

Chapter of the
Enological
Society
of the
Pacific Northwest

May 2009

YES!



A monthly publication for members of the Yakima Enological Society

A Summer Night Downtown

On June 10th, experience a variety of wines from downtown tasting rooms and wine shops paired with food from the restaurant at The Garden Hilton in the heart of downtown Yakima. The tasting will be held at the Plaza Square right next door to the Shopkeeper, Ummelina's Spa and The Garden Hilton. Let's party downtown and see what all the excitement is about!

~ Brad Baldwin/Julie Johnson

Plan Ahead YES Calendar of Upcoming Events

June 10

A Summer Night Downtown

July 8

Hawaiian Party at Bert's Place

August 15

A Case of the Blues

September 9

Wines of Portugal
(rescheduled from 2008)

October 18

Bus Trip to Hood River

November 11

"In Process"

December 8

YES Christmas Party

~ Julie Johnson

The Tasting Room Yakima, Naches Heights Enjoy a picnic and vineyard tour

The Tasting Room Yakima is a perfect place to relax, taste wines, tour the biodynamic vineyard with Vineyard Manager Philip Cline, and take in the sunset on the lawns or deck. You can enjoy the wines of three unique wineries: Harlequin Wine Cellars, Naches Heights Vineyard and Wilridge Winery... and purchase some wine to enjoy at home, too.

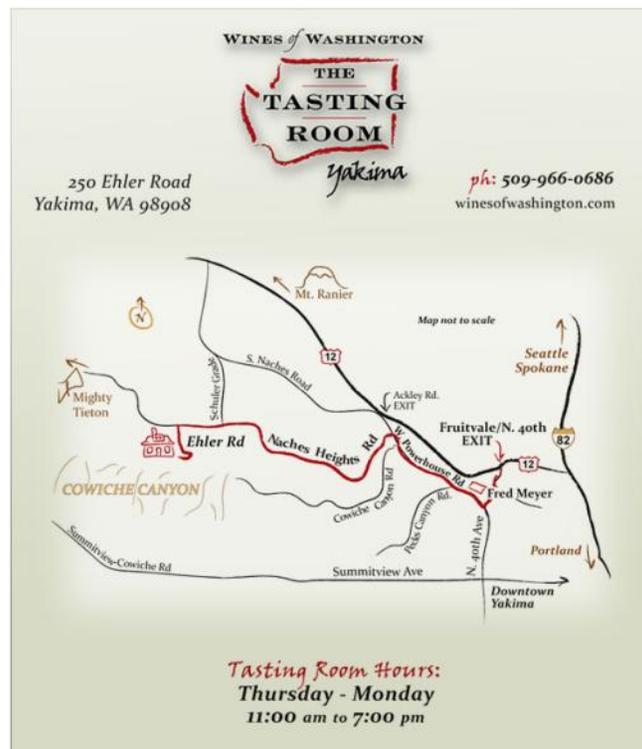
The property, 85 acres high above the Yakima Valley and the Cowlitz Canyon Nature Preserve, features organic vineyards, hiking and biking trails, picnic areas and scenic views.

Bring your friends, picnics, blankets, lawn chairs, tables, walking shoes and cameras. We will be picnicking on the lawns or deck of the 1900s-era farmhouse. Bread and cheeses will be provided with the wines. Be creative with your picnic and try to out-do fellow YES members. Barbecues available, both gas and briquette. Registration deadline is May 7. Phone calls only to Jimi Weaver at 575-7511 no later than May 9.

Date & Time: May 13, 2009 — 6:30 p.m.
Cost: \$16 member, \$21 non-member
Bring: Picnic meal and seating



~Gerry Amos



Directions:

From N. 40th and Powerhouse (Fred Meyer), go west 1 mile on Powerhouse.

Go left on Naches Heights Rd. Look for blue winery signs (Wilridge Winery).

