

VINEYARD NOTES

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VITICULTURE 2000 DEADLINE APPROACHING!

Timothy E. Martinson

Remember, Viticulture 2000, the one-time special meeting combining the Finger Lakes Grape Grower's Convention and Lake Erie Regional Grape Convention, is just around the corner on **February 18 and 19**. Just a brief reminder to those of you who are procrastinators like me. **January 17** is both the *early registration* deadline and the *deadline for reserving hotel rooms* at the **Adam's Mark** hotel. Registrations received after this date will be assessed a *late registration fee*. All readers of this newsletter should have received a copy of the program and registration form. For those who have lost it, I am enclosing another.

To register for Viticulture 2000: Fill out the enclosed form and send with payment to the New York Wine and Grape Foundation.

To reserve a hotel room: Call the Adam's Mark Hotel at 1-800-444-2326. Identify yourself as attending Viticulture 2000/NY Grape Convention for special rates.

Further information: Call our office for a program, or access the following Web Site:

<http://lenewa.netsync.net/public/vit2000.htm>

See You At the Convention! ♦

RESEARCH PROJECTS

All interested grape growers are invited to attend a meeting in the Richardson Room of the Adams Mark Hotel in Buffalo, NY on February 17, 2000. You are invited to participate in a roundtable review and discussion on ongoing or proposed viticulture research projects. These are projects funded by New York Wine & Grape Foundation, Lake Erie Regional Grape Processors, the Grape Production Research Fund and/or the Viticulture Consortium. This meeting is being held in conjunction with the Viticulture 2000 conference scheduled for February 19th and 20th and will begin at 9:30a.m. continuing until approximately 4:00 p.m.

This is an excellent opportunity for growers to learn more about and participate in the direction of research being conducted in New York and Pennsylvania on behalf of the industry. These roundtable discussions will focus on three subject areas: (1) Optimizing Plant Protection; (2) Genetic Improvement of Grapes; and (3) Improving Horticultural Practices. Lunch will be provided, but we need to know the number of participants, so please let the extension office know by February 1 if you are interested in lunch. ♦

ESTABLISHED AND NEW WINE GRAPE CULTIVARS FOR COOL CLIMATE PRODUCTION REGIONS

PART I. WHITE WINE VARIETIES

*David V. Peterson
Swedish Hill Winery*

Ed. Note: This article is reprinted from '96 Finger Lakes Vineyard Notes Part II – red varieties will follow next issue.-TEM

Growers and winemakers have literally hundreds of grape varieties to choose from. In most parts of the world, regions have settled on a few varieties that to specialize in. In general, these varieties offer the best combination of viticultural adaptation and wine quality for the given region. New York and surrounding regions, however, continue to produce a multitude of different species, varieties and wine styles. This is especially evident in the upstate New York regions, where wines are produced from *Vitis labrusca*, *Vitis vinifera*, and interspecific hybrids. Wineries range from bulk producers to small premium farm wineries.

In this paper, I am including a discussion of hybrid and *V. vinifera* varieties that may be considered by the growing premium wine industry in the Northeast and Northcentral USA. I have divided the varieties into 4 classifications: Recommended, Recommended with Limitations, Worthy of Further Trial, and Not recommended. Decisions for categorizing are my own, and I based them on commercial experience, trials conducted at Geneva faculty (primarily by Dr. Robert Pool and Dr. Bruce Reisch), and personal experience. Judgements regarding potential for high quality are of course subjective to some extent, and some producers are likely to have somewhat differing views of some varieties. Although my comments are based on our experience in upstate New York, they should generally be applicable to Michigan as well. Additional information may be obtained from other publications, including: *Wine and Juice Grape Varieties for Cool Climates* (Cornell Cooperative Extension Information Bulletin 233) and *Growing Vitis vinifera Grapes in New York State. I. Performance of New and Interesting Varieties*.

