community.

Gordon will continue on the magazine's staff as editor at large, primarily a reporting and writing role that will get him out into vineyards and cellars more often to cover news and trends in the winemaking and wine business

The switch in roles provides continuity in terms of personnel and editorial content as the 12,000 (print/digital) circulation



magazine approaches its 100th year of publication in 2019. Wines & Vines serves North American winemakers, grape growers and wine marketers with breaking industry news, how-to articles and market research both in the monthly print edition and at WinesandVines.com.

Adams now directs all editorial content, new content initiatives and manages a team of staff writers and editors as well as correspondents in California, the Northwest and Eastern regions. He is a former newspaper editor and reporter who worked one harvest at Beringer Vineyards and three at Starmont Winery, crushing grapes, dragging hoses, washing barrels and doing lab analysis before joining Wines & Vines.

Adams' wide-ranging duties at the magazine have included writing Technical Spotlight profiles on new and renovated wineries, writing weekly and sometimes daily industry news stories, writing dozens of reports on barrels and cooperages, analyzing industry data and speaking at industry conferences including Central Coast Insights and the Wines & Vines Packaging conference.

Adams worked for the Lodi News-Sentinel newspaper for four years, as a reporter and later managed daily news operations as city editor. He was a reporter for The Daily Astorian in Astoria, Ore., and a reporter for the Sonoma Index-Tribune in his hometown of Sonoma, Calif. He earned a BA degree in journalism at the University of Oregon, where he also was a reporter and editor of the daily, student-run newspaper the Oregon Daily Emerald.

Gordon has been covering the wine industry as an editor and reporter for more than 35 years, and joined Wines & Vines in 2006 as editor. He is also a contributing editor for Wine Enthusiast magazine and past director of the annual Symposium for Professional Wine Writers at Meadowood Napa Valley. He was editor in chief for two books by publisher Dorling Kindersley of London: Opus Vino, which was a finalist in the James Beard Awards, and 1000 Great Everyday Wines. Gordon was managing editor of Wine Spectator for 12 years and editor in chief of Wine Country Living magazine for four, during which time he helped create Wine Country Living TV for NBC station KNTV in San Jose.

Both men live in Napa, Calif. -Wines & Vines staff

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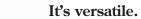
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# **Thornhill Wins Wine Brand Infringement Case**

anta Barbara, Calif.— Thornhill Companies has reached a cash settlement and obtained a contributory trademark infringement finding against CustomVine Corp. and its CEO after a lengthy dispute over wines sold under a Thornhill brand name.

Nicholas Miller, whose family's Thornhill Companies holdings include the Turn Key brand, said that CustomVine CEO Kevin Boyer began bottling and selling inferior wine using Turn Key and other labels. "They took our Santa Barbara Chardonnay with my brother's only daughter's name on it and put a California appellation on it," Miller said, noting that this was

just one of the wines that CustomVine, a custom-wine producer and brand developer, sold under Turn Key-owned labels. "It was such a callous disrespect for other people's marks. We had federally registered that name [Eleanora Marie]."

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The label at the top is for a 2013 Santa Barbara County Chardonnay produced by the Thornhill Companies. The bottom label was for a 2014 California Chardonnay bottled under the Eleanora Marie brand by CustomVine and was one of the brands that resulted in legal action by the Thornhill Companies.

> U.S. District Court Judge R. Gary Klausner entered a judgment against CustomVine and CEO Kevin Boyer for contributory trademark infringement against four Turn Key brands, and the parties reached a \$315,000 settlement, Miller said.

Miller is vice president of sales and marketing for Thornhill, and his brother Marshall is vice president of operations. Their father, CEO Stephen Miller, runs the company, which manages three vineyards, including the esteemed Bien Nacido in the Santa Maria Valley, as well as custom-crush wine facilities and estate wine labels, among other concerns.

The Millers originally hired Boyer in 2013 as an executive consultant and national on-premise sales manager, after Boyer left his post as vice president of online retailer Lot18. When Boyer and Lot18 wine flash site founder Philip James launched Custom-Vine, Turn Key was one of the

original investors.

"At the time we thought we had a synergistic arrangement," Nicholas Miller said. "But basically none of the programs Kevin said were going through were hitting. Of all the restaurants Kevin brokered, none of them came

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through. He spent all of our money and made all these promises. We took the loss and walked away from them, with 6,000 cases of aging inventory."

Shortly thereafter, the Millers discovered in the spring of 2016 that Boyer "took these brands of ours and went to other suppliers and to Lot18 to print new labels."

The wines were designated California rather than Santa Barbara, Miller said.

When Turn Key slapped cease-and-desist orders on CustomVine and the affiliated Penrose Hill to stop selling wines under Turn Key's trademarked brands, "they accelerated their sales instead of stopping," Miller said. "All we wanted was for them to stop, but they sucked us into a year and a half of pain."

CustomVine offered "to just walk away," Miller said, "and we said 'no no no, we need to know the damage here, we need to understand what happened to our brands."

After a year of wrangling, in December 2017 the two sides reached the monetary settlement and received the District Court rulings: a finding against Boyer, another against Boyer and CustomVine for brand infringements (on Turn Key, Compass Point, Eleanora Marie and Wayside) and one against Penrose Hill for the Turn Key trademark.

Boyer, who remains president and CEO of CustomVine (James is president), had no comment on the case. "Unfortunately [there's] nothing to talk about," he said via email.

Boyer's lead attorney, Massachusetts-based Louis Miller Ciavarra, said that after extended discussions, "the parties got to a place where they felt they could reach an agreement and move on."

But the saga is not completely over, because the Turn Key brands have been "tarnished for a long time," Miller said. "There's a lesson here in how other people disregard the value of your own trademarks. Once people take it and run with it, they can have it a long time. Then it takes a long time to repair the damage that's been done."

#### Related litigation on the rise

Protecting brands has been part of Wines & Vines' ongoing coverage on facets such as the vigilance needed to protect intellectual property and the basics on dealing with brands at risk.

J. Scott Gerien, a partner with wine-industry law firm Dickenson Peatman & Fogarty in Napa, Calif., said that cease-and-desist orders such as those Thornhill used have limited effectiveness. "Cease-and-desist is the first step," Gerien said, "because if it works that's great and sometimes people are innocently doing it, most of the time there's a resolution. But if people have bad intent, they're not going to go 'oh, we'll cooperate.'"

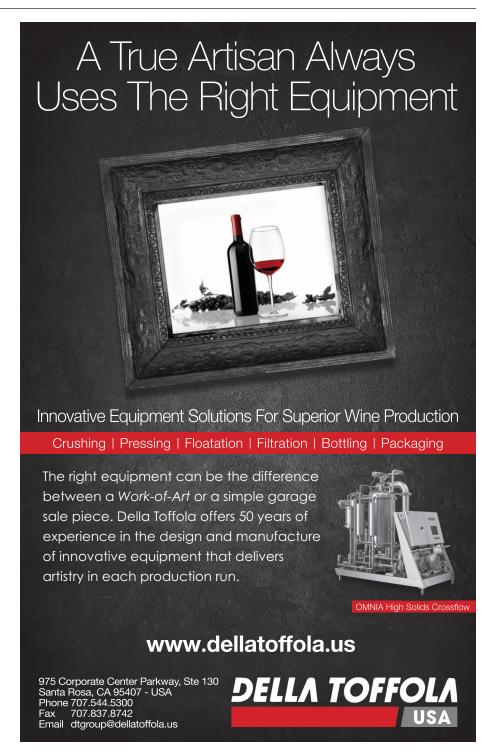
He added that getting a national trademark

is essential, especially in an era in which so many brands already exist. In December 2017 for example, Sonoma County's Davis Family Vineyards sued a newer Napa Valley winery called Davis Estates over trademark infringement. Just recently, according to a report in Wine Business Monthly, Caymus Vineyards sued the Sonoma, Calif.-based real estate development company Caymus Builders. The wine company registered the brand Caymus with the U.S. Patent Office in 1994 and sued the development company after it had erected

signs near areas where it was working on rebuilding structures damaged by the October wildfires. The wine company alleges such signs, and the development company using the name Caymus, "will likely cause confusion, mistake, or deception."

But problems exist with even more generic names. "You have to be pretty original to find one that's available," Gerien said. "It is more difficult to find a mark that's clear, and as a result of that we are seeing more litigation."

— Bill Ward



# **Ensure Wine Quality and Path to Market**

apa, Calif.—Brian Phillips, director of wine strategy for Darden Restaurants, says wineries better be sure their product is of consistent quality and well represented. Otherwise, wine risks losing further market share in the on-premise sector, especially to spirits.

Phillips, currently pursuing final certification as a master sommelier, manages the wine program for Darden, which operates more than 1,700 restaurants including Capital Grille, Yard House, Long-Horn Steakhouse and Olive Garden restaurants. The company's total sales in 2017 surpassed \$7 billion, he said.

He said the company can serve about 250,000 people a day and about 25% of those order wine. Assuming all that wine is sealed with cork and 3% to as much as 12% of those corks could be tainted. "Maybe they consume it

and don't go back to it," he said. "That's a big concern."

Phillips' remarks came during a panel discussion that was part of the Fifth Annual Wine Conversations forum hosted earlier this month by French closure supplier Diam, its North American distributor G3 Enterprises and Full Circle Wine Solutions. In addition to Napa, the companies also hosted the event in Paso Robles, Calif., and Newberg, Ore.

"I'm not pitching anything," Phillips said, adding he just wanted to stress the importance of quality when his white table cloth diners still expect a wine to be sealed with cork. "They still prefer the romanticism of pulling the cork."

Yet what also concerned Phillips was simply being able to source some wines. Brands he typically has relied on have become more expensive and it's harder to know who to work with when wholesale

reps can change two to three times per year. "I've had to make some really tough calls in the past six months," he said.

He urged the more than 100 winemakers in the audience to take great care in understanding how their wines get to market and who is representing them. As wholesale prices rise, he has to raise his winelist prices to maintain margin. He observed that customers are skipping a bottle of wine and having just one glass with the meal and a cocktail before it. "We're seeing this in our restaurants. This is a growing trend," he said.

In December 2017, Nielsen announced spirits had overtaken beer as the "most valuable onpremise category" with spirits dollar sales edging out beer \$42.6 billion to \$42.4 billion.

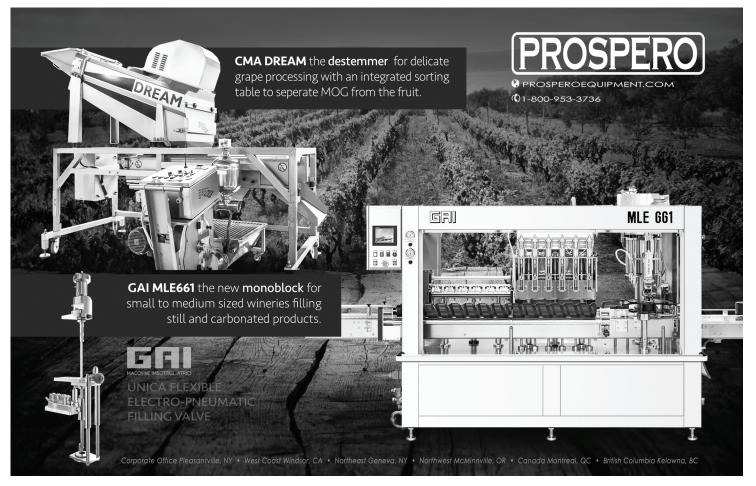
Joining Phillips on the panel was Greg Martellotto who produces Bordeaux-variety wines

through Martellotto Wine Productions in Buellton, Calif., owns an import company and an online wine retail website. Martellotto has also recently partnered with Vivino, the wine ranking app and e-commerce company.

While wine shipments to consumers have opened to nearly every U.S. state, shipments by retailers are still closely regulated in many states. He said as consumers do more and more of their everyday shopping online, the wine industry needs to confront lingering restrictions on wine shipments. "We want to eliminate the middle tier as much as possible," he said.

The current system is riddled with inefficiencies that stem from just a handful of very large companies dominating almost every market. He said when he wants to buy a pallet of wine from a Northern Californian winery and get it delivered to the Central Coast it can take up to three weeks for that order to process. "I hope you guys realize that is totally absurd," he said.

- Andrew Adams

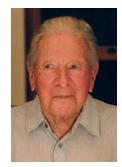


# **Haas Leaves Lasting Legacy** on Paso Robles, U.S. Wine

aso Robles, Calif.—Robert Haas leaves a lasting legacy as a vintner and pioneer and advocate for Rhône Valley varieties in California and the wider U.S. wine industry.

One of the Central Coast's first entrepreneurs and vintners,

Haas, died March 18 surrounded by family at his home in Templeton, Calif. He was 90 years old. "Many of us here who grow Rhônes are really indebted to Robert and the Haas family for bringing some of that great clonal material here," said Steve Lohr, CEO of J. Lohr Wines. "That's part of the reason we succeed with Rhônes here."



Robert Haas

Born in Brooklyn, Haas graduated from Yale and served in the U.S. Navy during WWII before following in the footsteps of his father, wine merchant and owner of M. Lehmann in New York City. As a wine retailer, Haas traveled to France to forge connections

with Burgundy producers such as Domaine Gouges, Mongeard-Mugneret, Domaine Ponsot, and Dauvissat; and to establish a futures program for Bordeaux.

During the course of his travels, Haas visited Châteauneuf-du-Pape and met Jacques Perrin of Chateau de Beaucastel, for whose wine he gained exclusive rights to import. After representing Chateau de Beaucastel and the wines of the Rhône together for several years, Robert Haas and Perrin along with their families —developed a friendship that would eventually set the stage for a transatlantic partnership that opened doors for the growth in production of wines produced with Rhône varieties on the Central Coast, throughout California and beyond.

By 1985, Jean-Pierre and Francois, the sons of Jacques Perrin, partnered with Haas to scout California for a new world perpetuation of Châteauneuf-du-Pape's distinctive style, varieties and lineage. A deeply rogue brand from its inception, Tablas Creek Vinevard launched in 1989 as a collaboration between the Perrin and Haas families, settling in the still as-yet largely untested region of Paso Robles, growing varieties and vinifying blends highly unfamiliar to American palates.

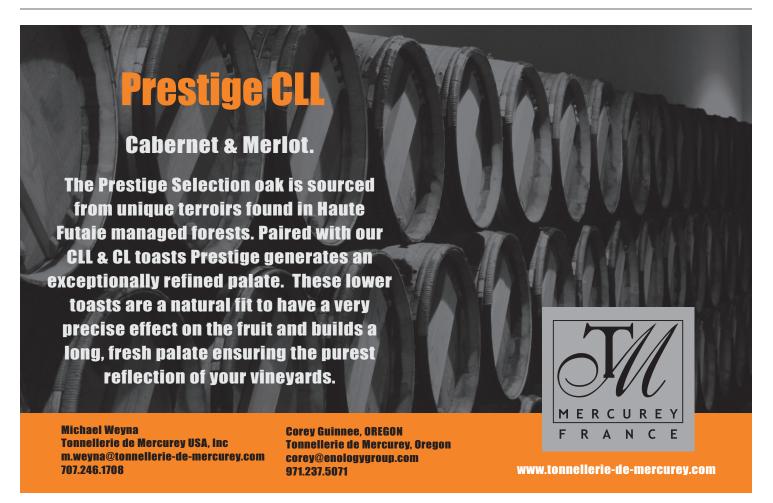
In addition to producing Rhône-variety wines, Tablas Creek served as a nursery for imported,

clean vines and rootstock from France, which the winery propagated and sold throughout the region.

"More than 600 vineyards and wineries around the United States use Tablas Creek cuttings, and my dad was always convinced that our decision to bring in vines spurred the reversal of a long-standing policy by ENTAV (the French national nursery service) against partnering with outof-country nurseries," Jason Haas said. "This policy change has led to the import of hundreds of new varieties and clones, and a new flowering of diversity in American grapegrowing, Rhône and otherwise."

Until very recently, Haas remained active in winery operations and community events, hosting winemaker dinners well into his 80s. The winery will now be managed by Jason Haas, general manager since 2003, and longtime winemaker Neil Collins.

- Jaime Lewis



# **Winning Wine Packages Selected**

ovato, Calif.—A panel of wine industry experts reviewed 178 entries in the Wines & Vines Packaging Design Awards and selected the winners in multiple categories as well as a Best in Show overall winner.

The winners will be announced at the Wines & Vines Packaging Conference, which takes place Aug. 9 at the Lincoln Theater in Yountville, Calif. Entries came from wineries all over North America and were submitted into five separate categories that included best redesign, classic packaging, luxury, alternative and series.

Now in its fourth year, the packaging contest has steadily grown in the number of entries. This year's panel of judges included Curtis Mann who manages the wine and beverage alcohol program for Raley's and Nob Hill stores; Debbie Zachareas owner and partner of Ferry Plaza Wine

Merchant; Ray Johnson, executive director of the Wine Business Institute at Sonoma State University; David Glancy the founder of the San Francisco Wine School, and designer and former Wines & Vines art director Barbara Summer who helped launch the first contest.

Speaking with Wines & Vines during a break in the judging that lasted all day at The Key Room event space at the Homeward Bound facility in Novato, Calif., the judges said any packaging strategy whether innovative or more traditional ultimately still needs to effectively convey to the consumer what's in the bottle.

Mann said it appears wineries are putting more technical infor-



Judges awarded gold, silver and bronze to entries in five categories and picked a Best of Show winner.

mation, such as pH and TA, out front on labels because they correctly perceive that consumers who are trading up for higher quality and prices want that information. "Customers are getting more and more tuned into the wine." he said.

Glancy agreed that as consumers buy more expensive wines they tend to grow more comfortable with more technical information about the wine. He said, however,

wineries should also account for novice consumers or people wanting to try new brands.

The judges also agreed that too aggressively targeting consumer groups, such as Millennials, can backfire. Mann said he's come to reject such brands because they have not been strong retail performers.

Glancy said such gimmicky labels aren't going to attract regular wine consumers and younger shoppers will also be turned off by them. "(They think) If they're trying to market it to us they probably think we're stupid," he said.

The judges assigned each entry a score to determine the gold, silver and bronze winners in each category. All of the gold medal winners were then reviewed by the judges again before they selected the Best of Show winner. The top 50 entries of the contest will be on display at the Wines & Vines Packaging Conference where attendees will vote to select the People's Choice winner.

— Andrew Adams



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# **Final Settlement on Winery Ammonia Death**

acramento, Calif.—Gibson Wine Co., an agricultural cooperative in Sanger, Calif., agreed to a settlement with federal agencies following the death of a winery worker in 2012.

The government alleged that an accidental release of anhydrous ammonia violated the Clean Air Act, the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation and Liability Act and the Emergency Planning and Community Right-To-Know Act.

"It's a done deal," said Sacramento attorney James T. Dufour, who represented Gibson in the federal lawsuit. Although the Environmental Protection Agency and U.S. Department of Justice had announced a settlement Feb. 5, Dufour declined to comment until a judge signed off on the consent decree, which includes \$330,000 in fines to be paid in installments, as well as credit for

capital improvements to the winery plant amounting to another \$300.000.

Dufour noted that the second amount is really a positive: It's safer for the environment and provides a much more efficient system and controls that will streamline the winemaking process. Originally, the government had demanded a total of almost \$1.2 million, and co-op members feared the additional liability that might have come with a hearing

"We made a payment program with the Department of Justice and agreed to make improvements we were going to do anyway."

Wavne Albrecht

not scheduled until 2020. He noted being able to pay the \$330,000 in installments will lessen the financial impact on co-op members.

Founded in 1939, Gibson produces some 200,000 cases of wine per year by quantity, although much of the production is cooking wine shipped in bulk to restaurant chains in the U.S. and abroad.

When Wines & Vines interviewed Gibson general manager Wayne Albrecht in February, he

said that the co-op had already reached a settlement with the victim's family through the company's workers' compinsurance.

According to local news reports, Robert Munoz, 28, was working at the winery through a temporary staffing agency at the time of the accident but had periodically worked at Gibson Wine Co. since 2004. The incident, which occurred when a worker opened the wrong valve during a routine winery process and released 280 pounds of anhydrous ammonia, was attributed to human error.

"We're not saying you can't always improve," Albrecht said. The process improvements now in place include a requirement that anyone working on equipment is licensed to do so. Refrigeration equipment, the source of the leak, was relocated, and a computer control monitor is already online. "We made a payment program with the Dept. of Justice and agreed to make improvements we were going to do anyway," he said.

Albrecht had been working on the case since it began. The co-op is owned by Fresno County farmers, and when the incident happened, there were 37 participating members. That's down to 19 currently. "They didn't want to pay," for the settlement, according to Albrecht.

- Jane Firstenfeld





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# **Regional News**

#### **CALIFORNIA**

#### Crimson hires Quillé as chief winemaker

Napa-based Crimson Wine Group named Nicolas Quillé chief winemaking and operations officer, providing Craig Williams the opportunity to pursue his interest in spending more time managing his vineyards in Oregon and serving as a consulting grower to Crimson, according to a press release by the company. Quillé was most recently general manager and head winemaker of Banfi Vintners' portfolio of wineries in the Pacific Northwest. Williams had been the chief winegrowing and operations officer since 2015 and remains on the company's board of directors.

#### **Hugo to oversee** winemaking at B. R. Cohn

In addition to continuing to manage production at Girard Winery in Napa Valley, Glenn Hugo is now the winemaker of B. R. Cohn Winery in Sonoma Valley. Both



wineries are owned by Santa Rosa-based Vintage Wine Estates. Cohn started at Girard as a harvest intern in 2003 and quickly rose through the ranks to become winemaker in 2010. During that decade, Hugo was a winemaking consultant at B.R. Cohn from 2004 to 2010. Hugo is also overseeing the construction of a new production winery and tasting room for Girard on Dunaweal Lane in Calistoga, Calif., expected to be open in time for this year's harvest.

#### **New winemaker** at Geyser Peak

Randy Meyer is the new winemaker at Geyser Peak winery in

Healdsburg. A Santa Rosa native, Meyer has more than 30 years of experience in the Northern California wine industry. Meyer worked in winemaking at Korbel Champagne Cellars for 23 years and most recently was winemaker at Draxton Wines in Healdsburg.

#### Name change for NGWI

The National Grape & Wine Initiative, NGWI, has changed its name to the National Grape Research Alliance, NGRA. According to the press release announcing the change, the group wanted to raise awareness of its role in supporting and promoting research. Based in Sacramento, the NGWI was organized in 2003 to drive research to strengthen the productivity, sustainability and competitiveness of America's grape industries. The group brings together all grape sectors including raisins, juice, table grapes and wine plus nonprofits, academic institutions and government agencies in a unique collaborative effort that seeks to organize and advance research.

#### **Moulds named Napa** grower of the year

Oak Knoll District grapegrower Steve Moulds has been named the 2018 Napa Valley Grower of the Year. Moulds was honored May 11 at the Napa Valley Grapegrow-



ers 43rd Annual Dinner. Moulds began his farming career in the early 1970s, on a ranch in Morgan Hill, Calif., raising animals to sell at auction. During that time, he served in the Department of Social Services in Gilroy helping Spanish-speaking migrant workers gain skills and remove barriers to employment. In 2000, he and his

wife Betsy moved to a property in the Oak Knoll District, where they planted 11 acres of Cabernet Sauvignon. In addition to serving on several wine industry boards, Moulds also has served on the Napa County Housing Commission, supported the local Future Farmers of America, and is an active bidder each year at the Napa County Livestock Auction. He purchases several animals to later donate the meat to the Napa County Farmworker Housing Centers.

