

BCAWA News

Volume 2, Number 3

June 30, 2011

Message from the Editor

BCAWA Members:

Please make a note that for Vol. 2 (2011) the next copy deadlines will be August 10, October 10, and December 10.

Thanks once more to John Schreiner for permission to reprint one of his recent blogs. If the recent explosion of crush pads is news to you, you may find yourself wondering why winemaking clubs aren't getting involved.

You may not approve of my inclusion of an advertisement for a commercial tour of New Zealand. I made the unilateral decision to put it in as a favour to Art Hooper who worked so hard to make the 2011 Kamloops Provincial a success.

In case it's needed, I hope this issue of the NEWS is a reminder to AWC entrants to make sure your bubble-packed bottle entries (375s preferred), entry forms and cheque for \$9 reach me before July 17!!! Please remember that Nova Scotia wants full ingredient labeling.

In the August issue look for a few observations from our family's (3 generations) three weeks in Italy in June.

Happy Winemaking!

George

Message from the President

I would like to thank the Kamloops Winemakers Association for hosting the 2011 Provincial competition. The venue was located on a hill overlooking a huge park with an incredible view. All weekend the food was delicious. For those of you who did not attend, you really missed out! To all those individuals who put in long hours and lots of effort to make this event a success, I salute you. Without dedicated volunteers like you, the Provincial competition could not take place.

Speaking of volunteers, your BCAWA executive is also run by volunteers. Even after hours of arm twisting and cajoling, Helmut Berner was unable to fill the spot of Vice President. I am now in my third term as President and with out a VP to take over next year I will be looking at a fourth term. Now the optimist in me thinks that I am doing such a great job that no one else could ever fill my shoes....LOL, but I sense the reality is that no one really seems to care and that saddens me. BCAWA is the glue that keeps all of the clubs connected through Newsletters, Competitions, Seminars, the BCAWA website, meetings, etc. Without BCAWA, none of this would happen and amateur winemaking in BC would begin a rapid decline. If this concerns you then perhaps you should get involved.

Being on the BCAWA Executive is not a lot of hard work and it doesn't take up a lot of time but it does need some fresh ideas from time to time to keep it vibrant, current and relevant. You will always have a lot of support from current and past executive members. There are a lot of people who are involved in their club, who are already volunteering their time but we really need the silent majority to step forward. Now you all have 2 choices. Either get involved and contribute to the hobby that I know you all enjoy, or sit back and do nothing with the knowledge that you could have made a difference.....if you really cared.

Cheers

Rick

Rick Homer

BCAWA President



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2011 BCAWA Chief Steward's Report

The KWA hosted the event at Hal Rogers Kinsman's hall, a bright and airy venue. Judges all arrived in time for the Friday program. Only one judge did not show and I was not informed he would not be there. We had some trouble entering the wines due to the fact that several of the competitors used entry forms that were out of date. The Registrar had to phone and re-enter the wines correctly. One entrant had 6 wines disqualified because of this. Some of the competitors did not fill all the information. Phone numbers left off or writing illegible. We had to make several calls and do some detective work to deal with this. A Nanaimo club member, Vern Rogers flew to Kamloops to assist with the computerized program. Without his support we would not have been able to make the event a success. Is there another computerized program that some BCAWA clubs use? If so, then some of the trouble we had asking questions about the use of them make some sense as we could have been talking about two different ways of running the event. We certainly strongly recommend a club has a dry run on an easy event before going cold turkey into the provincials using a computerized registration.

There were 289 entries including wine and beer, and only one cider. The beers were entered by the same two people who have entered beer for the past 3 competitions. I recommend the cider and beer classes be dropped for next year. Some statistics. 39 persons entered the competition. 28 or 72% submitted 6 or less entries, or 31% of all entries. 4 or 10% submitted 7 -12 entries, or 12% of all entries, 4, or 10% submitted 13 – 24 entries for 25% of all entries and 3, or 8% submitted 24 or more for 32% of all entries. In other words the competition, with all the work involved to make it successful, is done for 7 people who entered 57% of all the wines. Six competitors entered 145 entries and for these 145 entries 48% won medals; the same percentage as those who entered just a few. So why not limit entry to say 12 bottles? When asked why a person did not enter I got an answer that reflected the above, "Why bother, it is only for a special few". These figures sure bear that out. So a cost of over \$6000.00 for the competition for so few people is in my mind not a viable option for the BCAWA to continue the event in this form. I believe not only the membership issue must be looked at, but also the way BCAWA encourages members to participate in this annual event.

Because of cost we tried to limit the judges to the lower mainland guild. This caused us a problem as one of the judges entered 36 bottles and trying to have him judge wines that were not his own was a little troubling. I recommend that when a judge accepts the position at a competition, that that person enter only a few wines or better still none at all.