WHITE WINE VARIETIES

RECOMMENDED

Chardonnay is recognized as perhaps the world's premier white wine grape. The most widely grown *V. vinifera* variety in New York, it appears well suited to production on the better sites in the major upstate grape production areas. Outstanding sparkling and table wines have been produced. Although cold hardiness is usually rated somewhat below Riesling, most growers find it to be more productive. Bunch rot may be problematic in some years and with some clones. Ripens in late September to early October in the Finger Lakes.

White Riesling is widely planted in the Finger Lakes Region. While it is a late-ripening variety that does not always reach high soluble solids, consistently outstanding wines have been produced. Bunch rot pressure also sometimes dictates an early harvest. Riesling, however, appears to develop excellent flavors at lower soluble solids than other varieties such as Chardonnay. Although Riesling is not considered a "hot" wine in the US market, demand for Finger Lakes Rieslings has been increasing in recent years and supply does not currently meet demand. Ripens in mid October in the Finger Lakes.

Though not widely grown in New York, **Pinot gris** is one of the better adapted white *V. vinifera* varieties. The fruit ripens earlier than Chardonnay, and cold hardiness appears to be nearly as good (some growers have reported it to be superior). Good to excellent quality wines have been produced, and plantings are likely to increase in New York and surrounding states. Although long grown in Alsace and Italy, Oregon has achieved most of the attention for Pinot gris in recent years. Several clones are available, and they appear to vary in their resistance to bunch rots. Ripens in mid to late September in the Finger Lakes.

Vidal blanc (along with Cayuga White) is one of the most sought-after interspecific white hybrid varieties in New York, and interest seems to be increasing. Clusters are very large and the vine is heavily productive, but large crops do not always fully ripen in the Finger Lakes. The fruit is somewhat thick-skinned and resistance to bunch rots is quite good. Tomato ringspot virus has been identified in some plantings. For this reason, grafting is often recommended. The wines are versatile, and excellent quality sparkling, table and ice wines have been produced. Ripens in late October in the Finger Lakes.

Demand for **Cayuga White** has been increasing substantially in recent years. This is one of the most disease-resistant and productive varieties grown. Though not as cold hardy as Seyval, it is otherwise culturally superior in the vineyard and is generally preferred by most New York winemakers. Wine is typically made off dry as a Riesling-like wine, but it has also been successfully used in dry wines (especially as part of a blend) and for sparkling wines as well. Grapes should be picked at low sugars to avoid overripe (sometimes Labrusca-like) flavors.

Traminette (NY 65.533.13) was released from the New York State Agricultural Experiment Station in 1996 as an offspring of Gewürztraminer and JS 23-416. The vines are far more cold hardy and are culturally superior to Gewürztraminer in nearly every way. Cold hardiness is similar to Cayuga White, and it ripens in early to mid October in the Finger Lakes. Some trunk injury problems have occurred on heavy soils, especially where air drainage is also poor. Wines can be very similar to Gewürztraminer, and it has the added advantage of having lower pH and less bitter phenols.

RECOMMENDED, WITH LIMITATIONS

Gewürztraminer has produced consistently good to excellent wines in upstate New York. Vines are excessively vigorous on many sites, however, and cold hardiness is significantly lower than the other recommended *V. vinifera* varieties. This variety should be planted only on the best sites, and soils that encourage high vigor should be avoided. Bunch rots are sometimes a problem, and leaf pulling in the fruit zone is often helpful in controlling this and allowing for full flavor development. Although the market for Gewürztraminer wines is often considered quite limited, Finger Lakes wineries have had reasonable success in selling it. Ripens in late September in the Finger Lakes.

Muscat Ottonel is grown on a limited commercial scale in Finger Lakes vineyards. While cold hardiness has been compared to Gewürztraminer, the vine is generally less vigorous and better wood maturity has been attained. The vine is reasonably productive. The aggressive, but high quality Muscat flavors have made this variety desirable for blending in small percentages to increase fruit character of less fruity wines. Ripens in late September in the Finger Lakes. A hybrid of Muscat Ottonel, NY 62.122.1, is very promising in trials in New York and hopefully will be released in the future.