#### **Green Medal** winners named

Bogle Vineyards in Clarksburg is the winner of the 2018 Green Medal Leader Award. Bogle is one of four wine companies that were honored for efforts in sustainability by the California Sustainable Winegrowing Alliance, California Association of Winegrape Growers, Wine Institute, Lodi Winegrape Commission, Napa Valley Vintners, Sonoma County Winegrowers and Vineyard Team. Bogle Vineyards has certified 1,200 acres of estate vinevards under the Lodi Rules program and since 2010 has paid \$2.8 million in bonuses for partner growers that certify through Lodi Rules. More than 90% of the company's total grapes are now grown in certified vineyards. The Environment Award was given to St. Supéry Estate Vineyards & Winery in Rutherford after reducing its water use by 50% and supplying 80% of power needs from solar. The Community Award went to KG Vineyard Management in Lodi, for the company's commitment to employee training and working with sustainably certified vineyards. Cakebread Cellars in Napa Valley won the Business Award for its commitment to investing in employee education and by diverting 92% of the company's waste in the past two years.

#### **Owings named CFO** at Rombauer

Matthew Owings is the new chief financial officer of Rombauer Vineyards in Napa Valley. Owings reports to chief operating officer Bob Knebel and will oversee the financial operations of the familyowned company. Prior to joining, Rombauer, Owings worked for

nearly 10 years at Jackson Family Wines where he most recently was vice president of finance.

#### **Galzignato returns** to Napa Valley

David Galzignato is the new senior winemaker and general manager of Provenance Vineyards in Napa Valley. Most recently, Galzignato was the winemaker at Jada Vineyards in Paso Robles and prior to that post worked in winemaking at Napa Valley wineries Charles Krug, Lewis Cellars and Paraduxx.

#### New president, CEO at Hess Family

John Grant is the new president and chief executive officer of Hess Family Wine Estates, as Timothy Persson assumes the role of chairman of the Napa-based company. Persson, the former CEO, is stepping away from day-to-day management and instead will focus on building strategic relationships with key accounts in both the United States and abroad. Grant was promoted from chief operations officer and will now be responsible for all aspects of the company.

#### Lodi commission names new leader

Stuart Spencer is the new executive director of the Lodi Winegrape Commission that represents more than 750 growers and 85 wineries in the Lodi AVA. Spencer was promoted from the position of program manager, which he held since 1999. During his 19 years with the commission, Spencer led many of the group's marketing, promotional and educational efforts. Spencer played a key role developing the Lodi Wine & Visitor Center, the Lodi Rules for Sustain-



able Winegrowing and the LoCA advertising campaign. In his new position, Spencer will oversee the

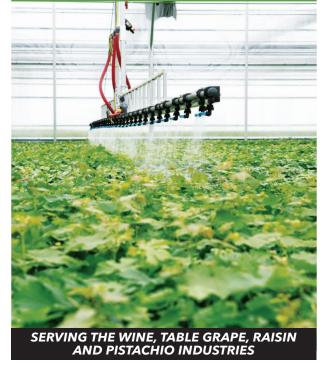
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commission's marketing, public relations, strategic planning, and regional branding efforts, as well as grower and vintner relations. He will lead the commission's team of 12, under the direction of the board of directors and will be the primary spokesperson for the Lodi wine industry.

# Far Niente Wine Estates promotes CEO

Steven Spadarotto is the new chief executive officer of Far Niente Wine Estates that includes Far Niente, Nickel & Nickel, Dolce and Bella Union in Napa Valley and EnRoute winery in the Russian River Valley of Sonoma County. Spadarotto has more than 30 years of wine industry experience including general management and senior executive roles with Jackson Family Wines, Ste. Michelle Wine Estates and, most recently, Francis Ford Coppola Presents. The former CEO, Dirk Hampson, who is a 36year veteran of the company will remain chairman of the board, and president Larry Maguire, a 35-year

veteran, is now vice chairman. The changes were approved by equity firm GI Partners that invested in the wine company in 2016.

#### NORTHWEST

#### Domaine Serene opens new tasting lounge

Domaine Serene winery in the Dundee Hills of Oregon partnered with Provenance Hotels to open a new wine lounge in downtown Portland, Ore. The lounge, scheduled to open on April 13, will feature the wines of Domaine Serene as well as wines from French wineries Château de la Crée and Maison Evenstad, which are also owned by Domaine Serene founders Grace and Ken Evenstad.

# Argyle names sales and marketing director

Robert Alstrin is the new director of sales and marketing for Argyle Winery in Dundee, Ore. Alstrin has more than 20 years of wine industry experience including founding a distribution network for Oregon and Washington wineries and being the co-owner of Eminent Domaine Winery. Alstrin also served on the board of directors for Oregon Pinot Camp and the board of the Oregon Wine Collaboration.

#### CENTRAL



## Messina Hof launches canned wine

Messina Hof Winery in Bryan, Texas, launched its first line of canned wine including a sweet red and dry rosé. The cans are available in four packs and are being sold at the winery's three locations in Bryan, Fredericksburg and Grapevine Winery near Dallas. The





dry rosé is made with 100% Grenache grapes and the sweet red is a wine the winery has produced for vears called Beau.



#### St. Julian opens two new tasting rooms

St. Julian Winery in Paw Paw, Mich., announced it is opening two new tasting rooms in Michigan. One is set to open in May in Troy, and another is planned to open later this year in Rockford. The new locations are intended to support increased production. In addition to a tasting room at the winery in Paw Paw, St. Julian also operates tasting rooms at three other locations.

#### EAST

#### **Brock confers Winemaker** of Excellence Award

Brock University's Cool Climate Oenology and Viticulture Institute in Ontario awarded the inaugural Winemaker of Excellence Award to Angelo Pavan for his past contributions to the wine industry. Pavan is the vice president, winemaker and founding partner at Cave Spring Cellars in Niagara and a founding member

and chair of the Vintners Quality Alliance standards development committee. The institute at its annual Cuvée Grand Tasting event also honored Albrecht Seeger, an eighth-generation grape grower in Niagara-on-the-Lake and sitting member on the Ontario Grape and Wine Research technical committee with the Vineyard of Excellence Award. Fifth-generation grape grower and winemaker Sue-Ann Staff won the Tony Aspler Cuvée Award of Excellence.





#### Cornell professor wins ASEV Merit Award

Dr. Terry Acree, a chemosensory professor at Cornell University and Flavornet co-founder, is the recipient of the 2018 Merit Award, which is the highest honor of the American Society for Enology and Viticulture. Acree will be sharing his presentation, "From Methyl Anthranylate to Mercaptohexanol: Measuring Wine Qualia" at the ASEV's 69th national conference on June 21 in Monterey, Calif. Acree is a professor in the Cornell University Food Science Department and researches food composition and its relationship to the chemosensory perception of flavor.

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#### **SUPPLIER NEWS**

#### **ATP opens Washington** warehouse

Winemaking products supplier ATPGroup announced the opening of a new warehouse in Grandview, Wash. The new facility is now ATPGroup's fourth warehouse on the West Coast. The company also operates locations in the California cities of Paso Robles, Fresno and Windsor. The new warehouse is intended to help ATPGroup better serve customers in the Pacific Northwest by providing reduced freight expenses, shorter shipping times as well as increased inventory and product availability. The 10,000-squarefoot facility will be open 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday and will carry a full product portfolio of brand names for use in the wine, craft beer, cider, spirit and food industries.

#### **AWDirect now** offering canning

Santa Rosa, Calif.-based AW-Direct, which provides wine and grape sourcing, brand development and sales support, is now offering wine canning services by The Can Van. The suppliers can provide 187ml, 250ml and 375ml cans in 24-can cases for domestic or international varietal and blended wines. "Given the explosive growth in demand for wine in a can, we're excited to offer this service to our current and future clients," said AWDirect USA's founder and general manager Bruce Cunningham in a press release announcing the new service.

#### **Berlin Packaging** acquires Erben

Berlin Packaging in Chicago announced its acquisition of H. Erben Ltd., a supplier of closures, packaging and packaging equipment based in Hadleigh, England. The deal includes Erben's subsidiary California Capsules, operations in South Africa and the website TheBottleJarStore.co.uk. According to the press release announcing the deal, Berlin Packaging is a \$2.6 billion supplier of packaging products across multiple sectors and purchased Bruni

Glass in 2016. Following the buyout of Erben, the company now has offices throughout Europe as well as South Africa. China and North America.

#### Vinventions acquires screwcap maker

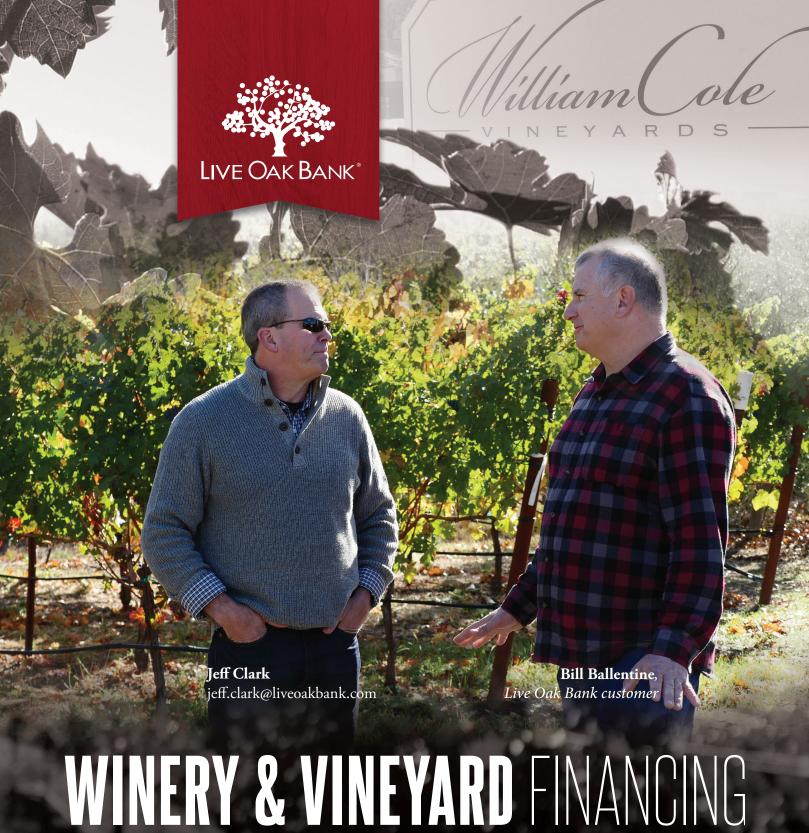
Vinventions in Zebulon, N.C., announced it acquired the 30 x 60 wine screwcap business of the Italian firm Alplast S.r.l. Following the deal, Vinventions adds more than 200 million wine screwcaps to its portfolio making it the third largest screwcap supplier in the world, according to a statement released by the two companies. Alplast will produce the screwcaps for Vinventions at its factory in Tigliole, Italy, and the Alplast name will become an additional brand for Vinventions and encompass litho-printed and offset printed screwcaps.

#### Oenodia now in the Central Coast

Oenodia North America announced a partnership with Electrotec Service Company in Paso Robles, Calif., to provide the STARS treatment for tartrate stabilization and pH adjustment to wineries in California's Central Coast. Electrotec is an established mobile service provider offering a variety of services including metered Velcorin dosing and crossflow filtration.

#### Vinfolio receives new investment

Wine sales and services provider Vinfolio.com announced it secured a new investment of capital and changed its leadership team to gain a greater share of the U.S. fine wine market. CEO Don St. Pierre Jr. and partner Allan Warburg have invested an additional \$5 million in the company to secure a majority ownership stake. The company also announced a new leadership team that includes Kevin Zollinger, chief operations officer; Cristina Hall, chief marketing officer; Adam Lapierre, MW, director of procurement; and Leah Hammer, director of cellar acquisitions. The company also released a new mobile app to integrate fine wine sales, cellar management, wine storage and content.



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Visit liveoakbank.com/williamcole to watch the William Cole Vineyard story.

# **Product News**

#### Latest offerings and announcements

#### 'Ultimate' sorting table

P&L Specialties unveiled what it's calling the Ultimate Sorting Table. The new table is the company's latest design after more than 30 years of manufacturing and improving sorting tables. The table can be used for sorting before or after destemming, and the supplier reports it was designed to operate with an automated MOG removal device or an optical sorter. The table features built-in LED lights to il-

luminate the conveyor belt, which is ozone and UV resistant. Available in 8-foot or 12-foot long models, the table also features emergency stop switches on both sides and variablefrequency drive speed controllers. pnlspecialties.com



#### **Water-immersion barrel**

Tonnellerie Quintessence launched its Hvdro-Pure barrel. which is the second barrel in the cooperage's Hydro Collection line of barrels built with oak that has undergone a water immersion process. During the immersion, water is continually circulated around the wood resulting in accelerated tannin extraction. After immersion, the barrels are toasted with a minimal process to provide softer mouthfeel with "vibrant fruit, florals, softly toasted oak, balanced acidity and a subtle finish." The supplier recommends the barrel for fruit-driven white wines. tonnelleriequintessence.fr

#### Premium-gloss paper for UV ink-jet printing

UPM Raflatac released Premium Gloss UVI that it described as "the highest-quality, premiumgloss paper label stock for UV ink-jet printing on the market." The supplier reports the stock was designed for labels requiring a high-level of print definition and fine details and is available with either RP51 general purpose adhesive or RP48AT all-temperature adhesive for food and beverage products. The supplier also released a new online digital printer

recommendation tool to help users determine which label stocks are the best fit for which printers. upmraflatac.com

#### **Resource to ensure DtC** compliance

Compli announced a collaboration with Wine Institute to launch an enhanced website covering wine shipping compliance. The goal of the site is to ensure wineries stay current with shipping regulations, can find compliance information in one place and can access compliance information with almost any device. The website features winery laws by state, wholesale laws for wineries and links to news articles on DtC shipping and compliance. wineinstitute.compliancerules.org

#### Tires for narrow-row vineyards

Kleber unveiled a new radial tire to be used on equipment designed for narrow-row crops and vineyards. The tires are built for small and medium capacity selfpropelled sprayers, towed equipment and tractors. The Kleber Cropker tires feature a 40 mph Dspeed index as well as a maximum-width tread for an optimized contact patch. A new lug pattern

on the tires is intended to reduce the amount of soil pulled onto the tire while still preventing slippage in soft and damp soil. kleber.com

#### Screw pump for moving must

Vogelsang is now offering screw pumps to operate in tandem with the company's rotary lobe wine and must pumps. Built with 304 stainless steel and featuring a seal-welded screw, the pump is available with a 9-inch screw that can process up to 40 tons per hour or a 12-inch screw that can move up to 60 tons per hour. The screw pump comes with a 50-foot power cord and 10-foot cord that connects to the must pump to stop or start the flow of grapes. vogelsangusa.com

# Sanitizer for brewing

or winemaking LOGIC, Inc., released a new EPA-registered sanitizer for use

in brewing or winemaking. San Step NS is a sanitizer and descaler, which is now registered with the Environmental Protection Agency. LOGIC describes the product as a low-foaming, broad-spectrum bactericide and fungicide suitable for clean-inplace systems and is effective in hard water. Once diluted to the recommended solution San Step can be used as a no-rinse sanitizer. ecologiccleansers.com

#### Bluetooth monitoring device

DeltaTrak introduced the Flash-Link Bluetooth Low Energy (BLE) wireless tracking and monitoring device. The FlashLink can be



used to monitor temperature and humidity through a distribution or



shipping chain and will issue alerts based on pre-set parameters. All data captured by the device is sent to the cloud and can be downloaded in PDF or CSV formats. deltatrak.com

#### Weather app for agriculture

SetPoint launched a mobile weather app that provides alerts and current conditions without needing a weather station, power or internet connection. The app draws data from Weather Underground and the Weather Channel to provide information on specific areas and issue alerts on temperature, humidity, dew point, wind speed and barometric pressure.

#### setpointweather.com

#### Alternative to foil labeling

G3 Enterprises released a new line of liquid inks that the company claims offer the premium appearance of foil stamping but without the cost of foil dies or the waste material produced from foil stamping. G3 reports the G INK Reflection inks can be used to add multiple colors and designs to a label. g3enterprises.com



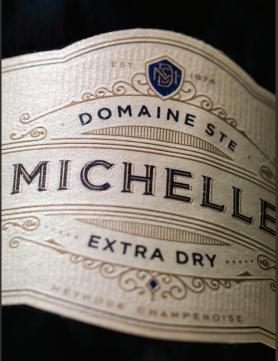
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■ ANDY STARR

# How Wineries Take Advantage of Big Data (or Any Data)

re the winemaking and sales decisions in your winery data-driven? Are all of your data sources well integrated into one system? Ask the question of some winery owners, and you may get these responses:

- "I will use data to run my winery once a really well-known Napa Valley winemaker does it and gets a 98-point score. It's the wine industry, where everyone strives to be the first one to be the second one."
- "My winery prides itself on making wine exactly the
  way they did in France in the 18th century. I even
  have my tasting room staff wear Les Miserables costumes at work, and on weekends when we have big
  crowds, I make them sell their teeth just like Fantine
  did. The tourists love it!"
- "Data analysis is what the 'big guys' do, but not here. We're just farmers."
- "Wine is an art."

True, I invented the quotations above, but they're not as far-fetched as you might think. Data is generated at every step in the winemaking process, from soil moisture to vineyard sampling to weight tags to all steps of winemaking to case goods to sales to consumer data. We are buried in data, yet we often make important decisions on anecdotes and "gut instinct." Everyone has a story of an owner saying more or less, "I love our Gold Digger's Reserve, named after my last three wives. Sure, we only sell 173 cases every year, but let's keep making 1,000 cases."

Marshall Graves is a vice president and wine industry specialist at Bank of Marin. He encourages wineries to "go beyond using your data set to simply resell to existing customers. Aggregate and examine your data to obtain a precise understanding of what your club members enjoy beyond wine."

Graves suggests accomplishing this by collaborating with companies that specialize in data analytics and social physics. "Done well, this will improve wine club retention and ultimately result in wineries having a more efficient and cost-effective marketing strategy." He added that "each of the top five wine-producing states also have established technology hubs. Those who engage in conversation with their tech community will become agents of change vs. being the disrupted."

We all know we need to use data better, but turning it into something

that objectively drives decision-making is a challenge for nearly everyone. I interviewed representatives of two wineries and their data vendors who are successfully integrating and using data in their everyday operations.

#### **DRY CREEK VINEYARD**

#### DtC and consumer data drive decisions

Michael Longerbeam is the direct-to-consumer manager at Dry Creek Vineyard, a 100,000-case operation in Northern Sonoma County, Calif.. Founded in 1972 and still family-owned, Dry Creek relies heavily on direct sales. Longerbeam is a marketing veteran, having done it in both software and wine, including Windsor Vineyards, one of the industry's DtC pioneers.

Longerbeam observes that most people see the wine industry as a relational business, where decisions are often made on interpersonal contacts. He encourages including data analysis in addition to conversations with industry colleagues when making business decisions. Longerbeam suggests looking at three things in your DtC program:

- Recency. When was a customer's most recent purchase?
- Frequency. How often does the customer purchase?
- Monetary. How much does he or she spend per purchase or per year?

Longerbeam used to do all the data crunching himself, joking that the other DtC staff see him as "the nerd on the computer." He creates and slogs through a number of spreadsheets, with the intent of distilling the data down to something useful or actionable.

He warns that doing it on your own, you can "go snow-blind by all the data," and not end up with the result you want.

His most relatable example is using data analysis to increase wine club retention. His team had discussed giving *every* club member a gift to improve retention. That may help sales, but it's expensive. Sending no one a gift costs nothing, but you may lose some revenue and profit from club drops. By grinding through the data, they learned there was a spike in cancellations at a certain number of months. They then used that data to send gifts to only those club members who had been in the

club that long, showing them some love at a point when they were most likely to break up. Longerbeam then measured club retention, and it improved. He notes that analysis "can get granular, but that's where the power of the data is."

Another example was deciding on what their next wine should be. My observation is most wineries make this decision based on something like "the winery down the road makes that varietal and it sold well" (another example of the "first to be second" rule).

Instead, Dry Creek worked with Enolytics, a wine data analysis company. Enolytics built an interactive dashboard using Dry Creek's existing, anonymized data, and determined that the winery was missing a wine at a certain price point. That data could be used in conjunction with other factors like wine quality, terroir, etc. when deciding on new wines. Longerbeam's observation is that "Enolytics is visually driven, making it much easier to find the data vou seek."

#### Something everyone should have

Enolytics produces for Dry Creek something that everyone should have—a breakout of their wine portfolio by margin and volume, displayed in an easy-to-understand graphic. "This forces you to look at your portfolio," Longerbeam said.

Enolytics founder Cathy Huyghe (pronounced HOY-huh) created a company devoted to giving a winery a clear picture of the wine consumer. Typically starting with a winery's existing DtC data, Enolytics can add data from a range of sources including Vivino, which

gathers data from its 29 million-plus downloads. The data can be segmented by brand, varietal, price point, appellation, etc. In addition, Vivino data records include a latitude and a longitude, which provides visualization into consumer location and demographics.

"Go beyond simply reselling to existing customers. Examine your data to obtain a precise understanding of what your club members enjoy beyond wine."

-Marshall Graves, Bank of Marin

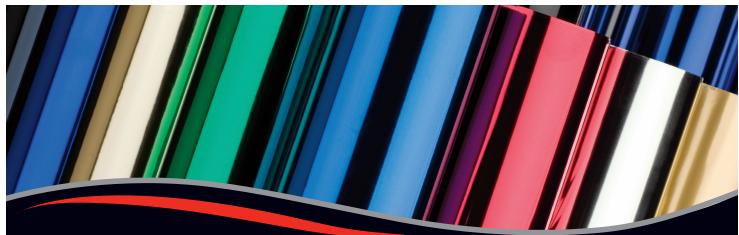
Huyghe gave some examples of how the company's data-gathering and analysis arms a sales team with "objective, quantitative evidence generated by consumers" instead of typical reliance on a distributor rep's qualitative and anecdotal assessment. Huyghe noted this causes data analysis to move from "hindsight to foresight." Two examples stood out:

Using its range of data sources and geotagging, Enolytics could create a "heat map" showing which neighborhoods within Manhattan were frequently chatting about Russian River Pinot Noir. Huyghe offered that the map "informs you where the fish are, so you know where to go fishing." A winery could then instruct its sales staff and local distributor to focus their sales efforts in those neighborhoods.

For other clients, Enolytics has been able to identify subregions, e.g. suburbs, where a brand's consumer interest is currently strong. The company then finds the additional suburbs around the country with similar demographics. Those become the next target markets.

#### **DUCKHORN WINE CO. Data integration from grapes** to consumer

Zachary Rasmuson is the senior vice president and chief operating officer of Duckhorn Wine Co., a collection of premium brands and wineries that includes Duckhorn Vineyards, Paraduxx, Decoy, Goldeneye, Migration and Canvasback. Rasmuson started as a cellar rat at a Napa Valley winery, then went to Goldeneye in Anderson Valley, and worked his way up to leading all operations for the parent company. He takes pride in building teams, systems and infrastructure.



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Duckhorn Wine Co. is experiencing rapid growth among its six wineries, creating management challenges for planning. While Rasmuson notes that sometimes "harnessing winery data is just inventory management," collecting and organizing all the data each year is seldom as straightforward as he'd like.

