



AWOnews



Produced by The Amateur Winemakers of Ontario

A forum for the exchange of news and opinions on home

winemaking in Ontario

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The 2003 Late Winter Edition

"Thine azure sister of the Spring shall blow

Her clarion o'er the dreaming earth ". Percy Bysshe Shelley"

IN THIS ISSUE:

by Paul Dunseath



Lots of news about a smaller Festival, due to the absence of a host club, but, thanks to the Executive, a Festival nonetheless. President Glenn Keown provides, on the back pages, a narrative description and a Registration Form. The "frugal winemaker", Blake Galloway, gives some hints on making inexpensive wines from available fruit, and President Glenn Keown in his regular column fills us in on what is happening in the Executive Suite. Also, some thoughts on the status of Mead as a competition; Acid testing revisited; and more.

A reminder, as well, that AWOnews is available via e-mail, and if you would be interested in receiving it in this form please let us know at dunseath@cyberus.ca.

This saves the cost of printing and postage, not to mention the work of folding, enveloping, labeling and stamping the issue; from your point of view it means that you get it days before the paper mail version and, to many people, it is more convenient to get it in this form.

Privacy is ensured by sending it out as a set of "blind carbon copies", so you only see your own address as well as that of the return address to AWOnews, and no-one else sees yours.

All that we ask is that if you change your e-mail address, you make sure that we know about it so that the mail list can be amended. A reminder, as well, that paper mail address changes should always be sent to David Burns, while e-mail changes should be sent to AWOnews.

Why not join the electronic mail age?

MOTIONS CONCERNING THE MEAD

COMPETITION CLASS

by Central Toronto Wine Guild

The motions presented below are based on a Motion presented to the AGM of AWO in Hamilton on Saturday June 8th. 2002 and have been developed at the request of that Meeting.

The intent of the Motions is to provide a vehicle, through competition, that generates interest in the processes, styles and ingredients of Mead making. This is consistent with the objectives of AWO as an Educational organization.

The Motions are presented at this time to give AWO members the opportunity to research and develop their Mead making skills for the 2004 competition.

Move that as of the 2004 the Mead Competition Class be a "Points" Class.

Note: Currently the Mead Class is a "demonstration" class and medals receive no points toward Championship or Wine maker awards.

This motion would also make Mead ineligible for entry in other "point" classes such as Dessert, Country and Sparkling.

Move that as of the 2004 AWO Competition the points awarded for Cider, Country Wine and Mead Classes be combined toward a "Grand Champion Traditional Wine maker" award.

Note: This Motion aligns traditionally Home made, non-grape, beverages into a single award. Currently Cider has its own "Grand Champion" award (for a single brew), Country wine is tallied with Grape wines into the "Grand Champion Wine maker" award and Mead is a standalone "demonstration" class.

Move that as of the 2004 AWO Competition the "Grand Champion Cider maker" award be renamed the "Grand Champion Traditional Wine maker" award.

The Central Toronto Wine Guild would appreciate your comments.

[FREE INGREDIENTS FOR URBAN WINEMAKERS](#)

Or, as the phrase goes, "weed it and reap".

by "The Thrifty Winemaker"

Blake Galloway © 2003

1. Dandelions

This is a young person's wine. That is unless you have grandchildren who will bring you the heads while you sit in one spot on the back lawn and pick the petals out of the surrounding green sepals. Even Though it's FREE, you need a whole half gallon of loose yellow petals - again, no green - for a gallon of wine. The recipe is in all the old winemaking books that you can borrow FREE from the Public Library: BERRY, TURNER, DUNCAN, but they are English and traditionally picking them on Saint George's Day, April 23rd, isn't going to work in Ontario. Try the end of May.

Pour a gallon of hot water over the petals with 2½ lbs of sugar, 2 tsp. ACID Blend, 1 tsp. Grape tannin, ½ tsp Nutrient, ¼ tsp Pectic Enzyme, and 1 crushed Camden Tablet. Add yeast (EC1118) next day and strain into gallon jug 5 or 6 days after fermentation begins, or when your fingers lose the brown stain from separating the petals from the dandelion heads. Rack every three months. Note;

Avoid picking near streets and highways because lead remains in the soil despite it being years since it was used as a gasoline additive.

2. Mulberry

Mulberry trees grow as weeds in alleys and around industrial sites in Southern Ontario cities. They're easy to spot in July/August because the fallen berries create purple, almost black stains, on sidewalks and asphalt. You need a ladder for this one. Probably only a step ladder.