Seyval is the second most widely grown interspecific white wine grape in New York. Vines are generally weak growing and tend to overproduce. Grafting is recommended to increase vigor, but cluster thinning is still generally required. The large, tight clusters are highly susceptible to bunch rots. Although Seyval is still widely used by New York wineries, Cayuga White and Vidal blanc are now favored by many winemakers.

Melody is grown on a limited commercial scale in the Finger Lakes. It has generally been overshadowed by the success of Cayuga White. This variety probably would have been substantially more popular if it had been introduced 10 years earlier. Cultural characteristics are good and cold hardiness appears at least slightly higher than Cayuga White, and it is less prone to over-cropping and bunch rots than Seyval. It can be very versatile in the winery, but it seems to be best suited to slightly fruity, off dry wines, which can resemble Riesling.

Chardonel, although released from the breeding program in Geneva, has generated little interest in the Finger Lakes. While cold hardiness is superior to Chardonnay, there has been an adequate supply of Chardonnay in the Finger Lakes in recent years. Wines have not been rated as high as Chardonnay at Geneva. Like Melody, interest may have been higher if it had been released 10 - 15 years earlier. It may be particularly useful as part of a sparkling wine base. Ripens later than Chardonnay, usually early to mid-October in the Finger Lakes.

An offspring of Pinot noir, **Vignoles** (Ravat 51) resembles its parent primarily by its small tight clusters that are highly susceptible to bunch rots. The vines are less productive than most other white hybrid varieties, and the fruit is very high in acid. Cold hardiness is better than most hybrid varieties, and its late bud break is an advantage in areas that have a significant risk of spring frosts. At one time, many wineries considered it perhaps the most desirable of the white interspecific hybrids. Although interest has leveled off considerably, many wineries use it for very high quality late harvest dessert-style wines and for blending. The market for varietals produced from this grape in the Finger Lakes seems limited. Ripens in late September in the Finger Lakes, although it is often not harvested until late October for some wine styles.

WORTHY OF FURTHER TRIAL

Siegerrebe, resembles Gewürztraminer (from which it is derived) somewhat in wine characteristics. Vines are considerably less vigorous and appear to be at least somewhat more cold hardy than Gewürztraminer. Ripens in early September in the Finger Lakes. Birds are attracted to the fruit. The introduction of Traminette may make this variety less tempting for those interested in "Gewürz-like" wines.

Viognier, a white variety from the Rhone, is one of the hottest varieties in California. While it has survived for a number of years in a small trial at Geneva, it is considered a warm climate variety and flavor development may be questionable in very cool regions. Cold hardiness appears to be somewhat better than most red Rhone varieties, but lower than the standard recommended white types for our region.

Ravat 34 is an early ripening white wine variety that is superior to Aurore in both cultural characteristics and in wine quality. Ripens in mid September in the Finger Lakes.

NOT RECOMMENDED

Aurore is the most widely grown interspecific white hybrid variety in New York. Fruit ripens very early and is highly susceptible to bunch rots. Primary use has been by bulk wineries for blending, and use by premium wineries is minimal at most. Wines are of comparatively low quality and are short-lived. Acreage is decreasing rapidly. Ripens in late August to early September in the Finger Lakes.

Verdelet was at one time considered a promising variety for New York and surrounding regions. Vine vigor is very low and it tends to overproduce. Cold hardiness is also below that of the recommended interspecific white varieties.

Villard blanc is a productive late-ripening interspecific variety that does not always fully mature its fruit in the Finger Lakes. Where crop size is controlled, quality can be very good. The variety, however, does not offer enough advantages to recommend it over the better alternatives.