Combined, the six wineries produce 130 distinct wine SKUs. How does the staff know they will have the correct amount of fruit assigned to each of them? How many new barrels do they need? What is the cost of each wine? To answer these questions, Duckhorn turned to Oztera, whose Teravina integrated data platform combines the "data silos" of production, lab analyses, finance, inventory, wholesale sales and DtC sales into one system.

Now Rasmuson can easily see and address potential fruit shortages for a particular wine and know how many barrels to buy. "The brilliance of Oztera is that it communicates well to finance and accounting, from cost of fruit and barrels to capital expenditures. It's a nice, nifty platform," he said.

#### Trial blend platform

Oztera was able to create a standardized trial blend platform for Duckhorn, which replaced the silo of each winemaker creating and using his/her own spreadsheet that resided on their personal computers instead of the company database.

Ultimately, Rasmuson said that data collection is often most valuable in the vineyard with their weather stations, soil monitors and other probes, and with their consumers. Data for winemaking decisions can only go so far, as the winemaker's skill is "to adapt to a current vintage in real time, especially in the first weeks after harvest." Rasmuson is intrigued by data that could be used for repeatable winemaking results, such as phenolics assays where winemakers fine-tune their palates to a phenolics reading, then try to match the phenolics from vintage to vintage.

I interviewed Mike Stallman, Oztera's Chief

Geek Juggler (yes, that's his job title). He explained that Oztera, based in Silicon Valley with offices in Napa, Hawaii and Arizona, specializes in solutions built on the Microsoft Dynamics NAV platform to address the unique challenges faced by wine companies. Oztera's Teravina program leverages Microsoft's investment and development of a robust system used by 140,000 other companies in a wide range of businesses.

## **Now Zachary Rasmuson** of Duckhorn Wine Co. can easily see and address potential fruit shortages for a particular wine and know how many barrels to buy.

Stallman notes that a winery typically uses many separate data systems for winemaking, accounting, sales, etc., creating numerous business challenges. Data is transferred back and forth between systems periodically, a clumsy exercise that invites a "spider web of problems." The Teravina system integrates all these systems into one.

As an example, many wineries struggle with product costing. With a typical siloed accounting program, wine costing becomes an exercise where the finance manager builds multiple Excel spreadsheets, bugs winemakers for their winemaking data, and then locks her/himself in a closet for two days to figure it out. Instead, Teravina integrates grape contracts into its winemaking and accounting programs. The system can compare contracts with weight tags and then follow the wine as it moves around the winery, adding in packaging costs and overheads. By integrating the entire process, everyone knows the true cost of their wine.

Stallman believes the Teravina system helps maintain quality consistency from year to year,

by giving winemakers the ability to compare blending and tasting records, plus other historical production data. "We provide winemakers the tools to let them do their job more easily."

Ultimately, Stallman sees that an integrated system provides "one source of truth. With multiple systems, you can get more than one truth." (Or multiple sources of half-truths.) Once you have all the data in one system, "you can ask just about any question, and we can build something to answer it. You can see everything from grapes to bottling projections, plus report on your KPIs within one site." Many clients use Oztera's system to plan their bottling runs over the year, and bring packaging vendors in on the process.

Oztera claims its software platform is simple and cost-effective for small producers, who can realize the same benefits as the big guys. Their customers range from an Iowa boutique winery producing 15,000 cases to a big California operation making 3 million cases.

#### Can you afford it?

You may be reading this and thinking you can't afford it. I would reply with, can you afford not to? You should be able to find someone who can help, as tech research hubs are located near winegrowing regions. If the cost of hiring a data analysis service provider is too high, ask your local wine association to subscribe and get a group rate for its membership. Perhaps Dry Creek's Longerbeam summed it best. He would like to see the wine industry use data the way it is already used in high-tech and other consumer goods companies. "You're sending emails to your customers anyway, you might as well learn from it. Next time you make a decision, work data into it."

Andy Starr, founder of StarrGreen (starrgreen.com), is an entrepreneur, marketing manager and winemaker who provides strategy, management and business development consulting services. A resident of Napa Valley, Calif., he holds a bachelor's degree in fermentation science from the University of California, Davis, and an MBA from UCLA.

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#### **■ JANE FIRSTENFELD**

# Welcoming Disabled Patrons

he beginning of the winery touring season invites a timely reminder to owners and managers of winery tasting rooms: Please be kind to your disabled visitors. There may be more than you think, and being mindful of their special needs can build your reputation among them and their friends.

I write this as a disabled person myself—parking placard and all. Although I still drive, tasting rooms are among the few destinations that still lure me for personal and professional motivations. I'm not in a wheelchair or on a walker. I

These few changes and tips could easily enhance the entire experience for your disabled patrons and their companions.

do have a cane, but don't always use it: It can actually be a hindrance to mobility. Mobility is not the only disability, of course: Sight and hearing problems come to mind as well, but I'm not personally equipped to address those, so mobility is my main focus.

#### Compliance with disabilities act

As in my case, it's not always obvious that a person is disabled. I walk slowly and painfully, and must always be careful of my balance: On many occasions, I've fallen and

needed help to get up, including one call to 911 when my helpful neighbors were not around.

When planning a tasting room visit, I always check and am almost always assured "We are fully ADA compliant." The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is supposed to ensure that both staff and clients are extended assistance to work or visit. (For California's ADA requirements, go to rehab.cahwnet.gov.)

Early in the 2000s, Northern California wineries were besieged by a disabled attorney who claimed not even to drink wine but wanted to verify disabled access to tasting rooms and other businesses. When George Louie wasn't pleased, he filed lawsuits: many, many lawsuits.

Fines for access violations started at \$4,000, but defense fees and building improvements multiplied those costs. The town of Yuba City, Calif., settled with Louie for \$150,000, with the promise he would never sue another business within the city limits. He claimed to have sued more than 500 commercial establishments, collecting \$500,000 in a single year.

#### Personal recommendations

Louie seems to have moved on to other targets, but as a reporter and supporter of winery tasting rooms, I hope these simple suggestions will be helpful to you and your disabled clientele.

**Seating:** Provide accessible and comfortable seating for all patrons. Most barstools can be too tall to clamber onto, even with assistance. On the other hand, low upholstered chairs may be easy to ease into, but without sturdy arms, rising from them can be almost impossible. If you can furnish something in the middle, please do so. For the wheelchair bound, tables sized to be rolled up to and under are a must.

Restrooms: For any business serving the public, disabledaccommodating facilities are required. But if these are separate, and normally kept locked, please make sure servers know where they are, have a key handy and willingly provide it.

**Teach your servers well:** At one tasting room, the manager asked me an awkward question. "What happened to you?" she said. I was dumbfounded (a rare occasion for me). "Did you fall?" she continued. She didn't really care to hear about the many times I'd fallen, so when I started my boring litany, it effectively stopped that intrusive query.

#### What not to say

Later I checked online and found a helpful list of "Seven Things Never to Say to People with Disabilities," on DiversityInc.com. That question was No. 1 on the list.

Other don'ts on the list:

- Speaking slowly or loudly to a person in a wheelchair. (They are physically disabled, not necessarily hard of
- "I don't even see you as a person with a disability." (It is still a reality.)
- "But you look so good," or, "Oh, you're here, so you must feel better." (Many of us have faced the fact: We're never going to feel better, although some days may be better than others.)

Also, unless requested, don't offer unsolicited assistance. My colleague and frequent tasting room partner usually carries my purse and helps me in and out of vehicles, but

confusing, painful or even damaging. Like the beautiful lighting we normally encounter in tasting rooms, these few changes and tips could easily enhance the entire experience for your disabled patrons and their companions. I do urge you to consider them in this or any season.

she knows me and my limitations. Like a

cane, your "help" may actually prove

Wines & Vines contributing editor Jane Firstenfeld has been writing about the North American wine industry since the 1970s. She covers news, packaging and, of course, tasting rooms in the Tasting Room Focus e-newsletter.



# Upcoming Wine Industry Events

June 18 ~ Marriott Hotel Napa, CA



Registration Open!

vineyardeconomics.com

The premier conference covering vineyard economic and financial issues.

June 28 ~ Wine & Roses Hotel Lodi, CA



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lodiwinesymposium.com

The economic and financial conference for growers and wineries in Lodi and surrounding regions.

WINE INDUSTRY

September 25-26 ~ Marriott Hotel Napa, CA

# Financial SYMPOSIUM

wineindustryfinancial.com

The premier wine industry conference covering financial, business and strategic issues.

August 21 ~ Marriott Hotel Napa, CA



winebusinessWITS.com

The only conference focused on successfully deploying technology solutions in the wine industry.

September 6 ~ Marriott Hotel Napa, CA



winejobsSUMMIT.com

A one-of-a-kind gathering for HR managers to connect with their peers to discuss current HR topics and learn from industry experts.

## WINE BUSINESS MONTHLY *events*

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f more than 10,000 North American wineries currently reported by WinesVinesData, more than 8,000 are categorized as "very small" (fewer than 5,000 cases produced annually). About half of those have what's termed "limited production" (fewer than 1,000 cases).

# **KEY POINTS**

Even the largest suppliers make efforts to help small wineries produce excellent packages at affordable prices.

Forecast your needs and plan in advance to take advantage of discounts.

Try to remain flexible with your packaging decisions. Expensive foils or custom capsules are not necessary for an elegant look. Savvy designers can make stock items look top-shelf.

Take advice from the design pros you engage: They know what will work for you and your budget.

Many of these tiny wineries produce multiple varieties or brands, and although they may not enjoy the services of distributors under the three-tier system, they still want the benefits of standout packaging for direct-to-consumer sales: attractive, memorable packages that will bring customers back for more.

When we contacted some major packaging suppliers, we learned they make special efforts to accommodate these wineries and their goals, with services and products to help the clients economize on costs and maximize results. When you're not large-scale, you may have limited

your packaging decisions to equally small businesses. That's great if you are well-served by your suppliers, not so much if you are investing too much time and money on your packaging.

# Suppliers eager to work with you

G3 of Modesto, Calif., is a massive company with international reach, but according to its vice president of sales, Mihailo Panovich, G3 serves winery customers of all sizes and in recent years has made significant investments in partnerships and equipment to meet growing demand by small and midsize wineries.

In-stock items are available for online order, including a bag or a case of oak chips, screwcaps by the case and Petainer kegs "by the layer": 20 20-liter kegs or a dozen 30-liter one-way kegs for on-premise by-the-glass service. The minimum order for custom DIAM corks is 1,000 stoppers; there's no minimum for large-format DIAMs.

Recently, G3 acquired long-established Tapp Label in St. Helena, Calif., with its digital printing abilities, which expands printing capabilities for small wineries.

Waterloo Packaging in Waterloo, N.Y., is another major supplier and serves more than 750 small wineries. Located in the Finger Lakes wine region, it claims a unique perspective on the needs of small producers and their day-to-day needs, including reduced pricing along its predefined fast shipping routes, according to sales and marketing project leader Bobbi Stebbins.

"Sometimes smaller wineries are less prepared to forecast their needs and may need last-minute supplies when bottling,"

Stebbins noted. With a comprehensive inventory and its own fleet of trucks, Waterloo can provide short-notice deliveries for small producers, who need lesser quantities of bottles and may lack storage space for large pallets of glass.

With the ability to repack on site, Waterloo can provide smaller producers with different bottles without purchasing an entire pallet; most styles are available in minimum quantities of as little as a single case, Stebbins said. Stock case boxes can be labeled in-house with the winery logo and basic artwork, providing significant savings to custom boxes.

Waterloo provides ready-to-fill printed and shrink-sleeved bottles in as little as one pallet of glass, saving time, labor cost and waste involved with paper labeling for smaller producers. Shrink-sleeving can transform an inexpensive bottle with rich color at lower cost, enabling a single bottle style to be used for more than one variety or brand. "We frequently allow closures to ride along for free with glass purchases," Stebbins said. Using a "one-stop" shop for all packaging saves both time and money, she noted.



# **Plants in France and Mexico**

More than a century old, Saverglass manufactures glass bottles for the wine industry, with plants in France and a new one under construction near Guadalajara, Mexico. According to sales executive Jyll Vidal, it's the only glass manufacturer that sells directly to wineries of all sizes. The average size of a repack order is 750 cases.

Warehouses in Fairfield, Calif., Auburn, Wash., Covington, Ky., and soon in San Antonio, Texas, provide quick turnaround, and specialty bottles are available to smaller wineries with a minimum order of one pallet (approximately 1,100 bottles). Custom-printed cases are available for minimum orders of 500 cases. Saverglass maintains strong partnerships with local corrugate specialists for enhanced flexibility and rapid response time, or Saverglass will repack bottles in customer-supplied boxes.

Large-format bottles are another specialty; Saverglass can manufacture custom wine bottles in quantities as few as 2,000 cases, which reduces mold fees and enables small wineries to personalize their bottles.

"Glass and carton pricing can be held to a minimum by choosing less bottle shapes and decorating the glass or using the label and capsule to differentiate the varietals," Vidal pointed out.





Ultra-violet printed glass bottles from Waterloo Container, which serves 750 small wineries.

# **Bottle distributors**

Smaller wineries are so profuse that contacting them directly can be time-consuming, and glass is no longer their solo option for bottles.

"Amcor Rigid Plastics sells stock bottles (187 ml and 750 ml) through distributors including TricorBraun, Berlin and Waterloo to service small producers. We also connect winemakers with our network of third-party fillers," said Emily Work, senior marketing manager. "Our research shows small wineries are exploring alternative packaging and PET bottles are among those." Amoor exhibits at trade shows and attends other industry events to help educate the market about the benefits of PET bottles.

"The shift for wineries to sell direct to consumer has opened new pathways for plastic bottles," Work added. PET bottles allow wineries to save significantly on costs tied to secondary packaging and shipping, since they are lighter and less fragile.

Glass bottles typically weigh between two and five pounds

when filled; plastic, around 1.2 pounds filled. The difference contributes to savings of 20-40 percent via standard ground shipping.

PET bottles have a lower carbon footprint than glass because less energy is used to produce and recycle the bottles, Work said. Plastic is also more widely accepted at local recycling centers.

# Overstock inventory

All American Containers-West Coast in Windsor, Calif., maintains a no-minimum-order policy. Billing itself as "a versatile company," All American strives to be a onestop shop to service smaller wineries with glass, corks, capsules and printed cases, according to Stephanie Ramczyk, business development. The company reaches out through smaller trade associations, "but the best way is simply word-of-mouth," she said.

The company often helps to focus smaller buyers on current special deals on overstock inventory. "Sometimes we may have a particular item that has changed item numbers, or changed the factory which we purchase it from.



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Amcor Rigid Plastics sells PET bottles through distributors.

The glass is still fully within spec and good glass, but we are trying to manage our own internals, so we may direct these customers to help us by offering them a particular item number, and it may be at a small discount. We also attempt to pair up deliveries in order to minimize the freight charges for these customers," Ramczyk said.

Her recommendations for additional savings: "Be open to using slightly different molds for different varietals, based on what specials we have going on. If there are no specials that fit the bill, go the opposite way and purchase in as large a quantity as possible of one particular bottle and then differentiate with another change like the color of the capsule. Talk to us about what the aim is, so that we can best guide to the cost-effective options."

Based in Napa, Calif., Global Packaging has international scope but serves smaller wineries, mainly with high-design bottles and pewter labels, according to president Erica Harrop. "They find us through word-of-mouth, as there are few well-supplied and service-oriented glass suppliers who will spend time with these people," she said.

To minimize costs, Global tries to work with wineries to project annual needs and take them into account. It has designed a full line of bottles, Elegant Light Line, with high-endlooking bottles for premium and higher-level wines. The winery benefits because these all use consistent-sized, larger capsules, with wellmarked, larger label areas that transcend the traditional Bordeaux/Burgundy bottle shapes.

# Make a plan but stay flexible

Designers see and vet packaging decisions from their inception. "Small wineries, particularly start-ups, are up against the same dynamic as established wineries," said Jim Moon. "They need to attract attention on the same shelf as the big guys. That is the playing field: Consumers make the call. Small wineries often will try to minimize their inevitable package design costs."

After they spend so much money to establish their wineries, some start-up vintners experience sticker shock from the additional costs of packaging design. But from the consumer point of view, it all comes down to the package. "If it fails to motivate them at the point of purchase, all the vintner's production costs were for naught," Moon said.

Kennewick, Wash., designer Sara Nelson put her head together with Scott Haggerty and Rob Griswold of Seattle-area's Trysk Print Solutions to assemble a tip list for small wineries.

Beautiful packaging is a necessity, not a any winery, the only visual representation of luxury, they emphasized. It's the public face of





the quality of wine in the bottle and often the only thing a prospective new consumer will know about it.

Here are their tips for keeping costs down without compromising labels:

- Choose stock cutting dies. A printer will have these in its inventory if it's a wine label specialist. Using standard stock dies instead of custom can save hundreds of dollars.
- Use high-quality paper stocks. At small quantities, these do not add significantly to the overall label cost, but they add very obvious, visible elegance and sophistication.
- Keep the number of special finishes to a minimum. Perhaps start with a metallic paper and add inks, rather than paying for foil stamping. It's inexpensive, yet provides the desired look. As budget allows, add luxurious finishes on future print runs.
- Make sure that labels are designed to share the same tooling: the same cutting dies, foil dies, etc. This means significant cost savings at the printer. Front and back labels that are the same size also add to efficiency. You can still change colors and design, as long as the tooling remains the same.
- The bulk of printing cost is in setup. Print as many labels as you can use at one time. You get the best cost per label this way. Consider printing all labels for the entire year at the

# **COORDINATE, COMMUNICATE** FROM DAY ONE

ach of the cited suppliers stressed advance planning and communications as their most important advice for smaller producers.

- G3: "We would advise that a customer engages G3 in the early stage of product development to help plan out their cost-effective packaging design and bottling requirement."
- Waterloo: Overall value (not price) is the most important factor. Look for value-added services such as on-site expertise, freight, quality management and personalized customer service when you need to make every dime count.
- Saverglass: Choose your bottle first and choose a shape you love. All other elements of your package will need to be sized to your bottle specifications. Be creative and do not go cheap on packaging. It is the vessel that will propel your brand to success.
- Amcor: Small wine makers focused on direct to consumer and growth tied to expanding offerings for "on-the-go" consumers have an opportunity to expand their business and enter new markets with plastic bottles. PET bottles are a great alternative to traditional glass packaging for wines. The lightweight, shatterproof package enables consumers to enjoy wine in new places and occasions.
- All American: Order in advance. Don't wait for the last minute. Communicate and be flexible.
- Global: Look for a supplier with abundant selection. Don't feel your needs are too unimportant to ask for the best service. Be prepared with information for your supplier. "We need to know right away your dates for bottling, preferably three or more months out," said president Erica Harrop. "Let us know the retail price of the wine, so we can fit the best options. Be flexible with colors and shapes."



# You know how good your





- same time, even if you won't be bottling for months.
- Spend what's necessary to have a nice cork. It doesn't have to be absolute top of the line, but it must be nice. Colorful synthetic corks diminish a wine's perceived value, in the eves of these pros.
- Small wineries typically don't have enough volume to make a custom capsule economical, but they can buy attractive stock capsules. Color options are limited, so design the label
- to harmonize with a readily available color such as gold, silver, red, burgundy, black, green or navy. The capsule color should match the artwork as much as possible, so that the finished package looks intentional.
- Once the labels are done, make sure they are applied to the bottles uniformly and without wrinkles. "We don't recommend attempting hand application," Haggerty said. He suggested investing in good-quality rotary labeling equipment and prefers

Great Engineering's equipment for its durability.

# Flashy is not necessary

Nick Azevedo, marketing analyst for Affinity Creative in Mare Island, Calif., offered more advice. "Most smaller wineries think that they need flashy packaging or an extremely extensive campaign to maximize the value of their brand. From a creative perspective, the perceived value lies within the quality of the design, not the quantity of colors, foils and special printing techniques.

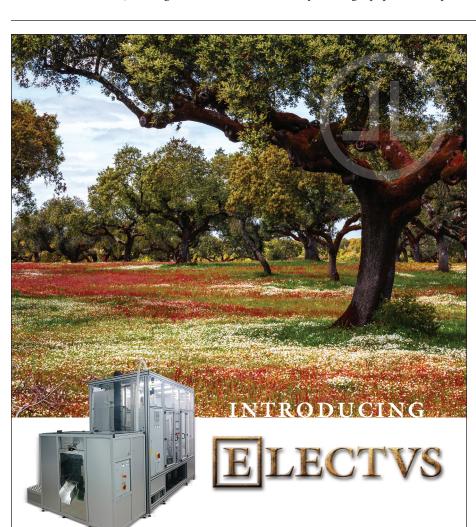
Monochromatic techniques, attractive type and craft-based substrates are highly coveted within the creative community. Smaller wineries can maximize these methods and not only reduce production costs, but also stand out from some of the larger name brands," he said.

Azevedo noted some mistakes to avoid: "Lead time on completing the packaging process gets even more complicated with smaller case production. One of the biggest mistakes that can be avoided during this process is something that most probably don't consider, so leave the packaging logistics to the experts. If a winery wants to avoid this lengthy lead time, avoid the vendor pitfall and proactively partner with an agency that understands the front and back ends of packaging logistics."

As all our suppliers advised, plan ahead for lead time and production. Don't get stuck at bottling without all the elements in place.



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# A CONVERSATION WITH

# Lisa Ehrlich

Connecting brands and wine packaging, and how to work with a designer

By Laurie Daniel

hen Chicago native Lisa Ehrlich was growing up in Wisconsin, wine was always on the table. But her interest in wine and food deepened when she spent her junior year in college in Aix-en-Provence, France, where she also picked Grenache grapes during a harvest. Although her studies had prepared her to become a law professor, wine and food turned out to be a bigger attraction, and Ehrlich went on to become a co-founder of Chicago's famed Charlie Trotter's restaurant, where she developed the wine program.

When she left Charlie Trotter's in 1990, Ehrlich embarked on a career in wine sales, marketing and management at companies such as Seagram, E. & J. Gallo Winery and Robert

Mondavi Winery. More recently, she spent 12 years as an executive at Purple Wine + Spirits in Graton, Calif., where she developed more than 40 brands, including Cryptic, Raeburn and Calista. She also launched a spirits division.

Since 2016, Ehrlich has run her own consulting company, Lisa Ehrlich Consulting. She's a frequent speaker at marketing conferences and a guest instructor at the University of California, Davis, Extension.

Lately, you've done some work with spirits brands. What do you think the wine industry could learn from the spirits world about packaging?

Lisa Ehrlich: Spirits packaging serves a bit of a different function. On premise, spirits need to be recognizable from a distance, on the back bar, as opposed to a wine bottle on the table.

At home, a spirits bottle, once opened, has a longer-lasting relationship with the consumer than a wine bottle. Possibly these things have driven spirits producers to take more risks with their packaging to stand out and differentiate themselves.

Even with wine packaging being more standardized than spirits, there is still some room to play, and one of the areas that could be the next frontier in wine packaging is glass. Custom glass can be expensive, requiring the purchase of custom molds, long lead times and relatively large volume commitments, but with the surge in craft spirits, some glass producers have developed custom glass programs with shorter lead times and smaller volume commitments. They also are offering customization of an existing glass mold where it doesn't fundamentally change the shape of the mold — for example, the neck finish, the punt or adding a custom cartouche. You can see this trend in one of the most dynamic wine segments, rosé wine brands, where they're using both glass and nontraditional closures to stand out.

