

# GRAPE PRESS

Fall 2016

The Quarterly Newsletter of the VIRGINIA VINEYARDS ASSOCIATION

Vol. 32 No. 3



Jack Looney

## Forging An Organic Path

Karl Hamsch has earned organic certifications for both the vineyard and winery at Loving Cup.

## Loving Cup finds ways to grow without synthetics

### Grape Press

Everyone knows it's impossible to make organic wine in Virginia – everyone, that is, except Karl Hamsch, who now has the Commonwealth's only vineyard and winery that are both certified as organic.

Disheartened by the volume of fungicides, pesticides and herbicides that were used in East Coast winemaking, Karl planted the first vines for what would become [Loving Cup Vineyard & Winery](#) in North Garden in 2008. The vineyard was certified organic in 2012 and the winery received its certification this spring. As a result, all of Loving Cup's wines, starting with the 2016 vintage, will be labeled "organic."

Grape Press had a number of questions about Loving Cup, and Karl was kind enough to answer.

Grape Press: So you're actually certified-

### organic? What does that mean?

Karl Hamsch: Short answer: no synthetic farm inputs, including fungicides, insecticides, and fertilizers.

### GP: And herbicides.

KH: Right. There are actually organic herbicides, but they don't work that well and we don't use them. For the first two years, we cultivate under the vines and, from then on, we just mow, weedeat, and hand-weed.

### GP: Hand-weed? Really?

KH: 12 inches around every trunk. A couple times a year.

### GP: So you don't spray herbicide or any pesticides?

KH: No, I do have organic fungicides and

See ORGANIC on page 6

### President's Corner

## A Most Unusual Harvest

By Tom Kelly

Kelly Vineyard Services

Harvest is upon us! At the time of this writing (last week of September), harvest of most white varieties in the vineyards I am involved in are behind us and looking back at the past few weeks, some interesting trends are occurring. In past years, certain "later-ripening" white varieties such as Viognier and Petite Manseng would have been picked several weeks after earlier ripening varieties such as Chardonnay.

This year however, I have observed exactly the opposite. In one particular vineyard, Viognier was harvested about ten days ahead of Chardonnay and, in fact, the pH of the Viognier was

See PRESIDENT on page 2

## INSIDE

### Regional Reports

Taking stock of the impact of this year's frost and freeze.

PAGE 4

### French Finery

An up-close look at the amazing terroir of the Jura region.

PAGE 8

### Building Consensus

Va. Wine Council works to keep up with legislative initiatives.

PAGE 12

# VVA BOARD

## 2016

*President*

**Tom Kelly**

tom@kellyvineyardservices.com

*Vice President*

**Jim Benefiel**

jwbenefiel@aol.com

*Treasurer*

**Kay Thompson**

kaythompson@gmail.com

*Secretary*

**Aimee Henkle**

aimee@lostcreekwinery.com

*Advisor*

**Dr. Tony K. Wolf**

vitis@vt.edu

*Business Manager*

**Tracy Kirkman**

vavineyardsassoc@gmail.com

*Grape Press Editors/Production*

**Bob Garsson**

rgarsson@gmail.com

**Chris Garsson**

cgarsson@gmail.com

**VVA Mailing Address**

**P.O. Box 168**

**Waterford, Va. 20197**

vavineyardsassoc@gmail.com

Special thanks to:

Paul Anctil, Karl Hamsch,  
Andrew Hodson, Paul Krop, Ben Rowe



## PRESIDENT'S CORNER (cont.)

*PRESIDENT, from page 1*

elevated enough to prompt the winemaker to harvest Petite Manseng early – at about 26 brix, 3.06 pH and 10g/l TA – for blending with the Viognier in an attempt to correct for the higher pH and lower brix of that fruit. Interestingly, the previously mentioned numbers for Petite Manseng are typical for this variety, however, in this area we would not normally see them until early October as opposed to mid-September.

### Reduced Sugar

In short, this situation is indicative of what many folks around the state are seeing – reduced sugar accumulation and color development relative to acid degradation.

Dr. Tony Wolf, in his most recent issue of [Viticulture Notes](#) explains some possible reasons why we are seeing this effect on our crops this year but, in short, it is generally a result of the unusually warm growing season we've had.

Vines tend to shut down sugar accumulation and color development as photosynthesis slows at high ambient temperatures. Acids, however, continue to degrade (partly due to unusually high nighttime temperatures) causing pH to continue to rise.

Only time will tell how this vintage will rate but despite the above-mentioned conditions, I am seeing very good fruit quality and yields from most of the vineyards I visit, at least with respect to the white wine varieties and the few red wine varieties that have been harvested to date.

While Chardonnay yields were affected by the freeze event earlier this past spring, the losses don't seem to be as dramatic as was initially expected. And, fortunately, most growers are telling me that wildlife pressure on our crops has been significantly less than in previous years.

Good news all around!

### Planning for Winter Technical

Planning for our 2017 Winter Technical Meeting is well under way and, in fact, we already have a fairly well-defined program – a pleasant position to be in so early on! I don't want to give away any details at this point but suffice it to say Tony has been hard at work lining up an impressive array of speakers for the event.

We'll have many exciting topics to present this year, spanning subjects as diverse as vineyard economics to

sustainable practices.

We will again be hosting the New Growers Workshop presented by Tony and his team at the Winchester AREC as well as the popular Governor's Cup Tasting and our usual assortment of fun events such as the Friday Night Wine Social and the Grower of the Year Award Ceremony.

The event will be held again at the beautiful Omni Hotel in Charlottesville on Feb. 23-25, 2017, so mark your calendars!