Sauvignon blanc, though capable of producing excellent quality wines, has been too low in cold hardiness for suitable economic production. Some clones from France reportedly mature their wood earlier than what has been tried here, but none have thus far been tested here. ♦

FINGER LAKES WINEMAKERS TOUR FRANCE

Bob Madill
Sheldrake Point Vineyard

Ed. Note: Dr. Pascal Durand, of Burgundy, graciously offered to host a tour of NY winemakers and vineyardists this past November. Bob Madill's comments on that experience follow. A return educational tour is planned for next May, with vineyard visits in Burgundy and Alsace. Look for upcoming announcements. - TEM

On November 14, 1999 a group of New York producers [Bob Madill (Sheldrake Point Vineyard), Ted Marks & Phil Hazlitt (Atwater Estate Vineyard), David Demarco (Seneca Shore Winery), Sayre Fulkerson (Fulkerson's Winery) and Kip Kumler (Turtle Creek, Connecticut)] headed off for a weeklong tour of Southern France, the Rhone and Burgundy. The tour was organized by Professor Pascal Durand of the University of Dijon, who spent six months on sabbatic leave in the Finger Lakes last spring and summer.

Pascal met us at the airport in Montpellier (southern France) and we boarded the comfortable mini bus that was to be our home for the week. Over the following days we received a broad introduction to French culture and viticulture. Daily samplings of regional foods and wines, discussions with growers and winemakers, meetings with research, teaching and commercial institutions were melded together with historic city architectures and rural landscapes. We also tasted and bought a load of great wine.

Languedoc. A visit to Chateau La Roque in the Languedoc, the Cave Cooperative at Puilacher and meals that included Les Cuisiniers Vignerons showcased the quality, complexity and low price of many serious wines. These wines were made from Picpoule de Pinet, Viognier, Marsanne, Syrah, Mourvedre, Rolle, Grenache (white and red) as well as Sauvignon Blanc, Chardonnay, Merlot and Cabernet Sauvignon. How does a bulk selling price for quality Chardonnay at \$1.80 / liter sound to you?

Many of the clones that we hear about have their origins at the ENTAV research institute, which tests over 300 clones per year to identify the few that are disease free and produce superior grapes. We spent a morning reviewing their vine repository (17,000 vines), research, and development facilities. The late afternoon was spent at ICV, a private research and consulting lab that provides marketing and technical services to much of the Mediterranean. In their view the American consumer seeks full bodied wines that provide instant gratification. While the French producers want to be active in the market, they want

to retain their traditional French values. Our discussion of market and products edged into the realms of terroir and niche.

Montpellier Trade Show. Imagine a football stadium sized hall packed full of grape harvesters and related vineyard equipment. This hall was one of eleven at the SITEVI exposition that we visited for a too short morning. Grape harvesters, wine making and packaging supplies, bottling equipment, grape growing, spraying, etc. – it was all there by the acre. The exhibition manager Mayrse Blai welcomed us. Pascal had arranged for complementary passes, special lunch tickets, and a guided orientation tour of the exhibits. It would have taken two days and a concerted effort to do justice to all that interested us.

Rhone. On the fourth day of our visit (five meetings to date) we wolfed down more excellent coffee and croissants and headed off to Burgundy via the Rhone and Condrieu. A tasting and discussion at Georges Vernay winery highlighted the delicious flavors and textures produced in the Rhone Valley. We hiked up a path beside a vineyard and pondered the steep hillside vineyards on the East slope of Condrieu facing the Rhone River. The vineyard work appeared daunting.

Regional School. Following lunch we drove to Macon, and visited the Domaine des Poncety's at the Lycee Viticole de Macon-Davaye. This school provides technical training (one to two years) in viticulture and wine making for young people, mostly from the families of producers. Consider that this is but one of several such schools in France, and then consider having such a talent pool available to us in New York. Government, academia and industry working together. This was to become a familiar theme.

Beaujolais. Pascal is well acquainted with Domaine Piron in Beaujolais. The proprietor Dominique Piron greeted us with and provided a tour and tasting during a very busy time - the eve of a fete to celebrate the release of the new wine in Beaujeux – Beaujolais Nouveau! We, as it turned out, had front row seats at the celebration. Food, wine, bands, les femmes fatales, more wine and just before midnight, a torchlight parade through the streets to the square where the new wine was welcomed at 12:00. Then, back to the bus and onto Domaine Piron where the party was in full swing.

