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2017 Iowa State Fair Wine Experience – Over & Done

In 2009 the Iowa State Fair Board, Iowa Wine Growers Association (IWGA) and Iowa State University Extension & Outreach met to discuss ideas for Grandfathers Barn on top of the hill of the Fair grounds. Because of new regulations & liability issues the former farm animal petting zoo and pony ride was to be no longer at the barn. It was decided to try letting the Iowa winos take it over with wine & grape exhibits, educational speakers, Iowa wine tasting in the barn, a Wine & Cheese tent, a Grape Get-a-Way for kids, a real vineyard and FREE grape stomps every day. We decided to call it the “Wine Experience.”

The Wine Experience idea worked. The first couple of years some random sample counts came up with approximately 100,000+ people visiting Grandfathers Barn. Nine years later and the crowds have DRAMATICALLY increased, the footprint of the Wine Experience now covers much of the entire hill area. A private vendor “Top of the Vine” now has a large tent serving Iowa wine, craft beer and soda, Parlo Pizza now sells wood oven pizza, Iowa artists are present selling their wares & performing their artwork and a band performs in the evening. The Wine Experience has become a destination village for fairgoers to visit.

The 3-way partnership between the Iowa State Fair Board, the IWGA and ISU Extension & Outreach has worked out well. The 2017 Iowa State Fair Wine Experience (August.
10-20) was the biggest and the most bestest yet. The 2017 State Fair had a new estimated attendance record of 1,130,071. It was a good fair.
C U at the 2018 Iowa State Fair Wine Experience, August 9-19, 2018.

**Final Note:** A special thank you goes to Nicole Eilers, Marketing Director for the IWGA who was the superintendent of the Wine Experience and to all the many, many volunteers who made this all happen.

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**2017 Iowa State Fair Commercial Wine Competition Results**

On July 9th, 12 judges met at the Iowa State Fair grounds to evaluate 178 Iowa wines from 32 Iowa wineries. Medals awarded included: 6 double gold, 5 gold, 53 silver and 64 bronze. A total of 128 wines received medals.

Complete Details: [https://www.iowastatefair.org/participate/competition/results/2017-iowa-state-fair-commercial-wine-winners/](https://www.iowastatefair.org/participate/competition/results/2017-iowa-state-fair-commercial-wine-winners/)

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**Iowa Harvest Comments**

The grape harvest surprised us all and came on very early this year. We started to see Brianna being harvested during the first week of August this year in the severe drought stricken area of southeast Iowa. This was about 7-10 days earlier than normal. Edelweiss, LaCrescent, Petite Pearl, Frontenac and others soon followed, all much earlier than normal. The harvest in the northeast corner of Iowa tends to be behind the rest of the state. Heavy rainfall during the season and cool weather has delayed their harvest also increased their disease incidence.

Quality parameters seem to be good over most of the state where the drought persists. Diseases pressure has been down and yield reports seem good. Overall, the 2017 Iowa Vintage should be very good.

Several of our vineyards have purchased [Falcon Fright Kites](https://www.iowastatefair.org/participate/competition/results/2017-iowa-state-fair-commercial-wine-winners/) this season to augment their Bird Gard sound systems and/or bird netting. I have been hearing good things about these falcon kites. Small birds will immediately start to attack them as they do hawks, crows and owls. One vineyard owner indicated that his kite attracted a falcon to his vineyard. Some are purchasing the telescopic pole or making their own pole out of PVC pipe to fly these kites 30 ft. high up into the air.

This is the first year that I recall where an Iowa vineyard picking their grapes in the middle of the night. Primarily to have cool grapes, but also because their busy day schedule forced this to happen. **In Vino Veritas** vineyard at Grimes told me that their pickers all wore headlamps on their head while picking.

I am not hearing many requests for help in marketing grapes to wineries this year. I hope this is a good omen and that all our grapes find a buyer. *mlw*
Results from the International Cold Climate Competition

Results of the 9th International Cold Climate Competition were posted online August 17th. The competition was held at the Minnesota Landscape Arboretum in Chaska, MN.

Six trophies were awarded to the top wines and wineries in addition to the medals. This year’s competition included 338 wines from nine states, and Ontario, Canada. The judging panel included 21 people: professional sommeliers, educators, growers and winemakers amongst others.