In August, a "special propositions" ballot was sent out and we had an excellent rate of return on those ballots. Members were asked to vote on three special propositions.

The intent of two of those propositions was to establish staggered terms for the board officers in an effort to mitigate the issue of the association losing a high percentage of its legacy officers (and their institutional knowledge of association operations) in a single election cycle.

The other — striking the language in the bylaw that restricts winery owners from serving as President of the VVA — broadens the talent pool from which we can fill board seats.

All three propositions passed with large margins and so now it is time to put these new ideas into practice.

### Vote for Officers

November will see a second round of ballots sent to you, the members, asking you to nominate and vote for new board officers. This round of voting will elect a new President, Treasurer and Secretary (the latter for a special one-year term).

I ask that you each take some time to consider your friends and colleagues in the industry and nominate those who you think would be of valuable service to the VVA.

Along with the election ballots, there will also be a request for nominations for our 2017 Grower of the Year award.

If you know someone whose participation in and service to our industry and association deserves special recognition, please nominate that person for this prestigious award.

### My Last Column

Finally, it is with some sadness (and some relief) that I write this article as it



**TOM KELLY**

*See PRESIDENT on page 3*

PRESIDENT, from page 2

will be my last President's Corner for the VVA. As this is my last term as President, you will be voting in, along with several other officers, a new President for the Association.

It has been a great honor for me to serve the VVA as a member of its board and as President, and I am gladdened by the knowledge that I will be able to continue to serve as Past President.

Being on the VVA board has allowed me the opportunity to work with so many great individuals, particularly the amazingly talented people who have held the other chairs on the board with me.

But most important for me has been the opportunity to meet and interact with all of you. It is you, the members, who make the VVA so great and it is you whom I have been privileged to serve.

Thanks to all of you for having made this such a great experience.

Best Wishes...

## Grower of the Year Nominations Due

The Virginia Vineyards Association is accepting nominations from members for the Grower of the Year award, plus three board positions: president, treasurer, and a one-year term for the Secretary's position.

Nominations for the three board positions should be forwarded to Tracy Kirkman at [vavineyardsassoc@gmail.com](mailto:vavineyardsassoc@gmail.com) by Oct. 15.

Written ballots will go out in the mail by the end of October, to be returned by Nov. 30.

Nominations for Grower of the Year should also be forwarded to Tracy. They are due by the end of January. The award will be presented at the winter technical meeting on Feb. 24, 2017.

To be considered for Grower of the Year, a candidate must have managed or operated a vineyard in Virginia for at least seven years, contributed to the Virginia viticulture industry, have a minimum of five acres of vineyard, and must be an active member of the VVA. Candidates must also be nominated by an active VVA member.

The special one-year term for the Secretary's position is intended to facilitate a new by-law provision that calls for staggered terms on the VVA's Board of Directors. Under that provision, the President and Treasurer will be elected in different years from the Vice President and Secretary.



[www.plasticposts.net](http://www.plasticposts.net)

## SUSTAINABLE VINEYARD SOLUTIONS



This is the solution!



### Why Plastic Lumber?

- No Splintering
- No Rotting
- Low Maintenance
- No painting or staining
- Environmentally friendly
- Resistant to termites, fungus, salt and oils
- Does not harbor contaminants
- Long life expectancy
- 50 year limited warranty



Post Profiles	Lengths
1.38" Stake	up to 8'
2" Line Post	up to 10'
2.5" Line Post	up to 8'
3X4" Stadium Line Post	up to 16'
4" End/Line Post	up to 16'
5" End/Line Post	up to 16'
6" End/Line Post	up to 16'

Trellising is one of the largest investments in your vineyard. Your posts are the back bone to your grapevines and with the traditional materials it's requiring more maintenance more often. Bedford Technology has the solution with it's FiberForce recycled plastic posts, they are a long term solution that reduces the total cost of ownership of your vineyard through sustainability, lowering your maintenance cost, increasing profitability, and adding value to your vineyard.

Not only can they be used in multiple trellising configurations, but they are a "green" solution that can be used in Organic systems. Our posts cut and drill like wood, you can run your wire through drilled holes or use many of the customary fasteners.

The strength in our product comes from its ability to remain strong and in higher winds it allows for deflection but don't break capability. Our posts deflect the wind resisting that moment of failure where traditional materials will bend, pull out, or even break all of which cost money to fix and can damage your crop.

Why keep replacing your posts every 5-10 years? Invest in a long term solution that is attractive and will allow for a more profitable vineyard.

RECYCLED PLASTIC PRODUCT SOLUTIONS > Experience the Bedford Difference

Contact Ethan Balman [ebalman@coastlinecomposites.com](mailto:ebalman@coastlinecomposites.com)  
717-875-0579

## ▶ EASTERN VA.: “Later bud breakers ... actually fared much better.”



Courtesy of Paul Krop

Traminette grapes ready for the harvest at Good Luck Cellars. Most of the clusters are from basilar secondary buds as a result of this year's late frost.

By Paul Krop  
*Good Luck Cellars*

As I noted in my last column, bud break on our whites arrived about one week earlier than in 2015, and the frost of April 6 and 10 produced damage. I had estimated 75 percent loss of Chardonnay, and that has proven true. What I did not anticipate was that losses in the other six whites we grow would be almost as severe.

Most of our two- and three-bud spurs lost their primaries and the only production came from the basilar secondaries. The other whites severely affected had fairly comparable bud break times (though slightly later than Chardonnay) and these included Chardonnay, Viognier, Seyval Blanc and Vignoles.

