

Boise Co-op Uncorked!

WINE DEPARTMENT
NEWSLETTER

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MAY CLUB PICKS

Tocai Friulano Le Zuclole

San Giorgio Pinot Grigio

Colognole Chianti Classico 03

Cuvee Kermit Lynch CDR

Mt Difficulty Roaring Meg

Ceretto Arneis Blange 06

Coudelet de Beaucastel Blanc

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Do You Know What's In Your Wine?

—*Christian Robertson*

During a recent wine discussion with Rosemary, our conversation drifted to fermentation sciences, as many conversations often do, and then it got a little heated. She vehemently insisted that there is, in certain wines, a quality that allows it to “speak of a place.” The concept revolves around terroir and biodynamics, which implies the use of indigenous yeast for fermentation. These styles of wine production can make great wines that are unique and truly have identity of place. Burgundy, Bordeaux, wherever it be (especially the “old world”) can speak of a place, a terroir with a distinctiveness all its own. It seems this argument centers on the “au naturel”, wine sans additif, and that got me to thinking... What is in my wine?

I have heard many theories as to what goes into wine. Lots of folks tell me that there is no sulfites in European wines and that's why they don't get a headache. I've heard my colleagues speculate on the addition of acid in wines from a warm vintage. I have even heard the question “Do they really put cherries in the wine to make it taste like that?” I'll save those questions for a later article. Right now I want to explore yeast in order to enlighten us on one of the most common additives in the wine production world.

First, lets give a little background to yeasts role in wine. Yeast is used in wine-making to convert the sugars present in grape juice, or must, into alcohol through a process called anaerobic respiration. Yeasts are a growth form of eukaryotic microorganisms classified in the kingdom Fungi, they are asexual, uni-celled organisms that thrive on sugar. There are some 1500 separate yeast strains known and only about 100 of them are suitable for wine making. Yeast is found all over. Grapes out in the field are covered with yeast that can be seen as a powdery sub-

stance on the skins of grapes. These are the yeasts that for centuries have been used for wine production, before we humans even knew what yeast was. Grapes were put into a vessel of some kind and if everything went well, the yeast on the skins of the grapes would start fermenting. Not much too it.



Boxes o' yeast!

The old school method of wine making when natural yeast was used for fermenting, however, had its problems. Sometimes the specific culture of yeast active within the fermenting juice could not handle too much alcohol, and a few days into fermentation, the whole strain would die, leaving a winemaker with a tank of half fermented, sweet grape juice. Other problems like weak strains of yeast would be taken over by other bad strains of yeast like *bretanomyces* and the wines would taste bad.

Things changed when Louis Pasteur cultured different strains and figured out just what those little yeasties do and what their life is all about. Years after his discovery, the wine industry has taken culturing yeast strains to a whole other level. Thumbing through the pages of any winemaking supply catalog, the yeast section is extensive. Yeasts that “will make your Sauvignon Blanc smell like pineapple” or claims to “have capacity to withstand up to 18% alcohol” are what the new world of winemaking has brought us. The science

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Curious about yeast strains? Go to: <http://winemaking.jackkeller.net/strains.asp> and check out a list of yeasts used for wine

Do You Know What's In Your Wine? Christian & Rosemary plan on continuing their banter over the authenticity and quality of natural v. cocktailled wines throughout the summer. Pick up future issues of the Boise Co-op Uncorked! to see if they keep their debating civilized.

Why I Am an Au Naturel, Esoteric Wine Geek with High Standards

—Rosemary Gray

One of Divit's friends, who enjoys wine but is in no way a wine geek, commented recently on an inexpensive, domestic, Cabernet-Merlot blend from a mass-producer, "This doesn't taste like wine, it tastes like a recipe for wine." Bingo.

Before Christian and I get too far into debating — err, conversing about the particulars of natural vs. techno wines, I think it is important to explain why I am a so hung up on natural (for lack of a better word) wines. It may seem unnecessary to some people, but the issue for me is not merely about drinking what I like, but is about drinking and living according to what I value.

First, I vote for natural wines for health reasons. Not just my own health, but also for a broader ecological notion of health. Low-impact, sustainable agriculture, that manages with little to no irrigation, and uses zero chemicals made solely to kill living organisms is good. It's the healthy, responsible and reasonable thing to do. Healthy vineyards produce healthy grapes which produce healthy wine which is healthy for me to partake of. This is a good thing. I'm wary of mass produced wines made with leftover grapes from chemical-dusted farms that have to be tweaked in the lab — err, winery, just to pass as drinkable. It's like adding laboratory-concocted scents to fast food so it smells like something edible (yes, they truly do that too). I want to know that the wine I drink is pure and good for me, I also want to know the creation of it is not damaging to the very place it comes from.

Second, I value the uniqueness and diversity of natural wines. Terroir is not just wine jargon or a complicated way of saying 'place,' the very term *terroir* conveys the truth that singular uniqueness is valuable — biodiversity is the basis of life itself. Our environment, countries, and populations are not monocultures, and if there is anything that can

be said of life it's that by necessity it is not mono.

