

WINE GRAPE INFORMATION FOR PENNSYLVANIA AND THE REGION

PSU Cooperative Extension Mission: to extend nonformal outreach educational opportunities to individuals, families, businesses, and communities throughout Pennsylvania. To enable the Commonwealth to maintain a competitive and environmentally sound food and fiber system and prepare youth, adults and families to enhance the quality of their lives and participate more fully in community decisions.

Table of Contents

1. PWA Annual Meeting
2. Tomato Ringspot Virus
3. Faith Based Viticulture
4. Hybrids and Vinifera
5. Pennsylvania AVAs
6. Join PAW!

PWA Annual Meeting

The Pennsylvania Wine Association held its annual meeting in Harrisburg last week. It was the best PWA meeting I can remember and thanks to Jennifer Eckinger, Judy Nissley, Chris Carroll, Kristen Miller, the PWA board, generous sponsors and others for putting this great meeting together. Excellent talks, delicious food and wine, wonderful fellowship, serious issues... what's not to like? This happens all the time to me. I go to a terrific meeting and learn a lot and just end up scratching my head wondering where everyone else is? I wish everyone in the Pennsylvania wine community had attended the meeting because so many crucial issues are on the table at this very moment and those present had a productive and constructive conversation about the future of this industry. There is so much good to celebrate but dark clouds continue to hover around the continuing growth and prosperity of vineyards and wineries alike. John Kramb has asked those wineries who did NOT attend to offer suggestions that might make it more compelling to participate. I think it's a fair request. While there were many wonderful talks, I have highlighted 2 (viticulture, of course. Sorry). I'd like to mention a presentation given by Donald Coe of Black Star Farms in Michigan. It was amazing to see all that his business does to be successful in the wine business. If you every have a chance to hear Don talk, do not miss it. In the meantime check out their web site at <http://www.blackstarfarms.com/>. I'll also highlight the tireless work of a few members in the wine community that benefits everyone. Fran O'Brien, the government liaison for PWA works tirelessly to bring our issues to the attention of a very distracted and often uninterested legislature. The members of the board of the Pennsylvania Wine Marketing and Research Program devote their time to allocating limited by very valuable industry-derived assets towards important marketing and research projects. They all deserve our gratitude but much more... our active interest and help.

Tomato Ringspot Virus: a summary of a talk given by Dr. Jim Travis, Dept of Plant

Pathology, Penn State. See attachment

Faith-based Viticulture: a summary of a talk given by Jim Law of Linden Vineyards; See attachment

Hybrids and Vinifera

After much hard work and some disappointments, Oregon wine growers had a fine vintage in 1985. The wine critics praised the wines and we thought it would be smooth sailing from then on. But in 1987 we hit (yet another) rainy vintage and those same critics were all over us like a cheap suit. We realized that most wine writers, like most journalists, are looking for a sensational story, in this case knocking the new guy down a few notches and reporting the horrors of a wet vintage. Well, it turned out that quite a few very nice wines were made but since the critics panned the entire vintage, even those who worked hard to make fine wines had trouble selling them. We learned our lesson... never give the critics, or for that matter the public, bad news to feed upon whether it is wet weather or a debate about the relative merits of hybrid and vinifera wines. I wouldn't suggest that an untruth be told. But a wet and cold vintage is a "challenging" vintage. A drought becomes an abundance of sunshine. When I got to Pennsylvania the industry was dooking it out over out-of-state fruit. There was a lot of unhappiness and unpleasantness. We are still facing some of the same issues with hybrids and vinifera. The fact of the matter is this is totally, completely and absolutely a non-issue, except in the minds of those who would make it one and they will ultimately leave the wine consumer and press with a bad taste in their mouths, no matter which wines they are drinking. When I came from Oregon, I was a vinifera snob. I realized, quickly and accurately, of the beauty and purity of a well-made Concord wine, the joy of a zesty dry Vidal, and the class of a fine Norton or Chambourcin. Are they among the great wines of the world? Will they ever be judged by Parker or the Wine Spectator, fairly and on their own merit in proper context? I do not know the answer to those questions. What I do know for absolute sure is that all of these wines bring great joy, satisfaction and pleasure to those who choose to consume them and that is what this business is all about. On the realistic side, I am anxious to have Pennsylvania find its place on the world wine map. I am realistic enough to know that this can be done only with vinifera wines. So I tend to focus on that realm of wine improvement. In no way does this diminish the importance or quality of any other grapes. Despite any confusion it may cause, we should embrace and celebrate our diversity. It is ultimately one of our strongest assets. And in this climate, we need all the assets we can get. We can debate politely and constructively the relative merits of hybrids and vinifera, just as in California they argue over Pinot noir and Cabernet Sauvignon. But we should never let this discourse spill out into public and do harm to each other and our self-esteem as an industry. Who cares if Parker and WS don't acknowledge natives and hybrids. I feel sorry for them and what they are missing out on. Our industry is the sum of many diverse parts and each makes its own special contribution. We should always honor and respect each other and each other's wines and work together to improve and promote ALL Pennsylvania wines. .

Pennsylvania AVAs - <http://wine.appellationamerica.com/index.aspx>

Did you know there are four American Viticultural Areas in Pennsylvania? This should not be considered unusual given our incredibly diverse climate and geology. But it demonstrates that wine growers decades ago were thinking in terms of what defined their particular wine growing region. I'm not exactly sure how these AVAs would hold up under more rigorous scrutiny of today's viticultural standards but, nonetheless, they are mapped and official. There is a new web site that locates and explains all the AVAs in the U.S. It's fascinating to look at because, just like here, it shows just where people in the past and present think an area is special enough for wine production that they would go to all the trouble to apply for an AVA. You might want to read about the Pennsylvania AVAs just for your own information and to see if your vineyard might fit into one of them. If anyone who reads this knows the history and original applicant for the AVA, I would appreciate know who that person was/is. Go to <http://wine.appellationamerica.com/index.aspx>.

Join PAW

If you are a wine grower in the commonwealth I urge you to join the Pennsylvania Association of Winegrowers. If you go on line and access the membership information it will only take a few minutes. PAW is trying to double its membership. The funds are needed for education and services. Please join the association that works hard to represent you interests as a wine grower in Pennsylvania. Go to www.pawinegrowers.com/.

Attachments:

[Tomato Ringspot Virus JTravis.doc](#)

[Faith based Vit JLaw.doc](#)

Mark L. Chien, Wine Grape Agent
Penn State University Cooperative Extension
College of Agricultural Sciences
Lancaster County
1383 Arcadia Road, Room 1
Lancaster, PA 17601-3184

Phone: 717 394-6851
Fax: 717 394-3962
Email: mlc12@psu.edu
Web <http://winegrape.cas.psu.edu>
