Veraison is Here

Véraison is a French term that has been adopted into English. The official definition of véraison is "change of color of the grape berries." Véraison signifies the change from berry growth to berry ripening. The berries become soft and take on the colors characteristic of their specific cultivars. From the beginning of veraison to harvest, the berries will increase in volume, weight, and sugar content (brix). It is also identified as the 35th stage of 47 of the Eichorn-Lorenz Stages in Shoot Development.

The beginning of veraison is a good time to walk through your vineyard to reinforce why plant to plant uniformity is so important in the ripening process. You will quickly begin to see how the following factors affect the ripening process:

a. High Vigor - will prolong ripening.
b. Heavy Crop Loads - will prolong ripening.
c. Open canopies - will hasten ripening.
d. Fruit Sun Exposure will - hasten ripening.

Veraison is also a good time to shut down any further fungicide applications, except for emergency sprays identified through scouting or specific sprays to fend off bunch rots for tight clustered cultivars like Seyval, Leon Millot or Vignoles.
Hedging of the canopy past this point in time is not recommended. It can have detrimental effects on the fruit filling and ripening process. Ideally, shoot growth will slow down dramatically or cease in a well balanced vineyard.

Additional information:

1. Adopt a Grape – Excellent video explaining veraison: http://adoptagrape.org/veraison

**Veraison is a Good Time For Petiole Testing**

Petiole tests are the primary tool used to determine fertility needs once the vineyard is established. Petioles (stem portion of the leaf) is the tissue recommended for determining the nutritional needs of grape vines. Obtaining a representative sample is critical. Optimum nutrient ranges are based on petioles sampled at specific times during the season. The following guidelines can be used for proper sampling and handling procedures:

1. Full bloom and veraison (approx. 1st week of August in Iowa) are the two times of the season to sample grapes. The full bloom sample is primarily used for nitrogen and boron. The veraison sample is more reliable for all the other nutrients.
2. At least 25-50 vines should be selected for a sample collection. Vines not typical of the vineyard should be avoided.
3. Vines should be of the same age, cultivar, and rootstock growing on similar soil/site conditions.
4. For full bloom sampling, take the petioles from leaves opposite the bottom flower cluster. For samples taken at veraison, take the petioles from the most recently developed matured leaf.
5. Collect 75-100 petioles. Short petioled varieties like Marechal Foch will need 150 to 200 petioles collected. Do not pick more than one petiole from any one shoot and do not sample any petioles connected to heavily diseased, insect or mechanical damaged leaves.
6. Dusty or dirty petioles should be rinsed with distilled water and patted dry with a paper towel. Place the collected samples in a paper bag and send into a testing laboratory. Make sure to record all the necessary information required by the testing laboratory.
7. Make sure to contact the testing laboratory prior to sending in the petiole test. You want to do it right the first time!

Many factors can affect the nutrient composition of plant tissue. Soil moisture, soil fertility, diseases, insects, crop load, weather, and cultural practices can directly affect petiole tests. When properly used, petiole testing will provide the most reliable method to determine fertilizer needs for established vineyards. Comparing petiole tests from year-to-year will show a more reliable trend over time. Charges will vary between laboratories, but most fees will range between $25 - $30 for a complete petiole analysis.

**Additional Resources:**

2. ISU Petiole Sampling Guidelines with a list of plant analysis labs:
   http://viticulture.hort.iastate.edu/info/pdf/leafsampling.pdf
3. Iowa Dept. of Ag list of soil test labs certified to do business in Iowa. Many of them will do
   petiole tests: http://www.iowaagriculture.gov/feedAndFertilizer/certifiedSoilTesting.asp
4. Midwest Grape Production Guide, p. 139 Plant Analysis, Ohio State Univ.:
   http://ohioline.osu.edu/b919/index.html

Pre-Harvest Parameters Workshop at Park Farm Winery

Where: Park Farm Winery, 15159 Thielen Rd, Bangston, IA 52039, ph: 563-557-3727
   : http://www.parkfarmwinery.com/
When: 10 a.m. to noon, Saturday, August 22, 2009
Who: Dave W. Cushman, Winemaker, Park Farm Winery. Dave will be speaking about grape quality
   expectations for grape growers from the perspective of Park Farm Winery. (ie. pH, Brix, TA
   and crop load.
Cost: Free
Sponsored by: Mississippi Valley Grape Growers Association.
Note: Bring Sunscreen, bug spray, and a sack lunch
Further info: Ian Bonnette – ph: 563-588-1854 or imbbozo@hotmail.com

