



A View from the Vineyard

By Lonnie Wright



I spend most of my days walking through vineyards checking on the progress of my grapevines. Do we need to

prune? Is there bunch rot? How's the sugar level? These are all things I'm looking for and a big factor influencing the grapes is irrigation---something in which I have a lot of experience. I thought for this newsletter I would spend some time answering some frequently asked questions (FAQ) about irrigation.

FAQ: Why do you irrigate The Pines Vineyard?

Lonnie: Grapes need about 25-30 inches of rain per year to survive. Since we only get 17 inches at The Pines Vineyard we need some help. We have a drip irrigation system in the vineyard. Actually, it is probably the oldest operating drip system in the Columbia Gorge. It has been in the vineyard since 1983.

FAQ: Does irrigation plump up the

grapes resulting in diluted wine?

Lonnie: It all depends on how you use the irrigation. Early in the growing season we don't need more water because it's already stored in the ground from winter. We are trying to grow canes that have about 13 leaves on them. That's enough leaves to ripen the grapes without shading the fruit.

FAQ: How do you measure the moisture in the ground?

Lonnie: I used to measure moisture by making dirt balls. But now we do it with neutron probes and charting soil moisture graphs on computers. We actually have a line on the chart which indicates when the plants will go into drought stress. I correlate this line with my observations in the vineyard. We hold the water level just above this line. For years I measured the moisture by watching the vines, but sometimes you miss. Now, these neutron probes give readings allowing me to dial it right to the stress point. It's a great



Upcoming Events:

First Friday's in Hood River
The Pines Tasting Room
Each month's 1st Friday 5-8

Thirst Wine Bar Tasting
0315 SW Montgomery
Portland, OR 97201
Thurs. July 19, 5-7 pm

Bonneville Wine Tasting
Bonneville Hot Springs Resort
Sat. July 21st 6-8 pm

Copper Club Private Party
The Pines Estate
Sat. July 28th 7-10 pm

Gorge Wine Celebration
Indian Creek Golf Course
Hood River, OR
Sat. Sept 8th 5-9 pm

Old Vine Zin Release Party
The Pines Estate
Sat. Sept 15th 2-8 pm

For more information please visit our website at www.thepinesvineyard.com



tool—allowing me to make better wine starting in the vineyard.

FAQ: What is drought stress?

Lonnie: The ultimate drought stress is when a grape plant is completely lacking water. The first signal of lack of water in the ground is that the chute tips stop growing. Once we get the vine to the desired amount of leaves (3-4 feet long) we want to stop the growing—this is deficit irrigation. The second signal of lack of water is that the base leaves on each cane turn yellow, indicating that the plant is really getting thirsty and moving into the initial phases of drought stress. The next phase moves further into drought stress when the grape clusters start shriveling. The plant, in order to save itself, begins to suck the water out of each berry causing its grape clusters to shrivel resulting

in higher sugar concentration. The final phase of drought stress is the plant wilting—which doesn't happen too often. If you haven't caught drought stress by this phase you're in some serious trouble. Once a plant goes to this stage it takes too long to completely bring it back be-

fore harvest. The fruit will be too tannic with lots of sugar.

FAQ: Do you stop irrigating the grapes prior to harvest?

Lonnie: People used to say not to water past labor day. I do think that thirsty grapevines from mid-Au-



Tropical Summer Salmon

Shopping list (serves 4-6):

Tropical Salsa

- 1 tbl. jalapeno
- 1/3 cup red onion
- 3/4 cup pineapple
- 1/2 cup mango
- 1/3 cup green pepper
- 1 tbl. cilantro
- Juice of 1/2 a lime

Fish

- 1 filet of Salmon (about 2 lbs)
- Juice of 1/2 an orange
- Juice of 1/2 a lemon
- Salt
- Pepper

Let's get started:

I chose this recipe because each time I crack open a bottle of Satin my nose is filled with tropical fruit. It evokes a desire for this fresh, delicious, summer-perfect fish dinner. Start out by pouring yourself a glass of '06 Satin.

- 1) Finely chop the red onion, pineapple, mango, and green pepper. Combine in bowl.
- 2) Mince jalapeno, and cilantro and add to bowl. Add the juice of 1/2 a lime. Combine contents of bowl, taste, season as needed and place in fridge to set for at least

30 minutes (best after an hour).

- 3) Preheat broiler. Drizzle rack in boiling pan with oil. Place salmon on rack.
- 4) Season with salt and pepper on flesh side only. Squeeze juice of 1/2 an orange and 1/2 a lemon over the salmon.
- 5) Place pan in broiler 4-6 inches from heat source. Broil 10 minutes, without turning, or until salmon is opaque throughout. Cut into pieces. Serve with a healthy serving of tropical salsa on top. Cheers!

The Pines Copper Club

Happy 2 year anniversary copper club! Being a Pines Copper Club member has benefits not available to the general public. These benefits include, but are not limited to the following:

- *No Joining Fee*
- *6 bottles of wine shipped 3 times per year*
- *Discounted rates for special events*
- *Member-only parties*
- *20% off all wine purchases*
- *Complimentary wine tasting at The Pines*



Shipment Dates (during the weeks of):

Jan. 10th

April 10th

Sept. 10th

Estimated Wine Cost per year: \$300-350

The Sept. 10th wine shipment will Include:
TBD



Please cut along the line and send us your information in order to join The Pines Copper Club

Name _____

Mailing Address _____

City _____

State _____

Zip _____

Phone _____

E-mail _____

Billing Information:

Credit Card Number _____

Credit Card Type: Visa

Mastercard

Expiration Date _____

Check box if you will pick up shipment (saves shipping costs)

• *Your credit card will be automatically billed during the week of the shipment date.*



gust until harvest make better wine grapes. You just have to watch the plants closely to keep them from going into drought stress. I like a little stress. A few yellow leaves are good, but I don't like to see it go much past that. I just want the plants to build enough sugar in the grapes, but to stop growing the chute tips. After harvest we give them about 24 gallons of water per plant so they can move into their next phase---building carbohydrates to get through the cold of winter.

FAQ: Why didn't you locate where there's more rain?

Lonnie: Rain at harvest is always a problem for grape farmers. Here, rain is not as much of a threat at harvest. Also, rain during the growing season can result in more canopy growth which shades the fruit, resulting in a higher chance of fungal diseases. I like having control of the water schedule.

Most importantly we need more heat and a longer growing season for the varieties that we're working with—and we have that here in The Dalles.



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What's Inside:

The Pines 1852
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