(1) Crush 3 lbs mulberries, (they look like black raspberries with a green stem right through).

(2) Add 3 lbs sugar.

(3) Make up to 1 gallon with water

(4) Add 2 tsp. Acid Blend, ½tsp. Pectic Enzyme, ½tsp Nutrient, and 1 crushed Camden tablet. Add yeast (RC212) and stir daily for 5 or 6 days. Strain into gallon jug; attach fermentation lock. Rack 3 weeks, 3 months, 3 months. Bottle: yield 6 (750 ml).

This wine has a lot of colour but little flavour, so blend it with apple, rhubarb,

frozen raspberry juice or berry wine.

3. Most free ingredients come from your own back yard; stop spraying your roses, plant Baco (tricky), buy red currant bushes, raspberry canes (they spread), gooseberry bushes (they produce 5 times as much fruit as grapes) or grow beets.

Yeah, beets.

4. Other Flower Wines

Pansies - your place

Golden Rod - nobody's place

Elderflowers - your neighbour's place

5. High Bush Cranberries

(Not related to Christmas cranberry sauce cranberries).

These were popular as foundation plantings before WWII and can be bartered for - "I'll give you a (one) bottle of wine if you let me pick your fruit", plus they grow in swampy areas behind the sand dunes of all four lower Great Lakes.

Look for pink berries, high up.

6. Crab Apples

None of your neighbours use these for anything anymore, so ask, already.

7. Rowan berries

Those bright orange berries on small ornamental sidewalk trees are related to maple trees and the berries are edible, if you get the right tree, but very strongly flavoured. Assume there's no sugar.

8. Sap

You can tap your own maple and birch trees, not the city park's, but timing and technique are essential. Don't kill your trees. Read a book. Once you've got the sap - it's very easy. Sugar to SG 1.085, acid, etc, (as above). Go!

9. Wild Grapes

Does a railway run through your town? Often Labrusca and Riparia "Swamp" grape and "Fox" grape grow on the Frost Wire Fences. I've picked ripe wild grapes from Point Pelee to Tobermory. Pick the ripe berries from the still green bunches in late late Autumn.

WARNING: Some vines with bright berries, but a crescent shaped seed, grow on the same fences, but are POISONOUS.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

by Glenn Keown President

y now everyone knows this year's Conference is going to be a condensed format. For some reason we have Conferences booked from 2004 to 2007. 2003 didn't get any takers. Your Executive have come up with A Different Experience, (see last pages for details and registration form). It was decided we would run a half-day event, which would consist of the Annual General Meeting, a sit down supper, followed by Club Showcase.

The venue is Sheridan College, Oakville, conveniently located on Trafalgar Road in Oakville , just north of the QEW, 25 minutes from downtown Toronto.

Directions: For both east and westbound on the QEW take the exit for Trafalgar Road and follow north to Sheridan College.

The presentation of the medals will be as follows: Merit and Bronze medals will be listed on a Information board at the entrance to Sheridan College. The silver medals to be presented prior to supper. Gold medals and Achievement awards to be presented following supper.

Of all the events that show the most interest is the SHOWCASE. This gives us the opportunity to show off your club's wines, as well as mingle with other members of the AWO, to re-new old friendships and make new ones. We have plenty of room available to set up our usual Showcase at Sheridan College. If your Club is interested, please advise David Burns, Registrar.

I would ask the Club Reps to canvas their members to see where their interests are concerning Annual Festivals (what would they like to see and do). This type of information could be passed on to the Clubs holding future Festivals.

Just to keep everyone up to date; since the New Year we have a New Chief Steward. John Peters resides and works in Toronto and is President of Upper Canada Vintners wine club. I have known John for the past few years and find him to be a very enthusiastic and willing person who gets in there and works hard to get things accomplished. I know John will enjoy the time he is spending

with the Wine Judges Commission, along with the Executive of the AWO.

Welcome aboard John.

Are you the type of person that wants to get involved? At the current time there is a strong need for volunteers to assist the Wine Judges Commission of Ontario.

They want to start a Stewards' Committee.

Those who are interested will be trained by the Judges Commission, in all aspects of performing the duties of a Steward. Not only will you get to meet all the Judges but you will acquire new friends who are also willing to get involved and expand their knowledge of another avenue in wine making. Most of us have never had the opportunity to be involved directly with a large wine judging such as the Ontario Final in May. Now is your opportunity to say, "yes, I want to get involved".