Need to sell or buy some grapes? Make sure to use the Iowa
Wine Growers Association “FREE” grape exchange classified
ads here: http://www.iowawinegrowers.org

Comments and Pic’s from Napa Valley

This is the third installment with details of my recent trip to the Lodi, Sacramento, UC Davis and the
Napa Valley area to attend an International Conference entitled, “Recent Advances in Grapevine
Canopy Management” held at UC Davis in California that was held on Thursday, 7-16-09. On
Friday, 7-17-09 I made a quick trip over to Napa Valley, our most premier winegrape growing area in
the U.S.

Napa Valley is a valley composed of 45,275+ acres. The valley itself if approximately 38 miles long
and 20 miles wide (758 square miles). It contains 15 separate appellations – American Viticultural
Areas (AVA’s), about 5% of the U.S. grape acreage and produces around 4% of the wine produced in
California. The Charles Krug winery was the first winery established in Napa Valley in 1861. This is
the same winery Cesare Mondavi (Robert’s father) purchased for $75,000 in 1943 starting the
beginning of the Mondavi wine dynasty. There were approximately 140 wineries wineries in Napa
Valley around the turn of the century in 1900. The number of wineries dropped to just a few after
Prohibition was established in 1920. Approximately 60 wineries started up after Prohibition was
repealed in 1933. It was not until the 1960’s that Napa Valley really began to become a true wine
tourist destination. Today there are over 325 wineries in Napa Valley.
(Right) Napa Valley today contains 15 appellations – American Viticultural Areas (AVA’s). Napa Valley itself was created as the first AVA on 2-27-1981. Napa Valley is approximately 38 miles long and 20 miles wide containing just over 758 square miles.

(Above) Typical vineyard in Napa Valley. Most of the vineyards seemed to be trained onto a Vertical Shoot Positioned (VSP) trellis system. You could easily see that a lot of time and money went into keeping these vineyards in almost perfect condition.

(Above) I found this unique terrace system in a vineyard northeast of the town of Napa. Railroad ties had been used to build a series of approximately 6 foot tall terraces for each 1-2 vineyard rows.

(Above) Several of the vineyards with wind machines also had smudge pots ready to go to protect against an early frost.
Comment:  This was the first time I had visited Napa Valley and it was just what I expected it to be. A lot of glitz, high prices, excellent wines and a lot of huge fancy wineries owned by large corporations. Not to take away from this type of experience, but I would much rather visit Midwest wineries where you get a unique experience at each stop with a very low “glitz” factor.

Napa Valley Links:


Show n Tell

Iowa State University held an All Horticulture Field Day Thursday, August 6th at the Horticulture research Station north of Ames, Iowa. Visitors were able to view many of the horticulture research projects being conducted there and interact with the researchers and graduate students. Just over 230 people attended this event. One of the highlights of the tour was the research vineyard stop where Dr. Gail Nonnecke spoke and poster displays from research projects being conducted by six different graduate students. Another hot stop was the new research winery located on the ISU Horticulture farm.

(Above) Attendees taste different wines made in the ISU Research Winery. Jennie Hansen, winery assistant talks about the different wines with a group.

(Left) Many of the vineyards in Napa Valley have wind turbines to protect them from early frosts.
Attendees were able to taste wines made from Traminette, Vignoles, Marquette, GR-7 and Frontenac that were grown on our research vineyards that are located at different research farms across the state. The weather was great! It was a good day.

(Above) Two attendees read Randall Vos’s poster describing his vineyard research he is conducting while working on his PhD.

(Above) L-R, Jennie Hansen – winery assistant, Dr. Murli Dharmadhikari-Director of the Midwest Grape & Wine Industry Institute and an unknown field day visitor check out the new winery lab located at the ISU Horticulture Research Station located north of Ames.

(Left) L-R, 6-bottle filler donated by Snus Hill Winery in Madrid, Iowa, plate & frame filter purchased new and a crusher - destemmer donated by Park Farm Winery in Bankston, Iowa were on display to the public during the field day.