Rosé producers, particularly from southern France, are leading the way. The Gerard Bertrand Côtes des Roses glass bottle has a rose sculpted into the punt and a Vinoseal closure, giving it a real luxury feel and, at the same time, a look that stands out. Whispering Angel has a branded cartouche on the front of the bottle. These are things you might see in spirits, but not as often in wine. Other packaging features used in spirits are combining silkscreen with a printed paper label, using leather, wooden and metallic materials for labels, as well as clear, colored or adhesive medallions. While more expensive than a simple printed label, these are

elements that can really set packaging apart.

You've developed brands that have fairly traditional packaging, while others have a more innovative look. How do vou decide which is more suitable?

**Ehrlich:** It's really about who is drinking the wine, which segment you're talking about, where it's being sold and how it's being consumed. It works to be daring and clever for rosé wines, red blends and other popularly priced wines (such as Spanish Garnacha) that have a strong retail presence and are enjoyed in more casual settings. Packaging in these segments has a good deal of leeway to experiment and be creative. For

wines consumed in upscale restaurants, and for more traditional market segments, such as wines from the Russian River or Napa Valley, Bordeaux or Burgundy, it's harder to break the rules. It's riskier for a wine drinker to buy these bottles, and more traditional packaging is reassuring. Luxury packaging can be a guide for consumers as to what to expect inside the bottle. You can't stray too far from the packaging conventions in well-established luxury categories without potentially losing some of your key customers.

# You've launched many brands. Are there instances where the concept didn't work?

**Ehrlich:** You can have the best package design and concept, but if the wine in the bottle doesn't match the wine drinker's expectations, or it's not quite at the right price point, it won't work. Everything needs to come together: the packaging, the wine and the price positioning. You can tweak these things as you go, but success is much more likely if you get it right out of the gate. For example, an elegant, oakaged red blend might not meet expectations of red blend drinkers looking for jammy, soft, rich red wines, even if the packaging stands out from the pack. It's also hard to move people up to higher prices in wine segments that offer outstanding value and quality at lower price points, even with great packaging.

Take the case of Cryptic, a red blend that I launched, targeted to a higher price point than where most red blends were selling at the time, with more luxurious packaging and a drier style of wine. A large retailer pointed out that while Cryptic was among the best packaging in the store, it wasn't generating the repeat purchases that might be expected. The suspicion was that it simply wasn't the style of wine the red blend drinkers were seeking. They might move up in price to try it, but they soon went back to the jammy red blends they enjoyed at lower prices. Perhaps the wine was just ahead of its time, although the brand seems to have found a niche.

# How does packaging help you reposition a brand?

**Ehrlich:** It's much harder to raise the price perception of an existing brand than it is to launch a new brand at a higher price point. For example, it's tough to take a \$25 Napa Cabernet and raise the price to \$40 or \$50 for that same wine once people are used to buying it at the lower price point. There are some packaging upgrades, however, that can really make a big impact. These include more white space on a label; limited use of color; a smaller, more elegant typeface; and subtle label-finishing techniques such as sculpted embossing and debossing, embossed paper textures, foil stamping, and high build and spot varnishes.

An example I worked on is Avalon Napa Valley Cabernet, which originally started out as a value proposition when Napa Cabernet grapes were much more affordable. As grape prices went up, it became necessary to move the program up market. By switching first from the orange label with a large Celtic medallion logo to a beige label, and then increasing the size of the label, using more expensive-looking white paper with black print, reducing the size of the logo, and enhancing it with high build and deep embossing, the wine was successfully repositioned at several price tiers above where it had been.

If the design is non-traditional, it helps to ground it in at least one or more classic elements such as typeface or layout. While it works successfully in craft beer, it's tricky to pull off bold designs or colorful illustrations in wine, particularly as the price point moves up. Where it's successful, it's been by done limiting all the other elements on the label, such as was done on the label for The Prisoner or the Sine Oua Non collection.

When choosing a designer for your packaging, it's obviously important to find one who's a good fit for the brand. What advice would you give someone who's looking for a designer?

**Ehrlich:** First, look for someone with experience in the category. Wine and spirits packaging design requires a wide range of skills, including knowledge of the wine consumer, the competitive market, wine packaging suppliers and government compliance rules, to name a few. While it can seem appealing to work with someone who is new to wine packaging and can offer a fresh approach, the learning curve is steep.

Find someone who is collaborative and can help guide you through the design process, allowing you to provide valuable direction to them. It never seems to work to tell a designer, "just surprise me," or "I'll know it when I see it." The best designs start with defining your packaging objectives and preferences up front, before you start working on the design. This usually takes the form of a packaging design brief. A well thought-out design brief sets a clear direction for the designer and prevents excessive back-and-forth that can drive up cost and anxiety on both sides.

But counterintuitively, it's also important not to over-direct a designer. Once you agree on the direction and goals, you need to give them enough free reign to execute their vision. I've seen great designers get tripped up on having to design around a particular idea that the client has in mind that doesn't really pan out, or by having their design deconstructed by the client to the point that it no longer hangs together.

How do you find a designer? Keep track of designs you like and who did the work. Often you can find out who designed wine packaging with a bit of internet sleuthing. Printers and glass decorators can be helpful in locating a designer and can vouch for their work. You will want to determine what it's like to work with an agency or individual and think about the designer as you would any member of your team when you determine fit. Will they recommend packaging vendors and help source packaging materials, or do they just turn over the artwork to you? That might be fine with you if you already have packaging experience and vendors in mind. Be sure to discuss your budget and timeline up front.

For your labels, it's also important to find the right printer. What advice do you have?

Ehrlich: A wine label designer who is experi-

# **CANS ARE COMPLICATED BUT PROMISING**

arketing consultant Lisa Ehrlich says she is enthusiastic about the future of wine in a can.

"It's a very dynamic emerging segment," she says. "From a consumer standpoint, it's eco-friendly, a lot more portable than a glass bottle, and offers single-serving convenience. It's a bit more complicated for the winemaker to produce wines that show well when canned, and they have a shorter shelf life than bottled wine, but it's a very promising direction for the wine category."

Ehrlich also thinks there are opportunities for creative designs when it comes to canned wine. "It's a chance to be more daring than with traditional wine bottle packaging."

That said, Ehrlich isn't working with cans - yet. "I can't seem to get retailers or potential clients as excited as I am about canned wine, but I think it's only a matter of time."

enced with wine packaging should have experience with a range of printers and can help guide the decision about which printer to choose. Generally, you will want to select a printer based on the label design, volume of labels, timing and cost.

As with a designer, you should look for a printer who is collaborative. Involve them as early as you can in the design process, so that they can review the design. This allows them to make valuable recommendations about printing techniques and ways to cut costs. Different printers may have specialized equipment, such as a laser that cuts intricate designs into the label, or offer state-of-the-art, multi-station offset printing presses that allow many different techniques during the same print job (e.g. embossing, varnish, foil stamping). For short runs, it's most cost-effective to print digitally, and there are printers who offer strong digital printing departments. It's ideal to have a printer who is based locally, so that it's convenient to meet with them in person and for you or your designer to attend press checks.

A resident of the Santa Cruz Mountains, Laurie Daniel has been a journalist for more than 35 years. She has been writing about wine for publications for more than 21 years and has been a Wines & Vines contributor since 2006.

# **PACKAGING** SUPPLIER GUIDE

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this guide provide bottles, bottle decorating and labels and are actively marketing packaging supplies to wineries.



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E: sales@bottleprint.com

W: bottleprint.com

Products and Services: Bottleprint has printed millions of glass bottles since starting in Napa in 1992. Our Santa Rosa facility can handle orders of up to 25,000 cases. We can source your bottles, facilitate additional storage, trucking and coordinate deliveries.

# BRICK PACKAGING, A SAXCO CO

PO Box 6715, Traverse City, MI 49696 P: (866) 770-7600

E: sales@brickpackaging.com W: brickpackaging.com

Brands Sold: Amorim Corks, Enoplastic, Janson Capsules, Kefla, MALA Closures, Maverick Enterprises, O-I, Saverglass, Seguin Moreau, SuperCap, Tonnellerie Radoux, Verallia, Vetreria

Etrusca, Vetri Speciali Products and Services: Standard, spe-

cialty and champagne/sparkling bottles. Natural and synthetic corks, 30x60 screw caps, PVC and polylam capsules. Oak barrels, oak additives, barrel racks, barrel washing stands. Wine bottle shippers and carriers.

# **BRUNI GLASS, A BERLIN** PACKAGING COMPANY

2920 Cordelia Rd, Fairfield, CA 94534 P: (707) 389-7605

E: info@bruniglass.com

W: bruniglass.com

Products and Services: Bruni Glass has passion for and experience in supplying premium and specialty glass packaging to the wine, spirits, food and gourmet markets. In 2016, Bruni joined with Berlin Packaging.

# **BSG HANDCRAFT**

800 W First Ave, Shakopee, MN 55107 P: (800) 999-2440

E: orders@bsghandcraft.com

W: bsghandcraft.com

Products and Services: Supplies for micro & small wineries - juice concentrates, wine chemicals, fining agents, clarifying agents, cleaning chemicals and much more.

# CALIFORNIA CAPSULES

3500 Dry Creek Rd, Ste 15, Paso Robles, CA 93446

P: (805) 250-1122

E: info@californiacapsules.com

W: californiacapsules.com

Products and Services: California Capsules is an innovative supplier of custom and stock tin, polylamninate, screwcap and champagne foils for still and sparkling wines, as well as bottling related machinery, with local Central Coast and SoCal representation and warehouse.

# **CAROLINA WINE SUPPLY**

329 W Maple St, Yadkinville, NC 27055 P: (336) 677-6831

E: gil@carolinawinesupply.com W: carolinawinesupply.com

Brands Sold: Amorim, Carlson Filtration, Charlois, Hanna Instruments, Laffort,

Leroi, Marchisio, Nomacorc, Rack & Maintenance, Remco Hygenic Tools, Shelco Filters

**Products and Services: Products include** tanks, barrels, barrel racks, filters/filter pads, pumps, wine bottles, corks, capsules, yeast, nutrients, enzymes and oak alternatives. Full range of cleaning chemicals, processing chemicals, lab chemicals and supplies.

# **CCL LABEL**

2511 NW 30th Ave, Portland, OR 97210 P: (503) 274-9782

E: mlytle@cclind.com

W: ccllabel.com

Products and Services: Utilizing multiple production technologies, C C L Label can produce A1:K91 runs large and small, cost effectively and timely. Whether printing on conventional UV offset and UV flexo presses or with the latest digital offset technology, you will be delivered labels of the highest quality.

# CASTORO BOTTLING

# CASTORO BOTTLING CO.

6465 Von Dollen Rd, San Miguel, CA

P: (805) 467-2002

E: niels@castorobottling.com

W: castorobottling.com

Products and Services: Quality bottling since 1989. Bottle cleaning, gravity fill, vacuum corking, screwcapping, pressure sensitive, all caps. 4 mobile lines--flexible scheduling. All technicians with over 15 years of bottling expertise. Velcorin and liquid N2 dosing.

# **CERAMIC DECORATING CO INC**

4651 Sheila St, Los Angeles, CA 90040 P: (323) 268-5135

E: chad@ceramicdecoratingco.com W: ceramicdecoratingco.com

# **CFP WINEMAKERS**

One 21st St, Pittsburgh, PA 15222 P: (412) 232-4507

E: winesales@cfpwinemakers.com W: cfpwinemakers.com

Products and Services: Specializing in wine grapes from California since 1952 and experts in servicing upstart and small wineries in the North East.

# **COLUMBIA LABEL**

PO Box 5290, Benton City, WA 99320 P: (888) 791-9590

E: sales@rippedsheets.com

W: columbialabel.com

Products and Services: Provides custom diecut sheets of labels and tags. Our specialty has always been our ability to provide labels in any size or shape in a wide variety of durable materials. Great discounted pricing for custom wine labels on rolls.

# **ENCORE GLASS**

2925 Cordelia Rd, Fairfield, CA 94534 P: (707) 745-4444

E: sales@encoreglass.com

W: encoreglass.com

Products and Services: High quality glass wine bottles from North American and Asian suppliers. Decanting services, packing and shipping materials.

# **ETCHED IMAGES, INC.**

1758 Industrial Way, Ste 101, Napa, CA 94558

P: (707) 252-5450

E: sales@etchedimages.com

W: etchedimages.com

Brands Sold: LowTemp Dip®, NoChip

Products and Services: A Napa Valley bottle etching and painting company serving the wine industry worldwide. We specialize in complex wine label reproduction, bottle blackening, NoChip Dip and LowTemp Dip sealing/dipping waxes, and wax dipping services.

# **FORTERA**

PO Box 1117, Tiburon, CA 94920 P: (415) 890-2073

E: tkellerman@vinasset.com

W: fortera.co

Brands Sold: Owens Illinios, Amcor Flexibles, Amorim Cork, Golden State Box Factory

Products and Services: Fortera is the number one online procurement website for dry goods in the beverage industry. Fortera directly connects you to the best suppliers from around the world through a simple online subscription to shop our pre-negotiated supplier contracts.

# FREERUN WINERY SERVICES

431 Hudson St, Healdsburg, CA 95448 P: (707) 395-0382

E: contact@freerunservices.com

W: freerunservices.com

Products and Services: FreeRun provides supply management solutions including planning, purchasing, production, packaging & logistics support. An

extension of winery & brand operations, we deliver improved efficiencies, high quality product and lower total costs of goods.



# G3 ENTERPRISES

502 E Whitmore Ave, Modesto, CA 95358

P: (800) 321-8747

E: g3.info@g3enterprises.com

W: g3enterprises.com

Brands Sold: Altop, Boise oak chips, DIAM, G Fresh, G Ink, G Tree, Mytik, Origine by DIAM, petainerKeg, Zipz Products and Services: G3 offers integrated packaging and logistics solutions including labels, twist caps. capsules, corks, oak chips, bottling services (including glass, box, PET, kegs), transportation & warehousing. Online order available at www.G3Order.

# GALLO GLASS CO.

605 S Santa Cruz Ave, Modesto, CA 95354

P: (209) 341-3583

W: galloglass.com

Products and Services: Gallo Glass, established in 1958, is a state-of-theart highly innovative glass manufacturer committed to meeting the needs of its customers while minimizing its impact on the environment.

# GINO PINTO, INC.

PO Box 72, Hammonton, NJ 8037 P: (609) 561-8199

E: makewine@comcast.net

W: ginopinto.com

Products and Services: Located in Hammonton, New Jersey, we distribute, import, and export winemaking equipment, grapes, juices, bottles, and accessories.



# **GLOBAL PACKAGE, LLC**

PO Box 634, Napa, CA 94559 P: (707) 224-5670

E: info@globalpackage.net

W: globalpackage.net

Brands Sold: Estal, Etiq'Etain, Saverglass, Vetreria Etrusca, VetriSpeciali, VetroElite, Vidrala, VOA

Products and Services: Specializing in semi stock and customized high end bottles, bottle design and decoration services for wine, spirits and food companies. Our focus is on unique specialty bottles, pewter labels, custom cartons and stoppers for wines and spirits.



# **GLOPAK WINE AND SPIRITS**

35 Engel St, Hicksville, NY 11801 P: (844) 445-6725

E: sales@glopakusa.com

W: glopakwineandspirits.com

Products and Services: Glopak offers a variety of high quality Bordeaux, Burgundy, Hock and specialty wine bottles with both screw top and cork neck finishes. We maintain over 14 warehouses across the US to help bring you the bottles you need at the time you need them.

# **GOLD COAST, DIVISION OF** STEVEN LABEL

11926 Burke St, Santa Fe Springs, CA 90670

P: (800) 752-4968

E: slc4you@stevenlabel.com

W: goldcoast-inc.com

Products and Services: Gold Coast specializes in making labels for California wineries. We offer several printing methods, material options, design services and technical consultation to bring your package to life. Build a lasting impression with Gold Coast!

# HALSEY BOTTLING, LLC

2471 Solano Ave, #133, Napa, CA 94558

P: (707) 695-1149

E: dan@halseybottling.com

W: halseybottling.com

Products and Services: Four high-speed mobile bottling lines serving California. 3,000 to 4,500 cases per day. Screwcap, WAK or cork finish. Optical spotting labels, heat tunnel, nitrogen dosing, hot-glue case sealing, bottle coding. CCOF Organic Certified.

# HAUSER PACKAGING, INC.

44 Exchange St, Ste 202, Portland, ME 4101

P: (888) 600-2671

E: info@hauserpack.com

W: hauserpack.com

Brands Sold: DIAM, Enoplastic, OI Packaging Solutions, Petainer, Saverglass, Verallia

Products and Services: We sell bottles. DIAM corks, printed boxes, screw caps, capsules, wirehoods, crowns, growlers and one-way kegs to the wine, craft beer and craft distilling markets.



# INFINITY FOILS, INC.

9090 Nieman Rd, Overland Park, KS 66214

P: (913) 888-7340

E: info@infinityfoils.com

W: infinityfoils.com

Products and Services: Infinity offers both hot and cold foil with many releases developed to work on a wide range of packaging and graphic applications.

# JOHN MULHERN CO.

PO Box 6604, Santa Rosa, CA 95406 P: (707) 578-5105

E: info@jmulhern.com

W: imulhern.com

Brands Sold: Critical Process Filtration, G&F Manufacturing, Hydronix, Quietaire, Shelco Filters, Shurtape, Swift Adhesives

Products and Services: Factory authorized master distributor for Critical Process and Shelco Filters membrane/sterile filters and sanitary housings. HB Fuller/ Swift Forbo adhesives, hot melt and label adhesives. Wine and water filtration.

# **KURZ TRANSFER PRODUCTS LP**

415 N Smith Street, Corona, CA 92880 P: (800) 478-3677

E: sales@kurzusa.com

W: kurzusa.com

Products and Services: Hot stamping, cold foiling and digital foiling for primary and secondary packaging.

# LABEL ART OF CALIFORNIA

290 27th St, Oakland, CA 94612 **P:** (800) 451-7979

E: trishell@labelartca.com

W: labelartca.com

Products and Services: Manufacturer of pressure sensitive labels & tags; specialists in the wine industry. Indigo digital offset & flexographic printing. Wide variety of wine stocks. Complete offline foiling and embossing manufacturer of non-adhesive wine labels.

# **LABEL SOLUTIONS**

151 W Passaic St, 2nd Fl, Rochelle Park, NJ 7662 P: (201) 599-0909 E: ilana@labelsolutions.net

# More wineries use winejobs.com than any other online job site.

Winery • Robert Kacher Selections • Robert Mondavi • Robert Sinskey Vineyards • Rodney Strong Vineyards • Rosenblum Cellars • Roshambo •

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W: o-ipackagingsolutions.com

W: labelsolutions net

Products and Services: Independent solutions provider for pressure sensitive labels.

# LABELTRONIX

2419 E Winston Rd, Anaheim, CA 92806

P: (800) 429-4321

E: info@labeltronix.com

W: labeltronix.com

Brands Sold: Arctic Shield. AVA Series.

HD Flexo

Products and Services: Flexographic and digital label printing with an abundant array of wine label materials. Achieve high-end elegance with foil and embossing embellishments. Lean Labeling is a better way to design, manufacture and manage labels.

# LIGHTNING LABELS, INC.

2369 S Trenton Way, Unit C, Denver, CO 80231

P: (303) 695-0398

E: info@lightninglabels.com

W: lightninglabels.com

Products and Services: Lighting Labels is a pioneer in the production of custom digitally printed wine labels. We have served this niche industry for 15 years with top quality output and dedicated customer service, and we offer an outstanding value to our customers.

# LORPON LABELS

24 Hudders Field Rd, Toronto, ON

P: (416) 679-1215

E: ieff@lorponlabels.com

W: lorponlabels.com

# M A SILVA USA

3433 Westwind Blvd, Santa Rosa, CA 95403

P: (707) 636-2530

E: info@masilva.com

W: masilva.com

Products and Services: M. A. Silva USA is the leading and award-winning manufacturer of the finest premium corks, glass and packaging for North American markets.

# MONVERA GLASS DÉCOR

1414 Harbor Way S, Ste 1400, Richmond, CA 94804

P: (510) 444-9463

E: info@monvera.com

W: monvera.com

Products and Services: Monvera Glass Décor specializes in screen printing labels on glass bottles with the ability to print up to 6 colors at a time using a vast array of ceramic, precious metal and UV inks.

### MULTI-COLOR CORP.

21 Executive Way, Napa, CA 94558

P: (707) 603-2574

E: sales.digital@mcclabel.com

W: mcclabel.com/wine-spirit.html

Products and Services: Multi-Color Corporation (MCC) is the global leader in label solutions for the wine and spirits markets. Whether it's improving your brand equity on shelf or meeting regulatory label requirements, we work with you to find the right label solution.

# **NIAGARA LABEL CO., INC.**

12715 Lewis Rd, Akron, NY 14001 P: (716) 542-3000

E: michele@niagaralabel.com

W: niagaralabel.com

Products and Services: With extensive finishing capabilities and industry leading technologies, producing high impact, visually inspiring labels has never been easier. Ultra wet strength materials, hot foil stamping, embossing, cold foil, screen printing.



# **0-I PACKAGING SOLUTIONS**

5200 Tennyson Pkwy, Ste 100, Plano, TX 75024

P: (469) 443-1000 E: wine@o-i.com

Products and Services: O-I Packaging Solutions offers a large selection of stock molds, colors, finishes, design services and decorating capabilities. We are able to supply large or small orders, provide quick and seamless deliveries and achieve accelerated speed to market.

# **ONE87 WINE AND COCKTAILS,** LLC

265 Lombard Rd, Ste A, American Canyon, CA 94503

P: (707) 552-9463

E: bill@one87.com

W: one87.com

Products and Services: World Leading, single-serve wine and cocktails packaging services. Don't get canned. Get our BPA-free PET, 100% recyclable, unbreakable, food grade PET solid wall vessels. Custom shapes and sizes available from 60ml - 450ml.

# PACIFIC BARCODE. INC.

27531 Enterprise Cir W, Temecula, CA 92590

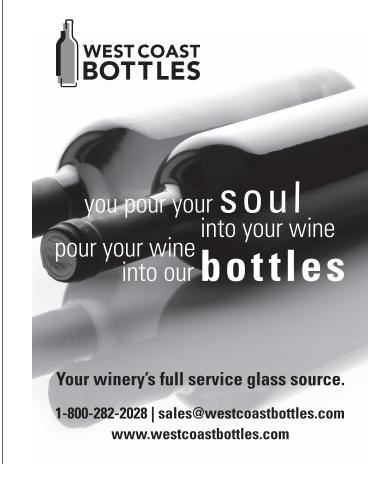
P: (800) 508-2535

E: sales@pacificbarcode.com

W: pacificbarcode.com

Brands Sold: Epson, VIP Color





Products and Services: Pacific Barcode Label Printing Solutions providing label printing equipment with on-site blank label manufacturing, on-demand barcode and product labels in a variety of sizes and shapes. Printed quickly and accurately.



# PACKAGING ARTS, INC.

700 Walnut Ave, Mare Island, CA 94592 P: (707) 562-2787

E: dave@packagingarts.com

W: packagingarts.com

Products and Services: We work closely with clients to generate relevant premium branded products that help promote their brands in the marketplace.