Travel 2.5 miles; turn left on Ehler Rd. Look for The Tasting Room sign.

Go to the end of the road and up a slight hill to the tasting room.

250 Ehler Rd.
Yakima WA
(509) 966-0686



Opening the Wine Cellar

This weekend is Spring Barrel Tasting in the greater Yakima Valley AVA. So for this article I thought I would write about why winemakers put wine into barrels. I'll just concentrate on red wines and leave white wines in barrels for a separate article.

For many red wines, after primary and secondary (malolactic) fermentation, red wine is placed in barrels. We do this for a number of reasons, including wine clarification, wine flavoring, and wine storage.

Let's begin with wine clarification. After crush and the primary and secondary fermentations, the wine is not yet clear – it has some residual particles left over from the grapes and other particles that develop over time (mostly tartrates) which can give a 'cloudiness' to the wine. Think of the basic shape of a barrel lying on its side. The 'belly' of the barrel is lowest and highest in the middle. This 'belly' (the low part) will allow sediments (tartrates and solid grape materials left over after crush) to naturally accumulate here over a period of a couple of months. Every couple of months, if the wine is decanted off these accumulated particles, this is a 'natural' way of removing sediments from the wine, resulting in clearer wine. This process is called 'racking' wherein clear wine is decanted off of the accumulated sediments and placed in a newly cleaned barrel. This process will be repeated with red wines 2-4 times over approximately an 18-month timeframe. The result is a clearer wine for consumers.

Next; wine flavoring. As many of you already know, barrels can add some flavoring compounds to wine, and these compounds change depending on the origin of the wood used to make the barrels and the charring or 'toast' level of the barrels. Most wine barrels today are made from oak – with oak from France, America, or Hungary being the most popular sources. However, in times past, other sources of wood were used including chestnut and redwood trees. The trees used to make barrels are usually seasoned for many years (meaning they are cut and stored in attemperated conditions), cut into 'staves,' and formed into barrels. The barrels are then 'toasted' over fires to caramelize the wood carbohydrates, which can give a sweet almost brown sugar aroma and flavor to the wine. The aroma/flavor that we refer to as 'toast' originates from this barrel toasting. And depending on the source of wood, barrels can give a spicy character to the wine. The other element which barrels bring to wine flavoring is oxygen. Wood is porous and allows oxygen into the wine in very minute quantities, but when oxygen mixes with some of the natural flavor compounds in wine, other flavor compounds result and further enhance the flavor of the wine. Depending on the winery, barrel aging of wine may occur for 12-24 months, or longer. And barrels are not inexpensive – new French oak barrels can cost close to \$800 for each 59-gallon barrel! That translates into \$13.50/gallon just for the oak!

And what about wine storage? Most wineries receive red wine grapes in batches or what we call 'lots' during crush. The lots may be from the same variety but from different harvest dates or different vineyards. Many winemakers like to keep lots segregated until it's time

to blend them into the final wine. So after primary and secondary fermentation (either can be completed in tanks or barrels, although barrel fermentation is very labor intensive), where will the wine go? For many wineries, wines are conveniently transferred into barrels – as it's easy to keep lots separate until the final blending time. However, barrels do require monthly maintenance. Because barrels are porous, they seep out wine, in the form of water, and create air space in the barrel. If this air space is not filled with more wine, bacteria called 'acetobacter' can develop and turn the wine into vinegar. So, all barrels must be 'topped' or filled, on a monthly basis. Think of a winery with over 30,000 barrels – a winery employee must top each barrel every month with fresh wine in order to prevent the air headspace from developing.

In summary, at a winery, clarification, flavor and storage are the three primary reasons for storing red wine in barrels. Next month I'll talk about the red wine barrel tasting and blending process.

Questions? If you have a winemaker question, please forward it to YES and I'll try to answer your question in one of my columns.

