



The Wine Press



Let's Uncork Industry News

WHAT'S NEW IN GWP

2023 has had a great start! We opened the year with our largest Annual Conference to date with well over 200 attendees and 20 sponsors. Eric Seifarth won the first annual "Person of the Year" award, thank you for all that you do and have done for Georgia Wine. We elected new board members and they have been hard at work finding new ways to move us forward and find new and enticing initiatives for our members. Please see the BOD bios later in the newsletter.

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PASSPORT



2023



Yeast. Such a minute creature of which makes such a profound impact in our lives.

BY TRISTEN VANHOFF

Let's Uncork Industry News

CONTINUED

Wine Highway had record presales for 2023 at over \$20,000. Reporting is still trickling in, looking like \$30,000 more in sales. We would like to invite all of you to participate in an advisory committee for 2024 Wine Highway. We would like to see: new to WHW wineries, veteran WHW wineries, wineries who no longer choose to participate, and wineries who have seen great success. We have heard your app feedback, and have already discontinued.

Please share the news of our New Growers Summer Symposium and keep an eye out for an agenda to be released very soon. The Symposium will be held in Carrollton on June 24th.

Yeast

BY TRISTEN VANHOFF

The inner geek me comes out every summer when Scott Labs delivers the next edition of their winemaking handbook. The morning after it arrives, it is just me, my coffee, and a quiet place where I can read about the new products on the market and start to formulate my fermentation schedule for the upcoming harvest. For me, this is where harvest begins.

There are many different styles of winemakers out there:

- the naturalist – one that prefers to let nature take its course, generally using "native" yeast

- the minimalist – ones who like to interfere as minimally as possible, yet still use a cultured yeast to start fermentation.
- the pragmatic – ones who know what they like, and stick to their tried and true yeast strains without much variance.
- the experimentalist – someone who will use yeast strains specific to each varietal, and sometimes multiple strains per single varietal.

I am a self-confessed experimentalist. In no way am I suggesting that this way is the best method, it is just how I like to operate. I have an idea of the direction I wish to take a certain wine, and I select the yeast based on what characteristics I am after in the finished product. Here in the southeast, we are constantly dealing with high disease and pest pressure, and because of that, I will always inoculate the must/juice with a cultured yeast in fear of something rogue/negative taking off before "native" yeast takes control.

Next to the fruit itself, the yeast is the next major factor that will determine the quality and style of each wine. Other key factors that play a pivotal role in the end product are temperature and nutrient demands.

Temperature is always more important than time. Should you not be able to regulate the fermentation temperature, consider strains that will work well at higher temperatures, for example. A cooler fermentation will result in more floral notes in whites and fruity notes in reds, while a warmer fermentation will generally showcase more tropical whites wines and bolder jammy red wines.

Be aware of your nutrient demands through fermentation. When the yeast is stressed, they are going to throw off negative flavours and aromas. When they are stressed, it is generally either due to temperature, or they need a dose of nutrients. When it comes to nutrient demand, consider organic nitrogen sources, such as Fermaid O, over inorganic, such as DAP (diammonium phosphate). Organic nutrient is uptaken over a longer period of time, and will assist in avoiding any heat spikes within your fermentation. A good rule of thumb is to never use inorganic nitrogen/DAP below 12 Brix either, as this may not be fully consumed by the yeast by the time fermentation is complete.

Even after almost fifteen years of making wine, I still play around with new yeast strains every year. Not only does it help ensure I am continuously learning, it also ensures I am doing right by the grape/vineyard/wine into the future.

At the end of the day, you are your own person. You are your own winemaker. You have your own palate. Go make the wine you want to make. However, give those little yeast guys the love and attention they deserve during fermentation to ensure that they turn your vision into reality.

Cheers,

Tristen Vanhoff.

Accent Cellars/Yonah Mountain Vineyards



Welcome Dr. Lowder

BY SARAH LOWDER

Hello everybody! My name is Dr. Sarah Lowder and I am the new UGA Extension Viticulturist and Assistant Professor in the Department of Horticulture. Born and raised in North Carolina, I moved to Athens from Corvallis, Oregon, where I have recently finished my PhD with Dr. Walt Mahaffee with the USDA-ARS. My past work has been looking at more effective ways to monitor and manage grape powdery mildew in the vineyard, especially when dealing with fungicide resistance issues. In the new position, I am very excited to be working with both bunch and muscadine grape growers in Georgia. So far, I've got plans underway for projects and resources to help with variety and rootstock selection, updating the UGA Viticulture

website, Pierce's Disease management, replant assistance, spray coverage considerations, a muscadine management poster (for those of you who enjoyed the Viticulture poster from several years ago) and more!