Travel and entry collection costs to Kamloops are a huge issue. I am not sure whether we should be subsidizing BCAWA executive members to attend when I think they get travel assistance to attend BCAWA meetings. Surely the BCAWA AGM is an Association meeting, therefore those who would receive assistance for that meeting should not be subsidized from the competition. We do not know how other clubs arrange the collection of entries but for Kamloops this was a day of driving to save about \$200.00 in freighting. One club charged us to freight the entries to the Vancouver area so we could pick up. We do not know what the general policy is regarding the transporting of entries to the annual competition and the payment of same.

Trophies are still a problem. I thought all had been retired but there are still a few. One did not make it to the event and I don't know if the recipient has got it yet. We have had to freight the trophies to the recipients as no one from VAWA was at the event to take their achievements home. Cost was \$60.00. One was damaged and I had it repaired. (\$10.00)

I must mention the terrific job that Daniela Basile and her team did in organizing all the meals. Some thought they were on a Princess cruise.

The KWA took pride in doing this competition, and accepted with pleasure, the kind and encouraging remarks visitors made to us, but falling membership in our club and fewer making "real" wine means we must make this the last Provincials we will host. We ask you to take our name from the rotation of clubs.

To this report I have attached the accounting of the event. Repayment of the \$1000.00 loan was done by cheque to the treasurer.

Art Hooper, Provincial Steward 2011 Competition.

Ed. Note: BCAWA Executive members are not subsidized to attend meetings and competition entrants should not be reimbursed for the cost of shipping their entries to the Provincial.



Okanagan Viewpoint by Bill Collings

It's been a long and cold Spring; and budbreak was two weeks later than last year – April 21, 2010 and May 6, 2011. And if we have another cold Summer, the harvest date will also be late. On the other hand, June started on a high note with temperatures about 10 degrees higher than in May. Seems we are not alone according to the report out of Washington. In radio interviews, local growers were talking of reducing the crop load ASAP in anticipation of another late harvest. Irrespective, we still have the usual vineyard work to do, such as suckering and thinning the shoots which is another way of reducing the crop load.

Another wrinkle has occurred in our neighbourhood. George, who has done our spraying for many years decided after last year's harvest that he was going to sell his vineyard, and he did very quickly. He was asking \$650,000 and took \$635,000. His vineyard has ten planted acres with no house, which made it very attractive. We have three other properties in our immediate neighbourhood for sale – two vineyards and an unplanted ten acres. Prices are a bit high. A twelve acre vineyard, including a B&B, is listed at \$1,649,000. The unplanted property is listed at \$1,199,900. The last property was originally listed for \$1,250,000. It has been reduced to \$850,000 and the owner refused an offer of \$750,000. This property has very steep slopes, so steep that I would not drive a tractor on it.

While we are pleased for George that he was able to sell so quickly, the down side is that I now have to do my own spraying. There is nothing complicated about it; it's just a bit time-consuming. Fortunately, the new owner has let me rent the equipment which otherwise would set us back about \$10,000 for two items – a weed sprayer which I would use once a year and a regular vineyard sprayer which I would use four, maybe five times.

You will read Joan's article about our visit to Southern France and some of the wineries. While Chateau Neuf de Pape enjoys the freedom to blend from a large selection of grape varieties, the same is not the case in Beaune and the Mâconnais where the wineries are restricted to making wine from only two or three varieties. It is very interesting to visit a small town in these regions and see tasting rooms next door to and across the street from one another, sometimes three or four in the same block. And while they may not all sell the same wineries' wines, they are selling wines made from the same basic grapes. Coincidentally, during the trip, there was a series about wine on television. In one interview with a prominent French winemaker, the statement was made, with some disdain I thought, "In the New World, winemakers go to the customers and ask what kind of wines would they like the winery to make. Here, we make our wine and then go and find the customers." This region of France probably has far more acreage planted to only two or three varieties; we, with much smaller acreage, grow probably more diverse grape varieties than any other comparable acreage in the entire wine world. And where wineries situated within shouting distance of one another may not make wine from the same grape varieties. Are the Old World wineries trapped in a kind of restrictive time warp which requires all wineries within some regions to make only one or two types of wine? The point? I think the New World wineries have far more freedom to explore making wine as single varietal wines or from blends of all sorts; and the customers have a far greater choice.



John Schreiner's Blogspot

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 1, 2011

Exclusive small-lot wines are the new trend

Aside from making your own wine, the closest you can come to having exclusive wines on your table is to seek out the growing number of limited production labels emerging from the Okanagan's custom crush wineries. These are wines you cannot buy from a local wine store because, typically, they are available only through winery web sites. You need to subscribe to email alerts, order by the case, and move fast when a wine is released because the volumes are limited. For example, only 74 cases of Synchronesh Riesling 2010 were released and one savvy Vancouver restaurant placed a big order.

If that is not exclusive enough, the new **McWatters Collection Meritage**, just released this spring, initially was available only at Local, the Summerland restaurant run by Christa-Lee McWatters-Bond. Those who have tasted it have acclaimed it as an excellent wine with a retail price of \$25.

