



# From the Grape Vine

Western Iowa Grape Growers Association

Volume 2007 - Number 1

Winter Issue

## GRAPE RESEARCH AT THE ARMSTRONG RESEARCH FARM

By Bernie Havlovic

Grape research began at the Armstrong Research Farm near Lewis in 2002 when the 1 1/2-acre vineyard was constructed. Through a grant from the Leopold Center for Sustainable Agriculture, a grape cultivar by management systems trial was established to gain information on different pest control and vine management systems. Project leaders for the experiment are ISU professors Paul Domoto and Gail Nonnecke. The study was designed to evaluate 15 grape cultivars under three management systems.

*The following year a second trial was added to the vineyard through an IDALS specialty crop grant. In this Wine Grape Cultivar trial 20 cultivar or advanced selections are being evaluated for their adaptability, productivity, and wine making potential in southwest Iowa. All totaled our vineyard consists of 645 vines representing 35 cultivars.*

Similar trials were also started at ISU Research Farms near Ames, Nashua, and Crawfordsville, Iowa. The first grapes were harvested from the cultivar x management trial this fall and the wine cultivar trial is expected to be in production this coming season. We look forward to the information these trials will provide for Iowa grape producers in the years to come.

*Vines in the research vineyard came through the '05 winter in fairly good shape despite a low temperature of -10.5 degrees being recorded on two different nights. The degree of winter injury was also considered to be less severe than at the other research vineyards around the state. Despite rather large monthly deviations in temperature and rainfall the growing season totals average near normal. Disease and insect problems were minimal under the conventional and IPM (best management) treatments but anthracnose has again a problem with certain cultivars in the organic approved management treatments. Harvest began on August 16th when the Edelweiss and Reliance cultivars were picked, and concluded on October 11th with the harvest of the Chambourcin, St. Vincent, and Cynthiana varieties.*

Yields were excellent but with some cultivars getting the desirable balance of % Soluble Solids and pH proved to be a challenge. Yield results and other vine ratings are being tabulated as this is being written and should be available to producers in the farm's annual progress report in February or at the ISU Outlying Research Farms website at <http://www.ag.iastate.edu/farms/>.

## Prairie Crossing Winery to Open Soon

A new winery will soon be added to those that make up the Western Iowa Wine Trail. **Prairie Crossing Vineyard and Winery**, owned and operated by Association members Andy and Julianna Hrasky, will open its doors in April with a grand opening celebration scheduled for the weekend of April 28 and 29.

Located in Treynor, Prairie Crossing has 3 acres of vineyards consisting of Catawba, Cayuga White, Concord, DeChaunac, Frontenac and LaCrosse. The vineyards surround the winery allowing visitors the opportunity to see how wine grapes are grown and maintained.

Prairie Crossing is producing approximately 2,700 gallons of wine in its first year. Twelve different wines will be offered. Andy and Julianna are looking forward to finally earning some revenue off of this venture! They are most appreciative of the advice offered by so many Association members over the past several years and are committed to continuing to do their part in promotion of the Western Iowa grape growing and wine making industry. Be sure to stop by this spring and see what they have to offer!

## No. . . Napa Was Not the 1st!

by Mike White

The U.S. Federal Government enacted Law 27 CFR §4.26(a) in 1978, which provided for the establishment of American Viticultural Areas (AVA).

On June 20, 1980, Augusta, Missouri became the first recognized American Viticultural Area. The second viticultural area, Napa Valley, was not recognized until January 1 of 1983. As of October, 2006 there were 173 AVA's approved by the Alcohol & Tobacco Tax & Trade Bureau (TTB) in the U.S.

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*From the Editor's Desk*

Readers of the *Grape Vine* may find this issue a bit unbalanced - not as "local" as usual. Several items I'd hoped to use I've replaced by others that seemed more pressing. Out-of-State Vine & Wine events took considerable space. I'm not sure how many readers intend to go to Paris for the Wine Evolution, but I thought a full review of what's available would be of interest. *The New York Times* article (shortened) took a full page, but again, I thought this would be of interest.

Bernie Havlovic has a splendid article on developments at Armstrong Farm, and Andy and Julianna Hrasky's spring winery opening merits the front page.

Mike White submitted several fine articles, but a couple pieces will have to wait the Spring issue. Mike's book review is a welcomed addition. Would any readers care to share their reading experiences? I'm sure members would be interested in good books to add to their libraries.