Additionally, you can help me, as I do my best to help you! Along with Extension Agents Clark MacAllister and Nathan Eason, we have a survey that, if enough of us take it, can get us more national resources and attention. Please consider taking this survey:

https://ugeorgia.ca1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_6Vhu8uap9qKHwjA

I am very excited to work with the GWP, the county Extension agents, and all of you to support the wonderful grape industry here in Georgia. For the short time I've been in this role, I have felt very welcome. Please reach out to me if you have any questions or to say hello if you have not already (sarah.lowder@uga.edu).

The Final Frontier

BY SEAN WILBORN

From the moment Europeans landed on the East Coast of the United States, there's been an effort to figure out what grows best in this wet, humid and challenging environment. It was one huge forest and the vine cuttings that made the voyage over didn't stand a chance. The local grapes weren't worth writing home about but stood up to the harsh conditions which led to research on hybridizing European and American grape varieties. The East Coast was the hotbed of research and grape growing until someone wrote home about the West. All the effort to tame the East faded into the sunset and prohibition pretty much killed what was left of our grape-growing heritage.

Virginia seemed to break through the stigma, then New York and they've held strong and built onto a solid foundation. Texas! Even Texas has broken through. They've all made it into the prestigious pages of Wine Spectator and Wine Enthusiast magazines! We all know you're nobody until you've been granted status by the journalists of wine holiness. So here we sit, the heathens in the bottom right corner, the dirty, dirty south...the final frontier.

That gets me fired up. The opportunity, the blank canvas, the stuff of legend!

SEAN WILBORN

I don't know about you but that gets me fired up. The opportunity, the blank canvas, the stuff of legend! We've long begun our journey and we have so many who've gone before us to thank. Their dreams and hard work from whom we can all learn and draw inspiration. Some things worked, some things did not. So where do we go from here? I always say that what's made every wine place notable is the grape that they've championed as their own. Chianti has Sangiovese, Napa has Cabernet Sauvignon, Oregon - Pinot Noir and Virginia has Viognier. What do we have?

Vinifera varieties have a thin sliver of the north east and north western parts of the state but the

rain. The bloody rain. Achieving chemical and physiological ripeness with these varieties is inconsistent and won't give us a grape we can hang our hat on as a state or region.

Sustainability is also a thing. If you have to build an artificial environment around it just for it to survive, how can it be scaled up to mass production – the mass production we desperately need in this state? For us to truly conquer this final frontier, we must land on a handful of truly promising varieties that check all the boxes. What are the boxes?

Well first and foremost, it has to make great wine. Second, it has to be resilient to the myriad of funk that our region generously provides. These are primarily powdery mildew, downy mildew, and pierce's disease. Not all hybrids fit these two essential requirements. However, fortunately there are several that keep showing up to the party and they're dressed to kill!

A short list of some of my favorites include Lomanto, Lenoir, and Villard Blanc. On the fringes are several others such as Blanc du Bois but I've purposely and quite confidently left off Norton and Chambourcin. No offense! What is it about the aforementioned that gets many of us so excited? These grapes are jungle grapes. They are made for our rain forest-esque paradise. They still need a strong spray program but they are much more forgiving than their European relatives and won't leave a void in your vineyard rows three years in. What's most exciting is the wine we are making with these varieties.

Lenoir is the closest thing to a vinifera variety we have tasted and we are consistently making nice wines with Lenoir. There's enough familiarity with

the profile for the mass consumer to feel like they're getting their "I usually drink Merlot" style wine. Lomanto is just amazing. There seems to be a ribbon through the south where Lomanto likes to be, from the fringes of the Piedmont plateau and all points in between, Lomanto is one that could put us on the map. We describe it as a "Malbec and Dolcetto meeting at a Grateful Dead concert...in your mouth!" Grateful Dead concert in my mouth? Yes please.

We've had the snootiest of wine snoots, owners of Italian winery estates, sommeliers, even the French get all excited about Lomanto. It appeals to people who typically don't drink wine to people who have tasted every single wine in the world. It's a game changer. So too is the obscure and somehow forgotten Villard Blanc. Villard is a workhorse! It can produce up to 8 tons per acre!! Huge clusters of chemistry we can only dream of in the dirty, dirty south. It doesn't do well in the extreme south as we have seen it fall to pierce's disease but from the piedmont and North, it's a winner. We are producing lovely sparkling and still white wines with Villard Blanc.

Blanc du Bois is a dirty girl. Elusive and diva like, the wines are just fun and delicious but growing can be tricky. Sour rot is prevalent right as you're achieving the desired ripeness and the vine seems to just always want more of something that it can't put into words. A tease that leaves you in a heap yet begging for more. It's an endorsement but proceed with caution.

What's most exciting is the times in which we live. The advent of powdery and downy mildew resistant varieties as well as more pierce's disease varieties is very promising. European

countries are rethinking their prohibitive laws which could open the door to amazing research from which we can all benefit. Ultimately we have to land on our grape. What is the grape that is going to put us on the map? What grape is going to be the one to conquer this final frontier?

If you have a grape variety that gets you excited, please share with us on our Facebook Page and let's keep the conversation going!

