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VOLUME 43 | NO. 1 | SPRING 2011

PLANET BORDEAUX

Bordeaux & Bordeaux Supérieur Regional Appellations

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A Visit to Taiwan's Pioneering
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EDITOR'S Message

The first measureable snow of the season has fallen and even Christmas carols on the radio don't soften the hard truth that I can no longer wear my slippers to go to the mailbox. I could, however, wear my slippers in the winery, but that is a different story.

I'm guessing that many home winemakers have "lost their marbles" trying to create the perfect wine. But how many have actually used their marbles? Ian Scott has. In this issue, he provides some helpful tips on how to manage additives, yes, using marbles.

For those of you looking for something completely different, wine writer Ellen Landis is back with new and refreshing recommendations on "21 Wines to Watch." This well-researched list presents a great opportunity for AWS chapters looking for new wines to highlight at group gatherings. And, since not everyone was able to attend this year's conference in Cincinnati, we offer articles that summarize two of this year's sessions: Planet Bordeaux and Wines of Navarra.

The Journal wouldn't be the Journal without at least one travel piece – this time up it's Taiwan, as seen from the eyes of Bill Wilen, an AWS certified wine judge, wine educator and amateur winemaker. Although Taiwan is no Napa Valley, there are some serious pioneers in the wine industry there – and, well, where would be without our pioneers?

Beginning with the next issue of the Journal, we would like to feature photos taken of our members while they were visiting wineries or vineyards here or abroad. To submit your photo and cutline, contact me at rink@americanwinesociety.org (high resolution pics please, in focus. Please contact our creative firm at steve@porterdesign.com with any questions). And if you want to wear your slippers to go to the mailbox, go right ahead.

Stay warm,



Jim Rink

Editor



Wine JOURNAL

VOLUME 43 NO. 1 • SPRING 2011

Published by
The American Wine Society,
a non-profit corporation,
PO Box 279, Englewood, OH 45322
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or pictorial content without written permission
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Number: TP544 A46A3 LC Card 76-647900

PUBLISHER

John Hames

EDITOR

Jim Rink

CONTRIBUTING WRITERS

Bibiana Guerra, Ellen Landis,
Jim Rink, Paul Wagner,
Bill Wilen, D. Ed., Ian Hugh Scott
David Falchek

EDITORIAL OFFICE

Jim Rink
2881 S. Lake Leelanau Drive
Lake Leelanau, MI 49653
rink@americanwinesociety.org

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ADVERTISING OFFICE

PO Box 279
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888-AWS-9070
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CREATIVE | PRODUCTION

Porter Design, Inc.

1340 Chandler Road
Lawrenceville, GA 30046
Phone: 404.925.2677
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The AWS is the largest consumer based wine education organization in the U.S.
A non-profit group, the AWS is devoted to educating people on all aspects of wine. Its members include wine novices, experts, grape growers, amateur and professional winemakers, chefs, wine appreciators, wine educators, restaurateurs and anyone wanting to learn more about wine and gastronomy.

AWS ACTIVITIES

AWS Chapters: Local community groups of AWS members sponsor programs, usually monthly. Activities include: tastings, dinners, lectures, picnics, winery tours, winemaking and cooking demonstrations, viticulture conferences, amateur wine-judging events, and other wine-related social events. Guests are welcome and novices have nothing to fear. Chapters are self-supporting, so expect a nominal charge to attend a tasting, dinner, etc. If a local chapter does not exist in your area, national will be glad to assist in forming a chapter. AWS furnishes a chapter manual, suggested meeting topics, and access to speakers and reference material. All that is needed are a few interested wine lovers. Meeting can be informal and held in member' homes or in other settings, such as restaurants and wineries.

AWS Regional Events: Organized by regional vice-presidents, include statewide wine judging, contests, special tastings, regional wine conferences, regional picnics and dinners.

AWS National Conference: Held each fall—a two and one-half day national conference and extravaganza of wine. Attendees become part of a tradition that has drawn wine-lovers, winemakers and gastronomes together every November for over 40 years. Prominent American and international speakers conduct seminars and lectures on all aspects of wine appreciation, wine production, grape growing and cuisine. Members experience fine food at connoisseur luncheons and dinners, tastings of hundreds of wines and royal treatment by the finest American hotels and resorts. The annual conference brings professionals, serious amateurs and novices together to discover what is new in wine.

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PLANET BORDEAUX

By Paul Wagner

Bordeaux & Bordeaux Supérieur Regional Appellations Featured at Annual Conference

There's no doubt about it: the highlight of this year's annual conference was the plenary session tasting organized by Planet Bordeaux. Wonderfully led by Xavier Mihade, owner of Château Recougne, and Bordeaux-based American, Jana Kravitz of Vin'Animus, the tasting covered eight wines from the world's wine capital, and provided a great selection of both wines and wine styles.

But this was no dry, academic tasting. Moderated by Paul Wagner, the tasting provided a lively discussion of wine, food, and life in the Bordeaux region. Xavier and Jana gave a delightful sense of what it is to live in Bordeaux wine country, and shared stories about the

wine producers and their families, local cuisine, bed & breakfasts in charming medieval villages, and the art de vivre in this most famous of wine cities.

The tasting began with a 2009 Château de la Vieille Tour Bordeaux Blanc. It was Eleanor of Aquitaine who ordered the first vines to be planted here in 1150, and the Pierre Boissonneau family has now owned this vineyard for four generations. Blended with 60 percent Sauvignon Blanc, 30 percent Sémillon and 10 percent Muscadelle, it was a bright and playful wine with a juicy medium body, moderate citrus and specks of acacia flower and fruit. As a contrast, the second wine was the

2009 Château Lamothe de Haux Bordeaux Blanc, in which the character of the Sauvignon Blanc was more noticeable with a blend of 40 percent Sauvignon Blanc, 40 percent Sémillon and 20 percent Muscadelle. Château Lamothe has belonged to the same family for three generations – and has had women winemakers at the helm! This is a wine with elegant notes of sweet Meyer lemon, tangerine blossoms and silky minerals.

For a real change of pace, the next wine was the fresh and delicious 2009 Mayne Sansac Bordeaux Rosé, blended with 80 percent Merlot and 20 percent Cabernet Sauvignon. This young wine had a vibrant, deep pink color, with a subtle, elegant nose revealing aromas of red fruits, including cherry and raspberry. The aromatic profile is complex, reflecting the red fruit flavors found in the nose and finishing on an attractive black currant note.

The next five wines were all reds, three Bordeaux AOCs and two Bordeaux Supérieur AOCs, each revealing their winemakers' style and vintage variation.