A feature for the spring issue will be a few fairly arcane (to me) words that will certainly test what you likely never learned in your advanced conversational French classes - courtesy of Mike White. I'll ask Stan Olson for feedback from the *New York Times* article, and Allan Petersen will have news about Eli.

**In the Grape Vine****Page**

Bernie Reports from Armstrong Farm	1
A New Western Iowa Winery to Open	1
American Viticultural Areas (AVA)	1
Board Officers 2007	2
From the Editor's Desk	2
Book Review by Mike White	3
Important Local Vine & Wine Events	3
Multi-state Wine Joke from Mike White	3
WIGGA Dues for 2007	5
New York Times Article	6
Out-of-State Vine & Wine Events	8
Wine Quotations	10

*Would anyone care to offer some opinions on the ongoing dialogue about "What constitutes an "Iowa Wine"?"*

*There are several important issues here. Let's hear what you think?*

Have we run out of wacky "Overheard" items? Several alert viticulturists have come up with lots of good stuff overheard in the vineyards, but I think you enologists **just aren't listening!**

What are the important events in your vineyard or winery during April, May, and June?

Please send me any information you think would be of interest to other WIGGA members. This is your newsletter and your input is important. If you don't find the articles interesting enough, it's **partly your fault.**

P. S.

I'm sorry this issue is so late. A rare winter electric storm knocked out my scanner and printer. My local guru, Mike Moore, got me over a couple hurdles - but he's been busy on the farm with winter calving. Dave Richards, Radio Shack - Corning, has been on his honeymoon, but he got the printer working. Joyce and Jack Amdor installed a recalcitrant new scanner, and I appear to be up, and, er, walking.

*Floyd Pearce*

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 Cumberland, IA 50843  
 Telephone: 712-774-2244  
 e-mail: floyd\_pearce@yahoo.com

### Book Review by Mike White

*The Grape Grower - A Guide to Organic Viticulture* by Lon Rombough, Copyright 2002, 290 pp.

I have accumulated quite a few viticulture and wine books over the past seven years I have been working with grapes. I must admit that I very seldom read these entire books. I often just skim the contents, read a chapter or two and then put them aside for reference.

*The Grape Grower - A Guide to Organic Viticulture* is one that I recently read cover to cover. This book is much more than just a "Guide to Organic Viticulture". To me it is more of a common sense easy-to-read primer on grape growing. It does a fantastic job of enlightening the reader on the structure of the vine and the reasons we prune and train the way we do. Well-placed historical facts, personal observations and grape-biology facts keep the reader interested. There is one chapter on propagation that is the best information I have seen on the vegetative reproduction of grapes. Mr. Rombough's 35+ years of viticulture experience and formal horticulture education make this an easy reading, but authoritative viticulture book. It should be in every grape grower's library.

You can order this book directly from Lon Rombough's web page: <http://www.bunchgrapes.com/publications.html>, \$45 Softcover, \$54 Hardcover. You can purchase it for a little less from either MDT & Associates (888-530-7082, See ad) or Midwest Vineyard Supply (217-864-9896).

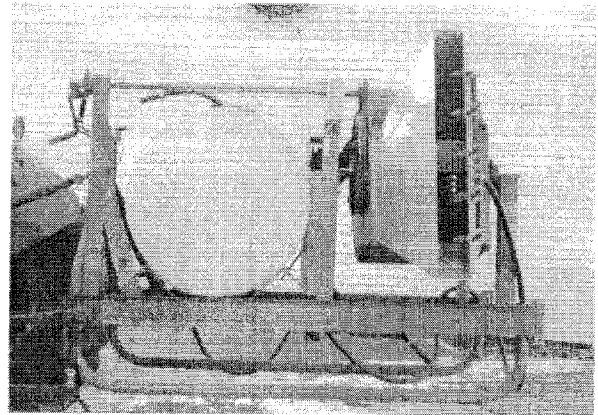
### IMPORTANT MEETINGS FOR WESTERN IOWA WINE MAKERS & GRAPE GROWERS

#### Feb. 9-10: Iowa Wine Growers Annual Conference

Where: Hotel Fort Des Moines, Des Moines, Iowa  
 Noon to 5 pm Fri., Feb. 9th, Evening Wine Reception  
 8:30 am -5 pm Sat. Feb 10th, Evening Wine Reception,  
 Banquet & Dance; Vendor Displays Contact:  
 Joan O'Brien, Executive Secretary, 800-383-1682  
 or [joano@agribiz.org](mailto:joano@agribiz.org)  
<http://www.iowawinegrowers.com>

**I'M SURE WIGGA** members would be interested in any grape experiments by other members. Share your lurid tales about dried grapes, raisins, chocolate covered grapes, grape leather, ice wine, champagne, grape sherbet, liqueurs, herbed wines, novelty jams, whatever. . . Share your secrets. Even the failures could be interesting.

