



WINE GRAPE INFORMATION FROM PENNSYLVANIA AND THE REGION
From Penn State Cooperative Extension

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Correction: For those of you who may have been confused, Denise Gardner does not actually work for or at Nemaocolin Woods Resort in the Laurel Highlands as the misplaced link implied. Here is the correct link to her [Penn State enology website](#).

Bordeaux in PA: It's not often that a home-grown Pennsylvania boy falls in love with a French girl and moves to Bordeaux to join a wine family (sounds like a good movie) but, hey, that's just what **Daren Miller** did! He's from York County and has been living in Bordeaux for 15 years. The family owns two estates: [Chateau Haut Beyzac](#) in the Haut-Medoc and [Chateau des Tourtes](#) in the Cote de Blaye region on the Right Bank about 40 miles north of Bordeaux. Parker gave the '03 Haut-Beyzac a 91 and described it thusly:

"The super-concentrated 2003 Chateau Haut-Beyzac-Grand Vin reveals the vintage's strength in this area bordering St.-Estephe. Its inky/ruby/purple hue is accompanied by a stunning bouquet of creosote, scorched earth, creme de cassis, licorice, and a hint of smoke. Full-bodied, opulent, powerful, and rich, it should drink well for 10-12 years."

Yikes! "Creosote?" "Scorched earth?" "Smoke?" Well, the '03 vintage was a broiler in France after all. I have tasted his wines (you can, too, they are available at state stores) and the red and white wines are wonderful.

Daren comes home periodically to visit family and sell wine and has agreed to take part in a wine growers' discussion session on **Friday, October 7th from 10 AM to NOON**. The meeting will be held at the beautiful new Grace Winery at Sweetwater Farm in Glen Mills, PA, about 20 minutes east of Chaddsford. Chris LeVine, Sean and Farrell Kramer are our hosts. The vineyard consultant is Lucie Morton and John Levenberg assists with the wines. It's a terrific new addition to the Pennsylvania wine scene. For information and directions, please go to http://gracewinery.com/about_us/about_gw.php

It's a chance for us to compare notes about wine growing practices in Bordeaux and the Mid-Atlantic. I know that most growers are still picking grapes and wine makers are busy with their wines but if you need a break, please come to meet Daren. Everyone is invited and there is no fee but I ask that you contact me to let me know if you are coming (e-mail or phone). We'll have wines to taste. Please bring

a sample of your wine(s) to share, preferably but not limited to Bordeaux-style. You can read two nice articles, one in the Wine Spectator and the other by David Falchek of the Scranton Times at the [PWGN](#) website.

2011: It's not easy working with smart people. Whenever I send out a newsletter I get "feedback." People are unfailingly gracious in avoiding calling me names and I appreciate their restraint, and at least I know one or two people actually read my notes. I didn't always get it right as a grower and certainly never will as an extension educator. But since I started this gig in 1999 I have always felt my job is to be a conduit for information and ideas to the wine industry. Right or wrong, ideas are good, some better than others. I try to vet most of them but I count on you to be prudent and creative in adopting new practices and technologies. And I think most of the time it works! I compared 2009 to 2011 in my last letter and a grower corrected me, in fact, the vintages are very different. 2009 was cool and damp in its entirety and we ended up with very little heat summation and the red wines reflected these conditions. In 2011, we started cool and wet, baked in the middle and are ending warm and very wet, with GDD still at or above the historic average. In the non-western wine states, the weather conditions vary dramatically, as they do in the Mid-Atlantic area and even in southeastern Pennsylvania. So while we have been sopping wet in Lancaster, Erie has had a little above average rainfall for the season. The vintage (as we press to ripen and harvest reds) feels like the end of October, but it's only the end of September. Just for the record, on 9/30 the rainfall total in Lancaster is 2.5 inches over the previous record and there are still 3 months to go in 2011. My laundry list of grower comments about fruit rot management elicited comments from **Dr. Wayne Wilcox**, the grape pathologist at Cornell University:

- Switch is Vangard plus fludioxanil which may have some activity against sour rot. It has a 14-21 day PHI.
- Copper is possibly effective but depends on outstanding coverage. What are the effects of pre-harvest copper on wine making?
- Elevate is a proven botrytis fungicide. Good botrytis control will help reduce sour rot, especially under moderate pressure. Same for Oxidate.
- Canopy management. Ditto. Reduce botrytis, reduce sour rot.
- A proper IPM program results in better disease control. It seems obvious, but it must be properly executed.
- He hopes someone will look at KMS for sour rot control but wonders if it will ever achieve product registration.
- Pristine is a broad spectrum fungicide that may have activity against some of the sour rot fungi but it is not an eradicant. It's success may be related to post-application weather conditions.
- Makes sense that fruit flies may help to spread rot organisms (but no studies that we are aware of).
- The claim that calcium and copper may help ward off diseases are almost never substantiated. Emphasis on "almost."

