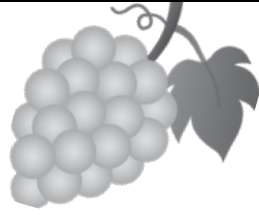


GRAPE TALK

Applegate Valley vintners experiment with wine varietals



Debbie Tollefson

BY DEBBIE TOLLEFSON

The list of grape varieties planted in the Applegate Valley has really grown in the last few years. According to Greg Jones, a former professor at Southern Oregon University and now director of wine education at Linfield College in McMinnville, Oregon, our area of southern Oregon is ideal for a very large variety of grapes. He estimates there are over 75 different varieties of grapes growing in and around the Applegate Valley American Viticultural Area (AVA).

There are 18 grape varieties known as “noble” grapes (defined by *Merriam-Webster* as “possessing very high or excellent

qualities or properties”). The red noble grapes are pinot noir, grenache, merlot, sangiovese, nebbiolo, tempranillo, cabernet sauvignon, syrah, and malbec. The white noble grapes are pinot grigio, riesling, sauvignon blanc, chenin blanc, moscato, gewurztraminer, semillon, viognier, and chardonnay. According to my research, nebbiolo (red) and semillon (white) are the only varieties of noble grapes *not* grown in our area. If you know of growers of either grape, let me know.

Both red and white noble grapes have additional varieties, a number of which also grow in the Applegate Valley. Categories

under white noble grapes are roussanne, which is similar to chardonnay, and marsanne, which is similar to viognier.

Vintners throughout the valley are experimenting with new grape stocks and new wine blends. Bill and Barbara Steele at Cowhorn Vineyard make a lovely marsanne-roussanne blend, a personal favorite of mine. Rachel Martin at Red Lily Vineyards recently released a vermentino, a wine similar to sauvignon blanc from southern France, northern Italy, or Sardinia, but now grown in the Applegate Valley.

Albarino, a Spanish white-wine grape similar to pinot grigio or chenin blanc, is being grown in our AVA, along with verdejo (also called verdicchio), which is similar to sauvignon blanc.

Sangiovese, one of the red noble grapes, is Italy’s top wine varietal. It is similar to other Italian grape varietals such as Chianti. Steve Hall, winemaker at Troon Vineyard, has created award-winning wines blending sangiovese with mourvèdre and tannat. Mourvèdre is a very old Spanish varietal brought to Spain by the Phoenicians, and tannat is a grape variety from southwest France and now also the national grape of Uruguay. Both mourvèdre and tannat are grown locally.

Joe Ginat at Plaisance Ranch created a 100 percent mourvèdre—the 2009 vintage is currently available. He is also growing and experimenting with mondeuse and

carmenère, an old varietal from France’s Bordeaux region.

Herb Quady of Quady North is also doing some interesting creations. His Pistoleta blend includes marsanne, rousanne, viognier, and grenache blanc. Herb’s complex Rosé includes counoise (a variety of grape from the Rhône Valley that is often used in blending for Châteauneuf-du-Pape) blended with grenache, syrah, and mourvèdre. He also has created a version of GSM, a well-known Rhône blend that uses grenache, syrah, and mourvèdre to create a red wine with complexity, but without too much tannin.

These accomplished wine makers and many others are realizing that our climate is perfect for experimenting with all kinds of interesting grape varieties. The innovative and award-winning wines being created from these varietals are putting our AVA at the forefront of Oregon’s highly acclaimed wine industry.

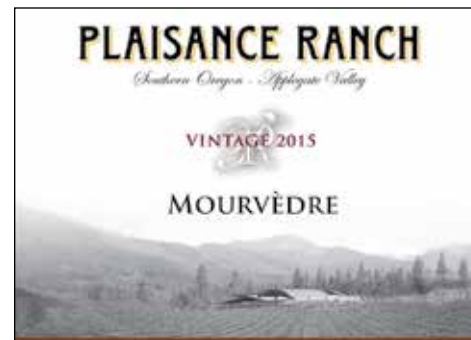
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Cowhorn Vineyard
Marsanne Rousanne blend.



Quady North GSM
(grenache, syrah, and mourvèdre) blend.



Plaisance Ranch 100 percent Mourvèdre.

San Francisco Chronicle 2018 Wine Competition

— Applegate Valley winners —

Best of Class
Augustino Syrah 2014

Double Gold: Schmidt Family Vineyards Cabernet Sauvignon 2014, Touriga Nationale 2014, and Chardonnay 2015

Gold: Schmidt Family Vineyards Albarino 2016 and Serra Vineyards Cabernet Franc 2014

For a complete list of winners, visit winejudging.com/medal-winners.

Voices of the Applegate Spring Concerts

Our new director, Jenifer Knipple, has launched our choir into the realm of New World music. Our concerts will be held in Jacksonville on Friday, April 6, at 7 pm at the old Presbyterian Church at 6th and California Streets, and in Applegate on Sunday, April 8, at 3 pm at the Applegate River Lodge, 15100 Highway 238. We will be singing songs from Russia, Iceland, and Korea, as well as American folk songs and modern classical selections.

Jenifer Knipple has an impressive background in music education and a unique worldview, which she demonstrated with nearly 500 Central Point students on a virtual trip around the world in “The Magic Cape Show” in January. She has been bringing music into the schools of southern Oregon with Rogue World Music, whose mission is “building community and cultural awareness through world music performance, education, and participation.”

Our rehearsals are exciting and educational. We look forward to our Wednesday evenings together to sing and learn a variety of songs from many different countries. Our rehearsals take place every Wednesday evening at the Ruch Library meeting room from 7 - 8:30 pm. Our next session will begin in early September. All are invited to attend. There is no audition required.

Registration fee is \$60, and some scholarships are available. Come join us for our next year of singing together. And don’t forget to attend our concerts in April!

Joan Peterson • 541-846-6988



Jenifer Knipple,
new director of
Voices of the Applegate.

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