# PARAGON LABEL

3810 Cypress Dr, Petaluma, CA 94954 P: (800) 799-9599

E: gmackie@paragonlabel.com W: paragonlabel.com

Products and Services: 10 color flexo, digital printing, foil & embossing, intricate laser cutting, unique materials. Extraordinary service, fast lead times, competitive prices, environmentally-friendly practices and an artisan's approach to fine wine label printing.

# PHOENIX PACKAGING INTERNATIONAL CORP.

2530 Rue Lapierre, Lasalle, QC Canada

P: (514) 487-6660

E: info@phoenixpackaging.com

W: phoenixpackaging.com

Brands Sold: Applic Etains, Fin Korkki, Gerresheimer, Kefla, Kelman, MKM, Nussbaum, O-I, Tapi, VE, Verallia

**Products and Services: Phoenix offers** standard, stock and custom rigid packaging solutions. These cover all elements of the process from new molds for bottles and closures, to corks, specialty metal labels and all forms of decoration.

# PRIMERA TECHNOLOGY, INC.

Two Carlson Pkwy N, Plymouth, MN 55447

P: (763) 475-6676

E: sales@primera.com

W: primeralabel.com

Brands Sold: AP360, AP362, AP550, CX1200, FX1000, FX1200, LX1000, LX2000, LX500, RW-7, UW-7

Products and Services: Produce full-color, professional quality labels in-house with Primera's color label printers, digital presses and finishing systems. Apply labels with AP-Series label applicators.

### PRINT3 TECHNOLOGIES

21718 W 61st St, Shawnee, KS 66218 P: (913) 534-4946

E: rob.rogers@print3technologies.com W: print3technologies.com

Products and Services: Print3 Technologies manufactures digital printing and decoration equipment for printing on wine bottles and wine glasses.

# **PROOFTAG**

1100 Ave de l'Europe, Montauban, France

P: (335) 632-11050

E: prooftag@prooftag.com

W: prooftag.net

Products and Services: Consumers want to be sure the bottles they are buying are authentic, and you want to know who is buying your bottles. Prooftag offers security seals with hosted services to secure, trace and creates a direct link between the winery and consumers.

# **QUEST**

15 Bleeker St, Ste 202, Millburn, NJ 7041

P: (908) 851-9070

E: ingridcornehl@byquest.com

W: byquest.com

Products and Services: Quest offers the broadest array of decorating technologies that help the world's largest brands stand out. Techniques include

every traditional type plus brand new methods. Let us help you with every facet: sourcing glass, cartons and

# **RETHINK LABELS**

2419 E Winston Rd, Anaheim, CA 92806

P: (714) 363-4190

E: rethink@rethinklabel.com

W: rethinklabel.com

**Brands Sold: EPSON** 

Products and Services: Take control of your label production! With the Epson C7500 from ReThink Labels, you can print high quality, professional looking wine labels - at your own winery. These can be printed on classic, textured and water proof wine label materials.

# RYAN MOBILE BOTTLING

1370 Trancas St, #121, Napa, CA 94558

P: (707) 258-9388

E: mary@ryanmobilebottling.com

W: ryanmobilebottling.com

Products and Services: Full range of mobile wine bottling services, including pressure sensitive labeling, cork closures, ROPP and Lux screwcap closures. Varied label orientation and third label application services are also available.

# Quality equipment for budget prices.



Automatic/semi-automatic/manual; mono-blocks, filling machines, T-cappers, crown cappers, labeling machines, corkers, bottle washers.

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Email: Info@uksinc.com, uksinc@aol.com

www.uksinc.com



# SAVERGLASS, INC.

841 Latour Ct, Ste B, Napa, CA 94558 P: (707) 259-2930

E: contactsgi@saverglass.com

W: saverglass.com

Brands Sold: Art & Touch, ColorPlay, DataMatrix, Savercoat, SaverDec

Products and Services: Recognized for its innovation, its glassmaking expertise and the quality of its products and designs, Saverglass is the partner of choice for creative wineries and the world's leading brands of fine wines, Champagne and sparkling wines.

# **SAXCO INTERNATIONAL**

1855 Gateway Blvd, Ste 400, Concord, CA 94520

P: (800) 328-6035

E: wine@saxco.com

W: saxco.com

Brands Sold: Ardagh, Mala Capsules, Mayerick Capsules, O-I (Owens-Illinois), Saverglass, Saxco Select, SGP Packaging, Vetri Speciali, Vitro

Products and Services: Owens-Illinois North American glass containers: imported glass containers from sources worldwide: Saverglass, Verallia, Vetri Speciali, Stemware- blank and decorated from: Arc International, Libbey, Royal Leerdam, Stolzl and Saxco Select.

### SICPA SECURINK CORP.

8000 Research Way, Springfield, VA 22153

P: (703) 455-8050

E: securitysolutionsus@sicpa.com

W: sicpa.com

Products and Services: SICPA's multilavered security solutions for capsules and labels fight counterfeiters while offering attractive elements that make a wine bottle stand out. Protect your wine from counterfeiting, diversion, tampering and refilling/reuse/adulteration.

# SIERRA PACKAGING SOLUTIONS

2475 Ave 400, Kingsburg, CA 93631 P: (559) 897-0711

E: clyde@spssales.us

W: spssales.us

Products and Services: We sell a complete line of products to farmers and labor contractors. Picking & market supplies, janitorial, shipping and packaging material. Bottles, labels and boxes for olive oil & wine.





# SIGNATURE MOBILE BOTTLERS.

PO Box 249, Clackamas, OR 97015 P: (503) 720-3579

E: david@signaturebottlers.com

W: signaturebottlers.com

Products and Services: Mobile bottling, labeling, sparging, gravity filling, corking, screw capping, capsuling and sealing. Thirteen trucks to serve you.

# SQUID INK MANUFACTURING

7041 Boone Ave N, Brooklyn Park, MN 55428

P: (763) 795-8856

E: ccarney@squidink.com

W: squidink.com

Products and Services: Squid Ink manufactures large character and hi-resolution ink jet printing equipment, ink jet fluids and a full line of case taping equipment.

# STACKTEK

400 Hosmer Ave, Modesto, CA 95351 P: (719) 659-2026 E: iim@stacktek.com W: stacktek.com

Products and Services: StackTek is an innovative single serve solution for wine or drygoods. This container has the properties of glass with the lightweight and shatterproof qualities of plastic. The container is an industry exclusive stackable solution.

# STANPAC INK

PO Box 584, Lewiston, NY 14092 P: (905) 957-3326

E: info2u@stanpacnet.com

W: stanpacnet.com

Products and Services: Glass container printing (bottle decorating) for the wine, spirit, beer and food industries. Stanpac ink decorated bottles create the ultimate eye-catching package that will give your product instant visibility.

# TAPP LABEL CO.

1380 Main St, Ste 200, St. Helena, CA 94574

P: (707) 252-8300

E: info@tapplabel.com

W: tapplabel.com

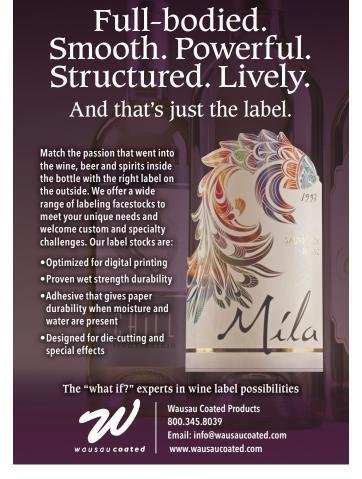
Products and Services: Tapp Label Company, specializes in high-decoration label and shrink-sleeve printing for the wine, spirits, beer and beverage industry.

# TECHNICOTE, INC.

222 Mound Ave, Miamisburg, OH 45342



www.napafermentation.com



P: (800) 358-4446

E: qstover@technicote.com

W: technicote.com

Products and Services: Manufacturer of pressure sensitive roll label material including Estate, Classic Crest, felt and matte litho paper along with specialty films and foils for the wine, spirits and specialty food industries.



# **TRICORBRAUN**

6 CityPlace Dr, Ste 1000, St. Louis, MO 63141

P: (314) 569-3633

E: marketing@tricorbraun.com

W: tricorbraun.com

Products and Services: Industry-leading supplier of rigid packaging glass, plastic and metal containers, closures, dispensers, plastic & metal tubes. Award-winning design group provides custom package design & development services and packaging component molds.

# TRICORBRAUN' winepak

# TRICORBRAUN WINEPAK

2280 Cordelia Rd, Fairfield, CA 94534 P: (707) 399-5800

E: marketing@tricorbraunwinepak.com W: tricorbraunwinepak.com

Products and Services: TricorBraun WinePak provides packaging components from domestic and imported bot-

tles to closure solutions. Our state-of-the-art repacking line and multiple warehouses throughout the West Coast provide fast, efficient access to your bottles.

# UNIONPACK

140 Dodd Ct, American Canyon, CA 94503

P: (707) 557-2277

E: info@unionpack.com

W: unionpack.com

Brands Sold: Federfin Tech, Intercap, PE-DI, Sabat, SealLux

Products and Services: Direct from our warehouse in American Canyon we can provide on-demand same day or next day delivery within California. In-stock screwcaps (13 colors), stock polylam capsules (15 colors) and stock wirehood & disk (5 combinations).

# **UNITED BOTTLES & PACKAGING**

1400 Dagenais St W, Sainte-Rose, QC Canada

P: (450) 622-1600

E: info@unitedbottles.com

W. unitedbottles.com

Products and Services: Specialized in the import and distribution of high quality glass bottles, standard European shapes and proprietary molds for a variety of food and beverage facilities.



# **UNIVERSAL PACKAGING**

1810 Kosmina Rd, Vernon, BC Canada P: (866) 549-1323

E: info@thinkuniversal.com

W: thinkuniversal.com

Brands Sold: Gallo, Piramal, SGP Packaging by Verallia, Vetri Speciali, Vinoseal. Wiegand

Products and Services: Universal Packaging is the leading bottle screen printer in North America, specializing in applied ceramic labels (ACL) since 1985. As your one-stop packaging shop, we also distribute bottles and the elegant glass Vinoseal closure.

### **VERALLIA**

370 Chadbourne Rd, Ste A, Fairfield, CA 94534

P: (707) 419-7200

E: sqp@verallia.com

W: sgp-packaging.com

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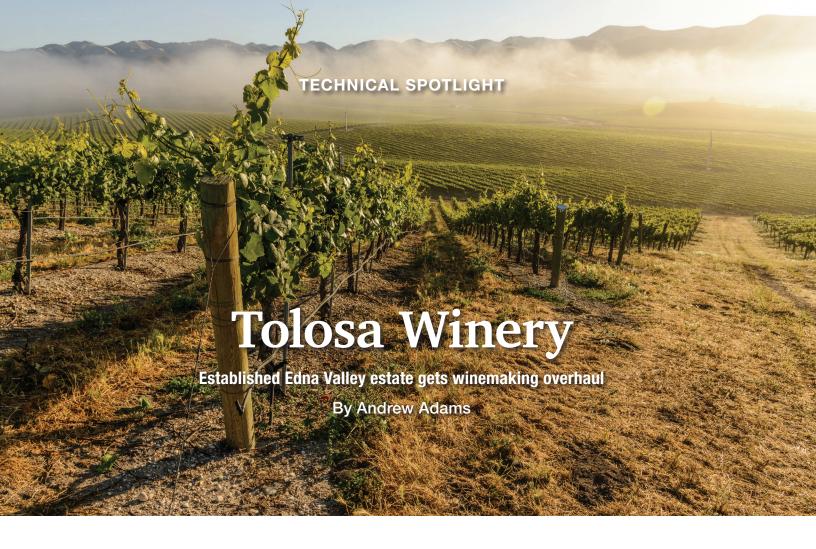
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# **KEY POINTS**

Revamped cellar is designed to better express vineyard.

**New equipment** includes optical sorter, smaller tanks.

Tolosa produces wine from 100 acres of an estate comprising 720 acres of vines.

ean Hoefliger has made a reputation for making Cabernet Sauvignon wines at Alpha Omega in Napa Valley but his first winemaking experience was with Pinot Noir.

A native of Switzerland, Hoefliger had initially pursued law in college but dropped out when he said it became clear he didn't have either the interest or the passion to be an attorney. Because he had neglected his law studies by playing cards and drinking wine, Hoefliger said, he went to work for his godfather, who owned a winery.

After his first day at the winery tasting dozens of tanks, many of which were filled with Pinot or Gamay — the most common reds of Switzerland — Hoefliger knew he wanted to become a winemaker and also learned the importance of spitting when tasting. That first cellar job was followed by others in California, South Africa and France before he returned to Switzerland to earn a degree in winemaking. After university, Hoefliger worked at Château Lynch-Bages in Bordeaux and then Newton Vineyard in Napa Valley.

Hoefliger was at Newton when he was approached by Robin Baggett, who had purchased Esquisse winery in Rutherford, Calif., and wanted to hire him to launch a new estate winery on the site. "They showed me the property, and I said no at the beginning because I really didn't see or understand the vision," Hoefliger recalled in an interview with Wines & Vines. "The building had no A.C., the tanks were really bad, and I was the winemaker at Newton, which is pretty much a paradise."

After the first refusal, Baggett came back and offered Hoefliger the chance to upgrade the winery however he needed. "Honestly, when you have the occasion to spend other people's money, which is great, I decided right away to say yes."

That was in 2006, and since then Alpha Omega has become a popular stop for Napa Valley tourists, earned the requisite scores, and its 10-case lot fetched one of the highest winning bids, \$75,000, in the 2018 Premiere Napa Valley Auction.

In 2015, Baggett approached Hoefliger about breathing new life into Tolosa Winery in the Edna Valley, near San Luis Obispo in California's Central Coast. Baggett and his partners, Jim Efird and Bob Schiebelhut, started by planting more than 800 acres to vines and then opened Tolosa in 1998 followed by, a second and larger, custom-crush winery Courtside Cellars. Courtside Cellars, in San Miguel, Calif., was later sold to E. & J. Gallo Winery in 2012. Today, the Tolosa estate has about 720 acres in total, of which 100 are used for the Tolosa brand wines. What isn't used by Tolosa is sold to other wine companies, and the winery

The name Tolosa comes from the Mission San Luis Obispo de Tolosa that was established in the area in 1772.

still is used for custom-crush winemaking.

Baggett, with a few other investors, bought out some of the other shares of Tolosa and wanted Hoefliger to revitalize the cellar.

# **Expressing Edna Valley**

The focus would be to produce Pinot Noir and Chardonnay wines that would express the true potential of the Edna Valley. "I saw that not only do we have a diversity of soil that is outstanding but also probably one of the best terroirs in California for Pinot," Hoefliger said of his initial impressions of the estate.

The Edna Valley AVA is one of California's true coastal appellations. The northwestern boundary of the appellation is a few miles from Morro Bay and the Pacific Ocean, and that pronounced marine influence creates one of the longest ripening seasons in the state. Bud break at the Tolosa vineyard can start in mid- to late February but picking for red Rhône varieties may not finish until the end of October.

After agreeing to work on Tolosa, Hoefliger said, he walked the vineyard, dug soil points and reviewed NDVI maps to gain a better sense of the vineyard. Nearly all of the estate's grapes are sold to other wineries, and Hoefliger took a hard look at the 100 acres that would remain for the Tolosa brand. "At the same time, we injected a lot of capital to redo the cellar," he said.

That all took place over six months, but Hoefliger was able to oversee the 2015 vintage, his first working on-site at Tolosa. The 2015 vintage was one of the hottest on record in the Edna Valley. "But even in such an exceptional vintage as far as heat is concerned, the terroir is that the air circulation between the Arroyo Grande (valley) and Morro Bay, you have an ocean flow of air that cools down the air and it protects really well the integrity of Pinot," he said.

Hoefliger splits his time among Tolosa,



One of the first changes to enhance wine quality was to begin picking into smaller, FYBs.

Alpha Omega and Baggett's latest investment, Perinet winery in the Priorat region of Spain. Those three wineries now make up what's called the Alpha Omega Collective.

Many of the initial improvements at Tolosa took place under the watch of winemaker Jim Kress, who joined the winery in 2015 after working at Vine Cliff Winery in Napa Valley. Kress and Hoefliger had gotten to know each other when Kress was winemaker at Domaine Chandon and had to take red wine production to custom-crush facilities that included Alpha Omega.

Day-to-day winemaking at Tolosa is now managed by Frederic Delivert, who joined the winery in time for the 2017 vintage. Hoefliger and Delivert met when both were consulting for Clark-Claudon Vineyards in the Howell Mountain appellation of Napa Valley. Delivert is a native of France and remained in California in 1997 after an internship at Newton Vineyard. He previously worked at Tamber Bey, a Napa Valley winery that was the subject of a Technical Spotlight article in the June 2017 edition of Wines & Vines.

One of the first changes Hoefliger made was to pick in FYBs (fine yellow bins), which was a major departure for how the estate had previously been managed.

Hand picking is the exception in much of the Central Coast, where growers of highly profitable crops like berries can pay a premium





Frederic Delivert (left) and Jean Hoefliger previously worked together at wineries in Napa Valley and manage winemaking at Tolosa Estate.

to retain or attract workers. Tolosa contracts with Mesa Vineyard Management in Templeton, Calif., and pays the company more to ensure that a crew of the same workers always is ready for whatever is needed in the blocks designated for Tolosa wine.

Picking will continue to be done by hand, although Hoefliger is quick to say that any winemaker who says "always" about something is lying. He said if he was faced with a storm with the potential to drop several inches on a crop of Pinot Noir, he's going to bring in the machines.

On the crush pad, Hoefliger went all-in on sorting and processing technology.

He was an early adopter of optical sorting at Alpha Omega after the 2009 vintage, in which a storm forecast to bring less than an inch of rain dropped 5 inches in mid-October, and that was followed by warm and humid conditions. "We had to bring fruit in very, very fast because a lot of the Cab, despite their thicker skins, was starting to rot," he said.

At one point, Hoefliger recalled having 32



After destemming and sorting, the berries are collected into stainless steel sumps that are dumped into open-top tanks.

# **ELEVATING THE DIRECT-TO-CONSUMER EXPERIENCE**



The hospitality areas of the winery were also enhanced to bolster DtC sales.

ot all of the changes at Tolosa Winery took place in the cellar. At the recent WiVi conference in Paso Robles, Calif., the winery's general manager June McIvor took part in a panel discussion in which she discussed how the winery's tasting room and direct-to-consumer program have been elevated.

McIvor, described the changes as a revolution, rather than an evolution. Before August 2015, she said, Tolosa sold "some pretty good wines" in several varieties between \$15 and \$45. "The winery was a really fun place to visit, with a modern tasting room, great hospitality. The lawn was a great place to throw down a beach blanket for an afternoon with kids, dog and a bottle of wine. Our pickup parties were the place to be with music and food. We were voted number-one tasting room [in the area]. So why did we change?"

Working with a marketing consultant, Tolosa's first step to increase in DtC sales consisted of clarifying the brand assets; through that exercise, said McIvor, Tolosa's team discovered that it aspired to be a luxury brand, focused on Chardonnay and, especially, Pinot Noir. McIvor's team removed extraneous varietals, then added SKUs of single-vineyard wines and a new flagship Pinot Noir at significantly higher price points. "It turned out that most of our strengths were not strengths for the DtC model," McIvor said. "We had too many varietals, we were trying to be all things to all people."

Secondly, they looked at all the different DtC revenue channels, including on-property sales, events, wine clubs, digital and inside sales. "We wanted to turn a great hospitality experience into a great hospitality and wine-buying experience," she said, and started by increasing staff pay and setting slightly higher yet attainable sales goals for the team.

She also moved many part-time staff toward full time and staffed up during busier times to ensure no guest was left underserved. Next, McIvor's team enhanced the productivity of the winery's spaces, starting with the lawn, which is now no longer a lawn but a tasting space with tables and chairs. "It's really about controlling the experience for guests," said McIvor.

The seated tastings have proved to be more enjoyable for the guests who in turn are buying more wine. "They're greeted at the door and led to a spot and it ends forty-five minutes later with a wine sale."

Other changes to Tolosa's DtC strategy include the launch of a futures program (which enables near-immediate capitalization on new vintages); phone sale check-ins for repeat buyers; a tasting space exclusive to wine club members; upscale events that end with dessert strategically placed beside the cash register; in-home tastings (in which sales expectations are set at \$20,000 to \$40,000 each); and a new elite wine club solely for single vineyard and flagship wines set at \$2,500 for a member's inaugural year. "Our staff was terrified to start selling this but success breeds success," McIvor said. "You sell a couple and it becomes exciting. Our team is now totally jazzed."

Jaime Lewis

tons of grapes in the winery parking lot and trying to work through that with a hand crew processing at around 1.5 tons per hour. "I had the assistant winemakers actually smell every cluster because that is the only way to detect pre-destemmer the impact or the presence of rot," he said.

# An investment in flexible processing

After that experience, Hoefliger said, he invested in a Pellenc destemmer with optical sorter and has never regretted it. "Being a small winery that, if I do my job right, makes highend wines, I have to have the luxury of picking faster, and since then we've never had a problem," he said. "We have to be able to respect the integrity of the fruit, and we have to be able to harvest it faster, and it worked really, really well."

On the crush pad at Tolosa, grapes are emptied from the FYBs onto conveyors leading to the Pellenc Selectiv' Process Winery that destems and sorts the berries, which are collected into stainless steel bins. Sometimes referred to as "gravy boats," the bins have a fluted side that directs the flow of berries into open-top tanks.

The process is gentler on the Pinot berries and also works well for the variety of tanks at the winery. All of the tanks were built by Quebec-based La Garde. The square-sided tanks range in size from 3 tons to 10 tons so wine lots can be as small or as large as needed. All of the tanks are also hooked up to hot and cold glycol for temperature control, which was another significant investment to protect wine quality.

Fermentations are managed by manual punchdowns. Despite having the opportunity



Both the Pinot Noir and Chardonnay ages in French oak barrels with about 30% new.

to invest in some type of punchdown device, Hoefliger said it would have been too restrictive for the layout of the cellar, and it's easier to regulate the pressure and intensity of punchdowns when done by hand.

Once fermentation is complete, the reds are pressed with a new Bucher Vaslin JLB press. Hoefliger admitted the trendy choice at premium wineries is to go with a basket press but stressed it's really about quality over quantity. "Lots of people think, 'oh gosh, it's so trendy to do a basket press.' Yeah, yeah, sure, sure it's trendy to have a basket press, but there's a cost to it because your yields of pressing are lower, but most people forget if you can use 20% of your press wine rather than 3%, then your investment is fairly fast recovered," he said.

The tanks are supported with tall legs that allow cellar workers to position the press basket directly beneath the main hatch, so they can simply rake out the pomace from outside of the tank.