In addition to the labels being produced at the custom crush wineries, several winemakers in the Okanagan are developing labels of their own, generally in an understanding with the wineries where they work. Look for interesting choices of small lot wines over the next several years.

The two custom crush, or incubator, wineries currently operating are Okanagan Crush Pad Winery near Summerland and Alto Wine Group at Okanagan Falls. Crush Pad has a new winery under construction while Alto Wine is making its magic in the same sort of metal-clad building that Black Hills Winery used to have.

Crush Pad has the higher profile. To begin with, Christine Coletta, one of the owners, operates a very effective marketing company in Vancouver and knows how to generate publicity. Secondly, her winery also generated considerable controversy this spring when another wine blog printed her press release and the blog was flooded with comments. Naramata Bench winemaker Richard Roskell, one of the owners of Marichel Vineyard, objected strongly, taking the view that aspiring winemakers need to invest in vineyards and buildings like everyone else has had to do. He termed developing "virtual wineries" to be the equivalent of create "a façade of an industry."



This furious debate went on for some time before being shut down. There is no question that many existing producers agree with Richard. Countering that is the argument that top flight winemakers should not be thwarted just because they lack the capital. "Short of winning the lottery, there is very little chance that I will ever be able to afford to own a vineyard and a winery of my own," was the rejoinder from Garron Elmes, the winemaker at Lake Breeze Vineyards for the last 16 years. I doubt the controversy is anywhere near over. In the meantime, there are interesting wines emerging from Crush Pad.

Christine's own label is **Haywire Winery**. It has currently released two wines, Haywire Pinot Gris 2010 (\$23) and Haywire Gamay Noir Rosé 2010 (\$21). These are solid wines and were reviewed in my blog recently.

A second label about to be released from the Crush Pad umbrella is Bartier.Scholefield. This is the label of collaborating winemakers Michael Bartier and David Scholefield. Their web site is www.bs.winesokanagan.com but it is not live yet. Two wines are being released June 15:

Barter.Scholefield White Table Wine 2010 (\$22). This is a blend of Pinot Gris, Pinot Blanc, Chardonnay and Sauvignon Blanc. The wine has aromas and flavours of citrus, green apples and melons. The finish is crisp and dry, with lively acidity and a somewhat austere personality. It is an excellent oyster wine. 88.

Barter.Scholefield Rosé Table Wine 2010 (\$20). Made largely with Gamay grapes, this is a wine with aromas and flavours of cherry. There is a house style here – this wine also is dry nearly to the point of austerity. 87.

Alto Wine has had a much lower profile, perhaps to stay away from the virtual wineries controversy. Several of the labels emerging from this facility are made by winemakers who have invested in the business. That means they are not really virtual wineries.

The lead partner at Alto Wine is Alan Dickinson, a youthful Vancouver entrepreneur who came to wine as one founder of Vancouver Wine Vaults, a wine storage business.

In a lifestyle switch, he began looking for vineyard property in the Okanagan. In March of 2010, he took over a five-acre vineyard just east of Okanagan Falls. About half was planted to Riesling, one of his favourite varieties, and additional Riesling has replaced varieties with which the previous owner had had little success. "I am a huge lover of Riesling," Alan says. "I think Okanagan Falls has incredible terroir for it." Because the Dickinson family has a love affair with the mechanical side of British sportscars, the first wine, a Riesling, has been released under the Synchronesh label. The web site is www.synchroneshwines.ca.

Alto Wine's Alan Dickinson

Synchronesh Riesling Kabinett Halbtrocken 2010 (\$30) has all that German on the label because its style is German; halbtrocken means off-dry. This is a lovely wine, with a moderate alcohol of 11.4%. It has flavours of citrus and peach, with a juicy texture and a long finish. The residual sugar balances the bright acidity so that the wine finishes almost dry. The winery recommends cellaring it four to eight years, allowing it to develop to its fullest. 90.

Not yet released is a very good Synchronesh Meritage red which was still in barrel when I visited the winery this spring.

Alan created the custom crush business for a very practical reason. "I discovered that unless you are coming into it with a lot of money or a lot of backing, it is not really financially viable to start up a small winery," he says. "That is where the custom crush thing started to evolve, for servicing people like myself who want to start up a small winery and making it more viable for them. It also allows us to get some cash flow through the door so we can do our own things."

One of the winemaker partners here is Tom DiBello, formerly the winemaker at CedarCreek Estate Winery and now a busy consultant in the Okanagan. He and his wife, Tari, have just launched DiBello Wines, produced in the Alto Wine facility. The wines can be ordered from them at 1-778-516-1398.



DiBello Viognier 2010 (\$33 for a production of 87 cases). The first release under this label, it is a variety with which Tom had extensive experience when he was making wine in Washington State. This is an intense and also exotic white, beginning with aromas of apricot, pineapples and, believe it or not, liquorice. It delivers tropical flavours to the palate, with a rich texture and a dry spicy finish. 90.

Still in barrel for the DiBello label are Chardonnay, Pinot Noir, Merlot and Syrah, all in small volume and all impressive. DiBello Wines is not planning to produce more than 1,000 cases a year in total.

