



From the Grape Vine

Volume 07 - Number 2

Spring Issue - 2007

The Mysterious St. Vincent Grape - Where Did It Come From by Mike White

The *Super Gigantic WWW Winegrape Glossary* identifies St. Vincent as a late ripening (Oct.) harsh-cold hardy red wine grape variety grown in mid-Ohio that may have the alias name Vincent when grown elsewhere. Discovered as a well-adapted "provenance unknown" vine in Missouri during the mid-1970s, information from the WWW page of Whispering Oaks Vineyard and Winery in Southwest Missouri also describes St. Vincent's history as not clear. The plants in their vineyard came from Bill Toben, former owner at Gloria Winery in Mt. Grove, Missouri. He found the vine in Wisconsin and brought it with him to Missouri over 20 years ago. The berry is a dark blue-black and the wine is red. They use it to make a dry red, a sweet red and a rosé.

The best information may come from Fred Dressel, owner of Evergreen Vineyard & Nursery in Labadie, Missouri. Fred also has been known to do some vineyard consulting and pruning up here in Iowa. Here is part of the letter Fred sent to Lon Rombough and printed in (*The Grape Grower - A Guide to Organic Viticulture*, 2002, page 190):

My father discovered St. Vincent in the early 1970s growing as a rogue in a Vidal Blanc vineyard at his Mt. Pleasant Winery in Augusta, Mo. He sent it to researchers at Cornell and to Phillip Wagner (where the Vidal originally came from). Neither had ever seen anything like it. It has no diglucosides like all other French hybrids (save Plantet, also called Seibel 5455), only monoglucosides like Vinifera. The leaves turn bright red in the fall (like Pinot Noir) and these are certified virus-free vines (so the red is not due to virus). It makes a good dry wine and had made an excellent rosé sparkling wine. It is a vigorous grower and a prolific bearer (6-8 tons per acre). A worthwhile grape in areas that cannot grow Vinifera. When the original St. Vincent vine died, we had Southwest Missouri State Viticulture people on hand at the time. The (original) St. Vincent looked to have a long tap root (a characteristic of seed seedlings, but not plants started from cuttings), so maybe this was a chance seedling. We had Pinot Noir on one side of the Vidal and Chambourcin nearby. Best guess is that, if this

is a chance seedling, these may be the parents.

The *Super Gigantic Y2 Winegrape Glossary* on the WWW describes St. Vincent as a late ripening (Oct.) harsh-cold hardy red wine grape variety grown in mid-Ohio that is thought by some to be a Dr. Hansen release from the Missouri State Grape Research Station at Mountain Grove. If the assumption is correct, it is a V Vinifera x complex T. V. Munson American hybrid. This source also goes on to document Fred Dressel's letter to Lon Rombough noted above.

In the book Growing Grapes in Missouri, June, 2003, Missouri State University, St. Vincent is identified as a chance hybrid of a French-American hybrid cultivar with an unknown parent. It is a red grape for wine with a very large berry size and small, loose clusters. It has high vigor and moderate to high degree of winter hardiness. The fruit matures late season. It does not require cluster thinning. Yield is high. The vine trains well to a cordon system with spur pruning. A good spray program is needed to control diseases. Loose clusters makes it tolerant to bunch rot. Wine quality is good. It is typically made into a dry, red wine, or used in blending.

Lon Rombough in his book describes this grape as a late-season blue grape with the ability to withstand temperatures down to -20F and moderately susceptible to Black Rot, Downy Mildew, Powdery Mildew and Phomopsis. Ed Daugherty, owner of St. Francois Vineyards and Nursery in Park Hill, Missouri, identifies it as a red grape and gives it a similar rating. Paul Domoto's description in ISU's *Grape Cultivars Guide* does not show any disease tolerance scores, but goes on to describe St. Vincent as a moderately vigorous, late-season blue grape with an upright growth habit. Paul gives it a winter hardiness of around -10F. I agree with this higher temperature threshold. Several growers in Central Iowa have seen some severe winter trunk damage over the past several years. I would be very hesitant to grow this variety north of I-80 in Iowa.