~ **Judith Thoet**
Assistant Winemaker,
Sagelands Vineyard
ISG Sommelier



**Send your
 winemaker
 questions to**

contact@yakimawine.org

Platinum VII Highlights

It's hard to keep saying this every year, but I believe this was the best Platinum ever! The 17 featured wines were all Platinum or Double Platinum. Seven well-known winemakers sponsored tables and wineries from Canada (a first) and Oregon participated in the event. We had a great reception with four wines (two of which were Double Platinum reds), great appetizers and our first silent auction with nine "Easter baskets" put together by Beverly Warren. We concluded the evening with a fantastic six-course dinner and 13 more wines, created by Executive Chef Greg Masset from the Yakima Country Club.

Jack Topper and Hank Sauer from Wine Press Northwest were our emcees and did a great job keeping the group on schedule. In addition to the honored winemakers and their guests/spouses, we were joined by Ken and Patty Robertson, managing editor of Tri-City Herald, publisher of Wine Press Northwest; and by Trent Ball, Chair of the Vineyard and Winery Technology program at YVCC. The live auction between dinner courses raised a record amount for the YES scholarship fund.

A special thanks to the staff of the Yakima Country Club and to the wineries and winemakers who supported the event either by donating wines or by giving us significant discounts. Please support the wineries that helped make this event such a success. Also, a big thanks to the YES members and guests who made the evening so memorable.

~ Chuck Johnson

Recycling is in

Going green and reducing the amount of trash going to landfills is the right thing to do, and supporting a good cause while doing all of the above is an added bonus. Remember to save your "true" cork wine corks and bring them to the next wine tasting where we will have a container marked Korks 4 Kids. Now you can drink wine for a good cause!

~ Julie Johnson
for Cathy Goshorn



What: Picnic and Vineyard Tour

When: Wed., May 13 — 6:30 p.m.

Where: The Tasting Room Yakima, Naches Heights

Yes, we'll be there...

Name(s) _____

Name(s) _____

Name(s) _____

Name(s) _____

Phone: _____

REGISTRATION DEADLINE:

**Postmarked or online
by Thursday, May 7, 2009**

Pay online at www.yakimawine.org

Members ----- @ \$16 = \$ _____

Guests ----- @ \$21 = \$ _____

Total Enclosed: \$ _____

Please include your email address if you would like to receive future newsletters by email:

◀ **Important: Please include your phone number**

If you would like to help with this tasting, please select one of the following:

___ Set Up ___ Food Prep ___ Registration ___ Greeter ___ Pourer ___ Clean Up

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

Yakima Enological Society

PO Box 2395, Yakima WA 98907
Email: contact@yakimawine.org
Web: www.yakimawine.org

Yakima Enological Society

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 Judy Thoet

We're on the Web...
www.yakimawine.org

*This newsletter published by Jonelle Foutz,
Write Mind, PO Box 1194, Yakima WA 98907*

President's Corner

Hello Enologists;

The Platinum VII tasting was fabulous. The wines paired excellently with the food. We had plenty of time to enjoy the wines and our friends. If you have not attended the Platinum tastings yet, try for next year. You will not be disappointed.

Spring has finally arrived and so has Spring Barrel Tasting in the Yakima Valley on April 24, 25, and 26th. It is a great time to get out and about and try the new wineries that just seem to pop out of nowhere. It may be too late, for this year, by the time you read this, but local wineries are always looking for help on big weekends such as Spring Barrel Tasting.

Shannon Bird may be contacted at 509-965-4521 or email info@rattlesnakehills.com. She will assist you in your endeavor to help out. Find out more about the Rattlesnake Hills Wine Trail by going to www.rattlesnakehills.com.

~Marie Clark



Welcome!

The Yakima Enological Society would like to welcome the following New Members to the Society: Vernal Allen, Robyn Fiebelkorn, Bob and Cecile Bader, and Cesar and Terese Abrea.

~ Gerry Amos

Yakima Enological Society
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Yakima WA 98907