Another partner who joined Alto Wine is Mark Simpson, the principal of Artisan Food and Beverage Group Inc. Mark is both a winemaker and a brewmaster. His first release from Alto Wine is a Merlot Rosé. This fall, the label will add a red Meritage with all five Bordeaux grapes. The web site is www.includewine.com.



A Taste of Southern France by Joan and Bill Collings

One week in France. Two rivers: the Rhone and Saône. Three wine districts: Provence, the Mâconnais and Burgundy. We land in Marseilles and join our ship at Avignon and the adventure begins.

Provence is a totally magical district. The light is ethereal, blues are deeper, yellows more intense as shown in the works of the Impressionists such as Van Gogh, Cezanne and Gauguin, all of whom spent time in Provence. It can also create a very good "brûlée de Soleil" in very short order!



The vineyards would strike most North Americans or New World vignerons as somewhat strange. The vines are not trellised but are head pruned and permitted to grow to a height of only three feet. The soil is very rocky. Fields are covered in what appear to be river-washed stones between 4 and 6 inches in size. Irrigation is not permitted except by special license under the AOC rules. (Appellation d'Origine Contrôlée.) We are told there are only 2 hectares in the entire district currently under irrigation. AOC also controls the harvest date – harvest may not take place sooner than 100 days after flowering but may take place later at the discretion of the vintner. At this time, late May, the bunches are well formed; harvest will be in late August rather than September, as usual. France, generally, is experiencing drought and it is common to see the bright yellow of stressed vines here and there.

Our first tasting takes place in Château Neuf de Pape at Maison Bouachon which is currently undergoing a name change to Skalli, something unheard of in the French tradition. Only 13 varieties are permitted, 5 white and 8 red, although only about one in 16 red blends contain any white varieties. Our tasting takes place in a large room suitable for big groups. The wines were:

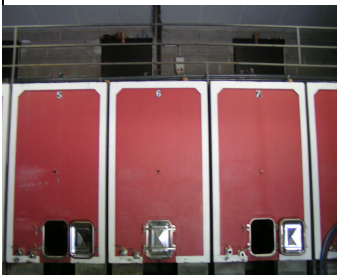


Les Rabassières, a 2009 Cote du Rhone made from 60% Grenache Blanc and 40% Viognier. It is unoaked, pale yellow with green tinges with a delicate aroma but, yet, quite fruit-forward. Think peaches, apricots, citrus, a hint of apple with a floral finish, €6.50. (*For future reference a Euro is equal to \$1.40 Canadian.)

2007 La Tiarda du Pape, Grenache, 60%; Syrah, 20%; Mourvedre, 15%; and Cinsaut, 5%. The colour is light garnet with orange edges. Look for cherry, strawberry, spice and light oak; elegant tannins with a black currant finish. Age 10 – 15 years, €28.

2006 Dedication – Grenache, 60%; Mourvedre, 20%; Syrah, 20%. This special blend is only made during vintage years, some vines are 100 years old. It is oak aged for 15 months. Dark garnet with copper edges, all the flavours of the La Tiarda plus a hint of mushroom but much more rounded, rich and complex. Will age for 15 – 20 years. Only 4000 bottles are made and are available only at the winery. €49.

What does one do on board ship between excursions, except the usual eating, drinking and sleeping? We had various short lectures on topics such as the history of Provence, Burgundy and France, Cheese (France lays claim to at least 365 different ones!), Cooking a chocolate dessert, a visit from a silk merchant selling lovely and colourful scarves and shawls, (Lyon was for centuries the centre of the silk trade) and basic French lessons. The latter did prove to be useful as we were told that Provençal is quite different from classic French. For example, "non" is pronounced "nah!!", complete with exclamation points. So, when we asked a clerk if she spoke English and she said "nah!!!" we knew we had not insulted her.



And, on to our next tasting in the Mâconnais near the town of Tain l'Hermitage to Domaine du Murinais where wine has been made for 7 generations, originally under a co-op but, now, as an independent winery. The current wine maker is Luc Tardy, a slight young man with quiet determination and 11 years experience. They produce 80,000 bottles annually, 70% of which is exported to the U.S, U.K. and Japan. A natural fermentation takes place in traditional huge, box-shaped, cement fermentation tanks with a capacity of about 20,000 litres; the newest fermenters are egg-shaped and about 2 metres tall with a capacity of 2,500 litres.

Those that are aged in oak are only in the barrel for 11 months as the barrels are required for the next vintage. All wines tasted were very young



2010 Cuvée Murinais, a white blend of Marsanne and Roussanne – quite floral with hints of honey, very light, pale and clean. €12

2009 Crozes-Hermitage Les Amandiers – 100% Syrah – light ruby with purple edges, simple, aged in concrete, good but young tannins with pleasant fruit. €11

2009 Crozes-Hermitage Vieilles Vignes, again 100% Syrah but aged in oak for 11 months. Simple, well made with pleasant fruit, good body and tannin. €14

Tain l'Hermitage is also home to the famous Valrhona chocolate, a favourite of chefs and chocolatiers world-wide. Our Programme Director had hoped to arrange a visit to the factory but, unfortunately, "c'est impossible!" We did, however, visit the shop where they had very generously left over a dozen dishes of samples scattered about. And, we did! Very rich, but, oh, so good!