The first of the three Bordeaux Rouge was the 2007 Château Ballan-Larquette, which has been in the Chaigne family for

several generations. A blend of 50 percent Cabernet Sauvignon, 35 percent Merlot and 15 percent Cabernet Franc, it was nicely balanced, medium-bodied, it had great, round tannins and wonderful acidity. Made in a classic style, with earthy tobacco notes and red fruits, it was a perfect introduction to Bordeaux reds.

At Château de Lagarde, winemaker Lionel Raymond's vineyards are organic, and the winery employs many energy-conserving and ecologically friendly practices throughout production. Made with organic grapes, the 2007 L de Lagarde, with 60 percent Merlot, 30 percent Cabernet Sauvignon and 10 percent Cabernet Franc, was very perfumed, full of black plum and black currant flavors, with well-integrated fruit and acidity.

Maison Sichel's Sirius allowed Xavier Milhade to explain the important historic role of the wine merchant, or négociant, in Bordeaux. Named after the brightest star in the solar system, Sirius combines an excellent understanding of terroir with real expertise in the craft of winemaking. Deep, brilliant purple color with mature black fruits and a pronounced tannin structure, the 2005 Sirius, with 55 percent Merlot and 45 percent Cabernet Sauvignon, combined elegance, finesse, and character.

The last two wines were both Bordeaux Supérieur Rouge, which, thanks to strict regulations in the vineyards and cellar (lower yields, increased foliage surface, barrel ageing), the wines offer more complexity and structure. It was a great honor to have Xavier Milhade present his own 2006 Château Recougne, a blend of 75 percent Merlot, 15 percent Cabernet Sauvignon and 10 percent Cabernet Franc, which showed a nose with appealing ripe, red fruits and a mineral element. On the palate, the wine was medium to full-bodied, layers of rich flavors – plums, cherries and black currant – with fine, firm tannins that gave structure, balance and ageability.

The final wine was the L'Huillier family's 2005 Château Fleur Haut Gaussens. This estate is situated in the village of Verac on the Right Bank. Having been honored with the Best Bordeaux award by French wine magazine "La Revue du Vin de France," this is one château worth watching. With a blend of 90 percent Merlot, 5 percent Cabernet Sauvignon and 5 percent Cabernet Franc, there were loads of bright fruit, with strawberry, blackberry and vanilla. It was full-bodied with silky tannins and a medium finish.

It was a grand tasting, and a great selection of wines. And there was even more enthusiasm when Xavier Mil



Renie Steves, a wine journalist from Fort Worth, Texas, enjoys a glass of Bordeaux wine

had announced the prices of these wines, ranging from \$15 to \$25 a bottle. The Bordeaux tasting led to a delicious buffet lunch that was paired to complement these delightful, food-friendly wines. But before the lunch, the crowd first responded with a standing ovation for Xavier, Jana, and Paul – and, of course, the wonderful wines of Planet Bordeaux. 🍷

ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

Paul Wagner is President of Balzac Communications & Marketing in Napa Valley, CA.

Château Recougne's cellar



One of Château Recougne's many picturesque vineyards





By Bill Wilen, D.Ed.

A Visit to Taiwan's Pioneering Vineyard and Winery

Taiwan has a wine industry and it is growing slow but sure, but you would never know it from the literature available to us in the United States. Originally, I was not sure what to expect in terms of Taiwan's wine industry because I was not able to find any mention of Taiwan's vineyards in the more authoritative books I have come to depend on when preparing to do some foreign travel and taste indigenous wines. While I did find information on Chinese vineyards and wines, there was absolutely no mention of Taiwan in the current editions of books by well-known wine writers - Robert Parker, Jancis Robinson, and Tom Stevenson.

When my wife and I arrived in Taichung, Taiwan, to start my semester of graduate teaching in social studies education at National Taichung University as a visiting professor, we slowly became acclimated to the wine culture here by tasting a variety of Taiwanese grape wines. They were mostly sweet. One problem we had was that it was nearly impossible to translate the Chinese on the labels to know what we were drinking. I was able to soak off some labels and have them translated but not enough to generalize accurately. We did understand alcohol percentage and realized that many were distilled wines.

Central Taiwan is sub-tropical which translates into hot and humid for most of the year although it is a little cooler and much less humid as we are enjoying

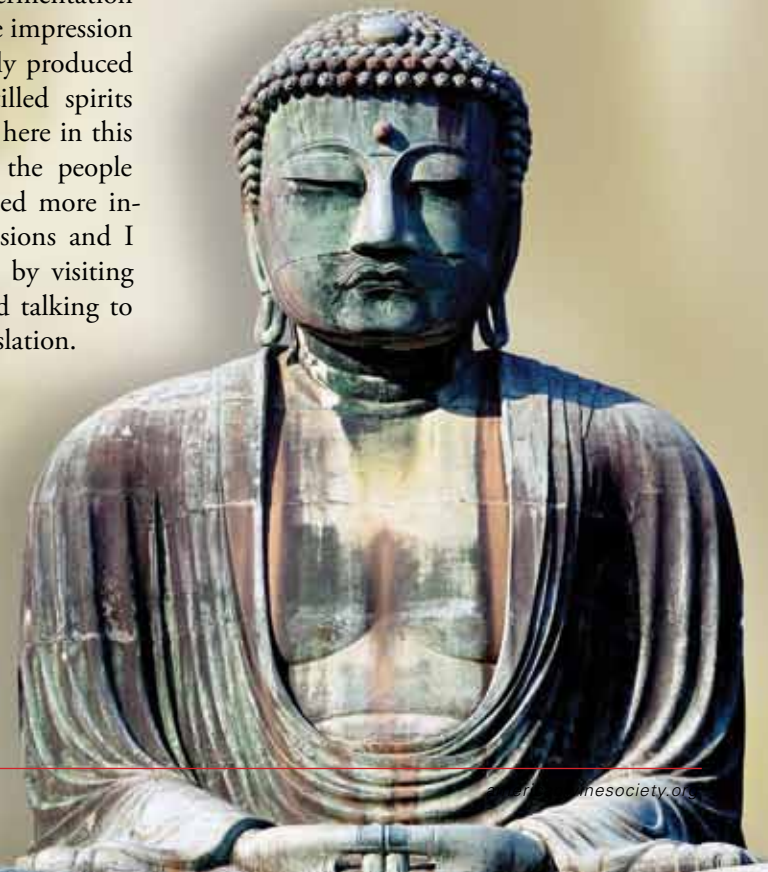
the Thanksgiving – New Year holiday season. The latitude for central Taiwan crosses southern China, central India, northern Africa and northern Mexico. A search of the internet (www.taiwanfun.com) produced information on seven vineyards located in the central part of the island where we were located – Taichung and Nantou counties. I read in the brief descriptions of wine products from five of the vineyards: “48-proof li-tchi wine...” “...made from Taiwanese onions or chives...” “...it is distilled three times, resulting in a clear plum liqueur...” “...produces six types of distinct spirits...” “...sugar cane is the main ingredient and steeped in specially selected rose petals...” and “...the winery uses tangerines in the fermentation process” (Cheng, 2004). The impression I was getting was that locally produced sweet fruit wines and distilled spirits were what they could make here in this difficult climate and what the people were willing to buy. I needed more information than just impressions and I realized I could only get it by visiting a grape vineyard/winery and talking to people with the help of translation.

