

[SLIDE 1]

Thank you, Sharyn.

For the two presentations we're doing on Zoom, I've adapted the National Tasting Project presentation that Melissa Bartlett put together for the chapters. That presentation is also available to you and has some references should you like more information on Washington Wines.

For today's session we will be discussing 6 of the National Tasting Project wines. Hopefully you've had an opportunity to judge the wines before we started today and can now sit back, relax with a glass of one of the wines as I go through today's wines and the American Viticultural Areas, or AVAs, they represent.

[SLIDE 2]

The 2020 National Tasting Project is a study of Washington State.

Over the last 20 years Washington has grown from 4 AVAs to 14 approved. We'll also talk a little about their newest proposed AVA later on in today's presentation.

[SLIDE 3]

Ste. Michelle Wine Estates was chosen to be this year's wine supplier due to their availability nationwide. Unfortunately, much of Washington state wines are not distributed outside of the state.

One of Ste. Michelle Wine Estate's wineries, Chateau Ste. Michelle is Washington state's founding winery. While it has been known as Chateau Ste. Michelle Winery only since 1967, it can trace its roots back to 1934.

The 1,000th winery was licensed in last year. Today there are 10 more active licensed wineries in the state.

[SLIDE 4] [2m:34s video]

Let's hear take a couple minutes and hear it from Washington State Wines.

[SLIDE 5]

Washington's first grapes were planted in 1825 by the Hudson's Bay Company at Fort Vancouver. Wine grapes followed the path of early French, German and Italian settlers. Italian and German varietals originally planted in the Yakima and Columbia Valley.

[SLIDE 6]

In 1937, Dr. Walter Clore arrived on the Washington wine scene as an assistant horticulturist at Washington State University's Irrigated Agriculture Research Extension Center in Prosser.

During the 1960s, he conducted research on more than 250 American, European and hybrid varieties. His meticulous research helped convince Washington winemakers and growers that they could grow vinifera. Dr. Clore is recognized as the “father” of Washington’s wine industry.

Commercial-scale plantings began in the 1960s. The efforts of the earliest producers, predecessors to today’s Columbia Winery and Chateau Ste. Michelle, attracted the attention of wine historian Leon Adams. Adams in turn introduced pioneering enologist Andre Tchelistcheff to Chateau Ste. Michelle. It was Tchelistcheff who helped guide Chateau Ste. Michelle’s early efforts and mentored modern winemaking in this state.

[SLIDE 7]

Here’s 2019’s precipitation in Washington state.

99.9% of wine grape production takes place in the eastern half of the state – the west is too wet. The Cascade Range blocks most rain. Annual rainfall is around 8 – 15 inches, which requires irrigation.

Being closer to the north pole than the equator grants grape growers 16 hours of sunlight during growing season—that’s 1 hour more than California’s prime regions.

The State of WA Wine Industry:

- \$7 billion-plus industry in WA state
- WA ranks second nationally for premium wine production
- Over 59,000 acres planted with vinifera grapes

[SLIDE 8]

As of May 2020, the State of Washington ranks second nationally for premium wine production. With over 60,000 acres under vine, Washington produces approximately 19.4 million cases of wine annually. That totals about \$8.4 billion in total economic impact to the state.

[SLIDE 9]

Let’s begin our discussion with the Columbia Valley AVA.

This large AVA was established in 1984, encompassing most of the Columbia basin, including areas of Oregon.

This is the largest AVA weighing in at 11 million acres; 17 thousand of those acres currently under vine. This area encompasses approximately 99% of the wine grapes grown in Washington State.

[SLIDE 10]

The Columbia Valley AVA is further sub-divided into 11 sub-regions:

1. Ancient Lakes
2. Horse Heaven Hills
3. Lake Chelan
4. Naches Heights
5. Rattlesnake Hills
6. Red Mountain
7. The Rocks
8. Snipes Mountain
9. Wahluke Slope
10. Walla Walla Valley
11. Yakima Valley

A twelfth region, The Burn, has just completed its public review period and back with the United States Alcohol and Tobacco Tax and Trade Bureau for their consideration.

The AVAs not included in the Columbia Valley AVA are:

- Lewis-Clark Valley [Shared with Idaho, east of Walla Walla Valley AVA]
- Puget Sound
- Columbia Gorge [Shared with Oregon]

[SLIDE 11]

As I said earlier, the Columbia Valley is very dry. It has a Continental to Mediterranean climate; the sub-AVAs have a varying meso- and micro-climate that help differentiate those areas. The Columbia River, shown here, meanders through the valley allowing for irrigation. You'll notice the tan versus bright green vegetation; the black at the top of the hills were burn marks from a fire the previous summer/fall.