Thursday as we were nearing Burgundy we decided to splurge and order from the wine list a good Beaujolais to accompany the wonderful Breast of Duck served for dinner. We chose a 2004 Louis Jadot Chateau des Lumieres Morgon, 13% alc, for €28. It was light bodied, deep garnet with silky tannins, a hint of Brett., some red plums and strawberries but, all in all, somewhat faded.

The Rhone Valley is very agricultural with large herds of the famous white Charolais cattle and goats. Interspersed amongst the vineyards where the vines are trellised as in the Mâconnais but still only 3 feet tall, were large fields of hay being harvested early, corn about 1 ft. in height, rapeseed (for canola oil) and a few of mustard although the French do admit that most of the mustard seeds for the popular Dijon mustard are imported from Canada! The countryside, generally, is very rolling with low hills. There are approximately 65 bridges plus about 10 or so locks between Avignon and Chalon sur Saône. Many of the bridges are old but most are very low and close to the river. This necessitated the clearing of the sun deck, folding the chairs and tables, collapsing the wheelhouse and stack, to ensure safe passage for the ship. And at last we arrive in Beaune (by bus), the centre of the Burgundian wine trade

Continued on next page

A Taste of Southern France..... conclusion



Beaune is a picturesque and charming town of about 25,000 people. Here we visited Le Cellier de la Cabiote where the tasting took place in an 18th century cave. We were served 2 whites, 2 reds and a liqueur accompanied by gougeres and pain (wonderful cheese puffs and a dark nutty bread).



The wines served were:

- 2009 Burgogne Aligoté Domaine Larue -100% Aligoté. Pale yellow with green edges, slightly nutty, mild flavour, light body and acid. €7.50
- 2008 Mâcon-Chardonnay Domaine Pauget – 100% Chardonnay. Slightly darker in colour and more robust all around. Flavours of grapefruit and peaches with a long finish with a slightly sweet impression, some complexity. A good food wine. €12
- 2010 Beaujolais Côteaux du Layet Domaine Garlon – light garnet, purple colour. Very fruity with cherries, plums and currants with a light body and silky tannins. Smooth, short finish, somewhat one dimensional. €9
- 2008 Beaune 1er Cru Les Chouacheux Domaine Lescure – ruby in colour with smooth tannins and good balance, some complexity and elegance. Typical aroma of cassis with pleasant oak. €22
- Double Crème de Cassis 20° Maison/Briottet – your typical cassis liqueur, very sweet and smooth. Kir, anyone? €15/70 cl, €13.50/50 cl.

No visit to Beaune would be complete without seeing the Hospice de Beaune (Hôtel-Dieu).



This is also the home of the famous wine auction but all that was visible of that was a list of last year's entrants. The Hospice was, of course, a hospital and has been re-furnished in its former style, heavy canopied beds end to end against each long wall, complete with red bed coverings, a tiny table with solid pewter dishes (even to the bed-pan) and mannequin dressed in the appropriate costume, gently hovering.



And, so we have one last delicious dinner accompanied by wines made especially for the cruise line under the label "GT Elegante" – a delectable Chardonnay, Sauvignon Blanc and Merlot.

A bientôt!

Jean and Bill



New Zealand Tour with Art and Shirley

(Advertisement)

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Underhill Trophy for 2010–2011

The Underhill Trophy is awarded to the BCAWA member who garners the greatest number of points in the dry red wine classes of sponsored club competitions throughout the year including the most recent Provincial.

Walter Frith compiled the information that determined the winner.

The trophy honours the contributions of Victoria's Ted Underhill to amateur winemaking in BC.

Underhill Trophy 2010 - 2011			
Rank	Name	Total Points	Total Medals
1	Axel Kroitzsch	49.62	23
2	George Gibson	42.1	18
3	George Beck	39.54	17
4	Mike Leeper	27.94	13
5	Don Graham	25	10
6	Glen Mayer	24.7	12
7	Cindy Kuwert/John Znider	21.64	8
8	Peter Gagnon	18.78	9
9	John & Fran Ayris	17.1	8
10	Clem Joyce	16.34	9



Book Review by Sam Hauck



The Instant Wine Connoisseur by Mervyn L. Hecht

Book World Press, 143 pages, 1997

I stumbled over this easy to read book at my local library recently. The author, Mervyn Hecht is a wine buyer for a California wine import company. He spends much of his year working and living in France. He begins his book with some basic rules for tasting wine, the "how" and the "why" of tasting, emphasizing the need to develop a memory for wine flavours.