For Chardonnay, the winery has a Europress EHM-120 press that is loaded with whole clus-

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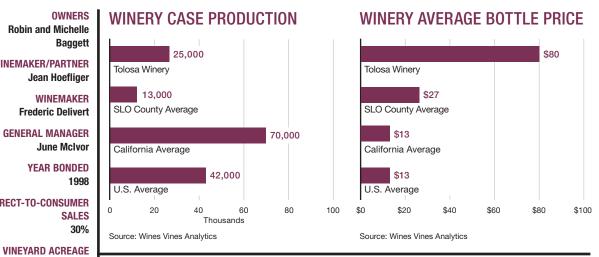
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# TOLOSA

# **Tolosa Winery**

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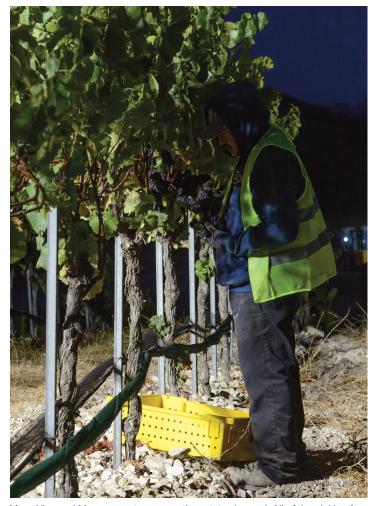
The Technical Spotlight is a regular feature highlighting wineries in North America that have recently opened or undergone major renovations and improvements. Wines & Vines seeks to report how facility design and winemaking equipment is used to achieve a particular winemaking style while also exploring new trends and techniques being used in the industry. If you think your winery would be a good candidate for the feature, contact us at edit@winesandvines.com.

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Mesa Vineyard Management oversees the estate vineyard. All of the picking for the Tolosa wines is done by hand.

ters, which are picked at night into MacroBins. Delivert said one lot of Chardonnay is destemmed and sits on the skins for a few hours as a special blending lot. The free and hard press wines are kept separate through fermentation and aging. Almost all of the Chardonnay ferments in 100% French oak barrels of which about 25% to 30% are new.

Delivert said he will stir the lees regularly and the vintage dictates how often. The wine goes through ML in barrel and generally spends about 10 months in oak. Tolosa also produces one Chardonnay that is fermented and aged in stainless steel and typically bottled after six months.

All of the Tolosa Pinot Noir is also aged in 100% French oak barrels, of which about 25% to 30% are new. Another key element of the cellar upgrade was the addition of a temperature-controlled room that can be warmed and cooled as needed.

"Last year we had a couple of thunderstorms, and it was in the middle of harvest because the picks were canceled for the safety of the crews."

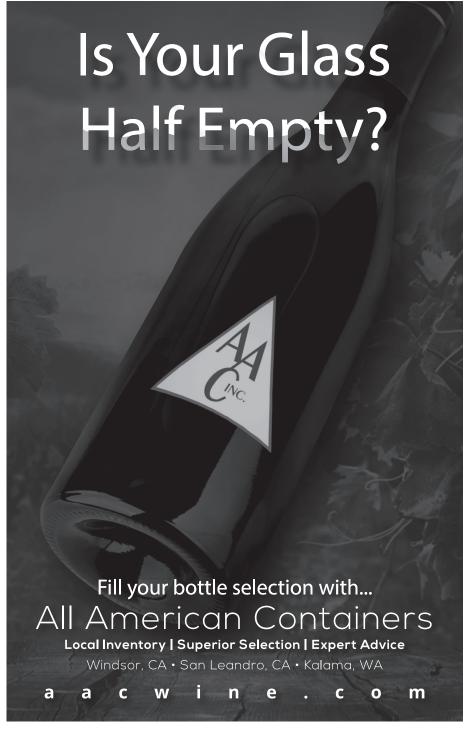
-Frederic Delivert

Hoefliger and Delivert say they are still evaluating the wines and vineyard with the goal of matching barrels to specific vineyard blocks. "It's still a work in progress," Delivert said. "To me, it takes a few years to really finetune your oak program." Some of the cooperages used at Tolosa include Tonnellerie Marsannay, François Frères, Tonnellerie de Mercurey, Ermitage Tonnellerie, Tonnelleries Billon, Damy and Tonnellerie Rousseau.

The evaluation will take time, Hoefliger said, because he and Delivert want to make sure their decisions are based on what they are tasting from the vineyard and not the weather. "You want to make sure that you don't adapt to a vintage but to a block, right?" Hoefliger said. "So you have to really measure year to year what works."

But adapting to the weather is something that both winemakers say one has to be quick to do when growing grapes in the Edna Valley. Because of the proximity to the ocean and the larger weather patterns of the Central Coast, the valley can see wild swings in temperature and conditions. "Last year we had a couple of thunderstorms, and it was in the middle of





harvest because the picks were canceled for the safety of the crews," Delivert said. "And then the next morning and for a couple of days we had fog. And that moisture sits there, and it's not cold, it's muggy."

# "You want to make sure that you don't adapt to a vintage but to a block."

Jean Hoefliger

Having a vineyard team on standby then pays for itself, because they can quickly get into the vineyard and make the necessary adjustments. Decisions on such things as canopy and fruit exposure also need to be made while keeping in mind the potential for quickly changing conditions. The vineyards are also monitored with weather stations and regular NDVI reports by the aerial imagining company TerrAvion. Tule evapotranspiration monitoring stations are being installed this year.

Delivert said that after the rain, Edna Valley went through one of its hottest heat waves



Pumpovers or punchdowns in the winery's open-top tanks are all done by hand.

during the Labor Day weekend, when the high temperature hit 105 degrees. He said he had to bring in nearly all the Tolosa grapes, just over 100 tons, in about 48 hours. "We had the heat wave plus three thunderstorms," he said

"Yeah," interjected Hoefliger, "a few curveballs."

But after a multimillion-dollar renovation, the winemaking team has the ability to swing out of the strike zone if needed.







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ee Miyamura has worked at Treasury Wine Estate's winery near Paso Robles, Calif., since 1990. In that time, the winemaker and her team have significantly expanded production while also seeking to improve operational efficiency.

The winery's fermentation tanks had originally been outfitted with air pumps dedicated for running pumpovers for red ferments. "As we kept expanding that necessitated us to look at different methods for managing fermentation," she said.

That included a look at using compressed air for tank mixing, although Miyamura said she had initially been concerned about it speeding up fermentation and being too extractive. Initial trials were followed by an investment in the air mixing technology and now Miyamura has plans to retrofit some tanks for the system. "I've come to find I have a preference for Pulsair during the fermentation process," she said.

Pulsair was one of the first companies to bring compressed air tank mixing to the wine industry and now offers a wide line of products to conduct "Pneumatage" or winemaking using the method. Air mixing has been one of the most significant advances in cap management and this Product Focus report will look at that and some other tools for more traditional cap management. Several suppliers, mostly European companies, manufacture tanks with a variety of ways to mix, wet or break up caps but that will be the focus of another report.

# Air mixing turns tanks faster

TWE Paso Robles, formally the Meridian Winery, ferments grapes from all over California for the company's premium wines priced \$25 to \$35. The winery has 138 fermentors that range in size from 24 tons to 72 tons. Each tank is turned about three times during a typical harvest. Miyamura said air mixing has proved a useful way to handle all those grapes and still account for vineyard and appellation variation.

The air mixing system is managed through a Pulsair control box but can also be monitored through the winery's tank temperature control system by Ignition, which is a software platform developed by Inductive Automation. The Ignition system works with the Pulsair controls as well as Allen Bradley process controllers on the cellar floor and is also used to monitor refrigeration, water use and even the status of cross-flow filters and centrifuges. Miyamura can monitor and control the entire system from her desktop and eventually from a tablet.

She said one of the handiest functions of air mixing is that if a fermentation in one of the big tanks, which can accommodate 72 tons, gets too hot she can quickly send a pulse of air through the tank that breaks up the cap and dissipates the heat faster than waiting for cooler juice to trickle through the cap in a traditional pumpover.

The winery's cellar supervisor, Guadalupe Gonzalez, also devised a quicker and safer way

to empty tanks after fermentation. While the winery had already begun to sluice tanks out to empty them quicker and more safely, Gonzalez tried pulsing the tanks with air prior to sluicing. The time needed to empty a tank went from 30 to 40 minutes down to 10 minutes or less. "That has worked out brilliantly," said cellar manager Karl Knupper. "It's a pretty good benefit to our labor efficiencies."

Pulsing the tanks prior to emptying them will also flush out the carbon dioxide, making the job safer for the cellar worker even though the worker no longer has to enter the tank to dig it out.

Safety and efficiency are two selling points of Parsec's updated Tank Mixing M.I. system. The Italian supplier updated its SAEn 5000 winemaking control system to incorporate the function.

Andrew Beckwith, plant manager of the custom crush and private label facility ASV San Martin in Santa Clara County, California said he had the Parsec system installed on six, 16,000-gallon tanks in a trial during the 2017 vintage to improve labor efficiency and reduce the time to empty tanks. That trial has proved to be the first major project in which everyone — cellar workers, winemakers and ownership — have been happy with the results.

The cellar staff were "ecstatic" that they weren't going to have move a pump over set up for each of those tanks and "in terms of quality we got better if not the same as the



current system."

Beckwith said the system allows cap management to be adjusted for every stage of the fermentation curve as well as for variety and winemaking style, and it can run a mixing cycle at 3 a.m. when the lights are off and the winery is empty. As a custom crush operation, it also provides a whole other set of data to provide clients. "It gives you a log of everything that has happened to that wine," he said.

He also saw a significant improvement in emptying tanks. What had taken up to 2 and half hours was reduced to about an hour and requires far fewer workers and no dig outs. The winery processed about 14,000 tons n 2017, and Beckwith said he hopes to retrofit 14 more tanks with the Parsec system.

# Using the wine's energy

Evan Schneider of the company Vintuitive has a master's degree in mechanical engineering from Stanford and a bachelor's in mechanical engineering from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Using his experience in CAD and 3D printing he said he evaluated 30 different patterns for a pumpover device before settling on one he introduced in 2012 called the Lotus. "It uses the energy of the wine flow to rotate itself," he said of the Lotus. "It creates a uniform pattern without creating a mist and bigger droplets that don't bruise the wine."

Schneider has also developed an attachment to optimize the device's throw pattern for square tanks, either stainless steel or concrete. The square or circle attachments also help modulate the flow of a winery's pumpover equipment to further ensure a consistent pattern.

John Hazak, winemaker at Beaulieu Vineyard, said most of the tanks at BV now have a dedicated Lotus and he added the uniformity of the devices helps ensure fermentation goes as desired. "If you have consistent, even coverage during pumpovers and eliminate the human error and chance that an irrigator might get stuck, there is a good chance that extraction and temperature management are happening as you want them to," he said in an email to Wines & Vines.

"With the traditional swing-arms, they are more finicky and likely to get stuck because they were installed slightly unbalanced or bumped by someone during an addition. Sometimes, it was just a matter of some grapes drying out in the pipe and preventing normal flow," Hazak said.

Fermenting in bins or small tanks means doing punchdowns. Doing many such small lots means an intern or two has to spend hours doing the strenuous work of managing each small cap. Punchdown equipment specialist RS Randall and Co. recently unveiled a new punchdown device designed for such fermentations. Owner Christopher Randall developed the device for a winery in Washington where small stainless steel "seed bins" holding 1.5 tons are commonly used for red wines. "I think it's an ideal solution that will do a thorough punchdown, while at the same time be easy to use and safe for the operator," Randall said.



# **Vintuitive**

Manufactured in the Napa Valley by York Machine Works and designed by the winemaking equipment start up Vintuitive, the Lotus is a patent-pending pumpover irrigator. The Lotus was developed with CAD software and 3D printing to expedite the prototype process. Built with 304 stainless steel and other food-grade materials, the Lotus is a fluted spinning disk that is positioned beneath a standard pumpover rig. As wine cascades onto the disk it spins and the fluted channels spray the wine over the cap in a uniform, even pattern. The Lotus is available in three diameter sizes and with the option of three or four flutes. Vintuitive claims what sets its device apart is there is no "hot spot" or heavy concentration of wine flow beneath the irrigator. The company also produces an attachment, so the Lotus can be used on square tanks and can be used with a 3-piece aerator that the company calls the Ace Venturi. vintuitivewmt.com

# **PARSEC**

Italian supplier Parsec, whose products are distributed in the United States by ATP Group, upgraded its SAEn micro-oxygenation and winemaking management system to include tank mixing. The Air Mixing M.I. system earned an honorable mention in the 2016 Vinitech-Sifel Innovation Awards, for improving the system the company first introduced in 2001. Those improvements included the overall design of the system such as placement of air injectors as well as enhanced software. The supplier describes the air movement through the tank as a wave that overturns and completely mixes the cap. Air mixing can be used in concert with other sensors of the SAEn system to run a complete fermentation protocol to meet certain quality and style parameters.

atpgroup.com

# Pulsair

Founded in 1983, Pulsair Systems produces tank mixing equipment for a variety of industries and conducted its first winery trial in 1988. The company describes its air mixing process as "Pneumatage." It can deliver compressed air or an inert gas to wet and turn a cap. The company produces equipment that ranges from small, portable units to elaborate systems that can control more than 100 tanks from a single touchscreen. The company recently launched a new Wine Cart that features a "drain and press" program in the control screen to launch a sequence of compressed air bubbles to gently liquefy and break up the cap. Most of the pomace can then be pumped out of the tank to the press, reducing the amount of time workers have to spend in a tank digging them out.

pulsair.com

# RS RANDALL AND CO.

Punchdown equipment specialist RS Randall and Co. in Brisbane, Calif., introduced a new device built for small-tank fermentations. Owner Chris Randall said he designed the device for a winery in Washington where stainless steel "seed bins" are a popular pick for red wine fermentation. The device rests on a stainless-steel frame that the operator rolls over bins. Powered by compressed air, the device glides along the frame to cover the entire surface of the cap. The device and frame can be disassembled for storage or transport.

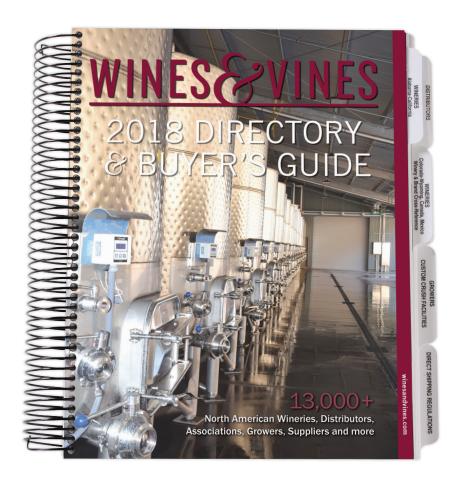
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# Preserving and Increasing Thiols

Adjusting Sauvignon Blanc aroma and flavor complexity

By Carien Coetzee

ew Zealand winegrowers use mechanical harvesting as a norm. This is probably out of necessity, however it is by far the harvesting method delivering the highest concentration of thiols. This is contradictory to what has been believed for years to be best practice when producing top quality wines.

Research studies comparing harvesting methods such as hand-picked with whole bunch pressing, hand-picked with crushing and destemming and machine harvesting showed an increase in thiol concentration as the "roughness" of the method increased. 11 This observation falls in line with the scientific explanation involving oxygen, enzymes and C6 compounds together with a sulfur donor.

An actual increase of some C6 compounds when comparing hand-picked grapes to machine-harvested grapes has been observed. With greater maceration (longer skin

contact) of the fruit and greater enzyme activity, the levels of the C6 compounds increased. The addition of maceration enzyme and sufficient time given for the reaction to occur can increase the thiols formed during the process.

Wine producers can mimic the effect that mechanical harvesting has on grape berries. Some of these tools are listed below, but the fundamental aspect would be to cause some berry damage with sufficient protection to avoid too much oxidation.

# **Presence of antioxidants**

When it comes to volatile thiols the importance of the presence of antioxidants cannot be overstated. The -SH group of the volatile thiols makes these compounds extremely susceptible to oxidation. It is therefore important to protect the wine from oxygen exposure and ensure sufficient presence of antioxidants such as

# **KEY POINTS**

This article aims to share information and insights obtained from a visit to Marlborough, New Zealand, in 2016. Industry workshops on Sauvignon Blanc production were hosted by the New Zealand Society for Viticulture & Oenology where researchers and producers shared knowledge and ideas on traditional and novel methods of producing top-quality Sauvignon Blanc wines.

Volatile thiols were the focal point of many discussions. This is part two of a two-part report and it investigates newest research and findings around these odorous compounds.

Much of the work mentioned was presented by Paul Kilmartin from the Wine Science Program at the University of Auckland in a presentation, "Thiols in Sauvignon Blanc."

sulfur dioxide, which will help preserve the aromatic compounds.12

The earlier the addition of antioxidants after harvest, the better. Studies show that increasing the amount of antioxidants also increased the amount of volatile thiols formed and maximum thiol potential seemed to be reached so long as a moderate (30 – 50 ppm) level of SO<sub>2</sub> was present prior to fermentation.<sup>2</sup> This does have some limits due to fermentation difficulties in the presence of too much SO<sub>2</sub> and inhibition of the enzyme responsible for increasing C6 compounds (lipoxygenase) during harvesting.

However this effect has not been conclusively demonstrated. Excessive SO<sub>2</sub> concentrations (300 mg/L) led to lower 3MHA concentration probably due to the acetylation pathway converting 3MH to 3MHA being interrupted.

Timing of SO<sub>2</sub> additions had an influence on 3MH and 3MHA production. A two-hour delay of the SO<sub>2</sub> additions resulted in wines containing thiol concentrations of about half compared to wines where SO<sub>2</sub> was added as early as 10-15 minutes after mechanical harvesting.2

Finding practical methods for early SO, additions can be challenging. New Zealand wine companies have used methods such as drip-feed of a concentrated SO2 solution, however, care needs to be taken over corrosion issues with equipment.

In another New Zealand study, the addition of increasing amounts (0, 60, 120 mg/L) of SO<sub>2</sub> led to increases in volatile thiol production obtaining levels of up to 12,000 ng/L which would be considered a high thiol wine.2 This wine was not Sauvignon Blanc, but rather Pinot Gris. These results show the necessity to investigate the contribution of volatile thiols to other varieties and highlights the importance of the use of antioxidants.

Other antioxidants that have been under investigation are ascorbic acid and glutathione. Ascorbic acid can be added to juice and wine as a supplement to SO2 in order to increase antioxidant capacity. Glutathione, on the other hand, is not (yet) registered as a permitted additive, however glutathione levels can possibly be increased by adding some commercially available inactive dry yeast products. 13

In a study where 30 mg/L SO2 was added to grape must together with either 100 mg/L ascorbic acid or glutathione, the levels of all three important volatile thiols increased with 4MMP increasing significantly with glutathione addition.14 A 30 mg/L SO2 addition together with 100 mg/L glutathione showed 3MH and 3MHA concentrations of at least double the value compared to treatments

where glutathione was added alone. It would thus seem that the combined protective effect could be more effective than the individual antioxidants.

After fermentation, the presence of SO<sub>2</sub> is of utmost importance as the instability of volatile thiols leads to drastic decreases if not protected.53 The thiol most susceptible to degradation and oxidation is 3MHA. During oxidation, very reactive quinones are formed which will readily bind to wine constituents including the volatile thiols rendering them odorless. Sulfur dioxide binds these quinones rapidly and thus prevents further oxidation reactions from occurring.

The methods used for antioxidant additions need to be controlled for efficiency. Concentrated SO<sub>2</sub> mixes quickly with the must in the bins as grapes are transferred into trucks or winery receiving hopper. The efficiency of powder should be investigated and it is important to check the uniformity and distribution of the antioxidant by taking samples from the juice arriving at the winery. Pockets of juice with low free SO2 are likely to have lower antioxidant potential.

# Cold soaking/freezing of grapes

In a study where Sauvignon Blanc grapes were frozen to -20° C (-4 F) using dry ice and then







When hand-harvested Sauvignon Blanc grapes were frozen they reached similar thiol levels as in machine-harvested grapes.

thawed over 24 hours the results showed an increase in 3MH and 3MHA content.14 Wines made from hand-harvested grapes that underwent this cryogenic maceration contained about 300% more 3MH and 3MHA compared to wines that did not undergo cryogenic maceration.

The level of thiols obtained were comparable with the same grapes that were harvested using the mechanical harvester. The explanation for this could be the increased leaching of precursors and enzymes into the grape must due to berry damage from ice crystal formation. Ice formation thus not only increases contact between reactants, but also concentrates the reactants in the available liquid thereby facilitating the reaction. The expense involved in using this freeze/thaw cycle may not be economical when processing large volumes of must, however, this technique could be applied in small batches to obtain larger diversity in wine styles.

# Pressing and oxidation of juice

Studies have shown that wines made from juice obtained from the press (1 bar) contained either the same or a lesser amount of thiols when compared to wines made from free run juice.17,18 This could be due to the higher potential for oxidation due to larger phenolic extraction as the pressing pressure increases.

Sufficient SO2 should be present prior to pressing to achieve a reductive atmosphere (using carbon dioxide or nitrogen gas) during the pressing process. Higher pressing fractions might contain higher concentrations of thiol precursors (including C6 compounds). However you run the risk of increasing the potential for oxidation (due to higher phenolic content).

This could be risky seeing that an increase in the conjugated precursors would not necessarily lead to an increase in free thiols in the corresponding wine.

Juice oxidation (measured by absorbance at 420 nm) can influence the volatile thiol concentration of the corresponding wines. Higher concentrations of 3MH were obtained from juice with lower 420 nm measurements.<sup>17</sup> However, a low 420 nm measurement did not guarantee high thiol concentrations as other important factors could have a greater effect on the formation of precursors and volatile thiols. The oxidation of juice is an important factor to consider, however the addition of sufficient SO<sub>2</sub> at this stage can minimize negative effects occurring due to oxygen addition delivering volatile thiol levels equivalent of juice that was not exposed to oxygen.<sup>18</sup>

It is advisable to keep juice fractions that might be in advanced stages of oxidation, separate due to lower potential for volatile thiol formation. The wine can then be bottled or blended if proven to have sufficient volatile thiols present after fermentation. Another option would be to eliminate phenolic compounds through the use of a specialized fining agent on the juice. This prevents formation of quinones at a later stage and preserves thiolcontaining compounds.21

# **Fermentation conditions**

The yeast strain is extremely important that could determine the amount of precursors converted during fermentation. However, the yeast strain will only have a limited effect. Juice composition (such as the presence of volatile thiol precursors), needs to be of a

certain standard and composition for the yeast to be able to convert and form volatile thiols. Other than precursors, the exact composition needed is unknown. The effect of the same yeast strain was investigated on different musts and the results showed that juice diversity was the primary thiol determinant,20 with yeast strain selection having a secondary effect. The strains can, however have an important effect and multiple fold increases have been seen when comparing yeast strain and volatile thiol production.

3MHA is not formed directly from a precursor, but rather due to an esterification reaction that occurs during the fermentation process. Not all strains of Saccharomyces cerevisiae have the same capacity to express these compounds. Some strains are good thiol producers in that they release 3MH and 4MMP from corresponding precursors or it can create the volatile thiols from other compounds. Other yeast strains can be good converters in that they can efficiently convert 3MH to 3MHA. A mixture of these yeasts can be inoculated to maximize both production and conversion.

S. cerevisiae is not the only yeast strain capable of releasing/producing volatile thiols from the precursors and other yeast strains, such as Pichia kluyveri, that have proven to be effective in increasing volatile thiol production.23

Higher fermentation temperatures (irrespective of yeast strain used) resulted in increased volatile thiol concentration when compared to lower temperatures. However, in some cases the extended higher temperature during fermentation led to a decrease towards the end.24 It is therefore advised to commence fermentation at 62.5° or 64.5° F (17° or 18° C) for about 30 grams of sugar fermented and then, depending on the yeast added, whether it is cold-tolerant or not, gradually lower the fermentation temperature to about  $59^{\circ}$  to  $61^{\circ}$  F ( $15^{\circ}$  to  $16^{\circ}$  C) in order to preserve the released volatiles.

