



College of
Agricultural
Sciences



New Wine Grape Grower Workshop 2013

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Workshop Overview and Goals

- Replace romanticism and enthusiasm with reality
- Substitute with a measured, thoughtful, information intensive approach
- Provide a sense of the economic demands of vineyard ownership
- Provide a very superficial but thorough overview of what is involved with starting a wine vineyard
- Alert you to some of the hazards of developing a vineyard
- Offer additional resources that can help you to succeed
- By the end: should I or shouldn't I start a vineyard?

Growing Wine in Pennsylvania (but it could be Virginia or Maryland)

Fast Facts:

- 160+ wineries and growing
- 1.2M+ gallons of wine
- 30 or so independent vineyards (fewer and fewer)
- 2800 acres of wine grapes
- 75% French hybrids and native varieties
- Family owned and operated small farms and wineries

Working together:
Pinnacle Ridge Vineyard &
Round Ridge Vineyards



Location Impacts Everything!

Where am I and why does it matter?



- What kind of wine?
- Site (climate and soils)
- Sales (customers)
- Where you live...



Distribution of Pennsylvania's Wineries and Vineyards

“Everything East of Denver”

- Wine regions from Idaho and Colorado, to Ontario and Georgia: we are all expanding and growing: PA 40>160, VA 50>220
- Mediterranean (CA, OR, WA, ID, AZ, CO) vs. continental climate
- Cold hardy varieties open a new frontier for wine
- The Eastern U.S: a checkered history but it's changing
- The Mid-Atlantic region – phenomenal growth w/ Virginia in the lead
- What drives growth?
- The “one bad bottle” phenomenon
- Grow fine wines of all types and styles



Varietal Diversity: help or hindrance?

- Diversity in wines and styles
 - City wines vs. country wines
 - How this affects viticulture
 - How it affects the wine market: retail vs. wholesale
- The argument for benchmark wines and regional identity
- Climatic realities driving decisions
- Quality must be the common denominator

We're not in California:

- Natives: Concord, Niagara, Delaware, Steuben, Elvira . . .
- Hybrids: Vidal, Seyval, Vignoles, Traminette, Chardonel . . .
- Cold hardy: La Crescent, Frontenac gris, Frontenac, Marquette, St Croix . . .
- Vinifera: Cabernet Sauvignon, Cabernet Franc, Merlot, Pinot noir, Chardonnay . . .

An Important Decision

- Viticulture vs. Marketing: find the balance
- In both cases:
 - Information from books and the internet
 - Scouting in the field for information
 - Industry associations



Markets for Grapes and Wine

Grapes:

- In state wineries
- Out of state wineries
- Home wine makers
- Bulk juice and wine producers
- Strong market (for now)
- Independent vineyards – Waltz example



Wine:

- Our advantage: selling retail and 5 extension of premises
- A sweet, rural palate: native and hybrid wines
- The big cities. Are they off limits?
- The recent push for *vinifera*
- State stores: who knows what will happen?



Grape Prices: not keeping up with costs

- Bordeaux red varieties, Pinot Noir: > \$2000/ton
- Chardonnay, Riesling, Pinot Grigio: \$1500/t
- Vidal, Chambourcin: ~ \$1000/t for best fruit
- Baco Noir, Marechal Foch, etc: ~ \$500/t
- Concord and Niagara: \$200-300/t
- There is no standardized system for setting prices, such as in Ontario
- Best price guidelines: Annual Finger Lakes grape price survey and your neighbors
- In the end it's between the grower and wine maker to set a price for grapes
- Please, use grape contracts!

Wineries: Your customers, friends and antagonists

- Quality, quality, quality. In the end, it's what sells a grape or a wine
- The current grape price and wine quality relationship
- Where it all begins: wine type, style and price point
- Winery and vineyard economics trickle down from bottle price
- Find wineries that share your philosophy and quality goals
- Cultivate a strong working relationship
- Communicate, often!
- Taste grapes and wines together, understand each others products and production methods
- Vineyard designated labels
- Utilize grape contracts and work hard to develop long term relationships
- Pace yourself. This is agriculture.

Other Economic Issues

- The plight of the independent vineyard
 - Sustainability
 - Economic survival
- If I have a winery, do I need to be in the entertainment business?
- Location, location, location for viticulture advantage and wine sales



When you Boil it All Down...It's About:

- Relationships – personal and business
- Economics – having enough to do the job well
- Passion – loving the whole process of growing a wine
- Persistence – dealing with problems. It's agriculture.
- Patience – 3 years to the first crop, 5 until you have a red wine to sell
- Learning – it never ends
- Growing wine is not about the romance
- Enjoyment – a 9000 year tradition of family, friends, food and wine

Okay? Let's plant a vineyard