Wines ought to be a reflection of this truth. Just as we should be wary of any culture that demands individuals look, talk, and behave the same, we should be wary of markets that strip our wines of authenticity. Just as men from America are different than men from France and men from Australia, so should our Cabernets be different, and even more particularly one man is different from another even in the same country, the same town. Each man, each wine has it's own voice and story to tell, and it is not beneficial for anyone to write over that uniqueness with a recipe that slaves to the market.

Right now I am about to open a Chateau Musar Cu-vee. It's a Lebanese wine made from a blend of Cinsault, Carignan, Cabernet Sauvignon and Syrah. It's an organic wine, naturally made, and as Serge Hochar, the man behind the wines explains, "the harmony of nature is better than anything we could ever create. I believe it should be a priority to seek to drink what is 'true' rather than what is 'good'". When speaking about quality in wine he adds "I once produced a wine that was technically perfect but it lacked the charms of imperfection." I have no idea what this wine will be like, but I do know that it will tell me a story, it will speak a specific place with it's slopes and sunlight and soil, it will also speak of a year of unique weather — ideal or otherwise. It will introduce me to something I haven't yet encountered, and never will again. It may be quirky, it may not be a "perfect" 100 points, but it will be authentic and true and an instrumental expression of life. And life in all its unpredictable, imperfect, diversity is exactly what I want to sustain. It is exactly what sustains me, and that's why I drink it.

And finally, it's just damn boring to drink recipe wines. They're all the bloody same year in and year out. How dull is that?

Maison Joseph Drouhin 2005 LaForet Chard & Pinot

Our favorite bargain French Burgundies are back again. The 2005 vintage has blessed even the entry level wines of the region, and the Drouhin LaForet is no exception.

Maison Joseph Drouhin has been a negotiant in Burgundy since 1880. Primarily a negociant, Drouhin does own some vineyards and makes a few estate bottlings. Presently Drouhin is a proponent of maintaining healthy vineyards and buys fruit from organic and biodynamic growers. In French LaForet means "the forest."

The Chardonnay is a delicious blend of grapes from all over the Burgundy region, but primarily Chablis. Delicate tropics -- pear and pineapple, fresh, bright, lively finish. Good acidity. While it isn't going to be confused with a great Montrachet, it is a pleasurable example of the goodness of even simple white burgundy. \$9.99

Past vintages of the Pinot Noir have been everyday wines for some of us in the wine department, and the 2005 is living up to the reputation.

Again, the grapes are sourced from throughout Burgundy, but primarily the Cote de Beaune. Bright ruby-garnet in color, the nose is full with red berry aromas and on the palate it is classic burgundian cherry with a sense of spice. The wine is made partially in stainless and partially in oak; making a wine that is structured and full of fresh, fresh Pinot Noir fruit. \$10.99



Wine Club Selections

Cru Classe Club

**This month Christian picks Cru Classe*

Coudoulet de Beaucastel Blanc 2004

Coudoulet is a 3 hectare site that adjoins the vineyard of Château de Beaucastel, between Orange and Avignon. The wine is equal parts Marsanne, Viognier, and Bourboulene, with 10% Clairette. It is hand picked and does partial fermentation and maturation in oak barrels and part in steel tanks. The wine is pale yellow, with a nose of peach and honey. The oak influence creates a rich, full-bodied wine, but the finish is fresh and floral. Drink over the next 2-4 years. Parker gave it a 90.

Produturri del Barbaresco 2003

100% Nebbiolo grapes, grown in the Barbaresco district of Piedmonte. Nebbiolo has grown since the 13th century in Italy, and is also the grape of Barolo. The wine ferments in stainless steel for 2-3 weeks before racking and kept in vats until the following September. Then it's barrel aged for 1-2 years and rests in bottles for six months. It's elegant, rich in tannin, with a complex nose. In its youth it's a bit closed with nice, fruity aromas and a spicy, tannic finish. Drink over three or four days. At maturity, the complexity of flavors opens up to reveal aromas of dry flowers, white truffles, anise — to be drunk in 4-5 years or more.

Colognole Chianti Classico 2003

Purchased by the family of Count Spalletti Trivelli in the mid-nineteenth century Colognole continues to be a family owned estate to this day. 700 hectares of forest, olive groves, peach orchards and pasture lie alongside the 52 hectares of vineyard surrounding the family home. The farm is owned and managed by mother Contessa Gabriella Spalletti Trivelli and her three sons. In addition to wine Colognole also produces olive oil, Pecorino and Ricotta cheeses, peaches, and cereal grains.

Elegant beautiful Sangiovese cherry fruit with light spice and earth. I found this to be an exquisitely interesting and well balanced Chianti. One of the prettiest Chiantis to grace my palate in quite a while.