Then I read about Shu-Sheng Domaine in Houli and that it was Taiwan's first privately owned grape wine estate and first grape vineyard. The fairly recent article at www.taiwan-panorama.com by Paul Frank (2007) said that

they were making wine from primarily two varieties of wine grapes – Black Queen, an imported Japanese hybrid, and Golden Muscat that they imported from the “Americas.”

Both varieties were first imported in the 1950s by the winemaker at Shu-Sheng, who is the grandfather of today's winemaker, Hung Chi-pei; he represents the 4th generation of winemakers at Shu-Sheng. Now my interest was piqued because, although Black Queen was a new variety to me, I knew of Muscat's potential since, as an amateur winemaker, I have made it in dry and dessert styles several times over the years.

One of many Buddha shrines throughout Taiwan



Mrs. Hung inspecting the grapes from Shu-Sheng Domaine

Paul Frank interviewed Mr. Hung at Shu-Sheng and reported on the vineyard's ups and downs over a 50-year period. They sold grapes to the Tobacco and Wine Monopoly Bureau, now the Taiwan Tobacco and Liquor Corporation (TTL), until the mid-nineties when it stopped buying. Most of the vineyard was converted into an orange and tangerine farm and Hung tried making a living with other odd jobs including running a karaoke bar and a betel nut stand, until the earthquake in 1999 when Taichung County was hit hard.

Within a couple of years it was realized that the area could recover and the fruit industry could be revitalized if it converted to grape growing and winemaking. One positive characteristic that they could capitalize on is that the soil is sandy and therefore, relatively well-drained. The vineyard “got a new lease on life” after Hung became re-educated about how young vines could be grafted onto the old ones, some of which were still in the old vineyard, learning how to become a winemaker and manager by taking some winemaking courses, and securing loans from the government to buy equipment (Frank, 2007). According to the Taipei Times (July 10, 2003), five other “tourist vineyards” were also founded in the earthquake zone and started commercial operations in 2003.

Shortly after I expressed my interest in visiting Domaine Shu-Sheng, my host and departmental chair invited my wife and I to visit this pioneering vineyard and winery, which was only 45 minutes away. So off we went to learn first hand. When we arrived we were greeted by an associate who was responsible for providing a tour through the vineyard and the cellar, and conducting a tasting in their tasting room and modern gift shop. We met the vineyard manager and the son of the winemaker.

The most obvious difference between Shu-Sheng and vineyards in our country was that the vines were all trellised about six feet above the ground and completely covered with permanent netting. Since I couldn't get an answer on the reason for the trellising, I assumed it was to give the vines maximum sun exposure and create airflow through all the vines to reduce the possibility of fungus and molds in a very humid climate. We have since noticed at other vineyards workers picking the grapes while standing on pails so they are almost the right height for the job. We were told that birds were the reason for the protective netting. So we walked in the vineyard under the vines. Our second surprise was finding out how busy they were because they have several harvests a year – table grapes are harvested three times per year; Black Queen, twice; and Golden Muscat, once.

We walked through the wine production building noticing several large stainless steel fermenters and the usual crusher/de-stemmer, filtering and bottling machines. I was allowed to walk through the wine laboratory and saw some familiar testing equipment.

Afterwards we went to the tasting room and our guide led us through a tasting of six of the nine different styles of wines and liqueurs they produce. All the wines were non-vintage and served in very small shot glasses. Our first was a Golden Muscat made in a dry style at 12 percent alcohol. It was light straw in color, had minimal nose but had a very good Muscat taste. Too bad it was slightly harsh in the finish. Next was another Golden Muscat called “Ice Mode,” which is their style of ice wine; it comes in the tall ice wine style bottle (375ml) that we have in northern Ohio for our Vidal Ice Wine. It too had minimal nose but was quite flavorful and sweet (we were told there was 18 percent residual sugar). The label indicated that it was at 10 percent alcohol. It's most outstanding characteristic was its smoothness.

I had read in Paul Franks' article about how, because it never freezes in this

A creative entrance to Shu-Sheng winery





The shop at the Shu-Sheng winery

area of Taiwan, the winemaker puts the Golden Muscat grapes in a freezer to allow them to “hibernate” for about a month. Then, upon pressing, 30 percent of the frozen water is eliminated allowing the sugar to concentrate making them sweeter. I thought this was an example of “necessity is the mother of invention.” We then switched to the red Black Queen wine called “Enjoy” for our third wine. It was medium red and sweet with a little spiciness, at 12 percent alcohol. But, it had very little finish (the label indicated that “it tastes slightly sour and bitter”). We were told that “Taiwanese like sweet wine.”

For the fourth wine we had another Black Queen but produced in a dry style; it was also at 12 percent. The label said in English, “It is a brand new wine with fresh taste and also full of fragrance. When tasting at the first time, you might find it sour, but the fragrances of cherry and cranberry will soon come through.” It was medium red, with some cherries in the nose, semi-dry with a little sugar and, true to what the label said, was slightly tart, which I suspect was also due to it being recently bottled. After our initial tasting, our guide gave us each a small berry to taste, which she called “mystery fruit.” We went along with her suggestion and found the berry had a seed and was very tart. She then re-poured the Black Queen we just had and, magically, the taste of the wine became noticeably sweeter, and smoother. Our taste buds had changed!

The fifth wine was so totally different because it was a coffee liqueur called “Mambra Liqueur” which was also from

a 375ml bottle. It was delicious. We were told that coffee was added to Black Queen and fortified to 18 percent alcohol – it tasted like iced coffee with a kick. The label said that the “Mandheling coffee bean” was used in the production. My wife thought it tasted like a brandy Alexander. Our final wine was Bacchus and it is their distilled wine at 40 percent alcohol and also served in the 375ml bottle. It was Golden Muscat – sweet but very strong like brandy. Its bite was such that I didn’t finish my mini-shot glass amount.