Overall, I guess it really does not matter where St. Vincent came from. In South Central Iowa, St. Vincent is gaining a reputation as a versatile red wine grape that can be made into a sweet, dry, or rosé wine.

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*From the Editor's Desk*

Lots of good stuff in this issue!

There are two articles from Mike White that were crowded out of the January *Grape Vine*. Mike's essay on the doubtful parentage of St. Vincent is slightly scandalous, and why don't you use the French terms and intimidate fellow viticulturists and enologists.

Randall Vos is the Viticulture Instructor at the Des Moines Area Community College in Ankeny. He has generously offered an article on Nitrogen Fertilizer, and he has promised more items for future issues. I'm sure he has given readers much to think about. Mr. Vos is available for field assistance to grape growers, and he held a very successful pruning field day in two vineyards in Mills County in March.

Page 3 has a couple important announcements.

Iowa Wine legislation is in limbo, and the federal 2007 Farm Bill threatens to make serious cuts in the RC&Ds.

The Western Iowa Wine Trail will sponsor a "Welcome Spring" event on May 5th and 6th.

Western Iowa winemakers can show their stuff and bring

home some ribbons from the July 14-15 Mid-American Wine Competition in Ankeny

There will be vineyard field days in April, May and June.

Mike Killinger represented Western Iowa winemakers at a national wine bash in San Raphael, California.

Be sure and take advantage of the 10% discount coupon for Fermenter's Supply in Omaha - page 7. April only. Fermenter's Supply in one of our valued advertisers.

Two WIGGA members sent pictures of the March 1st, 2nd and 3rd Snow Storm.

So there you are. . .

Floyd Pearce

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Cumberland, IA 50843

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Nitrogen: a Vineyard Friend, Foe or Indifferent

by Randall Vos

Whether you are for or against applying it, nitrogen (N) is probably the mineral nutrient that receives the most attention in vineyards. Some growers are faithful applicators of N while others avoid it completely. No matter what you do, make sure you have a reason and it is advisable to test your petioles annually and assess the vigor of your vineyard. The cost of testing petioles is minimal compared to the cost of preventable problems you can minimize.

Nitrogen is one of the most important nutrients needed in grapevine growth. The question is whether or not you need additional N applied to your site on a regular basis or if you have enough fertility available already. Leaf petioles samples are a valuable tool for indicating plant nutrient status. If your petiole samples were taken at bloom from leaves opposite the clusters, Minnesota recommendations are that the ideal range is from 1.2-2.2% N ('Petiole Analysis as a Guide to Grape Vineyard Fertilization' Rosen, 2007). Petioles sampled from the most recently matured leaf at around veraison should range from 0.9-1.3% N (Midwest Grape Production Guide). If your petiole samples are below these target levels or your vines are not achieving the growth they should be, a N application may be warranted.

One of the questions we need to ask when considering applying N is what is our goal? What sets the amount of grape production in a season is the crop load allowed to remain on the vines after pruning and thinning. Vineyard yields are not as directly correlated with N application as can be the case in corn production. The goal of vineyard N fertilization is to enable the growth of enough foliage to adequately ripen the crop load and allow the vine to build up reserves, in this way it indirectly affects vineyard yields.

Once it is determined that N should be applied, the next questions are how to apply it and when to apply? Soil applications of N are most common; due to the inability of a vine to absorb all the N it needs for the season through foliage. Nitrogen is a mobile nutrient and can readily leach out of soil. A large application of N at one time may cause excessive vigor. For these reasons it is advisable that small applications be made on a yearly basis, rather than one large application every few years. Studies have shown that for generally healthy vines a large portion of the N needed by the vine from bud break to bloom is from vine storage. Traditional recommendations are to apply N prior to bud break, but studies have also shown that vines accumulate less N when it was applied at bud break versus at bloom. Grapevines that are not adequately healthy may not have much N in vine storage, so in these cases bud break applications may still be warranted. Applying N late in the season is inadvisable since late spurts of growth may hinder the vine from beginning to acclimate to dormancy.