# Storage temperature

It is absolutely vital to keep the wine at a low temperature.<sup>25</sup> Higher temperatures will not only accelerate the oxidation reaction, but will encourage hydrolyses of 3MHA to form 3MH (in some cases even leading to an increase of 3MH concentration). This way you will lose some of the aroma potency due to the higher perception threshold reported for 3MH, and a change in aroma quality.

3MHA is the volatile thiol most affected during storage of wine, while much smaller losses were seen for 3MH. Some studies have shown the effect of temperature to be even more important than oxygen exposure during wine storage. It would thus be advised to keep wine at a temperature as low as possible not only until bottling but for consumption.

Differences in storage temperature of only 5.5° F (3° C) such as 15° C vs 18° C or 59° F compared to 64.5° F could have a massive impact on thiol preservation. The cost of refrigeration should be considered and a workable compromise of 50° to 53.5° F (10-12° C) has been identified.<sup>2</sup> Temperature logging during exports should be considered to ensure preservation of all aroma compounds and especially the thiols. It might be worth the cost and effort to ensure the transport temperature and condition is of a certain standard to guarantee better preservation.

# Interaction with other wine components

The Top 10 Sauvignon Blanc competition, presented by the Sauvignon Blanc Interest Group of South Africa and sponsored by First National Bank, is the country's foremost platform for Sauvignon Blanc producers to showcase and benchmark their wines. The ten selected 2015 wines were subjected to various chemical analyses including volatile thiol and methoxypyrazine, while the sensory profile of each wine was determined using projective mapping.

Results from the top 10 2015 winners showed great diversity in wine styles: from fresh and fruity to green and even wooded wines and volatile thiol concentration in these

wines ranged from less than 10 ng/L to 547 ng/L for 3MHA; while 3MH concentrations ranged from 328 ng/L to 1,638 ng/L. These values are much lower than the maximum values determined by Vinlab for 2015 which ranged from less than 10 ng/L to 2,440 ng/L for 3MHA and 29 ng/L to 4,140 ng/L for 3MH.

The diversity of wine styles chosen as competition winners, shows great complexity in quality South African Sauvignon Blanc wines. The contribution of other aroma compounds in these wines should not be underestimated as compounds such as esters and monoterpenes can significantly influence the aromatic composition of the wine delivering great complexity and desirable profiles. The sensory results of the selected wines did not always correspond to the chemical profile highlighting the importance of other aroma compounds impacting the wines and interactions occurring between volatile compounds.

Analysis of the 2016 Top 10 Sauvignon Blanc wines showed very interesting results for 4MMP. The values ranged from 0 to 122 ng/L, which are huge amounts of this thiol especially considering, in general, that this thiol is mostly absent in wines from other countries. Even to such an extent that some researchers have stopped analyzing for it. From the selection of top 10 wines, the wines containing copious amounts of 4MMP had a distinct black current character and it added a different dimension to the wines' aromatic characteristics. It would seem as if the presence of 4MMP in South African wines could give a needed edge to distinguish the wines in the international market.

The above mentioned techniques can be used to tailor-make a wine to fit the aroma profile desired, however, it is not an easy task. Not only is there no guarantee for success, there is the added hurdle of wine complexity where sensory interactions can play a bigger role than anticipated.

Sauvignon Blanc needs to be considered holistically by the way the compounds work together to create wine aroma. The presence of other molecules in the wine, whether it be aromatic or non-aromatic, can influence the perception of volatile thiols. This is a complex relationship within the wine medium and there is no real way to control these type of interactions as the effects of many have not been investigated.

Some relationships have been studied. The interaction of 3MH with oxidation-related compounds (especially methional, reminiscent of cooked potato) showed a strong suppressive effect with methional reducing the intensity of the fruity aroma significantly.1 Conversely, acetaldehyde actually enhanced





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the perception of fruitiness brought by 3MH with moderate concentrations.26 As soon as elevated concentrations of acetaldehyde were present the interaction changed from enhancing to suppressing.

A mutual suppressive effect was seen between IBMP and 3MH at specific concentrations.3 The contribution of the volatile thiols to the green aroma in wine has been observed in various studies. In a pressing study, the decrease in volatile thiol concentration in press fractions of higher inflation led to a decrease in the "fresh green capsicum" aroma even though there was no change in the IBMP concentration.<sup>27</sup>

# Tailor your thiols to your desire

Volatile thiols plays an integral role in the aroma of Sauvignon Blanc wines and potentially other cultivars. Various techniques, some explained in this article, are available for the winemaker to optimize the formation of these odorous compounds, however a greater understanding of the formation of the precursors and the reactivity of the compounds is needed to be able to fully take advantage of these tools. This article might be able to equip you with the necessary knowledge to tailor the thiols to your desire.

Even though volatile thiols can potentially be an overpowering attribute in a wine, in most cases it participates in complex aromatic interactions. These interactions lead to overall impressions of the wine aroma and perhaps can bring complexity to an otherwise onedimensional wine. Thus, the presence of certain aroma compounds does not guarantee the

Even though volatile thiols can potentially be an overpowering attribute in a wine, in most cases it participates in complex aromatic interactions ... and perhaps can bring complexity.

clear perception of the accompanied attributes. Assuming a certain aromatic profile based on a few chemical compounds would thus lead to incorrect conclusions.

Another mistake would be to assume that all Sauvignon Blanc grapes behave the same. For example, harvesting studies from different sites showed some agreement in results, however occasionally the treatment did not lead to enhanced thiols.19 This should be kept in

consideration to conduct small scale studies before opting for larger volumes to save time and money.

A great wine starts in the vineyard. If the potential is not there to start with, the chances of achieving significant volatile thiol levels are slim. Therefore, it is wise to keep track of high thiol producing blocks between vintages and primarily use those grapes for production of high thiol wines.

Some of this information is hard to comprehend as it will go against what has been considered for years to be good winemaking practice (especially for Sauvignon Blanc). South African Sauvignon Blanc is considered to be the mid-way point between New Zealand and the Loire (France) and innovative winemakers should push the envelope in order to stand out.

Dr. Carien Coetzee completed her Ph.D. at the University of Stellenbosch in South Africa. Her studies evolved around the effect of oxidation on Sauvignon Blanc wines with a central theme of aromatic compounds and their stability. She is currently employed at Vinlab, an accredited laboratory supporting the South African wine industry.

> The references for this article are available online at winesandvines.com/features.



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he Eastern U.S. wine industry has evolved dramatically in the last 30 years and that evolution was on full display at a sold-out session focused on high-end red Bordeaux-style wines during the Eastern Winery Exposition March 6-8 in Lancaster, Pa. The conference drew more than 1,100 people for sessions on viticulture, enology, sales and marketing as well as a wine industry trade show.

Two Virginia winemakers and one from New York's Long Island brought more than 100 years of winemaking experience to share. The European influence on these wines was evident: Luca Paschina, native of Alba, Italy, and winemaker for Barboursville Vineyards in Barboursville, Va., started his career in the early 1980s in Italy. Just about the same time, Roman Roth, the winemaker for New York's Wölffer Estate Vineyard in Sagaponack, N.Y., began his winemaking efforts in Baden, Germany. Jim Law, owner and head winemaker of Linden Vineyards, Linden, Va. planted his first vineyards in 1985, and has travelled extensively in Europe, learning from numerous growers and winemakers on each trip.

All three produce a high-end Bordeauxstyle blend, which is the signature wine of their wineries.

Attendees sampled Paschina's 2012 Octagon, a blend featuring 50% Merlot, 49% Petit Verdot and 1% Cabernet Franc. Roth's 2013 Christian's Cuvée is labeled as a Merlot, with 92.5% Merlot, 6% Cabernet Franc and 1.5% Petit Verdot. Law's 2012 Hardscrabble contained 56% Cabernet Sauvignon, 34% Merlot, 9% Cabernet Franc and 1% Petit Verdot. All were powerful yet balanced wines from vinevards of different altitudes and soil compositions, but very similar in the attention to details their winemakers employ.

Law's Hardscrabble Vineyard, which provides the Cabernet Sauvignon and Merlot grapes for his blend, is located 1,200 to 1,400 feet above sea level. Law identifies his efforts as "declassification," where he disregards the specific identities of what grapes he selects. "All of our decisions are made from the palate," he said.

#### Blending by taste, not a formula

Law presses his red grapes into three fractions, and during fermentation he tastes every two days. The wine is further "declassified" into as many as 300 variable-lid drums before going into oak. Some 60 barrels from different producers and ages are used, and blending trials begin by January. The trials are done daily, and can last more than a month, when necessary. The wine will rest for 20 to 22 months before the final blending and bottling. Law produced 446 cases of the 2012 Hardscrabble, which is priced at \$55.

To Law, Cabernet Sauvignon is the most important varietal (the Linden was the only wine in this group containing it), but what is in the final blend is not dictated by variety, but taste. "We're not fixated on the blend," he said.

Luca Paschina came to Barboursville in 1990. Barboursville Vineyards has approximately 185 acres of vines at an elevation between 550 and 800 feet, and Paschina has increased the acreage of Merlot and Cabernet Franc. The vineyards are planted on slopes with grades that range from 5% to 25% and which are particularly helpful during a rainy vintage.

Vineyard blocks are machine-picked according to taste, and often separated during fermentation according to block character. "I separate as many lots as possible and try to be open minded," Paschina said.

#### **KEY POINTS**

Two Virginia winemakers and one from Long Island share how they make blends from Bordeaux varietials.

They presented at the Eastern Winery Exposition in Lancaster, Pa.

Barboursville, Linden and Wölffer focus on different varietal mixes and emphasize blending by taste.

The wine will spend about a year in Italian oak, and then 6-10 months in stainless steel. Paschina said he firmly believes in consistency, and chooses his grapes, cooperage and blends with that in mind.

Blending is done by taste only, with the winemaker and several associates tasting blind until they find a consensus. The quantity of any one grape in the blend is not as important to Paschina as consistency in the character of the final blend. "Never blend according to plan," he said.

The 2012 Octagon contains 49% Petit Verdot, a grape which had never previously made up more than 10%. The 2012 vintage produced 1,215 cases and is currently available from the winery as a library selection for \$85.

#### Merlot is 'king' in Long Island

Wölffer has 54 acres planted on Long Island's South Fork and owns and purchases grapes from another 150 acres on the North Fork. The sandy soil vineyards average 55 feet elevation and are about 2.5 miles from the Atlantic Ocean.

Roth said he believes Merlot is "king" on Long Island, and those vines were planted in 1990. He too always looks for consistency, and the hand-picked fruit is me-

ticulously sorted for quality. "If the grapes don't feel right, you can't make great wine," he said.

After sorting and destemming, the must is collected into a 6,000liter upright, wooden tank, where it undergoes three pump-overs every 24 hours. When fermentation is complete, the grapes are pressed with a modest 1.1 bars of pressure and transferred to barrels "dirty," where the wine will remain on its lees for about 9 months before blending.

Roth prefers to not taste the wine during its stay in barrels and opens the barrels for topping only. He typically assembles the blend in early August. "I always make my blend for power," he said. "When you make a high-end wine, power is the key."

After blending, the wine is aged for 20 months, half in new French oak, half in one- to twoyear-old French oak. A final component to making this wine, according to Roth, is pride, but not arrogance. The winery produced 300 cases of its 2013 Christian's Cuyée wine that had a price of \$100 and is completely sold out. "You have to totally believe you can do it," Roth said.

Ray Pompilio is a wine writer based in Ithaca, N.Y., and a regular contributor to the Wine East section of Wines & Vines.



Vintage conditions and sensory analysis dictate the composition of each of the blends.



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ith the arrival of spring, tasting room managers know that it's just a matter of weeks until the busy season starts. They can get ready to shine with these 10 tips from the educators at WISE Academy (Wine Industry Sales Education), based in Napa, Calif.

#### 1. Great greeting

You only have one chance to make a great first impression, so you need to make sure that your greeting is exceptional. Studies show that if guests aren't greeted or acknowledged within the first 15 seconds, they typically rate their experience lower. Their first impression is an important one, and recovering from a bad start is almost impossible. Start off every experience on a positive note. If your tasting room is by appointment, you already know who is coming, so you can list the names on a welcome board they will see as they enter.

#### 2. Referral source

The best ice breakers build rapport by finding out what brought your guests to your winery and is a natural part of the initial greeting. Understanding where your guests heard of you – and what specifically brought them in today – helps allocate marketing dollars to those who send qualified guests. Did a nearby winery or

restaurant recommend your tasting room? Then you can thank your referrers and reciprocate by sending guests to them too. Remember to note the source of each guest so that you have that key information in your database. Perhaps even more important, these relevant open-ended questions set you up to easily build rapport and then tailor the rest of the experience based on your guests' interests.

#### 3. On stage vs. backstage

On stage refers to the performance concept, where "on stage" is the guest experience – everything the guest sees, hears, touches, smells – and "backstage" is all the things behind the scenes that need to take place in order make sure there is a great on-stage performance. Backstage issues are usually physical (e.g., smudged glasses, bathroom that needs servicing) but they can also be verbal (inappropriate attitude or comments in front of the guests). The tasting experience is an on-stage performance and you must rehearse to be ready. Your guests are here for the pixie dust. Don't spoil it for them by allowing them to see your backstage nuts and bolts.

#### 4. Service heart

Do the hosts really want to be of service? Is service in their DNA? You can always tell if the

person at the bar loves to be with guests. Did you go out of your way to make the visit extra special with some element of surprise and delight relevant to their interests? Did you offer water, a pen, a dump bucket? Let's make it your personal mission to ensure that each guest leaves with the feeling of wow!

### 5. Build rapport by asking open-ended questions

Use relevant open-ended questions to positively profile and understand each guest and then adjust the experience accordingly. Are they new to wine? How do they enjoy wine? Are they celebrating a special occasion or here on vacation? These are questions that tell us how to best serve each guest. To move customer satisfaction higher (as well as get more natural sales), more dialogue (less presentation mode) is needed. This can only be done by asking open-ended questions.

#### 6. Use analogies & storytelling

These skills help to educate and entertain guests all at once. Make wine accessible to those who are learning by explaining concepts in terms of something they already understand. For example, your winery plants roses to act like the canary in the coal mine to warn of pests in the vines. Analogies make visitors

feel comfortable (instead of intimidated) as they learn new things and concepts. Analogies are especially effective for visitors who are new to wine. Storytelling helps to share interesting, relevant things about the wine and winery. The best tasting room performers the best sales people - are all great story tellers because they weave a good tale. Including stories and analogies engages customers, gains trust and earns sales.

#### 7. Sell the brand first, the wine second

Let's face it, you all have great juice, so the story of what makes you unique will be the differentiator. Your brand needs to be compelling and unique and it will come alive with great stories. You need to have a bunch of stories that illustrate what your brand is about, so that you don't risk sounding like you are reading from a canned script by repeating the same story over and over again. Selling the brand and the experience first with compelling stories will help naturally sell the wine and make it more memorable to guests.

#### 8. Leverage silent selling tools

Non-verbal sales tools facilitate more sales and support your brand standards. Every single

guest should receive a list of wines being tasted with descriptors, pricing and room for notes plus a full price list, order form, club brochure and a pen. Wine club brochures and email sign up cards should be staged on the tasting bar and at other locations in the tasting room. This will help remind you to talk about these important topics.

You need to have a bunch of stories that illustrate what your brand is about, so that you don't risk sounding like you are reading from a canned script.

#### 9. Follow professional sales steps

Use features and benefits to sell the wine. the wine club and the email list. A feature is what something is. It's a factual statement about a product or service and alone won't usually close the sale. A benefit appeals to the customer's emotions by conveying what's in it for the customer, which makes the sale. Don't save the conversation about these topics until the very end of the experience. Warm them up by planting sales seeds and noticing buying signals throughout the experience. As you pour a wine, you can tell your guests what to pair it with. Food helps us sell when you can offer a wine that pairs beautifully with their favorite dishes. Mention that it's a club exclusive or club favorite to entice them to sign up. Talk about the great deals sent by email so that they want to sign up for the list.

#### 10. The friendly farewell

You want your guests to leave with the intention to return and bring their friends, so invite them to come back soon. Manners matter! If your guest has purchased, make sure you thank them, and perhaps carry their purchase out to their car. "No problem" is not an acceptable substitute for "you're welcome." Every guest should be given a friendly farewell with a suggestion to come back and visit soon.

Summer will be here before you know it. Are you ready? 😵

WISE Academy (Wine Industry Sales Education) offers a comprehensive curriculum designed specifically for wine industry professionals, and is celebrating its 10th year in 2018. Learn more at wineindustrysaleseducation.com.





Urban Winery-Brewery in Downtown Napa

he city of Napa, Calif., is now a tasting room hub but St. Clair Brown is a rarity. Its location on Valleio Street has a facility for wine and beer production and a tasting room across a narrow street just next to the tracks of the Napa Wine Train.

President Laina Brown has 19 years of experience in the industry and met co-owner Elaine St. Clair when the two were working at Domaine Carneros winery. The two went on to manage the direct-to-consumer program at Black Stallion prior to its sale to Delicato Family Vineyards in 2010.



St. Clair Brown offers tastings inside a renovated greenhouse and at outside tables in the winery's garden.

Following that deal, Brown and St. Clair decided to strike out independently and founded the winery-brewery the same year. It opened to the public in 2013. St. Clair is both winemaker and master brewer, producing 1,000 cases of mostly Napa Valley wines that

range in price from \$25 to \$95 as well as a range of beers.

Adopting a direct-to-consumer business plan, which took a year to create, they chose the urban location because city regulations are less limiting than the notoriously strict Napa County rules, which no longer permit drop-in tasting rooms. They purchased an existing building for production and leased a vacant property to build the tasting room and adjacent garden.

#### 150 quests on Saturdays

Typically, 1,500 to 2,000 visitors stop in every month, peaking from July through October, as in most California wine destinations. Saturdays are busiest, hosting as many as 150 guests. One advantage to the city location is that St. Clair Brown can serve until 8 p.m. Plans for the brewery were delayed until 5 months ago, due to different rules, but eventually the plan won approval thanks to the tasting room's food program, Brown said.

Prepared on site, the food program consists of not-so-tiny "small bites", available a la carte at prices from \$5 to \$18.

St. Clair Brown does not buy advertising, but networks personally throughout the valley. Social media and word-of-mouth are the biggest sources of visitors. Nearby hotels also refer guests, many of whom are within walking distance from the tasting room. The winery hosts live music and art exhibits.

Most days the tasting room is staffed with two or three servers. When needed, most new hires are referred by existing staff. "When we need somebody, they come our way," said Brown, who personally handles training for the small core staff to minimize costs and keep the message and culture consistent.

She and St. Clair contemplate adding another taproom in the middle of the brewery and will also put wines on tap as well for environmental reasons. Currently beer accounts for about one-third of tasting sales.

Servers receive bonuses for club sign-ups, and the clubs (including the beer club) now have a total of about 400 members. Servers do not wear uniforms, in order to express themselves more while maintaining a professional look.

#### Supplies and equipment

The POS is Square, widely used by small businesses and designed to support the seasonal food program. It's not integrated with the membership tracking system; Brown prefers to have two solid systems that provide the accurate data she requires.

When the tasting room launched, it started with "high grade crystal" for service, but soon reverted to standard wine and beer glasses. Brown said she prefers something that is both elegant and sturdy, and the tasting room's predominantly outdoor serving areas now have just a quarter of the breakage of the fragile and costly crystal.

They're not fancy, but the glasses are polished with microfiber towels for a beautiful finish. A high-temperature Jackson dishwasher cleans flatware and serving plates.

-Jane Firstenfeld

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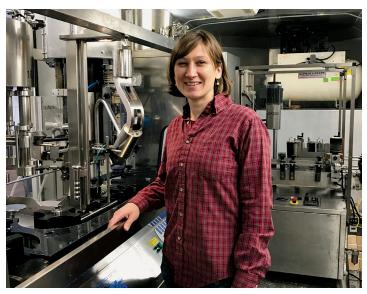
### A Tale of Two Expanding **Midwest Wineries**

asota, Minn.—Todd Roessler started his mobile bottling line business, Precision Wine Bottling, early in 2011 and then he and his family opened Elmaro Vineyard in Trempealeau, Wis., that November.

Roessler said he created Precision Wine Bottling for a specific reason: to meet the bottling needs of the family's new winery and he knew other small wineries also needed bottling services. His business eventually grew to 15 clients, but Roessler decided he had to focus on managing Elmaro's production, which had grown from 2,000 cases to 10,000. "We had a hard time getting our winery onto the bottling line schedule and we decided we should focus on our core business — the winery," he said.

This February, Roessler sold Precision Wine Bottling and the Costral 2000 NG bottling line and custom trailer to one of his clients, Chankaska Creek Ranch & Winery, in Kasota, Minn. Located in the Southern Minnesota River Valley, the winery has 13 acres of vineyards and currently produces 12,000 cases of wine, according to Wines Vines Analytics.

Elmaro winery was designed as a "drive through" winery, so that the bottling trailer could be driven into the building, parked inside for use, and then driven



Josie Boyle is the assistant winemaker at Chankaska Creek Ranch & Winery in Minnesota and will now manage the company's newly acquired mobile bottling line.

out. With the mobile bottling line gone, the winery is being redesigned and expanded to include additional tanks and a temperature-controlled barrel room. Roessler also purchased a new Costral 2000 bottling line to be used exclusively by Elmaro.

Chankaska's Precision Wine

Bottling service will be managed by the winery's assistant winemaker, Josie Boyle. The acquisition of the mobile bottling line will take care of the winery's bottling needs, and Precision's other clients in Minnesota, Wisconsin and Iowa will continue to be met.

—Linda Jones McKee

### From Viticulture Professor to Winery Owner

atervliet, Mich.—Dr. Tom Zabadal officially retired from his position as professor of viticulture at Michigan State University, MSU, on Dec. 31, 2017, and the next day became full-time owner, vineyard manager and winemaker at Moonrise Winery in Watervliet, Mich.

Michael White, extension and outreach viticulture specialist at Iowa State University, told Wines & Vines that he always considered Zabadal and Dr. Stan Howell (professor emeritus of viticulture and

enology at MSU) to be "the top two viticulturists in the northern half of the United States."

Zabadal and his wife Karen planted Chardonnay, Grüner Veltliner, Cabernet Franc, Merlot and Cabernet Sauvignon and until 2016 the grapes from the 2.5-acre vineyard had been sold. The new winery and vineyard are in an area near Lake Michigan and has sandy, well-drained soils. "All the Cabernet Sauvignon vines are on a steep, south-facing, hot slope, and the leaves stay on the vines 'til November," he said. He lets the grapes hang until Nov. and regularly gets 23° Brix and total acidity of 0.7.

In 2009, the Zabadals put up a 100-foot long pole barn with a pressing area at one end and a room for a potential tasting area at the other.



The new tasting room of Moonrise Winery, which was opened by former Michigan State University professor Dr. Tom Zabadal.

The winery was licensed for production in February 2017 and the tasting room license arrived on Nov. 22, the day before Thanksgiving. During harvest, Zabadal made 12 wines: nine will be estate bottled and three are from grapes or wine he "bought and modified," for a total of somewhat more than 1,000 cases of wine.

The official opening was March 23, and when asked about plans for the future, Zabadal told Wines & Vines that they "have everything to learn about the marketing side of things."

Zabadal received his Ph.D. from Cornell University in 1974 and then spent 15 years working in extension at Cornell. In 1989 he joined the department of horticulture at MSU and worked at the Southwest Michigan Research and Extension Center (SWMREC) in Benton Harbor.

