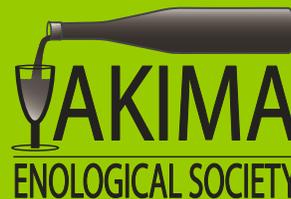


YES!



A monthly publication for members of the Yakima Enological Society

More than Ports from Portugal

If you think Portugal has only Port to offer, think again. On Wednesday, September 9 at the Yakima Valley Museum, I will present an educational wine tasting of the wines from Portugal. The tasting will include the crispy acidic white wine from the Vinho Verde, still red wines from the Douro and Dao regions, and of course we'll complete the tasting with a selection of fine Ports. Hope to see you there!

~ Judith Thoet,
Assistant Winemaker,
Sagelands Vineyard

Plan Ahead YES Calendar of Upcoming Events

- August 15**
A Case of the Blues
- September 9**
Wines of Portugal
(rescheduled from 2008)
- October 18**
Bus Trip to Hood River
- November 11**
Holiday Foods and Wines
- December 8**
YES Christmas Party
- January 13, 2010**
The Blind Leading the Blind

~ Julie Johnson



A Case of the Blues and All That Jazz

YES does not feature a wine tasting in August. Instead we encourage our members to attend A Case of the Blues and All That Jazz. This year the event will be held on August 15, 2009 at Sarg Hubbard Park on the Greenway and will run from 3 – 11 pm. This 17th annual fundraiser benefits our local Yakima Greenway Foundation and The Junior League of Yakima and features Northwest wines and microbrews, fine food and a silent auction.

This year the festival will feature 'Down & Dirty Delta Blues' with Zac Harmon. Other featured artists are Mark DuFresne and Lloyd Jones, Jeremy Dion, and local guitarist Jim Brunner.

Tickets to this 21-and-over event cost \$40 in advance and \$45 at the gate. For tickets or information call 509-453-8280 or go online to www.yakimagreenway.org.

~ Julie Johnson

Hood River in October

Because of the success of our bus trip last fall, we were asked to plan one again this year. This time we will be going to the Hood River wine area of Oregon on Sunday, October 18th. The bus will leave from in front of the Chamber of Commerce office building at 8 a.m. Everyone can park in the lot at the corner of 9th St. and Yakima Ave. We should return by approximately 6:30 p.m.

We have a full and varied itinerary planned. And since the cost is only \$50 per person, we expect a sold out bus — so make your plans to invite friends and send in your reservation as soon as possible to reserve your seats.

~ Chuck Johnson



Register Early!

July recap: Aloha fun

More than 80 people enjoyed the Hawaiian Tropical "Breezes" with the Blue Tropics... another successful wine event for YES!

A special thank you goes out to all the board members who provided the delicious food for this event. A BIG thank you to Jim and Sally Baldwin for sponsoring the band.

The auction proceeds from the mixed case of Platinum VII white wines will go towards the YVCC wine scholarship program offered by YES.

The best dressed Hawaiian outfit prize went to our youngest YES member — eight-month-old Vanessa Grace Robins, who stole the show in her grass skirt and coconuts.

Lost and found one silver and onyx earring.

~ Bert McDonnell

YES member Herb Lynch submitted this interesting article...



The Parker Holdouts

by Gretchen Roberts — from Portfolio.com, Feb 13 2009

Everyone knows a score from a top critic like Robert Parker or Wine Spectator can make or break a vintage. What's not common knowledge is that a growing number of producers are refusing to submit to the system.

Conventional wisdom in the wine industry is that 90 points is the breaking point when it comes to a critic's rating: Over that magic number means you can't keep a wine in stock; under it means you can't give a wine away. The 100-point rating system is the brainchild of übercritic Robert Parker, who developed the method in the mid-1970s for his newsletter, *The Wine Advocate*. Parker experimented with other ratings, including letter grades and a 20-point scale developed at the University of California–Davis, but ultimately created his own.

Any American who had gone through grammar school easily understood his system: A 95 is good, while a 75 is not. You get 50 points just for showing up. Wine Spectator and other publications quickly adopted Parker's system, and today the 100-point scale is ubiquitous. "The entire process of making and selling wine today revolves around the scores," says Tyler Coleman, author of *Wine Politics*. "Parker has steered people toward finding good wines, but what's gotten lost is that it's just an opinion. When you give a wine a number, it takes on a patina of objectivity."

Occasionally critics seek out a wine to review on their own, but most often, wineries or distributors submit samples for ratings. Despite the system's importance, some winemakers don't send their wines in for review at all. "That's a game we refuse to play," says Pete Hedges, winemaker for Hedges Family Estate in Red Mountain, Washington state's hot new wine-growing region.

The Hedges' wines are good, even great. Before they stopped submitting four years ago, several of their reds broke the 90-point barrier. But the company is not opting out of ratings because of a fear of poor reviews, but on principle: Scores are a dangerous game, subject to the personal palate of one critic.