**GRAND OPENING: Prairie Crossing
Vineyard & Winery**, April 28 & 29
31506 Pioneer Trail, Treynor, IA 51575
www.prairiecrossingwine.com

Sugar Clay Winery 2ND ANNIVERSARY
May 26 & 27, entertainment, food, tours
Noon to 8, 1446 - 240th Avenue, Thurman, IA
sugarclaywinery.com

Big "French" Words You Will Never Hear in the Vineyard

by Mike White

Aoutement: The period just after ripening of the fruit, beginning when the vine's rate of growth slows until the shoots stop growing and begin to show woodiness and proceeds until the shoots and leaves start to turn color.

Coulure: Flowers that were not pollinated and should have dropped, which remain on the cluster and develop into small seedless (shot) berries.

Debourrement: The period between bud break and the appearance of the first inflorescence (flowers).

Millerandage: Abnormal and uneven fruit set in which bunches contain berries of very different sizes because of poor fertilization.

Nouaison: When the ovaries of the blossoms on each inflorescence have been fertilized and have become small, hard, green berries.

Tienturier: French term meaning "having colored juice."

... and thanks to Don Thompson and the *Schleswig Wine and Bier Club* newsletter:

Ullage: The air space that is within a finished bottle of wine. This is typically anywhere from 1/4 to 1/2 inches between the wine and the cork when the bottle is standing upright. The amount of ullage in the bottle will increase slightly every year as evaporation slowly occurs through the cork.

Ullage can also refer to the head-space within larger vessels, while the wine is in bulk storage. In these situations you want to keep the ullage to as little amount as practical.

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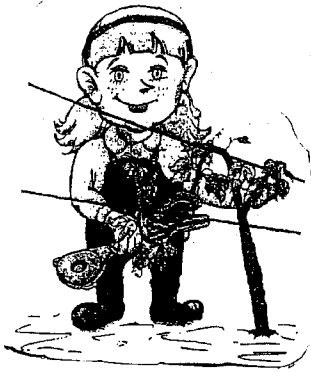
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Wine Legislation in Iowa

Bill HF104 appears not to have made it "out of committee" in Des Moines, so it's unlikely proposals contained in the bill will be enacted in the immediate future.

I am the last person in the world who can read or understand legal-speak. But it is my understanding that the current law "provides that 'native wine' means wine manufactured entirely in this state". ["Manufactured" includes "fermented".] Correct me if I'm wrong, but doesn't Bill HF 104 propose that at least 51% of native wines be manufactured in Iowa?

From my benighted position, I would argue that the existing laws should be **strengthened** and **not** relaxed. Shouldn't there be honesty in advertising? Why would Iowa winemakers want to discourage the Iowa grape growers?

I would further suggest that flavorings and spirits (for reinforced wines) from out of state could be added to the local product and it would still be a native wine.

Write Your Senators! Request Changes in 2007 Farm Bill: RC&D Program Gets the Shaft

It is not too late to write to our senators urging them to request the Agriculture Committee to support more adequate funding for RC&Ds in the 2007 Farm Bill.

In a nutshell, President Bush's budget reduces RC&D funding from \$52 million to \$14 million. Currently there are 375 RC&D coordinators nationwide. The reduced budget would eliminate 325 of the RC&D coordinator positions and leave 50 - one per state.

There is not space here to enumerate the valuable projects and programs that RC&Ds undertake throughout the nation.

Shirley Frederiksen, our coordinator, says, "I have trouble keeping up with everything going on at Golden Hills. I don't know how one person in Des Moines could keep up with 16 RC&Ds in Iowa."

Make your voice heard:

Honorable Tom Harkin, 731 Hart Office Building,
 Washington, DC 20510, Phone: 202-224-4254,
 Fax: 202-224-9369, and

Honorable Charles Grassley, 135 Hart Senate Office Building, Washington DC 20510, Phone: 202-224-3744.

Western Iowa Wine Trail

Sponsors "Welcome Spring" Event

Seven Iowa wineries on the Western Iowa Wine Trail are planning exciting events for May 5 & 6.

Participating wineries: **Breezy Hills Winery** - Minden, **Danish Countryside Vines & Wines** - Exira, **Kings Crossing Vineyard & Winery** - Glenwood, **Loess Hills Vineyard & Winery** - Crescent, **Prairie Crossing Winery** - Treynor, **Sugar Clay Winery** - Thurman, **Whispering Hills Vineyards** - Carson.

