



Notes from the vineyard

AMANDA CONKOL

As I have mentioned in previous columns, this summer has been the best – hot temperatures, plenty of sun, lots of parties, and of course, lots of wine! As harvest season is right around the corner, I thought I would take the next couple of weeks to give you a quick discussion on white wine grapes versus red wine grapes. So grab a glass of your favorite white wine and continue to read...

There are too many varieties of grapes to name and every year researchers in New York and California continue to experiment with new grapes. Some of the most popular white wine grapes are Chardonnay, Riesling, Pinot Grigio, Niagara and Vidal Blanc. Each year the grapes (and eventually the wine) can range in sweetness, color and acidity based on the weather during the growing season. Here are some of the general characteristics of some white wine grapes so you have a better understanding the next time you are at a wine tasting.

Chardonnay – usually known for a buttery or vanilla taste, Chardonnays range from a soft flavor to a very crisp flavor. When Chardonnay grapes are fermented in oak, the result is a big, full bouquet (or aroma) of vanilla, butter and a smooth finish. Chardonnays that are fermented in stainless steel have a tendency to be crisper with pear or apple bouquet.

Gewürztraminer – just trying to say the name of this wine (sounds like guh-VOORTS-truh-MEE-ner) makes it a fun summertime wine. Gewurtz (a shorter name of this grape) is usually on the drier side which creates a peppery or spicier finish. Gewurtz is an excellent wine to have with a jalapeño cheese or a

spicy dish like Thai or curry.

Riesling – depending on the style of Riesling (German, Italian, French or a Late Harvest) this wine can be very dry or very sweet. A drier Riesling tends to be filled with green apple aromas but as the wine tends to sweeten, you may get more of a citrus to a melon-like flavor in your wines. Riesling grapes are hearty enough where they can stay on the vine until late fall (called a Late Harvest Riesling) which greatly increases the sweetness of a wine making it a great dessert wine.

Vidal Blanc – similar to a Pinot Blanc, Vidal tend to be crisp, fruity and sweet. Most wineries use Vidal grapes as an excellent source for blending with other wines that tend to be too dry. The grape is very versatile as well, which makes for a great ice wine.

Niagara – if you like the taste of fresh grapes in your wine, Niagara is the perfect wine for you. Niagara grapes are very sweet and can trick you into thinking you are drinking white grape juice instead of wine. For non-wine drinkers this varietal is a great introduction to the wine family. Or on hot summer days, this is a great wine to mix with a little bit of Sprite – making it a great wine spritzer.

When you are out visiting other wineries, be sure to try a variety of wines – you will be surprised at the different styles of wine you taste based on the same grape.

Amanda is the Co-Owner of Candlelight Winery in Garrettsville. For more information on other wine topics, please visit www.candlelightwinery.com



Puppy Tails

MIALIE T. SZYMANSKI

Doodle Dog scampered through the cool grass and wove in among unusual trees and out among usual trees. He let the green blades tickle the undersides of his round paws as he scampered and wandered and trotted and plodded along his way, not really paying much attention to all that scampering, wandering, trotting and plodding as he continued on because he still had the barking hum or humming bark of the canine choir barking and humming away in his head. In fact, Doodle Dog found himself scampering, wandering, trotting and plodding right along in step with the tune depending on if it was humming or barking or echoing in his mind like the different voices of the animals and their humans had echoed off the usual and unusual trees surrounding the curiously enchanted garden!

Even though it had been days that seemed like hours or hours that seemed like days (he didn't quite know!) since he had left the choir of canines conducted by the director with the magic wand, Doodle Dog could still very much hear all the individual voices with their distinct tones humming and barking away. He bet it was the latter, as the sun had yet to set since he'd left the echo of the fairies and sprites who lived in the curious meadow, but he really couldn't be sure since the meadow was so curious, he expected even time could stand still there if it really wanted. Nothing is impossible where creativity blooms.

With the humming and barking echoing in his mind thoroughly entertaining him on his walk, Doodle Dog continued on, enjoying all the brilliant colors of the day.

Everything seemed brighter even though there was no reason why it should, except maybe for the sun being high in the sky. Before the floppy-eared puppy knew it, he came upon an interesting scene in front of him: dozens of humans and just as many pets were once again just steps ahead in his path, but this time they were not lined up in neat little rows paying attention to a man waving a magic wand. These pets and their humans – Doodle Dog recognized a few! – were scattered every which way throughout the town's park completely content in various creative activities.

Doodle Dog slowed his pace to take his time and investigate some beautiful clay sculptures in various stages of completion. Some were very, very tall, so tall that Doodle Dog could not see the tops of them. Others were very, very small, so small that Doodle Dog could come nose-to-nose with them and say hello! The sun was so high in the sky, directly above the artists, that none of the humans, pets, or sculptures cast shadows across the ground. The floppy-eared puppy enjoyed watching the humans sculpt statues made of clay that was drying quite quickly in the sun. He enjoyed watching, that is, until he caught sight out of the corner of his eye, of large pots of every color of paint a little puppy could imagine! The sun glistened off the paints, making them shine brightly, enticing the floppy-eared puppy to come on over and dip in a paw. Doodle Dog didn't want to just view the art, he wanted to do some of the art too! There were other dogs dipping their paws in the colors and tracking prints across a giant sheet of paper so Doodle Dog decided he would try it too. The darker colors reminded

him of the paint he had stepped in a while ago by accident – THESE paints he was supposed to step in on purpose!

Doodle Dog didn't even worry about how his paw prints would look on the paper. What if he dripped dots of paint where he hadn't meant to put them? What if the edges were all fuzzy and the colors ran together? It really didn't matter! Everyone seemed to be having so much fun putting a blob of bright paint here and a blip of even brighter paint there and a smattering of the brightest possible paint EVER right in the middle, connecting all the drips and blops and blips of color and making them into one big, beautiful creation. The floppy-eared puppy didn't even hesitate as he dipped a paw in paint and tracked across the big paper. And then, just as he turned to track across the other way... his tail dipped itself in the paint pot behind him! Oh no! No worries – Doodle Dog was able to paint twice as fast, with two colors at once, and make different designs with his feathery tail than he could with his round paws!

The activities were quite fun, but the sun was very hot so Doodle Dog decided to take a break. He looked for shelter and found shade nearby in a cozy gazebo surrounded by trees with a gentle breeze blowing through it all. Inside the gazebo the gentle breeze fluttered right past a princess sitting on a tree stump telling stories to several little fairies, imps, nymphs and sprites gathered around her – just like the ones whose laughter echoed like tinkling bells off the unusual trees in the curious meadow! Doodle Dog made himself comfortable listening to tales of this and stories of that, legends of knights rescuing princesses – and princesses rescuing knights! – and even some adventures of a bear who kept getting his hand stuck in a honey pot. (He was curious just like Doodle Dog and the floppy-eared puppy could certainly relate!) And before he knew it, the trees and sculptures and people making them had long shadows stretching across the earth as the sun began to set. People over at the paint station moved the paper so that it stretched out under the long shadows and knelt down to trace around it. Even as the sky turned its different shades of the evening, the artists and the floppy-eared puppy continued to work, inspired by the natural currents around them. Creativity never sleeps!

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