What a fascinating experience – having mostly non-traditional wines and liqueurs at a pioneering grape vineyard in Taiwan! When I think of pioneers in Ohio’s wine industry I think of Arnie Esterer of Markko Vineyards, who was the first to successfully to grow vinifera grapes. He learned from another pioneer, Konstantin Frank, in New York. Where would we be without pioneers! Today, Ohio has over 100 vineyards in operation. Afterwards, we were shown some of the awards won by the wines with the main one featured being the Golden Muscat, which had taken a first in a Taiwan wine competition. It was clearly our favorite in this tasting.

Since visiting Shu-Sheng Domaine, my wife and I have been to three other vineyards/wineries, neither of which compared with the experience and, for the most part, the quality of the wines we had at Shu-Sheng. One exception though, was a trip we took to Yiquing Ranch and Winery in Nantou County where we tasted wine made from the Jufeng grape, which is indigenous to Taiwan. It is considered the other major wine producing grape along with Black Queen but it was also produced in a sweet style.

So what have we learned about another area of the world trying to establish a modern wine making industry under very difficult circumstances? We learned that the efforts of pioneers at Domaine Shu-Sheng in Taichung County are starting to

pay off because there is potential for grapes such as Black Queen, Golden Muscat, and perhaps Jufeng, to produce quality wine. Given the sub-tropical climate and the current taste of the Taiwanese people it looks like semi-dry to sweet grape, fruit, and fortified wines and distilled spirits will remain on the agenda for the immediate future. Paul Frank concluded his interview with Hung, “The four generations of Shu-Sheng winemakers are mindful of their many blessings, have deep roots in their land and culture, and are discovering ever-new delights” (Frank, 2007). Maybe in five to 10 years we need to return and see if other vineyards and wineries have continued the pioneering spirit and to explore new directions in grape wine production.

Bill Wilen is an AWS certified wine judge, wine educator and amateur winemaker. He has earned numerous awards for his wines in state, regional and national competitions. 🍷

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NOTES OF THANKS:

Special note of thanks to Dr. Ya-Hui Hsueh for arranging the visit, accompanying us to Shu-Sheng Domaine, and her oral translation, and to Chi-Yuan Chang for her translation of the wine brochure of Domaine Shu-Sheng

Don’t Lose Your Marbles - Keep Them For Your Home Winemaking

“Marbles for home winemaking?” you ask. “What on earth would marbles have to do with making wine?” Well, marbles certainly won’t impart any flavors to your wine (unless of course you have not sanitized them first - and that would be a bad thing), but marbles can come in very handy. Marbles don’t seem to be as popular in the school playgrounds as they were when I was in grade two, but we used to have fun with both the large and small size marbles. Both sizes can be very handy in your winemaking endeavors.

wine at home with some imagination using cheese cloth, thread and needle. For the carboy that has a small opening, you’ll of course want to make or purchase smaller bags that will easily fit through the mouth of the carboy when you want to remove it. If you’re planning on using oak cubes, consider that it will be easier to remove a bag with oak cubes the closer the width of the bag is to the size of the cubes. Pulling a bag out through a small opening, even though you managed to squeeze them in, will be much more difficult when the cubes all

test fishing line works well, and you will still have a tight fit for your bung and airlock assembly.

Marbles can also useful after you have racked your wine from one fermentation vessel to another. Sometimes, when trying to avoid siphoning the sediment from the bottom, you’ll lose a small quantity of wine and end up with too much head space (officially referred to as ullage). When this occurs, home winemakers are often told to “top off” the wine to decrease the head space between the carboy opening and the top of the wine. Topping off with the same style of wine is preferred when this happens, but often you might not have any available. Some wine kits advise to top off with water. What you can also do is use the marbles to displace the air. Don’t just simply drop your marbles into the carboy, though! Use the nylon bag as described above. As the marbles are submerged into the wine, the headspace will be reduced. As always, be sure to use glass marbles that have been sanitized thoroughly in a sulfite water solution.

Ian Hugh Scott has been making his own wine for years. As well as wines from commercially available kits, he has discovered the pleasures of experimenting with other ingredients such as black currants, strawberries, blueberries, and even ginger and parsnip! Follow along with Ian’s regular home winemaking activities at his blog: <http://homewinery.info/blog>. 🍷



Some winemakers love to make use of additives such as oak cubes, oak chips, or elderberry flowers to their carboys while their wine is fermenting and/or bulk aging. The problem is, these additives will float on the top of the wine and much of their effectiveness is lost. So what can you do to increase the effectiveness of your oak or dried elderberry flowers? Use your marbles! You can purchase nylon mesh bags in various sizes or you can make your own like others who make

bunch up together where the diameter of the carboy is smaller at it’s opening. Once you have your bag, throw in a few marbles first (you should test to find out how many marbles you will need if you are submersing oak to ensure they sink below the surface). Then add your additive ingredients. Tie a knot in the top of your bag, and then attach a string that is long enough string that can extend from the top of the submerged bag to hang outside of the carboy. For this, 10-pound

ARTICLE SOURCE

<http://tinyurl.com/ybgtjlq>

WINES of Navarra

By Paul Wagner

The Wines of Navarra were front and center at the annual conference in Cincinnati this year. Paul Wagner, President of Balzac Communications & Marketing in Napa, gave an in-depth look at the wines to a sold out seminar audience of more than 90 AWS members, and then treated the whole conference to a wine and food pairing luncheon with dozens of Navarra's fresh and fruity rosados, whites and reds.

During the lunch, the seminar attendees were encouraged to share some of the stories with their luncheon tables, and they did that with pleasure. They had heard about the region's importance in Spanish history, its centuries of winemaking, and the convergence of European cultures, climates and traditions that make Navarra the fascinating wine region that it is today. For those who were not able to attend Paul Wagner's entertaining presentations, here are some of his fun and educational facts:

During the Crusades, Navarra and its capital, Pamplona, became an important gathering point on the pilgrimage route to Santiago de Compostela. Twelfth century guidebooks recommend the wine of Navarra to pilgrims making the journey.

Along with Canterbury, Camino de Santiago, or St. James Way, is one of the great pilgrimage routes in Europe. This steady traffic of religious visitors from all over Europe gave Navarra exposure to many different cultures and traditions, including contact with winemakers in the major wine regions of France, Germany and Italy – and this has led to a very innovative and open-minded approach to wine in the region.