Later bud breakers – Traminette and Vidal Blanc – actually fared much better with estimated tonnage (soon to harvest at 3 to 4 tons per acre). All of our reds (not yet harvested as of Sept. 2) appear to be on target with 2015 tonnages and good quality.

We certainly fell behind this year somewhat with leaf pulling because of manpower shortages. We agree with Tom

Kelly's suggestions about finding good labor, but have avoided using the H-2A program because the details seem daunting. Because of the heavy rains of May and June we've certainly enjoyed an aggressive canopy growth that required frequent hedgings and suckering, as well as a vigilant spray program. As of this writing, we have had some downy mildew, but overall a pretty healthy canopy supporting ripening.

We appreciate the recent visit of Dr. Mizuho Nita and grad students during the past week. He confirmed our observations on a number of things. This included finding scattered ripe rot in our Traminette, though fairly scanty and likely not to have a big impact on yield.

He noted the significant frost damage on the many whites, as I mentioned above, and the more severely affected vines that were producing only on their secondary buds and thus ripening late. He also noted that frost damage in our eastern sector appeared to be worse as he proceeded south and surmised our damage to be worse secondary to elevation (we are at 90 feet) compared to Ingleside (some 100 feet higher and possibly different

pruning techniques).

However, since we are basically spur pruned, things may have been worse if we had been cane pruned, since cane pruning tends to push buds earlier than spur pruning. He suggested that we try to stick with a double pruning program with the last pruning as late as possible.

Finally, he did note a fair amount of crown gall in our newly planted three-acre block of Chardonnay and felt it most likely came to us from the nursery. That three-acre block was entirely on virgin territory that had never before been planted with grapes!

Macro-pest damage from birds, deer, etc. appears to be worse this year because of our August drought. Birds especially appear to love the liquid source for a quick nip in a drought. This is confirmed by our good friend, Rock, on the eastern shore.

We hope the quantitative loss in our whites due to frost this year will be offset by healthy appearing clusters of average or slightly above average tonnage in our five red varieties. The brix and pH in these are running on schedule compared to the 2015 harvest.

► **SOUTHERN VA.:** “This was the worst year ever for animal and bird predation.”

By Paul Ancetil  
*Sans Soucy Vineyards*

When I was first introduced to the military’s version of communication, written or verbal, I was admonished to keep it simple and short. One salty old instructor told our class, “Don’t write me a story, get it down to a paragraph. If you can get it down to a paragraph that means you can cut it down to a sentence. Keep it factual, concise. If the CO wants more details he’ll ask you for them.”

So with that in mind let me summarize the 2016 grape growing season for my area: two significant freezes at Easter time, two bouts of hail in late spring, double the normal rainfall for June and July, weeks of 90-plus degree heat, unusual animal and bird predation pressure, lack of available

workers.

Did that effectively paint the picture? For those of you interested in details, keep reading.

Both my Viognier and Tempranillo had approximately 2 inches of shoot length when the first freeze hit. The few shoots that survived that first episode were quickly eradicated two nights later with temperatures in the low 20’s. The secondary buds did eventually fill the canopy but they were not fruitful. Instead of the usual 3 tons per acre I normally get from these two varietals, I barely got 500 pounds from each.

The Cabernet Franc and Petit Verdot were not affected by the spring freezes. They showed good promise for a nice crop. Then came the hail. It caused about 30% damage in those two but the surviving fruit still looked good.

As an aside to the hail damage, I had

to replace the windshields on two of my vehicles.

Rain is good in the spring, right? This year I had more than double the normal precipitation for both June and July. At times it was nearly impossible to navigate on some of the sloping rows. During July, I don’t think the day temperature ever went below 90 degrees. The humidity was oppressive. It was a physical challenge to work in the heat and the disease pressure was high. My spray program budget was exhausted by July.

Hundreds, if not thousands, of acres of timber were harvested within one mile of me. Several hundred acres on both my immediate south border and northwest border were cut over completely. Critters of all manner that once lived in those forest were forced to find new homes. Guess where a lot of them went? Yup, my little 50-acre island of forest.

Without a doubt, this was the worst year ever for animal and bird predation. Flocks of migratory song birds swooped in by the hundreds onto my PV and CF every morning and just before sunset. Deer so bad that I got a kill permit for 12, followed by four more. Raccoons, opossums, turkey – you name it, they came for dinner.

And finally, what I think is one of the more serious issues for the industry: our inability to find people who want to work on a farm in the hot summer.

Many, if not most of us, got into grape growing late in life. Try as I want, I simply can no longer perform the physical work required of a commercial vineyard without help.

And finding healthy young people to work on a farm, any farm, is getting to be nearly impossible, regardless of how much pay you offer. If anyone has any successful experiences with the H-2A guest worker program, I’d love to hear from you.

The summary of all this? I had a lousy year. Less than 4 tons of fruit (yeah, Traminette) from a vineyard that normally gives me 28 to 30 tons.

Were these problems unique to my vineyard? No, not really. I talked with four other growers. They didn’t suffer the same degree of loss as I did, but they were all significantly impacted by the unusual conditions of 2016.

At this stage in my life I don’t usually like to see the calendar jump ahead. This year is an exception.

I’m looking forward to 2017!

**WINCHESTER EQUIPMENT COMPANY**  
 Agricultural, Construction, Material Handling Equipment  
 Since 1957

**cima** **Rinieri**

**Introducing a new partnership between  
 BDi Machinery and Winchester Equipment.**

# Finding the Right Grapes to Go Organic

*ORGANIC, from page 1*

insecticides. Of the fungicides, the elementals like copper and sulfur seem to be the most effective. Of the insecticides, we use Btk, spinosad, and neem.