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### For the Jocular Viticulturist. . .

A Minnesotan, Missourian, New Yorker, South Carolinian, Texan, Iowan and Californian were flying across country on a small plane when the pilot comes on the loud speaker and says, "We're having mechanical problems and the only way we can make it to the next airport is for 6 of you to open the door and jump, at least one of you can survive".

The seven men open the door and look out below. The Minnesotan takes a deep breath and hollers, "Viva Riparia!" and jumps. The Missourian takes a deep breath and hollers, "Viva Aestivalis!" and jumps. The New Yorker takes a deep breath and hollers, "Viva Labrusca!" and jumps. The South Carolinian takes a deep breath and hollers, "Viva Muscadinia!" and jumps. The Texan takes a deep breath and hollers, "Viva Mustangensis!" and jumps. The Iowan takes a deep breath and hollers, "Whatever?" and throws the Californian out of the plane.

*from Mike White*

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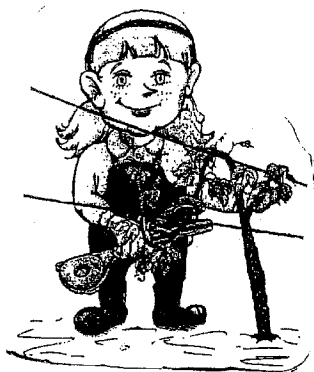


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### JANUARY IS WIGGA DUES MONTH:

Time for WIGGA dues for 2007. \$40 for Growers & Wineries, \$15 for Affiliates.

Benefits for \$15 membership include: Quarterly newsletter, email notification of upcoming wine industry events, access to membership website.

Benefits for \$40 membership include: All of the above plus discounts to educational workshops, cooperative buying notices, and voting privileges at meetings.

Sent dues to:

Diane Forristall, WIGGA Treasurer  
 35252 Pioneer Trail  
 Macedonia, IA 51549

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**New York Times, Sunday, November 19, 2006**

by *Susan Saulny*

ADEL, Iowa — Stan Olson used to grow corn and soybeans on hundreds of acres here on the Raccoon River west of Des Moines, but no more. These days, Mr. Olson's empty grain silo is useful only as a rustic image to promote his new vineyard and tasting room.

***Mr. Olson's Penoach Winery is a tiny operation in a red barn behind his family's farmhouse, next to a small grape nursery. It does not have much of a customer base yet or any vintages that go beyond last year, but Mr. Olson is thrilled nonetheless.***

"I will make as much selling grape plants off of two acres this year as I did many years on 1,000 acres of corn and raising 3,000 head of hogs," said Mr. Olson, who makes much of his money selling cuttings to other aspiring vintners.

"This year was a very good year," he said.

But across the Midwest, wineries are thriving, both as tourism magnets and profit-making businesses. Some are even producing quality wine, made possible by French-American grape hybrids that are bred to thrive in cold climates.

***They have been so successful that more corn and soybean farmers are clearing fields and planting grapes. In Iowa alone, a new winery has been licensed every two weeks for the past year, officials say. Now, more than 700 acres are devoted to grapes (compared with 15 in 2000) and there are close to 70 commercial wineries. Iowa has also just hired its first state oenologist to help guide the novice winemakers.***

Other Plains and Midwestern states are also producing grapes, and uncorking more of the bottles they produce.

In South Dakota, for instance, the number of wineries has more than doubled recently, to 11. In Indiana, the local wine industry has added \$34 million to the economy annually. And Ohio is spending \$900,000 to promote its local vintages, competing with more established regions in California, the Goliath of American wine.

*"We're not afraid to take them on," said Fred L. Dailey, director of the Ohio Department of Agriculture. Bragging about a recent West Coast competition where an Ohio Riesling won an award, Mr. Dailey said dismissively, "We beat out all those over-oaked chardonnays over there."*

Because of the extreme temperatures around much of the region, traditional European grape varieties tend not to do well, but some newer hybrid grape types can withstand the cold.

