

Wine and Grape Community

A reminder to all you wine connoisseurs and back yard growers out there: The Biochemistry and Molecular Biology Department has two separate email lists available for your participation. The first is winenews@unr.edu. This list is for receiving our newsletter and event information such as our June 2008 Fundraiser and workshops beginning in April 2008. The second is grapetalk@unr.edu for locals to email everyone on the list about winemaking and grape growing in Nevada with specific topics. To be added to these lists, please send an email to majordomo@unr.edu with only the text:

subscribe winenews or **subscribe grapetalk**
end **end**

Also, [College Brewers of Nevada](http://CollegeBrewersofNevada.com) is a new student club on campus whose goal is to educate the student body and community in the science of brewing and fermentation, and to hold tastings of commercial and private wine, beer, and meads. Send an email with your net ID and R# to collegebrewersofnevada@gmail.com if you are interested.

2007 Harvest

Last season brought a false spring, which afflicted the entire country. Our vineyards sustained warm temperatures for a couple of weeks followed by a 24°F freeze. Dormant grape plants can survive this level of cold easily because of protective mechanisms in the plant during dormancy. The warm spring weather that preceded the freeze enabled the vines to wake up and start to break bud. This fragile tissue was present for the freeze, which caused widespread damage and die off of certain varieties, and marginal damage in others. Our 2007 harvest was roughly 1/3 of the previous year. Total number of cases this year was 38 compared to 118 in 2006. For this reason many varieties were blended together prior to fermentation or before bottling. Shown below is a table of this year's yield compared to the previous season. The first number is cases of well-watered vines, the second number is drought stressed cases.

Variety	2006 Liters	2007 Liters
Pinot Noir WW/DS	150/73	Blended
Pinot Meunier WW/DS	93/61	Blended
Merlot WW/DS	60/50	38/29
Syrah WW/DS	18 combined	Blended
Lemberger WW/DS	165/92	76/40
Cabernet Franc WW/DS	154/75	42 combined
Chardonnay WW/DS	54/41	Blended
Pinot Gris WW/DS	60/45	Blended
Pinot Blanc WW/DS	46/43	Blended
Semillon WW/DS	87/65	37 combined
Gewurztraminer WW/DS	56/42	33/20
White Riesling WW/DS	56/36	52 combined

Winter Mulch and Burial Experiments

As Nevadans, we live on the boundary of the cold winter climate. According to long-term DRI weather information, between November and March average extreme low temperatures can reach from 15 to 0°F in Reno. All-time lows have been recorded between -2 and -16°F between the years of 1936-2007. Damage from winter freezes may occur if temperatures reach -8°F and below depending on the length of time at these temperatures, the variety in question, and level of dormancy. Spring in Nevada can be unpredictable, as every gardener knows. Typically the last freeze in spring occurs prior to June 1st. Average extreme low temperatures in April and May when the plants are emerging from dormancy have been recorded at 21 and 28°F with all-time extreme lows reaching 13 and 18°F. Spring frost can damage the plants as temperatures approach the freezing point. However this is also dependent on the variety and length of time at these temperatures. Breaking buds have been shown to survive temperatures of 28°F here at Valley Road without damage.

In cold weather climates such as Washington State, agricultural practices have been adopted to ensure winter survival of grape plants that may be sensitive to cold in the winter and early spring. Some of these practices include laying the vine on the ground and covering with soil or mulch. Covering the vines under a foam board or geotextile has also been shown to insulate the vines. Others employ trenching, in which case the plants are planted in a deep trench and filled with a little soil each year until trunk growth reaches ground level, allowing for establishment of a very deep protected root system. Another widely used precaution in the industry is spraying above ground vines with a mist of water. The latent heat released as the water freezes insulates the vine and protects it from damage in cold temperatures. For more information on these and other cold climate practices, read *Northern Winework: Growing Grapes and Making Wine in Cold Climates* by Tom Plocher and Bob Parke.

In light of these and similar practices observed around the world, we are experimenting with various burial methods in our Valley Road North vineyard. These experiments included pruning all canes to 5-7 mature buds in three of our 15 rows. One row was buried under 1 ½ feet of dirt and another was buried under 1 ½ feet of oat hay mulch and covered with netting to prevent it from blowing away. In the third row we forced the pruned canes to lie on the ground and covered them with approximately 1 foot of dirt. The plants will be uncovered in early or late May depending on the weather. Stay tuned to find out the survival results!!

Nevada Wine Newsletter

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College of Agriculture, Biotechnology And Natural Resources

Nevada Wine Newsletter
c/o Monica Keady
Mail Stop 200
University of Nevada,
Reno, NV 89557

Visit us on the web
for more information
regarding grapes
in Nevada.

www.ag.unr.edu/cramer/

Spring Workshop Series!!!

Everyone has been asking about it, and now they are here! The Department of Biochemistry and Molecular Biology would like to announce our Viticulture and Enology Spring Workshop Series. The series will consist of three separate workshops: viticulture, winemaking, and wine tasting. The Viticulture Workshop will be the first in the series. Winemaking and Wine tasting Workshops will be

announced at a later date. **Overview:** Workshop will include local climate concerns, choice of cultivar, traditional viticulture practices including pruning, training, leaf pull, cluster thinning, pest control, pathogen control, sulfur application, weed control, fruit monitoring, harvest, cold climate practices, novel pruning and training methods from around the world, and the direction of global and Nevada

Viticulture in the changing climate.
Date: April 5, 2008
Time: 1:00 pm
Location: UNR Experimental Winery
Cost: \$100.00
Cost includes materials, a Cabernet Sauvignon or Chardonnay vine from our nursery, and a taste of wine with a souvenir *Nevada Wine* glass.
Contact: Monica Keady at (775) 784-4225 or at mkeady@cabnr.unr.edu

Wine Tasting

The University of Nevada, Reno College of Agriculture, Biotechnologies, and Natural Resources are proud to announce the first *Nevada Wine Tasting*. Proceeds will benefit the Department of Biochemistry grape and wine research programs and scholarships. The goal of our grape and wine research is to assist Northern Nevada in the establishment of a local grape and wine economy as an exciting new tourist destination and an agricultural alternative to alfalfa. Research conducted at Valley Road has two purposes. The first is to establish which varieties are best suited for our high desert, cold winter climates in terms of survival and agricultural practices. The second goal is to establish

which of those varieties yields the best quality grapes and wine under different degrees of water availability. Thirteen different wines grown at the Valley Road Vineyards will be available for your tasting pleasure. Three tasting booths are planned and include a vertical tasting, a paired tasting of well watered and drought stressed wines, and novel wines with secondary fermentation, aged, and blended wines. White wines include Chardonnay, Pinot Blanc, Pinot Gris, Semillon, Gewürztraminer, and White Riesling. Red wines include Pinot Noir, Pinot Meunier, Merlot, Syrah, Lemberger, Cabernet Franc, and Cabernet Sauvignon from our Shenandoah Valley experiments in California. Questionnaires will be available for your valued

judgment regarding water stress effects on wine quality. A raffle or silent auction will also be held with donations from local and industry businesses. The raffle or silent auction will include wine-making kits of various sizes and styles, a large crank style wine press, nursery packages to plant a vineyard in your own backyard, and other items from the Nevada and California wine and brewing industry.

The event is planned for the evening of June 11, 2008. Tickets will be available for \$45.00. If you would like an invitation to the event, please send an email to Susan Casey at scasey@cabnr.unr.edu or leave a message at 784-1653. RSVP will also be available on the web in PDF format at www.ag.unr.edu/cramer/.