**GP: And this works?**

KH: No, not really. None of our organic sprays work that well.

**GP: So does that mean you experience a lot of disease? And pest damage?**

KH: More than YOU are used to, but it's mostly manageable. As disease symptoms show up, we remove leaves and fruit. Same with Grape Berry Moth: we see a berry with tunnels and we pull it out. Because we are not working with any Cadillac sprays, hand labor has to replace what our sprays cannot do.

**GP: What varieties of grapes do you grow? Which ones do best in an organic environment?**

KH: Yeah, so you've drilled right down to it. That's really the cornerstone of organic grape growing, as far as I'm concerned: variety selection. Because of the disease pressure of our region, the varieties that we grow have to have a stout immune response to pathogen attack.

**GP: You mean disease-resistance?**

KH: Yes, of course. The varieties have to be generally disease-resistant, and have to be most disease-resistant to Black Rot. This is called the Achilles Heel of East Coast organic viticulture, and it really is a deal breaker. We've already pulled out two varieties because of Black Rot.

**GP: Really? But you haven't been growing grapes that long.**

KH: No, first came out after two years, and second variety came out after six years. And Black Rot isn't the end of it. Too much Downy is no good. Too much of anything is no good. Anthracnose is the new bane of my existence. Right now I'm looking at my Vidal, which is highly susceptible to Anthracnose, and wondering if I can get a couple more years out of it before I pull it, too.

**GP: So which varieties did you pull out and which ones are you still growing?**

KH: Yes, right, so we pulled out Scheurebe and Traminette. And we are still growing Cayuga and Vidal for our whites, and



Courtesy of Karl Hamsch

Two varieties that do some of the heavy lifting at Loving Cup: Marquette and Cayuga.

Marquette and Corot Noir for our reds. I suspect, however, we will likely replace three of the four varieties within 10 years. We planted initially with the best information we had, but I fear most of these varieties will not be long-term sustainable. Currently, Cayuga is the only variety that we grow that appears to be compatible with organic production... in Virginia.

**GP: How difficult is the organic certification process? Is there a lot of paperwork?**

KH: A silly amount of paperwork! A 75-page recertification application for the vineyard every year.

**GP: Do you have to deal with site inspections?**

KH: Oh, sure. Every year. Farm inspections are part of recertification process.

**GP: What kind of feedback have you gotten from your customers?**

KH: What, about being organic? Well, most new visitors are surprised. And almost everyone is positive and appreciative. Most folks are buying organic foods anyway, so organic wine is not as foreign a concept as perhaps it might have been 10 years ago. And being close to Charlottesville is great! Lots of

folks in Charlottesville value organic foods.

**GP: What advice do you have for others who want to go into organic viticulture?**

KH: Oh, goodness. Well, honestly, don't bother trying it with vinifera. Unless the variety does the heavy lifting, it's not going to work. Secondly, I guess, don't underestimate how hard it's going to be. If you try to cut any corners, it's also not going to work. Being organic is like walking on a wire without a net; take it seriously. Oh, and plan on working seven days a week until leaf-fall.

**GP: What was the most difficult problem you dealt with?**

KH: Difficult? Well, the diseases are difficult, but the thing we spend the most time on is weed control. You may not realize how challenging weed control is without herbicide.

**GP: What's the one non-organic solution you miss the most?**

KH: Well, I've never grown grapes conventionally. I don't know the conventional alternatives to miss them. I am certainly aware of the efficiency of

See *ORGANIC* on page 7

# Organic

ORGANIC, from page 6

modern spray programs, so I guess I covet the efficiency of our neighbor vineyards.

**GP: How did you get interested in the idea of organic viticulture?**

KH: Oh, goodness, that's too long a story. It just kind of happened. Suffice it to say we did not do this to make a point or be different; this is just the path we took. One thing led to another and another, and in the end, we were doing it.

**GP: How does the organic philosophy carry over to the winemaking?**

KH: Well, technically speaking, everything we use in the winery has to be organic also. But, winemaking is less complicated than grape growing. Our philosophy in the winery is approach every issue conservatively, stress about every detail, and never go home.

**GP: How about biodynamic viticulture? Have you given thought to that?**

KH: Yes, and we incorporate a few biodynamic practices in our vineyard, but I have some fundamental problems with biodynamics as a whole. I agree with the whole-farm concept and emphasis on soil health, but it's the use of domesticated animals that troubles me. We instead rely on native animals and insects.

**GP: How many acres of vines do you have? Is there a practical limit to the size of an organic vineyard?**

KH: Right now, we're somewhere between three and four acres. I keep pulling out vines, so I'm not sure where we are right now. This spring we'll put in another acre. Eventually, if I stop ripping out vines, we'll be done planting at five acres. I figure that's all we can manage without hiring full-time help.

**GP: What moment do you remember most? Was there ever a moment when you felt like giving up on organics and just spraying Mancozeb or Quintec or something like that?**

KH: Oh, well, I remember my mistakes the most. I've made some real bone-head mistakes that I'll never forget. I guess I also remember the moments I decided to pull out each variety. But no, I am not tempted to use conventional materials.

**GP: Can you tell us something about the difference between organic and non-organic wines in terms of taste?**

KH: No idea. Nor would I want to be on the record if I did.