The next morning we met with the proprietor of Chateau Fuisse in Burgundy. The keys to quality in Burgundy involve the origin and the age of vines and yield. Vines less than ten years old are not generally considered to be capable of producing fine wines. Vineyards are densely planted with 3,000 or so vines per acre and yield 2 to 2.5 tons per acre. Our tasting of vineyard-specific Chardonnay wines (all white in this area) provided an introduction to the style of Burgundian Chardonnay – dry with more structure, less obvious fruit, more mineral and bread notes. They were wines with elegance, balance and complexity as opposed to sweetness and massive weight.

Burgundy Wine Auctions. The next morning in Beaune we joined the by-invitation-only trade tasting of barrel samples of the 39 lots being offered at the auction of the Hospice de Beaune, all made by Andre Porcheret. As is customary here, we tasted the reds and then the whites. Glass in hand, a snaking chain of tasters wound its way among rows of barrels – tasting, gargling, spitting, all the while chatting – great fun.

Following lunch we attended tastings at Clos St. Jacques with Sylvie Esmonin and then Jean Claud Boisset with Pascal Marchand. As was generally the case, we visited the production facilities and cellars of these producers, who made time for us by specific appointment. They are not open to the public and do not have public tasting facilities. While case sales may be made to good customers by allocation, it is not the custom to make individual bottle sales to trade visitors. Our visits were a matter of professional courtesy, so once again we were exposed to wonderful hospitality and wines and sadly unable to purchase them.

The 127th Exposition General des Vins de Bourgogne was held in Beaune in conjunction with the auction at the Hospices. On the 20th Katherine Durand (Director of the CIBC students program), Pascal and Dominique Peyron (Institute Jules Guyot in Dijon at the Institute University de la Vigne et du Vin) escorted us through the tasting hall (trade only). The wines were presented by Apellation with hundreds of choices. While some of us aimed high at the Grand Cru, others tasted wines from the new and developing areas. I was particularly impressed with the emerging quality and attractive prices available in the wines from Monthelie and the Hautes-Cotes de Beaune.

After lunch we visited the Domaine Michel Lafarge. The Father and son duo has developed a 100% biodynamic production regime. The elevator took us down into the cellars where tasted several vintages and AOCs including a superb 1991 Beaune Greves. That evening we established our selves at the Hotel des Ducs in Dijon. By now the bus was packed full of suitcases and boxes of wine and getting it all home was much on our minds.

We spent Sunday morning with Dominique Peyron at the Institute Jules Guyot, a research and teaching institute that includes a two-year program for both viticulture and enology. In the order of 50% of the graduates find employment with producers, 25% with labs and 25% move into sales and marketing. It was interesting to see the prominent display of the results of Leslie Weston's (Cornell Professor) research from her work at the Institute.

In 1985 Dominique and her colleagues initiated a field research program to assist producers to understand the phenolic structure of their grapes. The objective was to develop indicators that could be used to predict phenolic extractability and stability (color). This would enable the producers to better understand which winemaking techniques to adopt – cold soaking, temperatures, punch down, pump over. Phenolic extraction varies from vintage to vintage, and this affects the evolution of tannins and other components needed to provide for structure and stability. In Dr. Peyron's project, field samples are taken starting just before veraison until harvest. This year Dominique held two communications meetings between September 7 and 14, and attracted 300+ growers to each! Industry is clearly well supported by academic institutions that are supported in turn by government.

Our trip concluded with a very interesting tasting with Jean-Yves Bizot at his property in Vosne Romanee. Jean Yves is a purist, whose wines are snapped up well ahead of the completion of a vintage. Over dinner that evening at Chateau de Gilly with Pascal and Katherine Durand, Jean-Yves Bizot and Dominique Peyrin, we discussed winemaking philosophies and techniques. We also compared the language that both countries use to describe wines. Considering climate and wine structure, we in New York and most particularly in the Finger Lakes share much in common with parts of Burgundy. It may be that by sheer weight of sales, marketing and presence, Kendall-Jackson, Beringer, Gallo and The Wine Spectator are defining the

“idea” of a wine in the US - typified by an emphasis on fruit, softness and sweetness. However, our path is less than certain, and the challenge for us will be to come to grips with a fundamental understanding of quality, terroir and related issues here in the Finger Lakes. ♦

UPCOMING EVENTS

Upcoming Pesticide Training and Recertification classes offered by Cornell Cooperative Extension.