The following Trophies were awarded:

Governor’s Cup: La Crescent (2016) Northern Hollow Winery, Grasston, MN
Winery of the Year: Parallel 44 Vineyard and Winery, Kewaunee, WI
Best of Show White: La Crescent (2016) Parallel 44 Vineyard and Winery, Kewaunee, WI
Best of Show Red: Marquette (2015) Indian Island Winery, Janesville, MN
Best of Show Specialty: Ice Wine (2016) Parallel 44 Vineyard and Winery, Kewaunee, WI
Best of Show Rosé: Rosie’s Red (No Vintage) Richwood Winery, Callaway, MN

Here is the breakdown of awards given by location:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Double Gold</th>
<th>Gold</th>
<th>Silver</th>
<th>Bronze</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>% of Awards</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Illinois</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
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<td>Iowa</td>
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<td>15</td>
<td>30</td>
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<tr>
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<td></td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minnesota</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>46.7</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nebraska</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>8.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New York</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>8.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ontario</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pennsylvania</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vermont</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>9.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wisconsin</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>19.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>5 (2.5%)</td>
<td>20 (9.85%)</td>
<td>65 (32%)</td>
<td>113 (55.7%)</td>
<td>203</td>
<td>203 (60%) of the 338 wines submitted received awards.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
10(22-24), Vindemia Conference – Nebraska City, NE

What: 1st ever Vindemia Conference created by the Nebraska Wine and Grape Growers Association

When: Sunday – Tuesday, October 22-24, 2017

Where: Lied Lodge & Conference Center, Arbor Day Farm, 2700 Sylvan Rd, Nebraska City, NE 68410

Early Bird Cost: $15 to $360 depending on member / nonmember status in the NWGGA and venue selected. A la carte registration. Does not include lodging.

Full Details & Registration: http://vindemiane.com/
Early Bird Registration ends September 1, 2017

Questions: Lori Paulsen, 402-310-7264 or lpaulsen@nebraskawines.com

Vindemia = Latin root for a grape gathering.

2017 Iowa Tourism Conference – Sioux City, IA

When: Wednesday – Friday, October 25-27, 2017

Where: Sioux City Convention Center, 801 4th St. Sioux City, IA 51101

Registration: https://www.regonline.com/builder/site/?eventid=2014356

Full Details: http://www.traveliowa.com/conference
Show n Tell

Left: L-R - Preston, Amber & Ivan Gable of Backcountry Winery in Stratford next to Governor Kim Reynolds. This was the first year that the Iowa State Fair Commercial Wine competition awarded a Governor's Cup. Backcountry’s Vignoles won both Best of Show white and the Governor’s Cup. 8-18-17

Right: Another first for the Iowa State Fair Commercial Wine Competition was the Peoples Choice Award. People tasting the top four Best of Show wines from the wine competition at Grandfathers Barn were asked to place a plastic bead in the empty wine bottle they thought was best. Ackerman Winery’s Cranberry & Apple blend won this award hands down.

Left: Canada Thistle, a common perennial weed found in vineyards will sometimes turn white. Certain herbicides like Roundup (glyphosate) and Callisto (mesotrione) can do this, but often the yellow to white color indicates a bacterial infection of Pseudomas syringae pv targetis (PST). This naturally occurring bacterial disease can slow the growth of Canada Thistle, but researchers have yet to find a way to use this bacteria to control this serious weed.
**Videos of Interest**

1. *Buchanan House Winery* – Tipton, IA 8-6-17 1:35 min.
3. *Harvesting grapes at Prairie Creek Vineyards – Central City, NE with a Korvan Harvester*, 8-24-17. 3:14 min.

**Marketing Tidbits**

1. *Word of Mouth Marketing*, 8-16-17 Booze Business
2. *Table wine sales & volume stagnant over last 2 Years: Nielsen*, 8-17-17
5. *Managing your Beverage Sales Force*, 8-24-17 3 Tier Talk

**Neeto Keeno**

1. *Grape Connect Grape Pricing Update*, 8-24-17
2. *Free Subscription to Hard Cider News*

**Notable Quotables**

“Sparkling wine continues to be the fastest-growing wine category (10% growth by volume in 2016). Led by Prosecco, wines such as French Cremants, cava and Sekt”

From: *Four Things You Need to Know about the U.S. Wine Industry*, 8-16-18 BuzzBin

“In the 52 weeks to June 2017, wine sales in the on-trade across the US rose 1.5%, with spirits up 1.6%, the market research analysts found, as beer sales slid by over 2%.”