**GP: How much of a selling point do you think the organic brand is? Will Virginia wineries be able to charge higher prices for their wines if the product is organic?**

KH: So far, we have seen no evidence that an organic premium exists for wine ... much to our dismay. It could be that the price point for wine is already high as it is. Personally, I feel a 15% premium would be fair, but if organic products are too expensive, fewer folks will incorporate them into their daily routines. You can't enrich someone's life with your wine if they can't afford to buy it.



**VINTAGE**  
NURSERIES  
a Wonderful company.

**PREMIER QUALITY FROM  
NORTH AMERICA'S LEADING VINE NURSERY**

Leaders raise the bar in everything they do and that's why Vintage Nurseries continues to set the industry standards for vine cleanliness, improved irrigation methods and product selection. In the last year alone, Vintage has begun work on a new, state-of-the-art greenhouse facility, changed from wood to eco-friendly recycled plastic storage bins and callous boxes, and introduced new sanitization techniques.

From our 2010 Protocol mother blocks, to our advanced testing lab, the innovative new Vintage Root Sock and more, Vintage Nurseries strives to provide the cleanest, healthiest vines in the industry. It's how we lead. It's how we grow.

**ECO-FRIENDLY PLASTIC STORAGE BINS**





**VINTAGE NURSERIES' ADVANCED NEW TESTING LAB**

**PLASTIC CALLOUS BOXES FOR VINE CLEANLINESS**



**SERVING THE WINE, TABLE GRAPE, AND RAISIN INDUSTRIES**



**WASCO**  
661.758.4777

**800.499.9019**

**PASO ROBLES**  
805.237.8914

**SANTA ROSA**  
707.542.5510

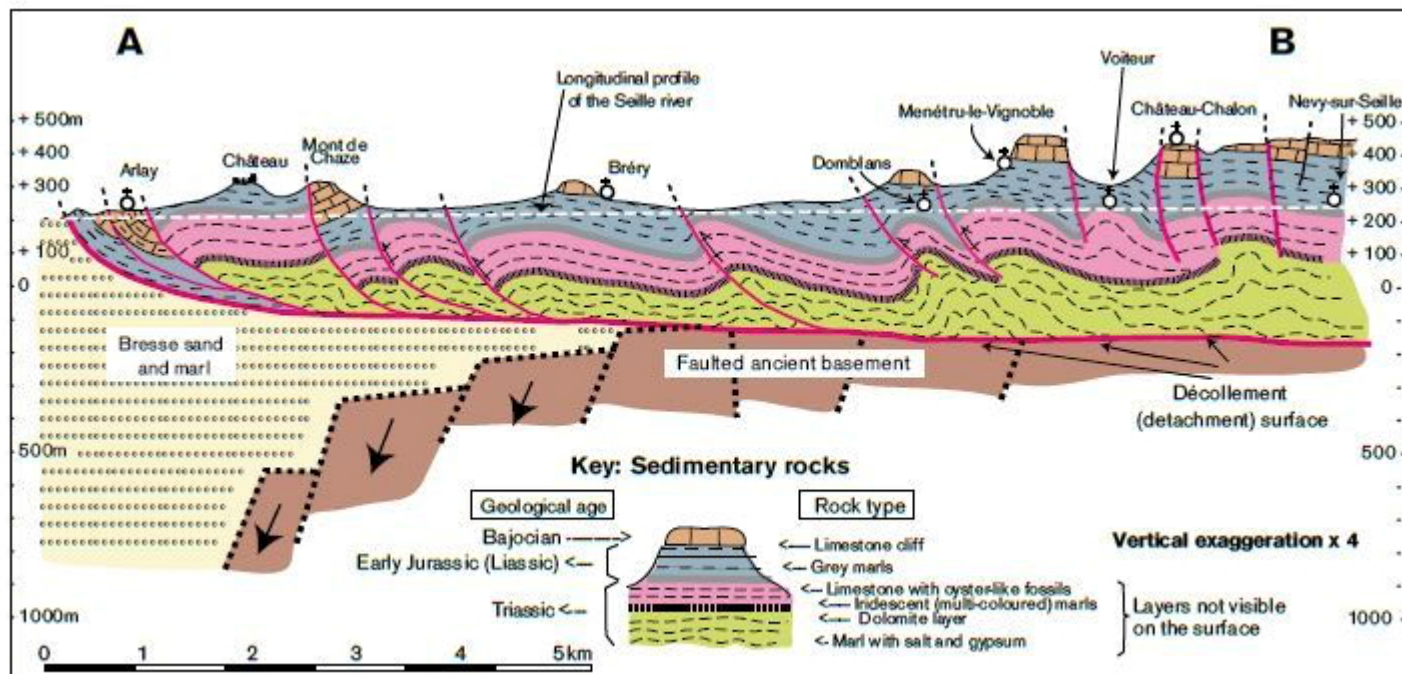


*Mercier*  
CALIFORNIA

[VintageNurseries.com](http://VintageNurseries.com)

Notes on Traveling in France

# Exploring Minerality in Jura



Above, used by permission, from Jura Wine by Wink Lorch; below, Andrew Hodson

Geological cross-section of the Jura vineyard region from Arlay in the west to Nevy-sur-Seille in the east. Helped by the plasticity of the salt- and gypsum-rich marl layer, the upper layer of the Jura Mountains detached and slipped towards the Bresse basin, and the land mass became separated into numerous fault blocks. Below, layers of the sedimentary rocks were pushed westward millions of years ago to form the Jura Mountains.

By Andrew Hodson  
Veritas Vineyard & Winery

We have always loved being in France – the culture, the food, and of course, the wine.

I have an almost Darwinian respect for the French wine industry as it still governs the world in all spheres of premium wine. Like it not, French wine is respected as the global gold standard.