Let us mention phylloxera for a moment. The dry weather coupled with the sandy soils of the area does allow for more planting of vines on its own rootstock. This is now beginning to change in some areas are now in the south and east of the AVA. Phylloxera is starting to impact vineyards.

[This is a panoramic shot of the Columbia River, taken just northeast of Chelan, WA from Alternate US 97. US 97 is located along the river at the base of the hill. It was taken in summer 2016.]

[SLIDE 12]

Vineyards are planted on predominately south-facing slopes, increasing solar radiation in summer and promoting air drainage in winter. The growing season lasts between 180 and 200 days, with annual rainfall averaging from 6 to 8 inches. Early and late-season frosts and winter freezes are the main environmental threats.

In 2018, Washington state as a whole produced over a quarter-million tons of grapes. The 5 leading grapes are listed on the chart above and account for more than 75% of the production.

[BACK-UP MATERIAL]

VARIETALS:

- Over 30
- Riesling, Merlot, Chardonnay, Syrah and Cabernet Sauvignon are the most widely planted varieties
- Barbera, Black Muscat, Cabernet Franc, Carmenere, Cabernet Sauvignon, Chardonnay, Chenin blanc, Cunoise, Gamay Beaujolais, Gamay noir, Gewurztraminer, Grenache, Lemberger, Malbec, Marsanne, Merlot, Mourvedre, Muscadelle, Muscat Canelli, Nebbiolo, Orange Muscat, Petit Verdot, Petit Sirah, Pinot blanc, Pinot gris, Pinot Meunier, Pinot noir, Riesling, Roussanne, Royalty, Sangiovese, Sauvignon blanc, Semillon, Syrah, Viognier, Zinfandel

[SLIDE 13]

By now, it has seemed like I've been talking for hours and we haven't even gotten to the wines.

Well, now's your chance to hear about the wines that we've included into today's session. I'll include

Let us take a little "virtual" wine trip. We'll begin in Spokane, on the eastern border. We'll head southeast toward Port Washington, Washington.

[SLIDE 14]

If you've already scored your wines, break out your salty appetizers or sushi rolls. Our first wine this afternoon is **Domaine Ste. Michelle NV Brut**.

It is sourced from premium grapes in Washington state's Columbia Valley. Since the Columbia Valley vineyards sit at a northerly latitude, similar to France's Champagne district, this latitude gives the region two additional hours of sunlight during the peak growing season. The ample sunshine and cool evenings create ideal conditions in developing superior flavor and crisp acids.

Winemaker, Paula Eakin, ferments individual lots for 2-3 weeks, then blends the lots into the desired cuvée using the same three grapes that the Champenoise have for centuries. She does blend more than one vintage together in order to create a consistent style.

[SLIDE 15]

Our average score was 14.1 out of the 20 possible points.

This would equate to a bronze medal at an AWS competition.

[SLIDE 16]

Our second wine from the Columbia Valley AVA is the **Chateau Ste. Michelle Cabernet Sauvignon**. The warm, sunny days and cool evening temperatures in the Columbia Valley create ideal conditions for intense aroma and flavor development in the ripening grapes.

The winemaker, Bob Bertheau, inoculates the destemmed, ripe grapes with various strains of yeast to maximize complexity. He uses gentle pump overs during fermentation were used to extract color and flavor and produce soft, supple tannins. The wine is aged 18 months in American and French oak, of which 14% is new barrel.

We realize that even though we attempt to have wine the same wine scored throughout the country, that doesn't always happen. I know I ended up with a 2016 vintage. It had 91% Cabernet Sauvignon, 6% Syrah, 1% Grenache, and ½% each of Cab Franc, Malbec, Merlot and Petit Verdot. The alcohol content and total acidity were identical.

[SLIDE 17]

This wine would have received a silver medal with an average score of 16.1 points.

[SLIDE 18]

The most northerly AVA we're going to discuss today, is the Ancient Lakes AVA. Recognized as an AVA in October of 2012, it sits along the eastern side of the Columbia River along both sides of I-90.

[SLIDE 19]

Roughly 1,400 of the 162,000 acres are currently under vine, primarily to white wine grape varieties, such as Riesling, Chardonnay, Pinot Gris, and Gewürztraminer. A little Merlot and Syrah can also be found in the region.

Ancient Lakes has a unique soil composition that was left behind when Ice Age flood waters drained to the Columbia River.