From: *Nielsen: U.S. Wine Sales Stronger than Beer*, 8-16-17 Drinks Business

**Articles of Interest**

1. *MLF – Tool to Reduce Acidity and Improve Aroma Under Cool Climate Conditions*, research paper, Stellenbosch University – South Africa
2. *Wisconsin Wine Industry Is Growing, Thanks In Part To Cold-Hardy Grapes*, 8-16-17 Wisconsin Public Radio
3. NY: Chuck Schumer Says Feds Will Spend $18,000,000 to Buy Grape Juice to Subsidize Vineyard Owners, 8-18-17 CNS News

4. Grape Growers Say Herbicides from Neighboring Cotton Fields Damage Their Vines, 8-22-17 Austin NPR

5. N.D. Department of Agriculture looking for research proposals on grapes, wine, 8-22-17 KFYR TV

6. Sugar in Wine, 8-23-17 Decanter ****

7. PA: Dear Wine Industry Members: Reflections being the Penn State Extension Enologist, 8-25-17 Penn State University

Midwest Grape & Wine Industry Institute Updates: https://www.extension.iastate.edu/wine/content/institute-updates

Calendar of Events


10-(22-24), Vindemia, the NWGGA celebration of our industry, Lied Lodge Conference Center – Nebraska City, NE http://vindemiane.com/


2-(2-3)-18, North Dakota Grape and Wine Association Annual Conference. Location yet to be determined.


Midwest Climate Center’s Modified Growing Degree Days Map
http://mrcc.isws.illinois.edu/cliwatch/mgdd/gdd_maps.html
Using Tighty Whiteys to Measure Vineyard Soil Health
By: Michael L. White, ISU Extension & Outreach Viticulture Specialist 8-6-17

One strong measure of soil health is the amount of soil life like earthworms, insects, fungi, bacteria and other living organisms that are living in your soil. Having good soil health is essential to sustainably growing good crops over time.

Over the last couple of years, a number of people in Canada and the U.S. have been burying cotton underwear in the soil to get an idea of their soil health. The cotton cellulose in the underwear has a high percentage of carbon. Living organisms consume carbon. Tighty Whitey underwear are like a Golden Corral Buffet to soil organisms. They have been finding out that the less the soil is disturbed with tillage and/or pesticides the more of the underwear that is consumed. Example, it is not unusual to see only the elastic waistband remaining in pasture or alfalfa. More of the cotton is also consumed in no-till crop fields than in conventionally tilled fields.

So,… why not try this Tighty Whitey soil health test procedure on some vineyards in Iowa? From mid-February to late March I buried Fruit of the Loom 34-36” white briefs in five Iowa vineyards. I buried a pair in the grass aisle and a pair under the wire where herbicides were being used to kill the weeds and bare ground prevailed. None of these five vineyards had similar soil types. The length of time the underwear was buried ranged from 122 to 159 days.

Results: In “ALL” cases 97%+ of all the cotton was devoured. All that remained was the elastic waistband and maybe some of the elastic leg bands. It did not matter if the underwear was in the grassy aisle or in the weed free zone under the wire. The soil organisms consumed all the cotton. (Chomp, Chomp, Chomp!)

Summary: It seems that the soil health of the five vineyards checked were all in pretty good shape. These vineyards are all relatively young: 5 to 15 years old. Maybe the level of soil health under the wire versus the grassy aisle might be different in older vineyards where the soil under the wire has been bare for a much longer period of time.

What I learned from this project:

1. People thought I was crazy when I asked them if I could bury my underwear in their vineyard.
2. It does not cost much to do some “fun” basic research in your vineyard.
3. Don’t bury your underwear in your vineyard if you expect to wear them later.
4. I do not think this research will qualify for a Nobel Prize.
5. Soiled underwear would probably be devoured sooner.
6. Research like this will NOT enhance your career or get you tenure at a university.
Breezy Hills Winery – Minden, IA = 159 days

2-18-17

7-27-17

16 Oaks Vineyard – Fontanelle, IA = 159 days

2-18-17

7-27-17

ISU Horticulture Station – Ames, IA = 157 days

2-20-17

7-25-17

Grand Father’s Barn – Iowa State Fair = 129 days

3-18-17

7-25-17

In Vino Veritas – Grimes, IA = 122 days

3-29-17

7-26-17
Circulation of recipients in AZ, CA, CO, CT, DE, FL, GA, OH, OK, IA, IN, IL, KS, KY, MA, MD, ME, MI, MN, MO, MS, MT, NC, ND, NE, NH, NJ, NM, NV, NY, OK, OR, PA, SD, TX, VA, VT, WA, WA DC, WI, Australia, Brazil, Canada, Chile, France, India, Norway, Pakistan, Spain, Sweden & Turkey

Michael L. White - CCA, CPAg, CSW
ISU Extension & Outreach Viticulture Specialist
909 East 2nd Ave. Suite E, Indianola, IA 50125
ph: 515-961-6237, fax: 6017, cell: 515-681-7286
mlwhite@iastate.edu
http://www.extension.iastate.edu/wine

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