For two months, we went all over France. We started in Burgundy, then moved onto Champagne, Alsace, Jura, Languedoc and Bordeaux, before ending up back in the Languedoc. The Jura is the region in of all France that we enjoyed the most, and it's the topic of this article.

## A Geologic Masterpiece

While pre-phyloxera Jura consisted of almost 20,000 hectares, today its vineyard area is about the same as Virginia, or roughly 2,000 hectares. The thing about the Jura, though, is that it is a geologic masterpiece

For some reason, I am drawn to the history of the earth, and that plays into the fun of puzzling out what it is that gives a wine that zing, that tang of enjoyment that lights up pleasure and emotional centers of the brain.

So it was for me in the Jura when I was awed by the monstrous beauty of the rock formations at the same time as being whacked in the palate by simple wines of wondrous authenticity.

See JURA on page 9





# 'The Mystical Quality of Minerality'

*JURA, from page 8*

I cannot tell you the joy I got; it was like finding a precious expression of nature that has not yet been exploited by commercialism. It was that very joy that made me want to know more about the fundamentals that challenge us all in wine grape growing – namely, the relation of the soil part of terroir to wine quality and, in this instance, the mystical quality of minerality. My search to figure this out took me through geology and soil science and to wine experts.

We started in Chablis, after the obligatory two to three days in Paris. For three days we tasted the whole range, from the least expensive village wine to world-renowned, premium Grand Cru Chablis.

Chablis, as you all know, is the northernmost outpost of Burgundy, and Burgundy is all about place. Burgundy epitomizes the relationship between terroir and wine quality.

And here's the rub: Burgundy and Jura are on the same latitude. They are longitudinally parallel and only 156 km apart. Compared to Chablis, the wines of the Jura are virtually unknown, yet the two regions have more in common than you would think – in terms of geology and terroir, and also in the nature of the wines themselves.

Amazingly, before I got to the Jura I had not made the connection between "The



Andrew Hodson

**Terroir can change abruptly, from the white soil of Grand Cru that is all limestone and marl to the red soil of Premiere Cru that contains more iron and less limestone.**

Jura," the region, and "Jurassic," as in the geologic era made familiar to all of us by Steven Spielberg in the movie *Jurassic Park*, which focused on an era 150 to 200 million years ago, at a time when reptiles and dinosaurs ruled the animal kingdom. I

sort of knew about Jurassic as a geologic era in the same way I knew about the Kimmeridgian soils and their relationship to the regional typicity of Chablis.

The marine fossils and plants found in and around Kimmeridge – a small village in Dorset England – are from a time dating back some 150 million years. The term "Jurassic" was coined in the same way as "Kimmeridgian" by recognizing rocks and marls that contain plant and animal fossils of the creatures that roamed the earth over a much longer time period estimated at 150 to 200 million years ago. At that time, the Jura region was pretty much under water, and as sedimentary layers of rock formed, the remains of the creatures living at that time were trapped in the sediment.

Some millions of years later, as the Alps were formed, layers of the sedimentary rocks were pushed westward to form Jura Mountains. It was the exposure of the sedimentary layers of the Jura Mountains that provided the clue to the age of the rocks and the marl.

In the Jura we stayed in a little town called Voiteur and we had biked to a village called Baumes Les Messieurs. The countryside

*See JURA on page 10*

## Winemaking Consultant

[www.winemakingconsultant.com](http://www.winemakingconsultant.com)

Thomas J. Payette

Over twenty-five years of winemaking in  
Virginia, Napa and East Coast

Multiple Governor's Cup Winner  
2011 Wine Productivity Trophy  
"1999 Winemaker of the Year"

Phone : 540.672.0387

[winemakingconsultant@gmail.com](mailto:winemakingconsultant@gmail.com)

Winemaking solutions focusing on:

Winery and vineyard start-ups  
Still and sparkling wines  
General winery issues

**Food Science Degree – Virginia Tech**

# France

*JURA, from page 9*

was absolutely stunning.

It just so happened the village was located in a blind valley, what the French call a “reculee” formed as a result of fault lines in the deep bedrock that opens up the sedimentary strata.

Tired and weary from our bike ride, we found a nice-looking restaurant in the village called Le Grand Jardin. The wine list was inviting but we were on bikes so we couldn’t drink too much.

I ordered a “pichet” (500ml) of the white house wine, which cost about eight euros! I took one sip, and Kaboom! It was bone-dry, with dazzling acidity. Not much fruit, but the minerality would have matched any of the very best from Chablis.

I found out the wine is a blend of mostly Chardonnay with an unknown quantity of Savignin (a white grape of Jura) from an appellation called L’Etoile.

And why is it called L’Etoile? Because of the starfish fossils found in the mostly marl and limestone soils of the Jurassic Jura, which dates back some 150 to 200 million years. If Chablis is lauded as one of the best expressions of minerality, just try Jura appellation – L’Etoile.

In addition to L’Etoile, the other major appellations are Cotes de Jura, Arbois to the north and Chateau Chalon. Interestingly, there is no Chateau in Chateau Chalon; it is actually the name of the village.

Chateau Chalon is the main source of Jura’s signature wine – Vin Jaune or yellow wine. A wine made from the Savignin grape that has to age, exposed to oxygen, for seven years. It is unique, tasting very much like a high quality Fino sherry.

The local delicacy is Vin Jaune with almond fresh rainbow trout from the nearby Sielle river. There are two native red grapes in the Jura, Poulsard and Trousseau; of the two, Poulsard was my favorite, expressing wonderful minerality. It was one of the few red wines to express that property.