Zabadal's most lasting legacy may be his series of instructional videos on vineyard establishment, pruning and tying. He said he plans to leave the videos online (available at https://www.youtube.com/user/Viticultureinfo). "All the videos are copyrighted," he stated. "There are no ads, I don't make anything from them. I planned to make 100; there are now 39. The most popular is the one on basic skills in pruning.

—Linda Jones McKee

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# **Midwest Vintners Evaluate New Varieties**

Cold Climate Grape Conference features tastings and sessions on Itasca, Crimson Pearl

By Bill Ward

n a nascent industry, the focus is constantly on what's new and improved. So not surprisingly, seminars on new grapes including Itasca and Crimson Pearl and the latest research on yeast and soil were among the best attended and most buzzed-about presentations at the recent Cold Climate Grape Conference.

Itasca, a white grape released in 2016 by the University of Minnesota (UM), was the topic at two sessions: a tasting of eight iterations and a presentation on growing techniques. The annual conference, held March 15-17 in Bloomington, Minn., also included grape breeder Tom Plocher overseeing a tasting and discussion on Crimson Pearl; Scott Labs' Katie Cook delving deeply into yeast nutrition; Iowa State University's (ISU) Mike White revealing the dirt on soil (including his "Tighty Whitey Test"), and a rousing keynote address by sommelier Doug Frost.

#### World nexus for Itasca

Anticipation for the Itasca discussions was high because commercial vines have been in the ground for only a year or two, although the wines at the tasting came from vines planted during UM's pre-release research process. "The majority of the known amount of Itasca in the world is in this room," said a smiling Drew Horton, UM enology specialist.

Eight wines were poured, with two versions each (malolactic fermentation and non-ML) of four different yeast treatments: DV-10 control yeast, Lalvin's K1, AWR1 Alchemy and Laffort VL1. Horton said the VL1 and Alchemy "went

right through ML," while the other two had problems completing that fermentation. He also noted that the VL1 yeast raised the pH the most, from 3.08 when the grapes were picked to 3.34.

Several of the wines earned multiple votes from attendees as their favorites, and the consensus among winemakers afterward was that they preferred the ML renditions. John and Jenny Thull, who manage the 10 acres of research vineyards for the grape breeding program at UM, discussed growing strategies for Itasca. The couple has worked with a "mother vine" planted in 2004, but their attention for the conference session was on the kind of younger vines found in commercial vineyards.

"It's gonna grow fast like a teenager in those first couple of years," John Thull said. "It's not as vigorous as Edelweiss but more than Frontenac Gris, so we want to put more fruit on it and slow its growth. Some vines begged for spur pruning. Saving two shoots is a good idea the first year. Growth can later be focused into one shoot if progress is too slow."

Early training is essential, Jenny Thull noted. She is an advocate of vertical shoot positioning (VSP) and said Itasca's upward shoot growth could pair well with VSP. But the Thulls reported that high cordon training meant "less work and more productive vines." According to John Thull, "Young, high-wire trained vines are easier to manage, and the canes generally give larger clusters. The shoot growth is a little chaotic, though. "He added that "secondary buds tend to push, so they can be removed," with Jenny quickly adding "very carefully."

#### **What Crimson Pearl likes**

Crimson Pearl also likes a high cordon, Plocher said, "because it droops." He noted, "It starts hardening off wood pretty early, with hardening done by harvest." Plocher said the red grape shows moderate vigor and good disease resistance in the Midwest with a normal spray program (twice pre-bloom, twice post-bloom). The newest grape from the Hugo, Minn.,-based breeder has the same parents as his Petite Pearl but ripens five to seven days earlier. Typical harvest in the Twin Cities, he said, comes in at 22° to 23° Brix, 3.4 pH to 3.8 pH and 0.7% to 0.8% RS.

He recommended a 48-hour cold soak for Crimson Pearl followed by 15 to 16 days fermentation on the skins. He described the wines as "fruity, little lighter style, with true crimson red color and moderate, soft tannins." The variety is more affected by yeast strain than its sibling, but "all styles have good balance between acid, tannin and alcohol," Plocher said.

#### **KEY POINTS**

Commercial Itasca vines have been in the ground for barely two years so wines from research plots were presented.

Itasca may grow best on a VSP trellis but Crimson Pearl is droopy and well-suited for high cordon training.

Speakers also covered yeast needs in cold climates, the importance of soil health and how to better market Midwest wines.

#### Feeding the catalyst

As cold-climate grape growing comes of age, so, too, should the approach to the yeast that goes into the juice, said Cook, a veteran winemaker and sales representative for Sonomabased Scott Laboratories. But the choice of yeast type is not always the most important step. "In a lot of cases it doesn't matter what yeast you use if you don't feed it properly," Cook said, adding that that is particularly true in colder climes. "In California they don't even talk about nitrogen levels this high."

She recommended vintners measure yeast assimilable nitrogen (YAN) early and often, even before picking, "because a lot of YANs are in the skins." YAN is one of several factors in calculating how much yeast to add - along with sugar, temperature, oxygen and pH - and yeast nutrient requirements include nitrogen, carbon (sugar), minerals, vitamins, oxygen and limpids. Nitrogen is particularly important because it has a significant influence on fermentation rate and cell population, and because yeasts consume organic nitrogen more quickly than ammonia nitrogen.

#### What's beneath our feet

As important as yeast might be, nothing in the wine world matters without suitable soil. ISU's viticulture specialist Mike White pointed out, "in the last 10 years, everything is going toward soil health because that solves a huge amount of problems." In his work with the university's extension program, White said he has assessed many acres of land that farmers might want to convert from two of Iowa's primary crops, corn and soy, to vineyards.

At these sites, he studies only the top 12 inches, "and all my assessments are chemical and physical, not biological. If you have the chemical and physical where you want it, you can work on the biological." White cited worm castings as "fantastic fertilizer" and said he has become more open-minded about Biodynamics, which he "used to think was weird as hell, and it still is, but about 60% of it makes sense."

Speaking of weird, White talked up experiments that ISU has been running: burying men's briefs and then digging them up weeks later. Since soil microorganisms need carbon to survive and the skivvies are high in carbon, the better soils spawned "Tighty Whiteys" that were in tatters, as White's Power Point slides showed in what might have been a TMI moment for some onlookers (see the winesandvines.com article: "Underwear Goes Underground."). The point, though, is to get microbes working in the soil. After all, White said, "there are more microorganisms in a teaspoon of healthy soil than there are people on earth."

#### Forging an identity

In his keynote address, Frost, one of four people worldwide with both Master Sommelier and Master of Wine certification, posited the question, "Is there a Midwest wine identity?" His answer: not yet. "When I say 'Cabernet,' people know what it is," Frost said. "But when I say 'Le Crescent,' people, even those in this room, can't say exactly what it is."

He praised the establishment of the Upper Mississippi Valley AVA and efforts to create more AVAs in cold-climate regions, citing an earlier revelation by Paul Tabor, of Tabor Home Winery in Baldwin, Iowa, that bottles with the AVA on the label sold more briskly and for \$1 more than others. "Tell me who you are and where you come from. That helps," Frost said. "You need to think not just about who I'm selling it to but who I'm making it for." Increasingly, he said, that would be a Millennial generation that eats out more often than any other age group. Getting local wines into these restaurants is essential. "Farm-to-table restaurants should work as farm-to-glass," Frost said. "That has not been happening in the Midwest."

Bill Ward retired as the wine columnist for the Minneapolis Star Tribune in 2014 and now devotes his time to freelance wine and food enterprises. He lives in Hopkins, Minn., and has a wine website: decant-this.com.





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# **Cold Hardiness** of Grapevines

How growers can encourage it given the limits of nature and nurture

By Paolo Sabbatini, G. Stanley Howell and Josh VanderWeide



Canes collected during the winter; on the left, a golden-brown periderm suggests good maturation and an elevated degree of cold hardiness; on the right, a light-colored periderm is probably the result of canopy shading, poor storage reserve and a reduced cold hardiness of the tissues.

n his book on viticulture, Pierre Galet noted that the grape botanical family (Vitaceae) exists in the fossil record in the Early Cretaceous Epoch (66-145 million years ago), with examples of the genus Vitis found in the Early Eocene era 34-56 million years ago.<sup>2</sup> Geologists tell us that this was a time of the super-continent Pangaea, whereby plate tectonics subsequently drifted into a broader array of climatic regions, which placed further selection pressures on the offspring of those species.

#### **Nature**

Vitis survived in nature because natural selection allowed their genotypes to adapt and succeed in their environment. The genotypes best "fitting" that environment of growth produced more viable seeds and favored the resulting offspring. Grapes, as food, attracted animals to consume the berries and deposit seeds in other locations where natural selection continued, and processes of adaptation occurred and resulted in the array of Vitis species.

These species range in diversity from acidic

soils (V. rupestris, V. riparia) to alkali flats (V. Berlandieri) and sub-tropical climates (V. vinifera) to the -40° C line (V. riparia; V. amurensis) common to many hardy woody perennials.3 Clearly, grapevines existed alongside dinosaurs and millions of years before our genus of hominids migrated out of Africa and began to play

a part in the gathering and culture of the fruit and processing of grapes into wine.

The evolution of Vitis contributes considerably to our understanding of the series of adaptive grapevine physiological processes we collectively call cold hardiness.4 What is grapevine cold hardiness? Cold hardiness describes the ability of a grapevine to perform the following processes relative to its specific location:

- a) mature and initiate bud, cane, and perennial vine tissue prior to the earliest autumn freeze episodes (acclimation);
- b) achieve adequate levels of freeze damage resistance during the coldest winter freeze episodes;
- display resistance in response to dormant season warm temperature fluctuations that cause reduction in freezing resistance (mid-winter maintenance); and finally,
- slowly decline from maximal midwinter hardiness as local conditions become more favorable for bud burst and shoot growth after the final spring frost (de-acclimation).

Thus, cold hardiness is a localized response of the vine to its natural environment. Despite a cold-hardy vine's ability to withstand low temperatures, severe mid-winter freeze events can injure tissue. In addition, a freeze event occurring outside of the normal winter season, either during the hardiness transitional periods of

#### **KEY POINTS**

Grapevines have evolved into a number of species, some of which are more tolerant of cold weather than others.

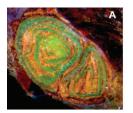
The ability of a grapevine to acclimate to the arrival of cold weather, resist freeze damage and fluctuations of temperature while dormant, and then de-acclimate slowly for bud burst and shoot growth comprise what is known as "cold hardiness."

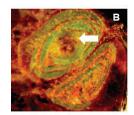
The most important considerations for growers are the characteristics of a potential site, followed by the selection of varieties that are appropriately cold resistant, can ripen the fruit within the available timeframe, and are on rootstocks that can achieve the desired vine vigor. Vine spacing, training, water and nutrition are other parameters that must be considered.

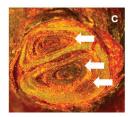
Once the site is selected and the vines planted, management goals should focus on the penetration of sunlight to the leaves. Training, pruning, leaf removal and shoot positioning should create an adequate exposed leaf area to mature the season's grapes as well as the canes for the next year's fruit. The grower should manage the vines to allow for maximum expression of the cultivar's genes for cold hardiness.

autumn acclimation or spring de-acclimation, may also lead to damage. Regardless of when they occur, freeze events make the assessment of vines for cold damage an inevitable and common practice in cool-cold climate viticulture.

Grapevine cold hardiness is comprised of anatomical, cellular and biochemical characteristics that are controlled by the grapevine genome. These intricate factors associated with cold hardiness can lead to elastic and plastic responses to cold stress. The responses vary







Cold injury to grape buds. A) Healthy compound bud; B) Discolored tissues indicating injury to primary bud; C) Compound bud with cold injury to primary, secondary and tertiary buds.

relative to the vine's annual cycle, the frequency of freeze episodes during the dormant season, and with the degree to which adaptive genetic processes can be fully expressed.

It is not surprising that attempts to define cold hardiness, whether within the vine, as a response to variation and timing of weather conditions, or as a relation between the two are very complex. A large variation in cold hardiness is seen between different cultivars, as well as within a single vine.6 On the same date, differences as large as 15° C have been measured from the same vine. Thus, methods of evaluating hardiness of vine tissues must be precise. This is yet another reason why there can be wide differences in the hardiness level attributed to any specific cultivar (see the table on page 86).

The cold hardiness of dormant buds is criti-

cal to the development of more viable seeds. Each dormant bud belonging to any species of grapevine has three potential shoots. The primary bud is the largest and most anatomically advanced of the three. However, it is also the least hardy and most susceptible to winter conditions. A healthy primary bud has the greatest capacity to produce berries with seeds (see the photos A to C below). Its loss, whether by winter cold, spring frost or insect predation, shifts production possibilities to the secondary

> shoot, which bursts later in most seasons and has a reduced capacity for fruit and seed formation. Should the secondary be lost, the tertiary

shoot, while typically fruitless, can still produce a canopy and allow the perennial vine to survive another year.

#### Carbon assimilation and distribution and vine cold hardiness: sourcesink interaction

In nature, the key process for perennial plant survival is carbon fixation via photosynthesis, and the distribution of carbon-based molecules to important locations within the vine. This process is called "carbon partitioning," and the specific locations, termed "sources" and "sinks," control carbon partitioning. M. Keller provides an excellent explanation of the kinetics of assimilate partitioning: they are dynamic, sensitive and hierarchical.7

The influencing factors are:

- a) Proximity: it is advantageous to be close to the source (leaf);
- b) Connection: it is advantageous to be directly connected to the source;
- Interference: a loss of vegetative sink (through shoot tipping and hedging) can positively influence "cross transfers" advantageous to other sinks;
- d) Communication: vines;
- e) Competition: vines; and
- f) Development: vines.

As Keller states succinctly: "For an organ or tissue to be a strong sink, it pays to be large, close to the source and to have good connections." Mature leaves and storage tissues such as roots and trunks are sources, which allocate carbon to developing tissues, termed sinks. These include young leaves, shoot and root tips, and fruit-bearing clusters, which utilize this incoming carbon for growth and seed development.

These sinks are found in various locations throughout the vine, and the strength of a given sink may change during the annual cycle, and by season.1 With this in mind, genes controlling vine hardiness can only be fully expressed after the metabolites and building blocks necessary for continuing the life cycle have been produced at adequate levels. Consequently, a goal of viticulture practices in cool climates must be to meet the needs of the weakest sink in order to achieve maximum gene expression in vines.

Previous work at Michigan State University has demonstrated that cold hardiness of primary buds was impaired the following winter more by varying levels of leaf removal at veraison than Brix accumulation in the current season or bud fruitfulness the following season. This adds to the concept that bud cold hardiness is a relatively weak sink, and any management practice





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which lowers the rate of accumulation or distribution of fixed carbon would have a detrimental effect on primary bud hardiness.8 This has important implications for viticultural management in cool-cold growing regions.

#### **Nurture**

As viticulturists, we nurture grapevines to achieve desired economic results: consistent annual yield and desired fruit quality. In cool climates, nurture requires that viticulture be utilized to fully express the cultivar's genome for all the vine hardiness factors. Cool-climate viticulture is a culture of limits, and economic success will depend upon the degree to which these limits may be ameliorated or eliminated through our choices as viticulturists.

One seldom mentioned valuable choice is rejection. Once a choice is made, it must stand up to continued evaluation and if lacking, be rejected. Some of these nurture components are within the control of the viticulturist, and some are not. In the Great Lakes Region, variation in growing season length, growing degree days (GDD) accumulation, and precipitation amount and timing, differ annually. While these are not within our control, they may be ameliorated.

An important question for the viticulturist seeking to maximize the expression of innate levels of cold hardiness is: "when do vegetative tissues and next season's buds ascend to apex sink status?" Since the fruiting cluster is the apex sink for most of the growing season, it is crucial that the vegetative tissue not inadequately compete with the cluster for available assimilate.

If there is one term that underpins successful viticulture, it is "balance." Various authors, beginning with M. Louis Ravaz in 1911 and more recently Richard Smart in 1985 and Stan Howell and R.P. Smithyman in 1998 have discussed concepts of balance. Those discussions have focused on vine cropping, vegetative growth, and fruit composition and quality. The concept of balance may be effectively applied to many aspects of viticulture. The following is a listing of decisions which must be made both before and after planting, along with a comment regarding the impacts of each on vine expression of genes for cold hardiness.

- 1. Site selection: A potential grower must become aware of the abiotic limits for a specific location. Most important are macroand meso-climates. Site selection is an especially important issue for regions where freeze damage is an annual concern.
- **2. Cultivar selection:** The process of choosing cultivars for a particular site must first consider the site selection. Annual winter temperatures of -35° C, occasionally expe-

#### CULTIVAR COLD HARDINESS LEVELS

Cultivar (Vinifera)	Temperature °F/°C	Cultivar (Hybrids)	Temperature °F/°C
Muscat Ottonel	-6°/-20°	Traminette	-20°/-28°
Merlot	-9°/-21°	Vidal Blanc	-22°/-30°
Pinot Gris	-10°/-23°	Chardonel	-22°/-30°
Pinot Noir	-10°/-23°	Chambourcin	-23°/-30°
Sauvignon Blanc	-10°/-23°	Seyval	-23°/-30°
Gewürztraminer	-12°/-24°	Vignoles	-26°/-32°
Chardonnay	-13°/-25°	Frontenac	-35°/-37°
Riesling	-14°/-25°	Frontenac Gris	-35°/-37°
Cabernet Franc	-17°/-27°	Marquette	-35°/-37°

Approximate warmest temperature where 80-100% primary bud kill may be expected to occur in midwinter. (Elaborated from Wine Grape Production Guide for Eastern North America. 2008. T. Wolf et al. and Zabadal T., Sabbatini P., Elsner D., 2008. Wine Grape Varieties for Michigan and Other Cold Climate Viticultural Regions. MSU Extension Bulletin CD-007.)

rienced in cool-climate growing regions, limit the available varieties to those which are cold-resistant, and can withstand such conditions. In addition, the rootstock selected must consider a given cultivar's susceptibility to phylloxera, and ability to achieve desired vine vegetative vigor.

The time frame of ripening for a cultivar should also be considered. Late bud-burst and late ripening cultivars are often required in coolclimate regions to avoid late spring frost damage, but often require low cropping levels, which may lead to greater canopy vigor and growth. Resulting canopy shading can delay fruit ripening, increase disease incidence and decrease bud and cane wintering quality.

The parameters necessary for survival of many cultivars have been established and researched, including growing season length, variability of length and GDD. The desire to plant a given cultivar, then, requires extensive measurements and knowledge about the capabilities of a site selection regarding these parameters.

3. Vine spacing and training **system:** The space given between vines, width between rows, and training system utilized all have an impact on sun exposure and productivity. Numerous variations exist between the three which can lead to differences in leaf exposure within a canopy. These are also critical components of the yield/unit land area and the berry

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composition and quality issues required for economic success.

4. Water and nutrition: Excessive water and nutritional stress will reduce photosynthesis while reducing carbohydrate accumulation and consequently cold hardiness. Too much water and mineral nutrition, in particular nitrogen, can extend vegetative growth at the expense of carbohydrate storage and therefore vine cold hardiness. There has been some suggestion in the literature that K and/or Ca applications can improve vine hardiness. To date studies have not shown any benefit of such applications when the elements are in the non-deficient range.

#### Management issues: establishment and production issues

Management goals regarding cold hardiness should be focused on sunlight penetration to leaves associated with shoots that will be retained as bearers for the following season's production. Cultural manipulations should be introduced to create adequate exposed leaf area to mature the crop, mature the canes that will be the next season's bearers, distribute carbon fixed via photosynthesis to perennial vine structures and for storage in roots to initiate the spring growth flush and complete the differentiation of cluster and floret structures for the coming season. In short, the task of the viticulturist is to manage vines in a manner that allows for maximum expression of the cultivar's genes for hardiness.

As noted above in the discussion of cultivars, there are a number of cultural conditions that can reduce the vine's ability to express its genetic capacity for hardiness. Excess crop is one of these. Carbohydrates are the energy which drives the metabolic machinery of the vine and that includes cold hardiness. The vine will preferentially send carbohydrates to ripening fruit and the potential for excess crop coupled with a short period between harvest and leaf loss makes careful crop control a major component in any effort to favor vine hardiness.

We expend considerable money and labor creating and maintaining

mechanical systems to which we attach grapevines. Viticulturists do so in order to create an effective "light trap." Training vines to this structure, and the subsequent manipulation of the canopy, are all done with a goal of facilitating the penetration of light into the fruiting and renewal zone. The decisions on which to base this decision for a specific cultivar are related to vine vigor and resulting vine size (as measured by the weight of annual cane prunings).

These are important bases for determining whether a single or divided (either horizontally, as with Geneva double curtain or lyre, or vertically as with Scott-Henry, Smart-Dyson or Sylvoz) canopy will serve best. The best choice for hardiness is the one that favors photosynthesis in the renewal zone with resultant maximal darkness of cane periderm color for that cultivar (see the photo on page 84).

Leaf removal and shoot positioning also aid light penetration into the fruiting and renewal zone and will have impact on cold hardiness similar to that of training system choice and for the same reason.

Pruning - an annual exercise is the first effort that has impact on the amount of crop that the vine may produce. Pruning has a growth-stimulating influence on vines. This means that viticulturists would prefer to do the practice as late in the dormant season as is possible and still get the effort finished before bud burst. Practical considerations often dictate that the effort begin prior to mid-winter.

This dilemma can be resolved by selecting the most-hardy cultivars that are least responsive to winter temperature fluctuations and begin the effort with them. Least hardy cultivars will be pruned last as that will also allow a final, pre-pruning assessment of bud and cane survival and can help determine the amount of "spare parts" to retain.

#### Conclusion

Many factors will influence whether vines will be damaged by winter freeze episodes. Many are beyond the control of the viticulturist once planting has occurred. No single decision by the prospective grape

grower can be more important than choice of site, with specific emphasis on macro- and meso-climate. Rationally, we must start there. It makes sense to begin with decisions that will be most difficult to change once the vineyard has been established.

Increasingly difficult would be the necessity to change cultivar. Replanting means a loss of at least three to four years of production while the conversion occurs, not to mention the cost of vines, plus the labor for planting and training those vines. However, the most expensive change will be the result of a rational rejection of the selected site for culture.

Vineyard site selection and retention, like all real estate value judgments, revolves around three overriding principles: location, location, location. Spending time to evaluate locations for potential grape production is the single-most valuable effort made in vineyard establishment and indeed for the long-term economic survival of the

vineyard. The quality of this initial effort can save or cost much money and can determine whether the enterprise has a long-term future.

In conclusion, the ideas here reinforce the importance of effective, timely application of cultural practices appropriate for the location of culture and the cultivars being grown. Nurture cannot produce hardiness levels above those made possible by the vine's genome. However, inadequate, poorly-timed application of practices can negatively influence the expression of the genes the vines possess for cold hardiness.

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The references for this article are available online at winesandvines.com/feature



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Mike Appolo is the owner and winemaker of Appolo Vineyards in Derry, N.H.



Adam Fizyta is part owner of Catoctin Breeze Vineyard in Thurmont, Md.



Peter Payne (left) form Willmington Del., and Newark, Del., based photographer Frank Clay.



Chad Whittington (left), with Ozone Solutions Inc., in Hull, Iowa and Robert Ramsey with Caihailian Vineyard in Arlington, Va.



Richard Ruggiero is the owner of Paradise Hills Vineyard & Winery in Wallingford, Conn.



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