These will be offered in the following locations:

Rochester - Jan 28, Feb 4, Feb 11, and Feb 18,
Exam Feb. 25th
Cooperative Extension Center
249 Highland Ave.
Rochester, NY

Penn Yan - Feb. 3, 10, 17, and 24, Exam March 2
County office Building Auditorium
110 Court Street
Penn Yan, NY

Canandaigua - March 6, 10, 20, 24, Exam April 3
Coop. Extension Center
480 N Main St
Canandaigua

Romulus - March 9, 16, 23, 30, exam April 6.
Romulus Fire Hall
Cayuga Rd
Romulus

Cost for all sessions is \$75.00 including training manuals; Certified applicators seeking recertification can receive 2.5 credits per class. Cost for all classes is \$45 (without manuals, test) or \$12 for individual classes. Registration forms are available through our office, or contact:

Russell Welser
Extension Educator - Pesticides
Cornell Cooperative Extension
Ontario County
Tel. 716-394-0377
email: rw43@cornell.edu

January 25-27, 2000. *Unified Wine and Grape Symposium*, Sacramento, CA. Industry and research-oriented talks and large trade show. Sponsored by American Society of Enology and Viticulture and California Association of Winegrape Growers. Contact: 530-753-3142 email: society@asev.org

February 13-15, 2000. *Ohio Grape Wine Short Course.* Dublin, Ohio (Columbus area) Contact 800-227-6972 for more information.

February 18 & 19, 2000. *Viticulture 2000.* Adams Mark Hotel, Buffalo, NY. A two-day meeting combining the Lake Erie Grape Growers' Convention and the Finger Lakes Grape Growers' Convention. Contact the Finger Lakes Grape Program 315-536-5134 or NY Wine and Grape Foundation 315-536-7442 for more information.

February 23 & 24, 2000. *Niagara Peninsula Fruit and Vegetable Growers Association.* Brock University, St. Catharines. Covers grapes and tender fruit crops. Contact Ken Slingerland, OMAFRA, 905-562-1639 for more information.

March 13-16, 2000. *Wineries Unlimited 2000.* Lancaster, PA. Seminars and Trade Show. Sessions include 'newcomer' session, winemaking techniques for red hybrids, financial management, Riesling production, barrel room and retail room management. For information call 800-535-5670.

March 29-30, 2000. *29th New York Wine Industry Workshop 2000.* Geneva, NY. Focus of the meeting will be Red Wine options, including cultivar selection, yeast strains, use of lysozyme, microaeration, color and flavor enhancing enzymes, and heat treatments. A comparison of Pinot Noir production in NY State and Burgundy, including tasting, will be featured. Contact Thomas Henick-Kling 315-787-2277.

March 31, 2000. *Grand opening of the Cornell Vinification and Brewing Technology Laboratory and Vinification and Brewing Technology Gala Dinner and Wine Auction.* Geneva, NY. 315-277-2277, or <http://www.nysaes.cornell.edu/fst/vb/>

May, 2000. *Proposed tour of Burgundy, hosted by Pascal Durand* of the University of Dijon.

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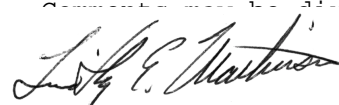
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in Ontario, Schuyler, Seneca,
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County Office Building

110 Court Street • Penn Yan, NY 14527-
1130

Comments should be directed to:



Timothy E. Martinson
Area Extension Educator
Finger Lakes Grape Program

315-536-5134 or

tem2@cornell.edu