Jura also makes a sparkling wine – a Cremant de Jura – using Chardonnay, Savignin, Poulsard, and Trousseau: charming and shuddering with minerality.

To complete the list of Jura specialty wines there is a concoction of grape juice and Marc (a French version of Grappa) that is drunk as an aperitif called Macvin, as well as a dessert wine made from grapes dried on straw, called Vin de Paille.

However, it was the experience with



Andrew Hodson

Looking down on the village of Baumes Les Messieurs located in a “reculee.”

“minerality” in the Jura wines that made me want to do this piece.

### What Is Minerality?

Prior to my visit to Jura, I thought I had a clear idea of what I understood by minerality in wine.

Minerality is a function of the soil terroir, whether it is Jurassic or Kimmeridgian. But

the more one looks into descriptive wine terms, including minerality, the less one knows. There is a scientific term for this: it is the Chesire cat phenomenon, as in *Alice in Wonderland* – the more one looks into a subject the more it disappears leaving just the grin. Relating characteristics like

*See JURA on page 11*

## WINCHESTER EQUIPMENT COMPANY

Agricultural, Construction, Material Handling Equipment

Since 1957

### VINEYARD TRACTORS AND SPRAYERS

New Holland - Kubota - Durand Wayland

### Tim Gano

Cell: (540) 533-5667

121 Indian Hollow Road Winchester, VA 22603

540-667-2244

[www.winchesterequipment.com](http://www.winchesterequipment.com)

## Enology and Viticulture Society Honors Zoecklein for Contributions

Virginia's own Bruce Zoecklein was this year's recipient of the Extension Distinction Award given by the American Society for Enology and Viticulture (ASEV).

This honor recognizes an extension educator for outstanding contributions in enology or viticulture through his or her extension service or the advanced translation of novel research findings into commercially applicable tools for enologists or viticulturists.

Bruce, Enology Professor Emeritus at Virginia Tech, shared his presentation, "In Vino Veritas and Jefferson's Dream," on June 29, 2016, at the 67th ASEV National Conference in Monterey, Calif.

"The overarching philosophy underpinning our extension efforts is to keep things as simple as possible, but not simpler, and to highlight to industry that the greatest obstacle in discovering the truth is to be convinced you already know it," he said in receiving the award.

Bruce is research coordinator, conducting science-based applied research, for Applied Research Cooperative (ARC), a federation

of wineries in California, Oregon and Washington.

He headed the Enology-Grape Chemistry Group at Virginia Tech for 28 years, aiding the development of the Virginia wine industry. He is also the editor of *Winery Planning and Design*, as well as *Enology Notes*, an electronic technical brief with more than 3,500 subscribers world-wide.



**Bruce Zoecklein**

He is a co-author of several editions of *Wine Analysis and Production* and is a certified auditor for the California Sustainable Winegrowing Alliance program.

Bruce taught enology at California State University, Fresno, and California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo. As head of the Enology-Grape Chemistry Group, he conducted research, extension, classroom and graduate student education, and oversaw the creation of a commercial analytical laboratory service for the wine industry.

His research interests include grape-derived aroma and flavor compounds. Following his retirement from Virginia Tech, he was rehired to continue his research.

## In Memoriam: Charlotte Boyer Baldrige

Charlotte Maureen Boyer Baldrige, 73, of Amherst, passed away Sept. 19 at her residence. Along with her husband of 36 years, John, she was owner and operator of Mountain Terrace Vineyard in Amherst.

Born in Worthington, Minn., on March 12, 1943, she was valedictorian of her high school graduating class. She was retired from Baldrige Architects and Engineers. She also served over 30 years as historian for the 359th World War II Fighter Group Association, and was a member of Holy Trinity Lutheran Church.

One brother, Anthony Boyer, preceded her in death. In addition to her husband, she is survived by a son, Dean C. Huston

of Indianapolis, Ind., and a daughter, Linda D. Wessels and her husband, Mark, of Rock Rapids, Iowa.

She is also survived by five brothers: Steven J. Boyer, Gene K. Boyer, David A. Boyer, Wallace E. Boyer and Douglas R. Boyer; three sisters: Becky JoAnn Strandberg, Virginia S. Christenson, and Donna R. McKinley; and two grandsons: Benjamin D. Huston and Samuel F. Wessels.

Those wishing to make memorial contributions are asked to consider Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, 1000 Langhorne Rd., Lynchburg, Va. 24503.

To send condolences online, please visit: [www.whittenmonelison.com](http://www.whittenmonelison.com).

## France

*JURA, from page 10*

minerality in wine to the elements in the soil is particularly disappointing.

Mark Matthews effectively debunks the idea that soil is the crucial factor in determining wine flavor components in his book, *Terroir and Other Myths of Wine Growing* – a myth that for me, and I think for most of the wine growers I know, is still a core belief.

I reached out to Bruce Zoecklein and he was equally demurring, saying that minerality is a function of redox potentials in the wine.

Desperate for further understanding, I searched for a descriptive definition of minerality from a tasting standpoint. There was no consensus; minerality means different things to different people.

The best I could come up with was an article by Sarah Jane Evans MW in the December issue of *Decanter*. She ended her excellent discussion with words to the effect that: if you are drinking a fresh white wine that you know comes from a cool climate with stony soils; that has marked acidity, is not overly fruity, and is not oxidized, then there is a good chance that the wine has minerality! Almost tongue in cheek she creates a scientific formula:

$$(SS+CC+A)-(E+T)-O_2 = \text{Minerality}$$

where SS is stony soils, A is acidity, CC is cool climate, E + T are the fruity aspects of wine in Esters and Thiols, and O<sub>2</sub> is oxygen.