(Right) Attendees at August 3rd SO2 wine testing class held at Kirkwood Community College, in Cedar Rapids. This class were presented by the ISU Midwest Grape & Wine Industry Institute and sponsored by the Iowa Wine Growers Association’s Vintners Quality Alliance Program.
Northern Illinois Grape Grower Field Day August 15

When: Saturday, August 15, 2009  Registration begins at 8:30 a.m. Programming will initiate at 9:00 am. A lunch on your own will begin at 11:30 a.m. and end at 1:00 p.m. There are many food establishments nearby, suiting any taste or budget. At 1:00 the event will resume, ending at approximately 3:30 p.m.

Where: St Charles Horticulture Research Center is 1.5 miles west of St Charles on IL Rt 38. At the intersection of Rt 38 and Peck Road, turn north. The entrance is the first driveway on your left: http://research.aces.illinois.edu/centers/st_charles

No pre-registration is necessary.

Hosted by: The University of Illinois

Supported by: The Illinois Grape Growers & Vintners Association and the Illinois Department of Agriculture.

(Above) Preparations are almost complete for the debut of the Iowa grape and wine industry display centered in and around Grandfather’s barn at the top of the hill at the Iowa State Fair, August 13-23, 2009. The large 3,000 gallon wine barrel head sits on a special display footing constructed by the State Fair maintenance staff. They also constructed the grape stomping platform that will be used for grape stomping contests held each afternoon. Please tell others and ya-all come visit this new display. Wine tasting along with vine/wine industry information and more displays will be located inside of Grandfather’s barn. http://www.iowastatefair.org/
Comments: This event will have two educational elements for attendees; a workshop and research vineyard tours. First, a workshop on grape maturity will be presented. Brad Beam and Dr. Elizabeth Wahle will discuss how to sample grapes to accurately measure their readiness for harvest. Elizabeth is an Extension Specialist and central Illinois viticulturist. This will be a timely presentation as northern grapes are approaching veraison. Brad Beam, University of Illinois Enologist, will then discuss tools for testing grape samples to accurately measure maturity parameters. Growers will learn how to ensure that the grapes they harvest are in prime condition for the winery.

Second, this event will be an opportunity for grape growers to see research in action at the Research Center and learn tips on growing grapes. A number of research projects will be presented and discussed, giving growers an opportunity to learn the latest results. Bill Shoemaker, Sr. Research Specialist and northern Illinois viticulturist, will discuss his research with grapes, including variety screening and evaluation, a breeding program for grapes and grapevine stand establishment. Elizabeth will also discuss weed control in grapes, a particularly challenging task to understand and execute properly in vineyards.

Additional Information: Contact Bill Shoemaker at 630-584-7254 or wshoemak@illinois.edu.

Comments from Readers

“Mike,
Attached are some photos of my Malbec and Nebbiolo. The Nebbiolo survived a cold winter with at least -23 F recorded and they look great. This is their second year. I pruned them and then buried them under 18 inches of compost last fall. Dug them out in March and thought J Trellis my ass, but darn if they didn’t come on stronger than ever. We now have approximately 1100 vines that are growing. Lost about 8 % first year. Surprisingly the mortality was about equal percentages between the hybrids and the vitae vinifera.

This summer has been a cool one with only two days above 90. The moisture has been slightly ahead of schedule and the prairie is still green going into August. Quite different from our 7 years of drought.”

--- Mike G. Rapid City, South Dakota 8-4-2009
Quotes of the Week

“Age doesn’t matter unless you are wine”.

--- embroidered on a cushion in Robert Mondavi’s office, 2001

“One bad wine in the valley is bad for every winery in the valley. One good wine in the valley is good for everyone.”

--- Robert Mondavi

Articles of Interest


2. *Laurens Sips, Celebrates its sister city*, 7-26-09, Fort Dodge Messenger: [http://www.messengernews.net/page/content.detail/id/517210.html](http://www.messengernews.net/page/content.detail/id/517210.html)


Neeto-Keeno WWW Stuff


Post & View Classified Ads here: [http://iowawinegrowers.org](http://iowawinegrowers.org)

Past issues archived as html and/or pdf here:

[http://www.extension.iastate.edu/Wine/Resources/winegrowernews.htm](http://www.extension.iastate.edu/Wine/Resources/winegrowernews.htm)

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