Geographically, Navarra is also a convergence of three different climates: 1) the Atlantic influence from France to the northeast, 2) the Mediterranean influence from Toro, Ribera del Duero and other areas of the Castilla y Leon to the west, and 3) Continental influences from more southerly regions such as La Mancha.

The region today remains an autonomously ruled kingdom within Spain. Navarra's capital, Pamplona, is famous for its festival of San Fermin and the running of the bulls through the ancient historic center. San Fermin is a week-long festival and the city comes alive with hundreds of thousands of people, all celebrating a history and shared experience that goes back more than a thousand years.

Starting in the foothills of the Pyrenees to the north and through the southern Ebro plains (the region's vegetable garden), Navarra is dotted with ancient castles and monasteries and home to music and classical theatre festivals. This is a land of adventure, and the Navarra that guests at the American Wine Society Conference got to know.

All of the wines tasted were D.O. Navarra – a designation signifying quality in the region. Among the producers who provided wines to the conference were: Bodega de Sarria, Bodega Inurrieta, Bodega Otazu, Bodegas Chivite, Bodegas Marco Real, Bodegas Castilla de Monjardin, Bodegas Ochoa, Bodega del Romero, Bodegas Piedemonte, Bodegas Principe de Viana, Bodega Cirbonera, Bodegas San Martin and Bodegas Campos de Enanzo.

Wines are produced from native Spanish grapes, Tempranillo and Garnacha, but also from Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Chardonnay and almost a dozen other varieties. These latter grapes were brought by the European travelers and have been planted in Navarra for centuries – in fact, long before France became a country.

But the conference session wines are only half the story. The other half was the delicious wines on the table, which paired beautifully with the lunch and charmed the audience of more than 450 wine lovers! 🍷

ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

Paul Wagner is President of Balzac Communications & Marketing in Napa Valley, CA.



Award of Merit

by David Falchek

Pennsylvania Wine Pioneers Earn 2010 AWS Award of Merit

On Saturday, November 13, 2010, Chaddsford Winery founders Eric and Lee Miller were awarded the American Wine Society's Award of Merit, given annually to a wine industry professional who has made a significant contribution to the advancement of American wines.

In this honor, the Millers join an illustrious group of wine industry professionals that includes legends such as Mike Grgich, Zelma Long, and Kent Rosenblum.

Of the 500 attendees at the conference, Pennsylvanians were well represented. As the room erupted in applause, and the Millers walked to the dais to receive the award from AWS President Willis Parker, faces of Pennsylvanians beamed with even greater pride.

The Millers are true pioneers in the eastern wine industry. Lee Miller co-founded Wine East magazine, which served the wine industry East of the Rocky Mountains. Eric Miller's family founded Benmarl Winery in the Hudson Valley. But he and Lee staked a claim in Chadds Ford to produce European-style wines. They made Chaddsford Winery a leader through example, rather than power. Through quality and innovation, Chaddsford has become the largest, and arguably the

best, wine producer in the Keystone State. Eric and Lee are a couple in the truest sense of the word. Their affection for each other is palpable.

"Everyone knows me as winemaker," he said. "But Lee has the harder job and what she does makes what I do, and everything else, possible."

Miller didn't talk about himself. He spoke about why he liked the American Wine Society. It recognizes winemakers. Its members' exploration of wine includes regional wines and wines of unconventional grapes such as French-American hybrids.

"Thank you for not calling it the Vinifera Wine Society," he said. "Where would we be without Vidal ice wine? Part of the reason it exists for us today is because of the AWS."

Dr. Konstantin Frank, who helped found the AWS, abhorred hybrid grapes and Miller divested of Benmarl because he wanted to make vinifera wines. Yet, he has produced outstanding wines of white hybrids and spectacular expressions of the red Chambourcin.

"There is so much knowledge and depth in this group where everyone is invited and everyone is welcome," he said.

After founding Chaddsford in 1982, Lee and Eric decided they couldn't afford to be in the same place at the same time – there was too much work to do. Long supporters of AWS efforts, Eric would dutifully schlep off the American Wine Society Conference to make a presentation or pour at the Grand Tasting, leaving Lee behind to mind the store and home.

"All these years I thought it was a great deal until I finally came here," she said. "Now, I see people eating and drinking and making friends. And eating and drinking more."

As Lee and Eric were given the award to thunderous applause, tables of Pennsylvanians stood up – some raised glasses to the pair, others fist-pumped. Eric kissed Lee on the head. 🍷

Reprinted from David Falchek's Empty Bottle Wine Blog. In addition to his blog, David writes a weekly wine column for several newspapers in Pennsylvania, including the Scranton Times-Tribune. A longtime AWS member, David was in attendance at the ceremony where the Millers received their award.

Evaluation of the consistency of wine quality assessments from expert wine tasters

By Bibiana Guerra

Food and beverage quality has been defined as “the ability of a set of inherent characteristics of a product to fulfill the requirements of customers.” Evaluation of wine quality is normally undertaken by “wine experts” - tasters whose experience and training allows them to evaluate whether defects are present and whether the wine typifies the variety, region, or style intended. But, as the authors note, this is no guarantee that individual experts will weigh the different dimensions of a wine in a similar way.

These authors believe that, for a quality score to start having any value, an expert taster

should first be able to demonstrate her/his ability to reproduce a quality score when assessing the same wine several times. The goal of this study was to find out if expert tasters could indeed do that.

The authors collected wine quality score data from 571 wine experts over a period of 15 years. (The experts were participants in an “Advanced Wine Assessment Course” conducted by the Australian Wine Research Institute). The wine expert demographics were as follows: 75 percent winemakers, 14 percent wine traders, 8 percent wine researchers, and 3 percent wine journalists. As for the wines, they represented a diverse range of varieties and styles familiar to the group, including Chardonnay, Sauvignon blanc, Riesling, and their blends, for whites; and Syrah, Cabernet Sauvignon, Grenache, Pinot noir, Merlot, and their blends, for reds.

During the study, test wines and their duplicates were embedded within large flights of wines, which represented particular varieties and styles each session. Thus, even though the expert tasters were aware that their judging performance was being evaluated, they were unaware which of the presented wines were being used to evaluate their consistency.

The judges scored the wines for “overall quality” using a 20-point scale. In arriving at this score, judges were allowed to weigh the different aspects of wine quality in any way that they considered fit. Once the data was collected, the authors used a variety of sophisticated statistical analyses to evaluate: 1) each individual wine expert’s consistency, 2) the individual wine expert’s ability to discriminate wines, 3) intra-panel consistency of small groups of 3 experts, 4) the consistency between the assessment of red and white wines, and 5) the evolution of a wine expert consistency over time.