Currently the Wine Judges Commission is looking for 15 eager and willing people to be trained as Stewards and 3 others who are very comfortable with doing data processing.

All of these people will be required for the Ontario Finals, to be judged during the weekend of May 23-25,2003.

So if you are interested in becoming a member of the Stewards Committee, please contact Joe Dale, Dalejt@idirect.com, or Glenn Keown, gkeown@eol.ca as soon as possible.

If you want further information, please do not hesitate to contact either of the above.

The opportunity and need is there for each and everyone of us to get involved, so please make the effort, to "volunteer", so we can advance Amateur Winemaking into the future.

For those who enjoy surfing the web, starting shortly our website will be updated, which should make things easier when looking for information concerning the AWO. All data currently being forwarded to the Club Reps by mail or e-mail will be posted on the website. So if you have missed something like labels for your entries for the Ontario Finals in May, a complete set will be on the website and downloadable. We will also be posting drop off locations prior to the Ontario Finals, to ensure your wines get to Brock in time for the Judging. Some of the winemaking material currently appearing on the Website is also being updated and once available will be posted. If you have anything

regarding winemaking that may be of interest please forward those articles to the Web Master, Paul Stuart.

I hope everyone does well at the club judging which are starting to get underway.

The Ontario Finals will be conducted at Brock University during the weekend of May 23-24-25.

I hope to see everyone on June 21st, when all the medals are handed out. Until then, take care.

MEASUREMENT AND CONTROL OF ACID

by Paul Dunseath © 1998, 2003

(This is a reprint and update of an article which appeared in 1998 -ed.) Why do we measure acid? For a number of reasons; the amount of acid, and the acid/sugar balance, in a wine have a profound effect on its flavour. In a dry wine, it can make the difference between a balanced wine and one that is either

sharp (or, as non-winemakers erroneously put it at times, "sour"), or one that is flabby. In a sweeter wine it makes the difference between one that is, again, balanced, and one that is cloying.

Fresh grapes and other fruits have no guarantee of acid content, so acid measurement is essential; similarly when making wines from concentrates it is useful to be able to measure acidity and perhaps adjust it from the middle-of-the-road values that manufacturers must use to appeal to a broad market.

The two common methods of acid measurement are by pH, which measures the strength of the acid, regardless of its concentration; and titratable acidity, which measures the total amount of acid, without regard to its strength.

The definition of pH is "the reciprocal of the logarithm of the Hydrogen ion concentration"; it is the hydrogen ion chemically, H^+) which results in acidity in a liquid, and this bit of mathematical legerdemain avoids having to deal with long strings of zeroes, although it has the unfortunate, and non-intuitive, result that the lower the pH, the higher the acidity. Possible values for pH run from 1 to 14, with 1 being that of a highly caustic acid while 14 is that of an equally

highly caustic alkali. Pure water has a neutral value: 7.

The pH values of wines range generally from about 3.6 to 2.8, and can be measured approximately (very approximately) with litmus paper, or fairly accurately with pH meters. These latter can be bought from about \$50 up to several hundred, with accuracies quoted from 0.1 to 0.01, and if not of the self-calibrating type, will require calibrating before use with "test liquids" of known pH, typically 4 and 7. These are made up using distilled water and capsules of powder, available from many suppliers. For the simplest types, a portable, shirt-pocket size, one simply dips the end in the liquid, presses a switch, and reads the pH from a LCD display.

Human taste responds not only to the strength of the acid, but also to its total amount. In addition, wine contains buffers - substances which tend to inhibit a solution from changing its pH when the total acidity changes. Consequently the pH value of a wine, while important as an indicator of the ripeness of the grapes, and the ability of the juice to withstand bacterial attack, does not track fully with the change in taste as total acidity changes; the quantity of acid present - to which our tastes are sensitive - can vary quite widely without any significant

change in the pH, if the wine is heavily buffered by such compounds as tannins and proteins. Different grape varieties have different buffering ability, while other fruit used in "country" wines may have a considerable buffering capacity; elderberries and bananas are prime examples.

For most home winemakers, and for some processes in the commercial world also, titratable acidity, which directly measures the acidity in a wine and is unaffected by buffers, is an easy measure to use. It is based on two facts: one is that alkalis (commonly called bases) and acids neutralize each other, and the other is that there are substances that change colour depending on whether they are in an acidic or basic environment.

If the base is 0.2 normal (an indicator of strength), and 15 ccs of wine are used, each 1 ml of base needed to change the colour from colourless to pink represent 1 part per thousand of titratable acidity, measured "as tartaric"