Sean Wilborn

Cloudland Vineyards and Winery



Coming Down the Barrel

DATES TO REMEMBER

Please help us support Georgia Wine by sharing your events and supporting those that are coming up. We have a couple of festivals coming up in May and our Summer Symposium in June. The Symposium is geared towards those looking to enter the industry up to about two years in, or even staff members looking to learn more. We will release speakers and the agenda shortly. Look out for a survey from the Wine and Grape Commission as well.

Dates:

Commission Survey
4/21

Hiawassee Wine
Festival 5/13

Ellijay Songwriters
Festival 5/25-5/28

Summer Symposium
6/24

Wine & Grape Commission

UPDATES

The Wine and Grape Commission Board has met on multiple occasions since the annual conference and have been working over all of the concerns and comments from GWP membership and other annual conference attendees. They have put together a survey that will be sent out to all GWP members and wineries in the state of Georgia. Please look for this in your email on April 21st and it will be posted to our website as well. The Wine and Grape Commission board is available to answer any of your questions and concerns along with the GWP board. Please find the contact info for the Commission below:

Simone Bergese ***sbergese@chateauelan.com***

Gary Engel ***gary@engelheim.com***

Eric Miller ***eric@yonahmountainvineyards.com***

Gary Paulk ***gary@paulkvineyards.com***

Eric Seifarth ***eric@cranecreekvineyards.com***

Board Member:
Jane Miller
Yonah Mountain Vineyards



Jane Miller is the co-owner of Yonah Mountain Vineyards in Cleveland, along with husband, Bob, and son, Eric.

Jane is excited to be serving on the Board of the GA Wine Producers, and believes that the organization will help further the wine industry in GA by mentoring new farm wineries and working with elected officials to expand recognition, increase marketing, and furthering research in the field.

Board Member:
Sean Wilborn
Cloudland Vineyards



Sean Wilborn spent 12 years in the wine industry before opening Cloudland Vineyards and Winery in Buford Georgia.

He's passionate about the wine industry and a huge cheerleader for Georgia wine and viticulture and is excited to serve on the board of Georgia Wine Producers Association.

Board Member:
Jason Summerour
Three Strands Vineyard and Winery



Jason is the owner of Three Strands Family Vineyard and Winery in Dallas, GA, along with his wife Erica. Being a newcomer to the wine industry, Jason recognizes the importance in passing on knowledge and experience of viticulture, enology, and operational information down to future generations. Jason is passionate about serving on the Board of the Georgia Wine Producers in helping to elevate the Georgia wine industry through mentoring, education, and promotion.

Board Member:
Tristen Vanhoff
Accent Cellars/Yonah Mountain Vineyards



With a degree in enology and viticulture from his native land, Australia, Tristen has 15 years of winemaking experience in Australia, British Columbia, California and for the past ten years here in Georgia. These days, Yonah Mountain Vineyards and Accent Cellars keeps him grounded.

Board Member:
Bill Cox
Cox Vineyard



I started making beer in 2003 and have had something in a fermenter continuously since then, even while moving from of three different states. I've successfully crafted wine, beer, mead, cider, sake and fermented a good glass out of a lot of things I never thought I would. I've taught winemaking courses and consulted on winemaking across the country and as far away as Lebanon. Won a pile of awards, but am always studying, trying, testing and asking in a constant process of trying to improve. Something I say in every one of my classes and often around a winery, usually when we are splattered with some goo, or cleaning a fermenter. Winemaking is Glamorous. Cheers Salute Kanpai

Board Member:
Dave Pratt
Familla Vineyards



Dave is a 25 year veteran of the wine industry as a winery owner, winemaker, grape grower, General Manager and consultant. He has served the industry as an officer and President of the county Wine Grapegrowers Association, the local Winery Association and the County Farm Bureau. Additionally, Dave was active in the community as an appointee to the county Agricultural Commission and Planning Commission and elected to the Community Fire Protection District.

Reach out to your BOD

CONTACT INFOR FOR BOD

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Sean Wilborn, Vice President 386-931-7434 - sean@cloudlandwines.com

Jason Summerour, Treasurer 770-314-1577 -

jason@threestrandsvineyard.com

Tristen Vanhoff, Secretary 770-527-0141 - tristen@accentcellars.com

Bill Cox 678-357-3506 - wineguybill@yahoo.com

Dave Pratt 916-715-7093 - dave@familiavineyards.com

Gary Wiseman 470-990-3491 - gary.wiseman@comcast.net

Board Member:
Gary Wiseman
Blue Cielo Farms - Vineyard & Winery



Gary Wiseman owns Blue Cielo Farms with locations in Elberton (Lake Russell) and Commerce. Gary joined the board in 2021 with aspirations of helping other new farm wineries open their doors and supporting growth of the Georgia Wine industry. Gary has over 25 years of leadership experience in the industrial and renewable energy markets and has a passion for growing businesses.

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