Special events are planned at these wineries.

For the Western Wine Trail map, hours, price and other details, including attractions, lodging and dining options, visit: westerniowawinetrail.com

The Mid-American Wine Competition

Here's a big opportunity to bring some winning ribbons to the winemakers in Western Iowa!

The Mid-American Wine competition will be held July 14-15 on the Ankeny campus of the Des Moines Area Community College.

All bonded wineries in the Midwest are invited to submit their wines for judging.

This event is held in conjunction with the S.Wine Iowa Pork and Wine Festival on July 14th.

The public is invited to both events.

For information: makeminewinemagazine.com

(The next issue of the *Grape Vine* will be in July and that may be too late for this announcement.)

Vineyard Field Days

April 21st, "spray clinic" basics of fungal diseases and methods of control. (Time & Place, see contact below.)

May 19th, "Bugs, soil analysis, general vineyard upkeep, overview, etc."

Prairie Crossing 31506 Pioneer Trail, Treynor,
712-487-3812, info@prairiecrossingwine.com

June 23rd, Canopy Management

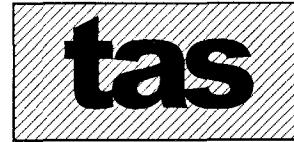
Breezy Hills Vineyard, 31735 Tamarack Road,
Minden, 712-485-2083, hillsideacres@msn.com

For further information:

James Rost, OA Fremont County Farm Bureau,
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Mike Killinger on Panel in the Heart of the California Wine Country

Mike Killinger, the owner of Whispering Hills Vineyards in Carson, was selected to travel in January to San Rafael, Marin Center, to represent Iowa at a Tasting Room Profitability Conference sponsored by Vineyard and Winery Management. Mike spoke on a panel where the topic was Tasting Room Tips from Coast to Coast. Also on the panel were Becky Waggoner from Dunham Cellars in Walla Walla, WA, and Jim Costa from Toad Hollow Vineyards in Healdsburg, CA.

There are now wineries scattered across the country, and Iowa is no different. Boutique style wineries with production levels of fewer than one thousand cases are producing award winning wines. This fact becomes apparent when a local winemaker is invited to attend a national wine conference.

"This goes to show you that if you produce a quality product, and create a great atmosphere, they will come!!" Mike said.

Mike and Dana Killinger founded Whispering Hills Vineyards six years ago with the establishment of the vineyards. Two years later they opened the winery which has grown from seven hundred gallons to seven thousand gallons of wine. "As we continue to grow, we always strive to produce a quality product, and to always treat our customers like we would want to be treated." Mike said.

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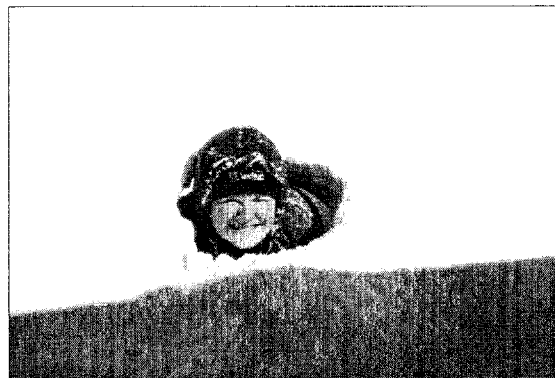
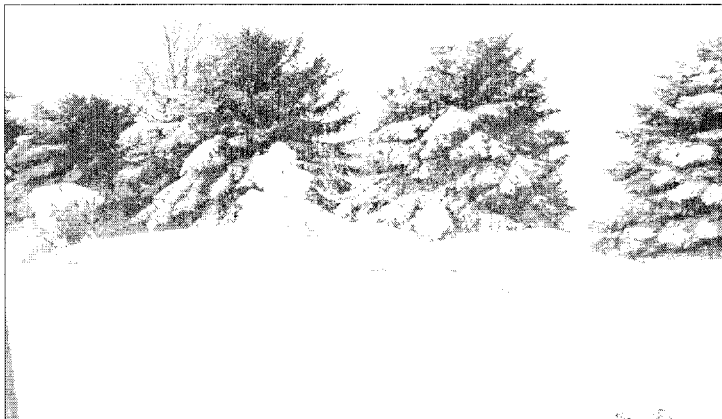
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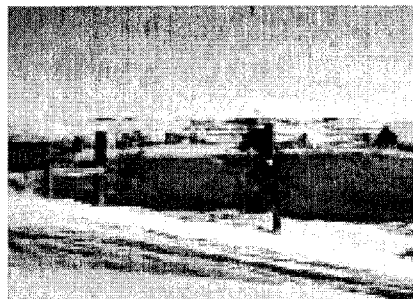
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The Big Storm of March 1st, 2nd and 3rd, 2007