"One of the reasons that taste is such a complex subject is that it is created by a combination of data from tongue sensors, mouth sensors, nasal sensors, eyes, subjective experiences, memory and analytic processes, all of which are processed differently by the brain, and then combined to create the experience of taste." p30

Hecht then goes on to describing each of the major wine making "French and California (West Coast) Red Wines". Included in this section are cabernet sauvignon of Bordeaux and California, merlot, pinot noir of Burgundy and Oregon, grenache, gamay, syrah and California zinfandel. He describes the traditional Bordeaux blend of (approximately) 60% cabernet sauvignon, 30% merlot, 5 - 10 % cabernet franc and 5 - 10% petit verdot. While merlot is usually used for blending, one chateau in Bordeaux, Chateaux Petrus, makes a 100% merlot wine that has become one of the most expensive red wines in the world. Of pinot noir, he states, "The great Burgundy wines have a special complexity of flavour and mouth sensations that are beyond the power of written words."p39

In "The Red Grapes of Italy", Hecht describes the characteristics of nebbiolo grape based wines such as Barolo and Barbaresco, the wines made from sangiovese grapes, Chianti and Brunello and the dolcetto and barbera grapes.

"Dry White Wine Grapes" deals primarily with chardonnay and sauvignon blanc. The author breaks chardonnays into three different styles: The "... mouth-filling, yellow, viscous, oaky, buttery wines" of California. "At the other end of the spectrum are the lean, light coloured, fresh, acidic wines..." made in areas such as Chablis in central France. In between these extremes are chardonnays that demonstrate qualities of "mild yellow or straw colour, medium acidity, slight fruit nose and a mild lemon and oak taste." French wines from Burgundy and Maconnais often exhibit these traits, as do other chardonnays produced around the world. Sauvignon (fumé) blanc is beginning to challenge the popularity of chardonnay in a modest way. They tend to go well with foods that are more delicate. The best-known sauvignon blancs in France are Sancerre and Pouilly-Fumé from the Loire Valley. As well, there appears to be a growing interest in chenin blanc. Hecht also suggests that the Rhone wines made from roussanne and marsanne grapes are becoming more popular because they offer "just the right proportion of dryness to sweetness, a wonderful nose, and the ability to age well." p85

Another section is devoted to sweet white wines. Here Hecht focuses on riesling and semillon grapes and he puts in a very good word for the great German rieslings that are very sweet and can be aged for up to twenty years. Semillon of course reaches its prime in the production of sauternes; and Chateaux d'Yquem being the best of the best.

In the section titled, "Serving Wine: Customs and Traditions", The author gives examples of how wine can enhance cooking. Foods with a mild or delicate taste should be paired with wines that are dry, mild in flavour and with an elevated level of acidity. For this reason, chablis wines, sauvignon blancs, muscadet and Sancerre wines are often the best bet for foods such as oysters, scallops, abalone, and poached or pan-fried white fish. With stronger flavoured fish dishes such as salmon, monkfish, herring, or cioppino rosé wines, Beaujolais or German rieslings would be better choices. Mildly flavoured meats such as veal go well with mild white wines or very light reds, depending on how the dish is cooked and what sauce is served with it. The stronger flavours of game and barbecued meats require wines that are similarly strong: Barolo, Hermitage, zinfandel, and Cotes du Rhones. Really good Bordeaux and Burgundy wines should be paired with simple foods (steak etc.) that will not steal their thunder. Hecht includes some traditional pairings such as: Foie gras with sweet sauternes, Bordeaux with lamb, Barolo with game and rich, fatty red meats, and chicken with Beaujolais or light Burgundy depending on the sauce. However, in recent times, there is a trend to experimentation. Anything goes is the rule and as a result do not be surprised to see salmon served in a red wine sauce. Some people have the attitude, "red wine with everything."

Hecht then includes some recipes including: Cabbage and Bones in Barolo, Chicken in Champagne Sauce, Sautéed Duck Breast Through Rose Coloured Glasses, Steak in Red Wine Sauce and Haroset.

The book ends with sections on "Drinking, Aging and Storing Wine" and "Wine and Health".

Once again, this is a basic, easy -to-read book. There were sections that I felt were glossed over too quickly and a few comments that I took exception to. None-the-less, it is a light enjoyable read.