I am left with the feeling that minerality defies both scientific definition and experiential description, but you know that is the intellectual excuse for continuing the quest for knowledge and, of course, drinking more wine.

### Useful Resources on Jura Wine

► *Jura Wine*, by Wink Lorch at [www.winetravellmedia.com](http://www.winetravellmedia.com).

► *Terroir and Other Myths of Winegrowing*, Mark A. Matthews, University of California Press, 2015.

► *Minerality in Wine: What Does it Mean to You?*, by Sara Jane Evans, in *Decanter*, Dec. 11, 2014.

► *Rescuing Minerality*, by Jamie Goode on [Wineanorak blog](http://Wineanorak blog).

# Wine Council Tackles Legislative Controls

By Ben Rowe

Virginia Wine Council

The Virginia wine industry has experienced rapid growth in recent years, and as is the case with any rapidly growing industry, we have seen an increase in our visibility to regulators and legislators. This raised profile has led to an increase in the frequency and scope of proposed legislation affecting wineries.

In an effort to stay ahead of the myriad issues facing our industry, the Virginia Wine Council (VWC) has worked to foster discussion and build consensus among farm wineries, cideries, and vineyards. Through a series of legislative roundtables that we conducted across the Commonwealth, we have led a discussion of how the industry can be more proactive in heading off these new threats.

The discussion raised a number of questions, not only about the rights and privileges afforded under the farm winery license, but how we can move the industry forward and continue to grow at a sustainable pace.

The VWC's roundtable discussions brought together representatives from more than 100 farm wineries, cideries, independent vineyards, and the related industry. The wide range of industry representatives provided well-rounded opinions for discussion and collaboration regarding four pivotal topics. Below are summaries of the four topics and the main takeaways, collated and condensed from our roundtables:

**Topic 1:** What does it mean to be a farm winery? We recognize the potential for event venues masquerading as farm wineries to take advantage of the benefits of a farm winery license. As an industry do we need to further define a farm winery?

▶ A farm winery/cidery must be a farm with a vineyard or orchard, actively growing grapes or apples for wine or cider production.

▶ A farm winery must produce some volume

of wine from its agricultural products.

▶ A farm winery must have suitable facilities for fermenting and bottling (including mobile bottling lines) on premises.

▶ A farm winery must be, first and foremost, in the wine business; revenues should reflect this.

▶ Any future changes to the farm winery licenses to reflect the principles above must include grandfathering of existing operations.

**Topic 2:** It has been three years since passage of legislation allowing wineries to contract out their winemaking. What is working, and what could be improved?

▶ There was a consensus that contract winemaking is not the root of problems related to "event venues" masquerading as wineries; however, there were suggestions that the industry should consider the percentage of a winery's contract winemaking and its privileges accordingly.

▶ There was consensus that addressing the farm winery definition may address perceived problems with contract winemaking without completely changing the existing process and a valuable tool.

▶ The industry should consider a sunset period of three to five years for 100 percent contract winemaking for farm wineries, and examine what percentage is appropriate after a three- to five-year startup timeframe.

**Topic 3:** During the 2016 legislative session, language creating a Virginia Vineyard and Orchard Grant Fund was introduced and carried over to 2017. How can we strengthen this legislation in 2017 to create a productive grant program?

▶ The industry should maintain the grant format and continue to seek state general funds. If there are not ample state funds available during the current budget environment, we should consider low-interest loans.

▶ The industry should develop standards for

how the grants are awarded (new vineyards vs. existing; large acreage vs. small) and an advisory board should be established to vet applications and award grants.

▶ The grant committee should consider whether to award the grants based on acreage or planting density.

**Topic 4:** Lastly, we discussed the relationship between farm wineries and on-site restaurants. Currently farm wineries are able to offer minimal food service and work with caterers to provide food in accordance with Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (VDACS) standards. Farm wineries are not in the restaurant business.

▶ There was consensus that the current Memorandum of Agreement with VDACS surrounding food service for farm wineries is adequate.

▶ There was an overall consensus that farm wineries are not restaurants and therefore should not be subject to food minimums, which require restaurants to obtain a minimum of 45 percent of gross revenues from food services.

Now that we have concluded our final event and compiled all of the feedback and suggestions, we will work with our board, members, as well as the VVA and VWA to craft legislation for the 2017 legislative session.

Please look for more detail from the VWC on our 2017 legislative agenda via our newsletter. And mark your calendar to attend our 2017 Pre-Session Legislative Roundtable, Tuesday, Nov. 1, at Early Mountain Vineyards. This afternoon program will be an opportunity for in-depth discussion of our VWC Legislative Agenda as well as other legislative proposals brought by our fellow stakeholders.

It will also be your opportunity to give a warm welcome to and meet and greet our new Secretary of Agriculture and Forestry, Basil I. Gooden. We encourage you to attend!

## Want a Working Kitty for Your Vineyard?

A group of determined animal rescue volunteers in Hampton Roads is reaching out to Old Dominion residents with vineyards, farms or stables to see if they might be interested in adopting relocated outdoor cats who would live outside on their property.

These cats currently live unowned

outside at Norfolk's massive naval base. But all will be spayed/neutered and given a rabies vaccine by the Norfolk SPCA prior to relocation.

To help us relocate cats off Norfolk military property or for more information, please contact Cat Team 7 at 571-423-9200 or [catteam7norfolk@gmail.com](mailto:catteam7norfolk@gmail.com).