Cuvee Kermit Lynch Cotes-du-Rhone

Kermit Lynch is a name to know for those seeking to find great French wines. Seeing the Kermit Lynch label on the back of a bottle is as good as any guarantee that you will get a decent bottle of wine.

In the mouth this wine bursts with dark cherry flavors, notes of cedar and the right amount of dirt and earth in the background — in a good French wine kinda way. Supple tannins make it stand up straight.

Passport Club

2006 Mt Difficulty

Roaring Meg Pinto Noir

Mt Difficulty was founded in 1992 in the Central Otago region of New Zealand's South Island. Situated in Bannockburn, known for hot summers and cool autumns, Mt Difficulty has managed to harness the beauty of the tough to grow Pinot Noir grape.

The grapes for this wine come from selected premium Central Otago vineyards. It displays a lovely red cherry fruit, with a hint of spice from oak influence, and earth that I have experienced in several wines from Central Otago. Tannins rise out of the mid-palate the wine finishes with a great balance of fruit and acidity.



2006 Ceretto Arneis Blange 2006

Ceretto is one of Piedmonte major estates. Brothers Bruno and Marcello have been in charge since the 1960s and are known for striking a practical balance between maintaining the wine traditions of Italy and benefiting from modern innovation.

This delicate white wine has the smallest touch of CO2 for the perfect fizz. Crisp fresh fruit flavors of pear and apple make this a perfect spring wine. It will pair nicely with seafood or antipasti.

R & R Club

Puiatti Isonzo del Friuli "Le Zuccole"

Tocai 2005

Tocai is Friuli's indigenous white grape, not related to the French Tokay-Pinot Gris or Tokay from Hungary. Displays a nose of hard candy, a characteristic rapidly replaced by ripe yellow apple and nectarine fruit and skins on the palate. Tocai possesses great acidity, and the oakless production of this wines makes for a crisp refreshing finish. An extremely versatile wine, it can pair with many kinds of food: seafood, poultry, lighter and even spicy Thai cuisine.

San Giorgio Pinot Grigio

San Giorgio is produced at Fratelli Pasqua, a family owned winery that began in 1925.

Fresh and floral bouquet with a hint of pears and apricots. Fresh and inviting with bright fruit and an easy drinking style with a pleasing hint of almonds in the aftertaste.

May 2007



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brought us. The science behind culturing the right yeast for a specific type of grape or style of wine is a huge industry. Wines can be "cocktailed" accordingly with specific strains of yeast to create specific results in the bottle.

This was the basis of my friend's argument. With the technology to isolate certain strains of yeast, observe their behavior under certain conditions of fermentation, and be able to label and market them around the world as imparting certain qualities to the final product, these wines couldn't possibly speak of a place. Natural yeast is a part of that area where those grapes were grown. Those yeasts are harmonious with the whole process and only with natural yeasts can a wine speak of terroir. Using commercial yeast in wines is borrowing somebody else's terroir and introducing it to a place it doesn't belong.

Rosemary is a purest in the utmost sense when it comes to wine. We bantered back and forth on this subject for at least two hours that evening. It was truly a profound conversation. We are going to devote a few more articles for the upcoming newsletters on subjects like these. Regardless of whether you are an advocate of purity or terroir, it is an important question to ask, what's in your wine?



Big Australian Wine: Amon Ra & Godolphin!

Colin Glaetzer established Glaetzer wines in order to create benchmark Barossa Valley red wines. Colin and his son Ben work to create small production wines true to Barossa character. The renowned Ebenezer district with its low rainfall and relative humidity produce full, intensely colored wines from old, dry-grown vineyards. The softness, elegance and approachabil-



very old vines in Ebenezer district

ity of Ebenezer fruit has become the hallmark of the

Glaetzer 'house style'.

AMON-Ra is Glaetzer's flagship wine, named after Egyptian mythologies the King of all Gods, Amon-Ra. The storey goes that the temple of Amon-Ra is recorded as the birthplace of commercial winemaking, having the first ever large scale vineyard grown specifically to make wine for the citizens of the temple.

Glaetzer's AMON-Ra is made with 100% dry-grown

Shiraz from vines that are 100-110 years old. If that weren't intense enough the wine spends 14 months in new oak barrels. Dense purple color, the nose displays notes of blackberry and intense spice.

The wine is voluptuous with supple tannins to complement the richness

and viscosity. If that weren't convincing enough Parker gave it 98 points. Now that's big.

Godolphin is 80% dry-grown Shiraz from 85 year old vines, and 20% Cabernet from 60 year old vines. It ferments and completes Maloactic and matures in new oak barrels for 15 months. The fusion of Shiraz and Cabernet Sauvignon makes for a nose of chocolate, herbs, and blackberries, the oak contributes cedar and smoke and on the palate it is tightly focused with fine-grained tannin and incredible density. The finish is fresh and lively, with flavors that linger. Parker gives it a 93.