Sam Hauck

The Wine Teacher

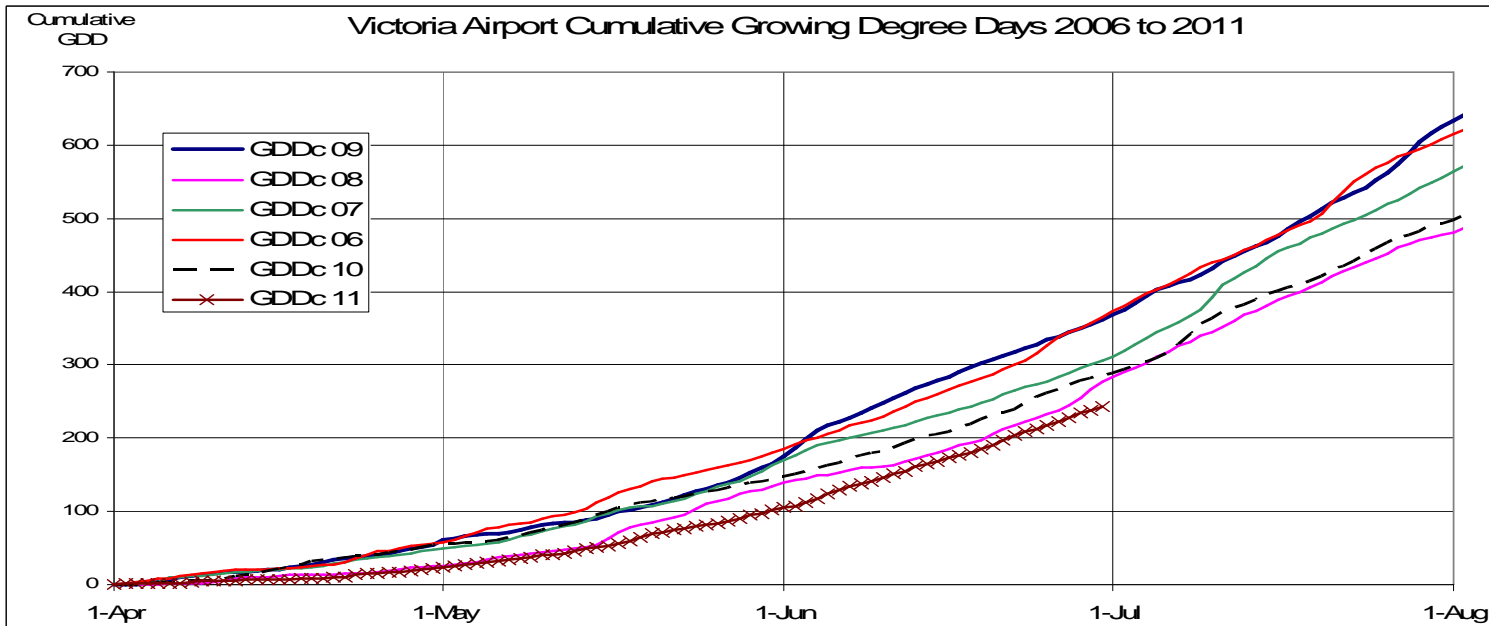
thewineteacher@shaw.ca



Lamont Brooks WIGA Report June 2011

Wine Islands Climate, Apr-Jun 2011

If this has felt like a cool spring and early summer to you, the numbers certainly back you up. The graph below compares the cumulative growing degree days (sum of heat above 10C) for the last 6 years at the Victoria airport. This year is the coolest to the end of June, and in the warm years like 2006 and 2009 this level of heat was achieved almost three weeks ago. For early ripening fruits like strawberries, this simply means ripening in early July rather than mid-June, but for a slow fruit like vinifera, this could mean ripening in late October when there's a high risk of rain. The good news is that La Nina is weakening and there should be a transition to neutral or even El Nino conditions in the Pacific, which could mean a very warm late summer-fall.



Bloom and Fruit Set

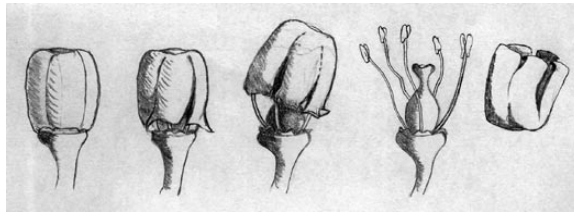
At the time of writing this account (end June), growers are watching their vines carefully to spot the beginning of bloom. Here are prebloom inflorescences (flower clusters) from Gewurztraminer (left) and Pinot Gris (right) on June 28; the latter are more full because they are higher yielding. The flower clusters actually formed about this time last year, staying at microscopic size within dormant buds until bud break this year, when they rapidly expanded and the flower structures developed. Grapes are self-pollinating, so no bees or other insects are needed.



Continued on next page

WIGA Report...concluded

Centre is a drawing showing the initiation of bloom for a single flower, as the cap expands, separates from the flower, and drops off ("cap fall"). On the left are clusters from Leon Millot on June 28; being a hybrid, it advances more quickly than vinifera, and you can see the tiny white anthers where the caps have fallen from some flowers. The caps on the ground under this cluster are shown on the lower right.



Bloom is a critical time for two primary reasons: disease prevention and fruit set. During bloom the clusters are very susceptible to infection by our most important disease enemies, powdery mildew and botrytis, even though they don't visually express themselves until later in the year. Most of our spraying dollars are spend from immediate prebloom to 3 weeks post-bloom. The other important aspect at bloom is fruit set. Typically about 50% of the flowers will form normal grapes, but sometimes this percentage is much lower due to poor fruit set, shown for Gewurz on the left and Pinot Noir on the right.