The authors make a distinction that is worth mentioning. Even though “reliability,” “consistency” and “category agreement” might all seem the same to you (they certainly do to me), the authors did use different tests to measure each. Let’s see how they defined each. They would consider a judge to be “reliable” if, the second time around, his/her bottom wines still got low scores, and his/her top wines got proportionally high scores, even if the scores were all 2 points higher, or lower, the second time. But this judge would not be “consistent.” To try to differentiate between these two, the authors measured two statistics (“regression correlation” to gauge reliability; and “absolute difference between scores”, to measure consistency), but because even these two statistics were insufficient, they had to introduce a third statistic (“category agreement”, or the percentage of times two scores for the same wine fell in the same quality category). In any event, let’s see the results:



1) Consistency of individual assessors.

When the authors measured reliability - or the “regression coefficient” between both sets of scores, they found that two thirds of judges showed significant reliability when judging red wines, and only half showed significant reliability with white wines. When the authors measured consistency – or the “absolute difference between scores,” they found that most of the judges were consistent. Finally, when the authors measured “category agreement,” they found that it was moderate to very high, even though it was significantly higher for reds than for whites. In brief, judges were better at reproducing a quality score for a red wine

than for a white wine. The authors attribute this difference to the possibility that, in red wines, the judges may have used visual color as a cue to quality. Color intensity has previously been shown to correlate well with flavor and other positive characteristics of wine.

2) Ability of individual assessors to discriminate wines.

By comparing the intra-wine and inter-wine score variability, the authors noticed that 64 percent of the judges discriminated among red wines better than they did among white wines. Overall, these results indicated that the majority of the judges achieved a consistent scoring pattern not by scoring all the wines in a narrow range, but rather by adequately discriminating among them and giving them widely different scores. Previous studies have suggested that the simultaneous presence of high reliability and high discrimination characterizes an experienced and confident judge.

3) Consistency of panels of assessors.

The authors observed that red wine score consistency was improved when using the combined scores of three expert tasters. Even if this trend was less clear for white wines, the authors believe these findings justify the current practice in Australian wine judgments of using a small panel of tasters.

4) Changes in assessor consistency over time.

Since this study spanned 15 years, it would be conceivable that the ability of the judges to give quality scores might have changed over time. When the authors tested this, they could see that no systematic change in performance had taken place. [Does this mean that the average quality of Australian wine has been stagnant for the last 15 years? Alternatively, an improvement in high-end categories may have been offset by the emergence of low price-point brands. We don’t have enough information].

In conclusion, when judging “overall quality” expert tasters were better able to allocate red wines to the same quality category than white wines, and this ability improved by combining the scores of three wine experts. This indicates that the common practice of using a small panel of wine experts to judge wine “overall quality” is well-justified. 🍷

This summary series funded by J. Lohr Vineyards & Wines.

For complete article see R. Gawell and P. Godden In: Australian Journal of Grape and Wine Research. 14(1): 1-8. 2008



by Ellen Landis

Medrano Estate Vineyards
2010 Torrontes
Salta, Argentina

Pungent citrus blossom aromas and a lovely purity of tropical and stone fruit on the palate create a brightly shining package with this tangy Torrontes from the northern Argentine region, Salta. The flavors of melon, white peach and flecks of citrus rind deftly balanced with just the right degree of acidity makes this wine simply irresistible.

SRP: \$13.50

Food Pairing: Seared scallops with beurre blanc sauce

www.filuswine.com

LaZarre 2007 Pinot Noir
Central Coast, California

Alluring mushroom, cherry and forest floor nuances on the nose make a perfect introduction to the mesmerizing layers of black cherry, raspberry, spice and herbaceous notes that fill the palate. Excellent weight with well-integrated silky tannins and toasty oak accents, this elegant Pinot Noir is balanced and stylish from its inviting start to the lip-smacking, persistent finish.

Food pairing: Roasted filet of salmon with a wild mushroom compote

SRP: \$35

www.lazarrewines.com

Arborbrook Vineyards
2009 Croft Vineyards Pinot Gris
Chehalem Mountains AVA, Oregon

Captivating aromas of honeysuckle and juicy pears splashed with fresh squeezed citrus draw you into the glass and keep your attention fully engaged. The succulent, ripened tree fruit, grapefruit and lemon-lime notes fill the palate gloriously. Bright acidity is another bonus with this lovely 100-percent stainless steel fermented Pinot Gris.

Food pairing: Butternut squash ravioli

SRP: \$18

www.arborbrookwines.com

Mazzocco
2008 Zinfandel
Reserve Smith Orchard
Dry Creek Valley, California

Glorious aromas rich with jammy fruit and complementary floral notes waft from the glass. Flavors are equally compelling with nutmeg and crushed red peppercorn nuances weaving throughout a lush mouthful of cocoa dusted blackberries. A nice touch of oak highlights the 18-month aging in French barrels; beautifully integrated.

Food pairing: Cuban pulled pork with Zinfandel mojo sauce

SRP: \$50

www.mazzocco.com

Mercer Estates
2007 Merlot
Columbia Valley, Washington

The nose captures sun-ripened cherries and enticing spice, and that's just the beginning. This velvety Merlot opens expansively on the palate with flavors of fresh picked blueberries and cherries accented deliciously by milk chocolate and baking spices. Smooth tannins fill out the seductive package.

Food Pairing: Lamb Noisettes with savory rosemary sauce

SRP: \$23

www.mercerwine.com

2006 Kelleher Family Vineyard
Brix Vineyard Cabernet Sauvignon
Oakville, California

Black currant and spice box aromas that fill the nose broaden deeply on the palate. Crème de cassis, tobacco and dry earth notes meld harmoniously together and hints of dark chocolate add further dimension. Complex and deep, this is a powerfully structured Cabernet with a solid backbone of firm tannins that will benefit from decanting now, and should age magnificently for decades.

Food pairing: Chateaubriand

SRP: \$82

www.kelleherwines.com

Kavaklidere Winery
2009 Egeo Rosé
Aegean, Turkey

This enticing, well structured rosé (made from 60 percent Cal Karasi, 25 percent Syrah and 15 percent Grenache) displays vibrant notes of freshly picked strawberries prominently on the nose. This attractively dry rosé offers a delicious mouth full of red cherry, strawberry and peach tones and a splash of citrus that all intermingle gloriously, creating a uplifting, elegant wine.