"I go to sleep and wake up with a smile on my face," said David Klodd, a native Iowan and an assistant winemaker at the Summerset Winery in Indianola, where sales have been increasing by about 20 percent a year. Summerset expects to

sell a total of 130,000 bottles of a dozen varieties this year at \$10 a bottle. Mr. Klodd is passionate about grapes, and his biggest problem is running out of Summerset's best seller, a semisweet red, now that the wine is under contract to be sold in stores.

*Agricultural economists say the timing is right for wineries like Summerset and Penoach - the original Indian name for Adel - because the American public is becoming more wine-friendly and is increasingly fond of all things local. Nationally, wine sales grew by 5 percent last year, to a retail value of \$26 billion, according to the Wine Institute, an advocacy group for the industry.*

"In the Midwest, it goes back to wanting to make home-made wine and having it represent the character of the region," said Bruce P. Bordelon, an associate professor of horticulture and landscape architecture at Purdue University. "The wineries aren't trying to be Napa, they're trying to be Illinois. And there's a place for all of them."

***Indeed, most Midwestern wine is consumed locally. But even at home, the wine can sometimes be a hard sell because the newly developed cold-hardy grapes are often unfamiliar to consumers. They go by names like Vidal Blanc, Seyval Blanc and Chambourcin.***

"You just say, 'You like Merlot? Well, here's something similar, and we grow it out back. See if you like it,'" Dr. Bordelon said. "Most of the time, guess what? They do."

"The Europeans have had centuries to understand their vines," said Doug Frost, a master sommelier based in Kansas City, Mo. "Lately, Midwesterners have produced some lovely wines from these vines, aided by greater experience in the vineyards and in the wineries."

Perhaps most important in Iowa is the fact that wine - whatever it tastes like - is giving farmers the possibility of a decent living again. Some young people are choosing the vineyard back home over jobs in cities and suburbs.

Corey Goodhue is one such young farmer. His family cultivates 3,300 acres of corn and soybeans near Des Moines. Upon graduation from Iowa State University in December, Mr. Goodhue, 23, will have many options but says he'll go back to the farm. He has big ideas about grapes.

***"We're not getting enough value out of corn and beans," he said. "But these grapes, there's a tremendous market emerging. On one acre of ground, if we net \$40 with corn or beans we've done well. With grapes, you could net upwards of \$1,500 an acre."***

In April, Mr. Goodhue planted his first acre of vines with the help of some buddies from Iowa State. Start-up costs were \$6,000, and he said he planned to plant six additional acres next year.

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## CALENDAR OF VINE AND WINE EVENTS OUTSIDE IOWA:

### Jan. 6: Minnesota Grape Growers Annual Membership Business Meeting

Doors open at 8:30 am, Meeting: 9:30 am to 3:30 pm  
Where: Minnesodot Landscape Arboretum at Chanhassen  
Symposiums on Managing Grape Diseases, Determining & Managing Grape Ripeness  
Updates from Anna Katharine Mansfield & Peter Hemstad  
More info: <http://www.mngrapes.org/>

### January 13: 8:30 am - 4:30 pm, Grape Growing 101

Where: Villa Maria, Old Frontenac, MN (approx. 45 mi. SE of Minneapolis/ST. Paul)  
Cost: \$60 first person in group. \$40 each additional person.  
Price includes: Coffee and donuts - 8 a.m. registration, lunch and snacks.  
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Registration: 651-345-3531, [grv@mchsi.com](mailto:grv@mchsi.com)  
website: [www.greatrivervineyard.com](http://www.greatrivervineyard.com)

### Jan. 20: 11 am - 10 pm, Wine Immersion Seminar

Where: Chateau Chantal Winery, Traverse City, MI  
Agenda: Mark Johnson, VP and winemaker presents a overview of winemaking, viticulture, food and wine pairing. Includes a vineyard walk, peasant's lunch, cellar tour, wine tastings, learning materials, and gourmet dinner.  
Price: \$125 per person.  
Sponsor: Chateau Chantal Winery  
Contact: 1-800-969-4009 for further details and reservations.  
Rooms costs are in addition to the seminar.  
<http://www.chateauchantal.com/>

### Jan. 23-25: Unified Grape & Wine Symposium

Where: Sacramento Convention Center, Sacramento, CA  
Agenda: Largest wine & grape show in the nation  
3 days of technical sessions  
Trade Show January 24,25  
Sponsors: American Society of Enology & Viticulture  
California Association of Winegrape Growers  
Contact: <http://www.unifiedsymposium.org/>

### Jan. 29-30: Wine Evolution 2007

Where: Palais des Congres, Paris, France  
Agenda: Oriented towards international wine executives, 30 internationally speakers  
Contact: <http://www.wineevolution.org>

### Feb. 3-5: Mid-America Wine & Grape Conference

Where: Tan-Tar-a Resort, Osage Beach, MO  
Agenda: Feb. 3 Focus on Grape Growing  
Feb 4, Focus on Wine Marketing, Wine Reception and Super Bowl Party.  
Feb 5, Viticulture & Enology Sessions  
Large Trade Show; Sponsors: Missouri Grape Growers Assn.