The Pinot Noir cluster illustrates fully developed berries with their full complement of 4 seeds, partially developed but still functioning berries almost certainly with less than 4 seeds, and small green 'shot berries' which never develop and which may have acid levels etc that we'd rather not have in our harvest.

Poor fruit set is much researched and appears to have a variety of causes, such as cool wet weather during bloom, low levels of certain micro-nutrients such as boron, and limited access to carbohydrates (food). An early boron spray is now standard practice in most parts of the world. Access to carbohydrates appears to be especially important, and can be improved by pinching off growing tips and laterals, which are strong competitors for the same food. But controlling weather? If anyone out there has figured that out, let us know!

One last weather point: here is an experiment at Symphony Vineyard, attaching panels to the deer fence to block the wind on the north side of the block. Recognize the graphics? These were used as snow fences in the Vancouver 2010 Olympics. Here's to medal-winning wines!



Lamont Brooks,
Wine Islands Grow-
ers Association
www.wiga.ca

Premium Wine Grapes for 2011

The principal suppliers/importers of premium wine grapes for home winemakers in the Lower Mainland are Pacific Breeze Winery, Avon Mersey, and Gilbert Tonello. You should consult Clem Joyce for information and availability of Avon Mersey's Washington grapes from Kiona Vineyards. White juices - Chardonnay, Sauvignon blanc, Riesling, and Chenin blanc arrive in 113L drums for about US\$475. Crushed black grapes - Cabernet Sauvignon, Cabernet franc, Merlot, Sangiovese, Petit Verdot, Mourvèdre and Lemberger are in 400 lb drums for about US\$685 and Syrah for \$735. Drums are shipped to Oppenheimer Transport near Port Mann Bridge. Orders should be placed with Clem, cjoyce@telus.net

Jacquelin George handles the orders for Gilbert's grapes. They include Washington grapes, picked a day earlier into 20-25 lb totes, from 3 premium vineyards including Klipsun (rated by Wine & Spirits Magazine as one of the top 25 great vineyards in the world). Their grapes, Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot & Syrah, cost about \$2.40/lb but they are usually sold out as early as November.

Meek Vineyard produces Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Cabernet franc, Malbec, and Petit Verdot, plus Syrah. Dineen Vineyard, at the highest point in Zillah, has Cabernet Sauvignon, Cabernet franc, and Syrah. It's a relatively cool vineyard and apparently the grapes enjoy a long hang time and ripen with some acid retention to produce "dark, structured wines with intense fruit" (Palouse Winery charged \$50 for its Dineen Cab Sauv and \$60 for its Dineen Syrah!) Owen Sullivan Winery uses grapes from both these vineyards. Meek and Dineen grapes cost \$1.65/lb. There is no minimum order. Gilbert also brings in 45 gal. drums (450-475 lbs) of crushed, destemmed fresh Stag's Leap District Napa Cabernet Sauvignon from Martin Vineyard at \$4/lb and Merlot from Tony's Vyd at \$3/lb. He also imports 45 gal. drums of Jessie's Grove (=Spencer Ranch) 60-yr. old Zinfandel from Lodi. Those grapes usually come in at 28-32 Brix!! So they require some watering but still produce excellent wine at \$1.50/lb. Sometimes a few drums of Lodi Petite Sirah are also available. Of course, the CA drums are most appropriately shared, whereas the totes are ideal for personal vinifying. The crushes take place at Gilbert's home in Burnaby. Orders should be placed through Jacquelin George, jgeorge@uniserve.com

Grape Pacific Supplies makes available to home winemakers all the varieties Pacific Breeze Wine brings in from high altitude Lake County (High Valley AVA) CA vineyards (Brassfield and Obsidian Ridge) as well as the coveted Sangiacomo Family Vineyards Chardonnay juice (\$1.95/lb) and Pinot noir (\$2.50) from the Carneros. They also handle Willamette Valley OR (Olsen Family Vyds) Pinot gris juice. Prices/lb. of whole fresh grapes (plus shipping) will be Brassfield Sauvignon blanc \$1.65, Cabernet Sauvignon \$1.85 and Cabernet franc \$1.80, Grenache, Mourvedre, Malbec, Petite Sirah, Petit Verdot and Zinfandel \$1.90. Obsidian Ridge Cab \$1.95 and Syrah \$1.85. They also bring in (from the rows that formerly went to Ecole #41) Sagemoor Vyds (Columbia Valley) Merlot (\$1.75) and Syrah at \$1.80. The Oregon Pinot gris is \$1.65. Frank & Co. are very obliging when it comes to blending varieties, adjusting quantities, - even freezing grapes or juice for you., etc. and there's no doubt that their grapes are of high quality. The Sangiacomo Chardonnay is a consistent gold medal awardee, and so is the Obsidian Ridge Cabernet Sauvignon. Finally, the more delicate and more aromatic Washington Syrah makes a wonderful blend with the Lake Co. heavier bodied Obsidian Syrah, though both are great on their own. For an order form and more information please contact Frank Gregus at 778-899-1300 or grapepacific@gmail.com