Food pairing: Grilled halibut with fruit salsa

SRP: \$19

www.kavaklidere.com

Channing Daughters
2008 Tocai Friulano
Sylvanus Vineyard
South Fork, Long Island New York

Expressive aromas of tree fruits and herbs suggest freshness in the glass, and this lovely dry white variety (most known from Northern Italy) delivers in spades. Delicious crisp pear and lemon zest accented by a dash of herbs coat the palate, and the fruit is well balanced with snappy acidity.

Food pairing: Chicken broccoli stir fry

SRP: \$24

www.channingdaughters.com

Charles Krug
2006 Vintage Select
Cabernet Sauvignon
Napa Valley, California

The intense aromas of this classic Napa Valley Cabernet really wow the senses. Round and voluptuous in the mouth with dark plums and black cherries that meld beautifully together and are artfully framed by firmly structured tannins. Finishes with quite a grip; this Cab is built to go the distance.

Food Pairing: Grilled prime rib with creamed horseradish sauce

SRP: \$69

www.charleskrug.com

Les Hospices
2009 Sancerre
Loire Valley, France

Floral and mineral notes captivate the nose and lead to citrus infused stone fruit, crushed river rock and a sprinkling of fresh herbs that are beautifully lifted on the palate with brisk acidity.

Clean and skillfully balanced; here is an exquisite example of Sauvignon Blanc exemplifying the terroir of the Sancerre region.

Food pairing: Fresh oysters on the half shell

SRP: \$22.50

www.pierrechanier.com

Ayres Vineyard
2009 Pioneer Ribbon Ridge Pinot Noir
Northern Willamette Valley, Oregon

Scents of sweet cherries and boysenberries lure you into the glass and remain focused with a pleasing earthiness and baking spices of cinnamon, nutmeg and allspice weaving throughout. This polished single estate 667 clone Pinot Noir boasts lively acidity and a good depth of flavors, and remains very well balanced through the lingering finish.

Food pairing: Salmon en croute

SRP: \$39

www.ayresvineyard.com

Ritzman
2009 (QbA) Riesling
Pfalz, Germany

Here is a great value Riesling blended with a bit of Silvaner and Müller Thurgau from the Pfalz region of Germany. Floral aromas provide a nice lead in to the attractive balance of fruit and acidity and pleasing touch of sweetness. Light and graceful on the palate; a pleasurable and easy-to-quaff wine.

Food Pairing: Chinese chicken salad with toasted almonds

SRP: \$10.50

Sherwood House Vineyards
2005 Blanc de Blanc Sparkling Wine
North Fork, Long Island, New York

Gorgeous yeasty, freshly risen bread dough aromas send you eagerly into the glass, where you'll find bright pear and butter cookie flavors and a pretty touch of citrus delectably intertwining with the yeasty notes on the palate. The steady stream of tiny bubbles stays lively through the bright finish.

Food pairing: Crab and avocado California rolls

SRP: \$37

www.sherwoodhousevineyards.com

De Ponte Cellars
2008 Dundee Hills Estate Pinot Noir
Dundee Hills, Northwest Oregon

This shining PN (aged 15 months in 50 percent new French oak barrels) opens with alluring aromas of wild raspberry and hints of vanilla bean and expands broadly on mid palate with layers of cherry, minerality, spice and subtle earth notes. Smooth as silk and deftly balanced; a Pinot Noir that should age gracefully for years.

Food pairing: Roasted duck with cherry sauce

SRP: \$55

www.depontecellars.com

Shinn Estate Vineyards
2007 Estate Merlot
North Fork, Long Island New York

Plump juicy blueberries and a splash of vanilla fill the senses splendidly. Lush and balanced with mouth filling layers of plums, blueberries, milk chocolate and spice that intertwine harmoniously alongside firm tannins that suggest age worthiness; good length too - beautifully crafted Merlot.

Food pairing: Braised lamb shanks

SRP: \$24

www.shinnestatevineyards.com

Cherry Creek Cellars
2008 Raceway Red
Albion, Michigan

A blend of Cab Franc, Chambourcin and Chancellor, this nicely made wine really sings. Forward cherry and spice aromas open the door to the purity of fresh berry and ripe cherry flavors showcased on the palate. Its sweetness is obvious but not over the top. The soft, round mouth feel of this price friendly wine is especially pleasing for those seeking a bit of sweetness in their red table wine.

Food pairing: Grilled sausage and peppers

SRP: \$14

www.cherrycreekwine.com

Black Star Farms
2009 Arcturos Riesling
Old Mission Peninsula, Michigan

This irresistible Riesling opens with delightful aromas of citrus and a fragrant bouquet of spring flowers, and stays focused on the palate with succulent white peach and nectarine flavors wrapped around a firm core of acidity; a nice touch of minerality adds complexity.

Food pairing: Pan seared shrimp

SRP: \$16.50

www.blackstarfarms.com

Forty-Five North Vineyard & Winery
2009 Blanc de Pinot Noir
Lake Leelanau, Northern Michigan

The beauty of this mouthwatering rosé begins with the brilliant rosy pink hue, and it bursts open with fresh strawberry and red raspberry flavors weaving harmoniously on the palate; well balanced with a nice touch of sweetness. Think biting into a fresh picked sun ripened strawberry, juicy and tasty on the palate and refreshing with a good level of acidity.

Food pairing: Herbed cheese appetizer

SRP: \$24

www.fortyfivenorth.com

James Arthur Vineyards
2009 “2 Brothers” LaCrosse
Raymond, Nebraska

LaCrosse is a white hybrid grape (created by Elmer Swenson) that does very well in cold winter climates. This wine is delightfully fruity and lifted on the palate with sweet and tart tones intermingling tastefully from start to finish. Bright fruit with a hint of citrus, this wine sits pretty on the palate with a smooth texture and pleasing aftertaste.

Food pairing: Sweet and sour chicken

SRP: \$16

www.jamesarthurvineyards.com

Prairie Moon Winery
2007 Winter Moon Vidal
Blanc Ice Wine
Ames, Iowa

Intoxicating aromas of freshly sauted apple slices dotted with brown sugar and a drizzle of honey completely entrance the nose. Powerfully built with decadent layers of baked apples and pears, creamy butter, honey and spice that richly coat the palate; finishes long.

Food pairing: Fresh apple tart

SRP: \$50

www.prairiemoonwinery.com

Wolffer Estate
2008 Diosa Late Harvest Chardonnay
South Fork, Long Island, New York

Honeyed aromas leap from the glass and segue smoothly to flavors bursting of caramelized peaches, honey dotted apricots and roasted nuts. Decadent and rich yet not cloying, with the ideal level of acidity keeping it vibrant and promising a long life.