In my honest to goodness opinion I think we have a better shot at fruit rot management than we do at bird and yellow jacket control. The latter items need much more of our attention if we are to make consistently fine wines, especially in a vintage like this one. Which brings me to the earlier grower comments about vintage comparison. . . the Irene and Lee tracked along a narrow corridor from DC to Albany and into Vermont. Outside of this area vineyards received much less rain, and while notes from other viticulture extension educators and growers indicate that fruit rots are a problem, the conditions

are significantly better than in the storm track. I didn't mean to cast such a wide net of despair over the region. The weather is what it is over your vineyard. I'll be more careful in the future to specify my remarks.

I had a chance to meet with **Lucie Morton** recently. She sees a lot of vineyards across the region and is a keenly observant viticulturist. We agree that this is generally a low brix year but at least with wine making potential. Her vineyards have clean reds, and she attributes this to a good spray program and canopy management. No surprise there. Her ability in the spring to forecast possible trouble in fall is the key. It meant that her clients applied the full range of fruit rot treatments and an extra measure of canopy management. That ability to see ahead is so important. What if it didn't rain? Well, maybe money was wasted but, in fact, it did rain. It's like believing in climate change (or not): can you afford to be wrong? Shoot and cluster number, and positioning were absolutely critical this year. All of that needed to be adjusted in the summer. As for sour rot, Lucie believes it begins with a wound, such as the berry pushing away from the pedicel, bird damage, botrytis, whatever and then, basically, yeasts take over to make wine that goes acetic in 48 hrs or so. So depending on the extent of the damage, growers need to make difficult picking decisions. Sour rot is very difficult to ameliorate in the cellar. She has other pathogen ideas that include non-sporulating botrytis and *botryosphaeria* as possible wounding agents. Lucie and I also see a lot of the trunk disease that afflict Eastern vineyards and we talk endlessly about crown gall, graft union problems, grapevine yellows, black goo as well as leaf roll and Tomato Ringspot Virus. We talk a lot about the problems with commercial grapevine nurseries and infected vines and mixed-up varieties. All of these issues deserve the attention of the wine industry as well as researchers. The former needs to step up and fund the latter as government assistance dries up. Lucie and I see stuff, but it's better for everyone if it can be documented through research.

There will be a lot of valuable lessons to learn from this vintage. Some early take-homes for me are that site selection, i.e. well-drained soils, slope and aspect really help to move water away from the roots. Absolute elevation mattered in this vintage, being lower and warmer helped to push fruit ripening along. Vineyard design and vine balance were very important factors, noting that smaller, balanced vines ripened earlier but that's all tangled up in site characteristics, a bit difficult to tease out cause/effect but I'll maintain that smaller vines, no matter how you achieve it, will push maturity. IPM is will always be one of the critical elements of successful wine growing in the region and has to be implemented for a worst case scenario each year – this includes cultural practices and spray programs. Weather is a chaotic system, we can never count on it to work for us, so are the birds, which need more of our time and attention.

A note about wine. . . wine makers are telling me about the prodigious juice yields they are getting, as high as 180 gallons per ton. Grape yields are down but volumes are steady or up. They comment that the juice is clean but just diluted. In fact, reds have little methoxypyrazines (maybe they blew away in the July heat) and perhaps a thoughtful use of a concentrator or roto-fermenter would bring more depth to a wine. Also, this will surely be a year where blending prowess is tested in the cellar, maybe even with a dash of a ripe 2010?

Grape Survey: Please Participate! Sorry to keep harping about my days in Oregon but any time I think an experience there will help inform our growth and success here, I have to mention it. One way the industry kept its legislative funding stream alive was to prove that it was consistently growing from year to year. Along with economic impact data, demonstrating growth potential was an important consideration in the legislative process. It's also important for our industry to know about, well, US! How big we are, what varieties we are growing, etc. Each fall, a survey from the National Agricultural Statistics Service

(NASS) and the department of agriculture would arrive in the mail and I would fill it out and return it. It was an obligation, not legal but to my business and industry, to do so. Now NASS in Pennsylvania wants to collect the same kind of data, data we need to understand who and what we are and to promote ourselves to partners and stakeholders. I strongly urge grape growers in Pennsylvania to complete the survey. Go to: http://www.nass.usda.gov/Online_Response/Be_Counted/. All survey results are confidential in compliance with federal laws. If you have any questions, please call the Jack Doney at the NASS office at 800-498-1518. Thank you!!

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