Pete Hedges' nephew, Christophe, who manages sales and marketing for Hedges, is an early-30s hipster, idealistic about terroir and determined to undermine the system in his own way. "We want to maintain our own integrity, but also inspire a score revolution," he says. "My dad calls high scoring wines 'bimbo wines' because they're good for cocktail parties but not marriage. We want to make the kind of wine that's beautiful for the long haul."

Anthony Nicalo, president of Farmstead Wines, an importer of handcrafted wines from small European producers, also champions subtler wine. "We don't submit any of our wines for review because we feel the scoring system tends to favor power and extraction over subtlety, complexity, and finesse," Nicalo says. He wants customers to evaluate his wines with food and around the table rather than in a clinical setting. The problem, Coleman says, is when a critic tastes 100 wines in a morning, the bigger, bolder wines inevitably stand out and get bigger scores. "The methodology stacks the deck against delicate wines," he says.

Other wine producers have made a deliberate business decision to not submit their wines. When Karl Lawrence Cellars began making cabernet sauvignon in the Napa Valley in 1991, "we had to choose which master to

serve," says Ric Henry, a partner. "Should we serve the critics and become dependent on that roller-coaster ride, or should we serve our clients?" Henry says. "Most wineries were trying to please the critics and put as high a price on the wine as they could. We decided to make really great wine at an unbeatable price so our customers would market for us, word of mouth." Henry says Karl Lawrence Cellars wants to cultivate customer loyalty, not flash-in-the-pan buyers who chase scores. "I'm a season-ticket holder with the Oakland Raiders," he says. "In a good year or bad, I stick with my team. That's the kind of customers we want at Karl Lawrence."

Phil Woodward, president of Woodward/Graff Wines in Sonoma, California, doesn't submit Graff Family Wines because he thinks there's too much bias and risk involved.

"When you're small- to medium-size, you have more to lose than to gain if you submit," he says. Instead, Woodward prefers to work with local journalists who like to tell a story rather than rate wine. "There are a number of good wine writers around the country. I love it when they write about what we're trying to do here."

With buyers so focused on scores (many wine-store owners lament the customers who walk in and ask for 90-point wines, regardless of the taste), it seems like career suicide not to submit. But Henry reports solid, repeat business and regular growth at Karl Lawrence. Christophe Hedges says not submitting has had a positive effect on Hedges' sales. When he takes a sample to a wine retailer, "the last thing I'd do is bring in a laminated sheet with someone else's opinion," he says, adding that wine buyers are professionals who prefer to form their own judgments. "I have much better success without a score," Hedges says, "because they know I trust their palates."



**Eat this...
Drink that**



Recipes by Susan McPhee, Wines by Brad Baldwin

This month: Blue Cheese-Pecan Icebox Crackers with Pontin del Roza Winery--Yakima Valley '07 Pinot Grigio...
a full bodied, off dry wine, rich, excellent acidity, refreshing and crisp

Blue Cheese-Pecan Icebox Crackers

- 3/4 cup pecan halves
- 1/4 cup all-purpose flour
- 4 Tbs. very cold unsalted butter, cut into small pieces
- 3 ounces blue cheese, crumbled



In 375-degree oven, roast pecans until fragrant and slightly brown, about 3-5 minutes. Let cool. Pulse in food processor until finely ground.

Combine flour and ground pecans in food processor. Pulse briefly to combine. Add butter and pulse until mixture resembles coarse meal. Add the cheese and process until dough comes together and is well combined.

Transfer dough to a clean work surface. Shape dough into a 2-inch wide log. Wrap the log with plastic wrap and refrigerate at least 24 hours.

Heat oven to 325 degrees. Slice the well-chilled log into 1/4 inch thick slices. Place slices on an ungreased baking sheet and bake immediately, rotating the sheet halfway through cooking, until the crackers are golden brown and firm in the center, 25-35 minutes. Don't let them get too dark around the edges. Transfer to a rack to cool. Crackers may be frozen or kept in an airtight container at room temperature.

Makes about 20 crackers



What: Bus Trip to Hood River

When: Sunday, October 18 from 8 a.m. — 6:30 p.m.

Where: Boards at the Chamber of Commerce

Yes, we'll be there...

Name(s) _____

Name(s) _____

Name(s) _____

Name(s) _____

Phone: _____

PRE-REGISTRATION

Send in your registration early to ensure we can make the deposit for the bus.

Members ----- @ \$50 = \$ _____

Guests ----- @ \$50 = \$ _____

Total Enclosed: \$ _____

Important: Please include your phone number.

Please clip and mail this form with your check to: Yakima Enological Society, PO Box 2395, Yakima WA 98907

All reservations must be paid for in advance and are NON REFUNDABLE