Kathy Tremel, of Earling, sent pictures of her back yard. Her daughter Katie, who is a senior in high school, couldn't go to school. Kathy said, "Katie went outside and played in the snow like she did when she was a little girl."



Tom & Phyl Christofferson, of Hamlin, took some pictures of their snowbound vineyard.

Where were you during the Big Storm of 2007? Were you house bound for several days when March "came in like a lion"? Snow, wind, snow, sleet, snow, wind, hail. . . Interstate 80 was closed, city streets and country roads were impassable for several days. No mail on Thursday, Friday, and Saturday. Many places in Iowa were without electricity when ice hung heavy and wires broke and poles snapped in the wind.

I remember the "Big Storm of 1934" - drifts so high we shoveled deep paths to the wood pile, the barn, and the chicken house. Northeast of the house the drifts were so high we made a tunnel to the outhouse.

But the Big Storm of 2007, the March Storm, the wind and snow and ice and more snow. . . I doubt if it got below zero, but the wind made it seem very cold. I have to admit that the March Storm made the "Storm of '34" seem almost polite. Walking was treacherous. I stayed inside and read, and wrote, and made a few phone calls, and organized some files, and ate cheese and crackers and drank several glasses of my chokecherry wine. My vineyard is too young to bear, but I have a chokecherry tree and last summer I made chokecherry wine for the first time. It has a hearty nose, rich clear garnet red, and a slow finish. It's a complex wine - some sunlight, but it's more like a hot summer night when the tree was dreaming. It was bitter last fall when I bottled it. I almost poured it down the drain. But I trusted the wine. It mellows by the hour.

What did you do during The Big Storm?



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Chambrocin	\$1.75	La Crosse	\$2.50	St. Vincent	\$1.75
Chancellor	\$1.75	Leon Millot	\$1.75	Seyval	\$1.75
Chardonel	\$2.50	Mars	\$2.50	Stueban	\$1.50
Concord	\$1.00	Marechal Foch	\$1.75	Traminette	\$2.25
Edelweiss	\$2.50	Niagra	\$1.00	Valiant	\$2.25
Elvira	\$1.25	Okanagon Reisling	\$3.00	Vignoles	\$2.00
Frontenac	\$2.50	Reliance	\$2.50		

Wine Words of Wisdom:

“Wine cheereth God and man.” — Judges 9:13

“Good wine ruins the purse; bad wine ruins the stomach.” — Spanish saying

“No thing more excellent nor more valuable than wine was ever granted mankind by God.” — Plato

“Drink wine, and you will sleep well. Sleep, and you will not sin. Avoid sin, and you will be saved. Ergo, drink wine and be saved.” — Medieval German saying

Wine rejoices the heart of man and joy is the mother of all virtues.” — Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

“When asked what wines he liked to drink he replied, “That which belongs to another.” — Laertius Diogenes

“The wines that one best remembers are not necessarily the finest that one has ever tasted, and the highest quality may fail to delight so much as some far more humble beverage drunk in more favorable surroundings.”

— H. Warner Allen

From the Grape Vine is a quarterly publication, page size 8 1/2 by 11 inches.

Price of Ads: Full-page - \$25 per issue or \$75 for one year

1/2 page - \$20 per issue or \$60 for one year

1/4 page - \$15 per issue or \$45 for one year

Business card: \$10 per issue or \$30 for one year

Classified ad: \$5 per issue, 25 word limit, 12 point type

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