Super Bowl Party. Feb 5, Viticulture & Enology Sessions  
Large Trade Show; Sponsors: Missouri Grape Growers Assn. & Missouri Grape Growers Assn.  
Contact: Rozana Benz, ph: 573-486-5596 or [rbenz@ktis.net](mailto:rbenz@ktis.net)  
<http://www.missouriwine.org>

### Feb. 7-9: Viticulture 2007 & 38th New York Wine Industry Workshop

Rochester Riverside Convention Center, Rochester NY  
Cost: Full seminar registration for all three days is only \$220, and rooms (single through quad) are \$79.  
A complete agenda, along with information on registration and accommodations, is available at  
[Http://www.viticulture2007.org](http://www.viticulture2007.org).  
Sponsor: New York Grape & Wine Foundation  
Contact: Jennifer Cooper at (585-394-3620, ext. 206)  
[jennifercooper@nywgf.org](mailto:jennifercooper@nywgf.org)

### Feb. 16-17: 3rd annual "Cold Climate Grape & Wine Conference"

(Theme: "Northern Viticulture: Growing our Industry")  
Where: Holiday Inn Select Hotel, Bloomington, MN  
Sponsor: Minnesota Grape Growers Assn.  
Registration and Agenda here:  
[http://www.mngrapes.org/ccgw\\_conference2007.html](http://www.mngrapes.org/ccgw_conference2007.html)  
Conference Director: Lisa Smiley  
[lisa.smiley@mngrapes.org](mailto:lisa.smiley@mngrapes.org) , 651-258-4334

### Feb. 22-25: Illinois Grape Growers & Vintners Assn. Annual Conference

Where: Hilton Hotel, Springfield, IL  
Contact: Bill McCartney, Executive Director  
ph: 217-285-6305, e-mail: [pbm2@verizon.net](mailto:pbm2@verizon.net)  
<http://www.illinoiswine.org/>

### March 2: North Dakota Grape Growers Association Annual Meeting

North Campus, NDSU at Fargo ND  
<http://ndgga.org/>

### March 2-3: Nebraska Grape Growers Annual Forum

Where: Holiday Inn, Kearney, NE  
Contact: Donna Michel, ph: 402-472-5136  
<http://agronomy.unl.edu/viticulture/index.htm>

### March 6-9: 31st Annual Wineries Unlimited

Valley Forge Convention Center, King of Prussia, PA  
Agenda: Largest Trade Show and Seminar for the wine Industry east of the Rockies.  
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GR 7	\$3.25
Kay Grey	\$2.50
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Okanagon Reisling	\$3.00
Reliance	\$2.50

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2,500 - 4,999 plants = 5%  
More than 5,000 = 10%

When men drink, then they are rich and successful and win lawsuits and are happy and help their friends. Quickly, bring me a beaker of wine, so that I may whet my mind and say something clever. - Aristophanes, c. 448-388 B.C.

Water for oxen, wine for kings. Spanish proverb

There is a communion of more than our bodies when bread is broken and wine drunk. M.F.K. Fisher, 1908 - 1992

O thou, the drink of gods and angels! Wine. Robert Herrick, 1591 - 1674

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Location of ads may vary. Page size is 11 by 8 1/2 inches.

Full page . . . . . \$25 per issue (\$75 for year - 4 quarters)

1/2 page . . . . . \$20 per issue (\$60 for year - 4 quarters)

1/4 page . . . . . \$15 per issue (\$45 for year - 4 quarters)

Business card . . . \$10 per issue (\$30 for year - 4 quarters)

Classified . . . . . \$5 per issue (no discount & limited to 25 words - 12 point)

**Patronize our advertisers.** They provide quality supplies and equipment for your vineyard and winery. And ads pay the bills for printing and mailing *From the Grape Vine*.

Floyd E. Pearce  
Western Iowa Grape Growers Association  
P. O. Box 205  
Cumberland, IA 50843