Food pairing: Warm peach crisp

SRP: \$37

www.wolffer.com

ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

Ellen Landis, a published Wine Writer, Certified Sommelier and Wine Consultant, is involved with many aspects throughout the world of wine. As Wine Director and Sommelier at Landis Shores Oceanfront Inn (Half Moon Bay, CA), which she co-owns with husband and chef Ken Landis, she coordinates and hosts wine events to help further educate wine aficionados. She was also a Sommelier at the Ritz Carlton for 4 years. Ellen has traveled extensively to many wine regions throughout North America and overseas. Visit her blog at *www.ellen-onwine.com*.

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by Jim Rink

THE DURAND FETCHES FRAGILE CORKS



The Durand is a Michigan railroad history museum, a line of demarcation in Afghanistan, and a newly patented device that is amazingly effective in removing older and fragile wine bottle corks whole and undamaged. Designed by a prominent wine collector, and named after world-renowned Sommelier Yves Durand, it has been “repeatedly tested on the most challenging corks.”

Mark Taylor, a wine collector known for outstanding vertical tastings, developed and produced the Durand, after struggling with difficulties in opening some older wines. The Durand is a fully patented and surprisingly simple two-part device that permits the user to successfully remove older and fragile wine bottle corks whole and intact.

The Durand has been tested and used with great success by numerous wine lovers, collectors and locally and internationally known sommeliers. Before the Durand, most corks, old and new, were removed from wine bottles using two or three basic methods, with mixed results.

“In March of 2009, I served as M.C. at a superb wine savoring of six old Clarets followed by six old Burgundies. Not one cork broke or crumbled. It was a remarkable experience. I believe any serious oenophile should own a Durand,” said the product’s namesake Yves Durand, voted best sommelier in America in 1985.

Instructions for use are printed on the inside of the reusable wrapper that encloses the charming presentation box of the Durand. For more information, visit <http://thedurand.com>.

WINE - NOTHING TO SNEEZE AT

Researchers from the University of Southern Denmark may have found the explanation why some people get allergies from drinking wine. They have discovered that there are certain proteins in white wine that may be causing the problem.

Along with his colleagues, Giuseppe Palmisano, a post-doctoral candidate in Martin Røssel Larsen's research group at the Department of Biochemistry and Molecular Biology, conducted in-depth studies with Chardonnay. He found glycosylated proteins (proteins with sugar structures) that have very strong similarities to known allergens and may thus be the reason why so many in the world have an allergy to wine.

The new knowledge may help wine producers to produce wines in the future that are more hypoallergenic, so allergy sufferers may have the opportunity to enjoy a glass of wine without runny noses, sneezing and/or breathing difficulties.

DOORS OPEN AT NORTH CAROLINA CENTER FOR VITICULTURE AND ENOLOGY

On November 5, 2010, the doors for the Shelton-Badgett North Carolina Center for Viticulture and Enology officially opened. Named for the family of Charlie and Ed Shelton, owners of Shelton Vineyards, the new center is part of Surry Community College in Dobson, NC. The center will serve the grape and wine industry, not only in North Carolina, but the entire Southeast, providing workforce training and industry support. North Carolina currently has 80 wineries and 400 vineyards. According to the North Carolina Grape and Wine Council, the industry contributes \$813 million annually to the state’s economy and provides 5,700 jobs.

The center is a \$5 million complex, funded through North Carolina General Assembly appropriations, North Carolina Community College System grants, North Carolina state bonds, and private donations. Surry Community College began offering courses in viticulture in 1999 and currently offers a two-year degree in Viticulture and Enology. To date, \$3.2 million in grants and private contributions have been leveraged for student-centered demonstration projects, technical training, and services targeting improved and expanded vineyard and winery operations.

The college has hosted seminars featuring experts from across the nation and world, which have presented topics at the forefront of grape and wine production. Students receive practical experience in

a five-acre vineyard and bonded winery on the college campus. A student-produced wine, Surry Cellars- 2007 Red Dirt Rosé, recently won a double-gold medal at the San Francisco Chronicle Wine Competition and a silver medal at the Finger Lakes International Wine Competition.

The center will feature a teaching laboratory, state-of-the-art commercially bonded winery, special events hall, classrooms for a variety of curriculum and continuing education courses, resource library/conference room, instructor offices, and climate controlled wine storage. The 4,000 square foot special events hall will enable the college to sponsor and host seminars, conventions and conferences. The center will also position Surry Community College to better partner with community colleges and universities across the Southeast to meet the needs of this diverse industry. Surry Community College is located in the heart of the Yadkin Valley AVA, North Carolina's first federally designated wine region.

For more information, contact Greg Smith, 336-386-3331, smithg@surry.edu or visit www.surry.edu.

DANISH YEAST MAKES WINES MORE "FROOTY"

Pursuing its strategy of offering natural, high value specialty yeasts and malolactic cultures to the wine industry, Chr. Hansen once again launches a breakthrough innovation within enology: A frozen, direct inoculation Pichia kluyveri yeast product for winemakers producing aromatic and fresh white or rosé wines.

First to be launched in New Zealand in 2011, after two years of local trials and fine-tuning, Viniflora® FrootZen™ is expected to generate particular interest within Sauvignon Blanc, Chardonnay, Pinot Gris and Riesling wines. Afterwards, it will be introduced to the major white wines areas in the Northern Hemisphere: Germany, Austria, France, Italy, Spain and the USA.

Developed in cooperation with a leading New Zealand University, Chr. Hansen's new product represents the highest level of technology available in bio-production and is the result of a working partnership, with an exceptional wine research team from the University of Auckland, New Zealand, headed by Dr. Matthew Goddard.

"This product represents an option for winemakers to naturally increase the microbial diversity of ferments in a reliable and consistent way. Along with the specific attributes, this strain of Pichia kluyveri brings to the wine an increase in flavor and aroma complexity as well as adding body. We have been working closely with Chr. Hansen to

understand and harness the biodiversity of natural microbes associated with wines in New Zealand and develop novel, natural ferment tools that increase wine complexity and appeal," Dr. Goddard comments.

Viniflora® FrootZen™ is based on a yeast strain found naturally in grape juice but never commercially used in enology until now. It is a direct inoculation product (no rehydration) containing 20 years of know-how developed within Chr. Hansen.

"The use of this strain helps to bring out the flavor precursors contained in grape juice more efficiently when associated with traditional yeast available on the market today, which boosts tropical fruit notes; it also increases the mouth-feel of the final wine and delivers long lasting fruit flavors which increases the wine's complexity in a very sustainable way," explains Hentie Swiegers, Head of Chr. Hansen's Wine Innovation Department. For more information, visit: <http://www.chr-hansen.com/>.



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