[NOTE: Caliche – sedimentary rock composed of hardened natural “cement” of calcium carbonate that binds up other materials (gravel, sand, clay, and silt)]

[SLIDE 20]

[Ee-row-ee-cah]

Launched in 1999, **Eroica** is a labor of love for two of the world's great Riesling producers. One from the Old World, Dr. Loosen Estate of Germany, and the other from the New World, Chateau Ste. Michelle of

Washington state. An intermingling of Old and New World philosophies and techniques enables the crafting an extraordinary Riesling from Washington state grapes. Named for Beethoven's Third Symphony, Eroica reflects not only its variety and site, but also its heritage: bold and forward from its Washington roots, elegant and refined from German inspiration.

2018 was a stellar growing season and vintage in Washington. Warm spring temperatures were followed by mild conditions throughout the growing season allowing for extended hang time and flavor development. Warm fall days allowed for full ripeness and color, while cool Washington nights helped maintain crisp natural acidity.

To protect flavor intensity, grapes were harvested at night when the vineyard temperatures were coldest. The berries went direct to press, avoiding the possible loss of freshness caused by a crusher/destemmer. A cool fermentation created a seamless integration of fruit, sugar and acid. Fruit-driven yeasts with slower fermentation rates were used to slow down fermentation and heighten fruit flavors.

Ernst Loosen and Bob Bertheau considered dozens of small lots, each reflecting a slight difference in character depending on where the grapes were grown, resulting in the complexity of the final blend.

100% of the 2018 vintage was sourced from the Evergreen Vineyard in the Ancient Lakes AVA.

[SLIDE 21]

[Ee-row-ee-cah]

Again I ended up with a different vintage. The 2017 had a little less residual sugar, acid, and alcohol than the 2018. With that said, we would have awarded Eroica a bronze medal with an average score of 14.9 out of 20.

[SLIDE 22]

Established in 1983, Yakima Valley AVA is Washington's oldest appellation. Today it is the Columbia Valley AVA largest sub-region and has 3 sub-regions of its own: Rattlesnake Hills AVA, Snipes Mountain AVA, and Red Mountain AVA

[SLIDE 23]

Containing over 18,000 vineyard acres, it is mostly planted to Chardonnay, Merlot and Cabernet Sauvignon, with representation from Riesling and Syrah. Expect to see Syrah become more widely planted in the future. With only 8 inches of precipitation annually, the predominant silty-loam soil help keep vine vigor under control.

[SLIDE 24]

While not part of the Yakima Valley AVA, Cold Creek Vineyard is located just north of the region. It is home to the grapes in our next wine. The vineyard was planted in 1972 on its own root stock. Currently, hosting:

- Cabernet Franc
- Cabernet Sauvignon
- Chardonnay
- Merlot
- Riesling

This is a warm, dry site with high heat accumulation. The low-yielding old vines produce small clusters and small berries, resulting in intense varietal flavors with deep colors. The soil has a little more gravel in the loamy sand than the Yakima Valley, but still very low-water-holding capacity.

[SLIDE 25]

To make the **Chateau Ste. Michelle Cold Creek Cabernet Sauvignon**: The ripe grapes were destemmed and sorted with a grape receiving and sorting system designed to gently remove any green material from the grapes, allowing for pure varietal expression and soft mouthfeel. Daily gentle pumpovers were used to extract optimal flavor and color and minimize harsh tannins. Frequent racking takes place during barrel aging to soften tannins and enhance mouthfeel during the 22 months in 25% new French oak, 17% new American oak and 58% neutral oak.

[SLIDE 26]

I received the 2015 vintage and it scored a 16.1 by us, which would have equated to a silver medal.

[SLIDE 27]

Located along the Oregon border, Horse Heaven Hills is home to 37 varieties of grapes. The leading grapes are Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Chardonnay, Riesling, and Syrah. The region supports 31 vineyards and 6 wineries with its 570,000 acres.

[SLIDE 28]

As you can see from the lower, right-hand photo. This is a very dry location. Being on the Columbia River, does allow for the upriver winds to help moderate the temperature. Comparing the Horse Heaven Hills with the rest of the Columbia Valley, this smaller AVA does get long sunny days that are warmer and has a predictable drop in temps in October keeps grapes on vine longer.

The soils consist of wind-blown sand & loess, Missoula Flood sediment, and hill slope rubble.

The terrain consists of south-facing slopes that provide excellent sun exposure for grape ripening, and protection from cold airflow during the winter months.

[SLIDE 29]

Planted in 1991, the vineyard at Canoe Ridge Estate lies on a steep, wind-swept, south-facing slope on the bank of the Columbia River. The proximity to the river moderates the temperature extremes, allowing uniform ripening and excellent color development.

The grapes for the **Chateau Ste. Michelle Canoe Ridge Cabernet Sauvignon** were sorted with a state-of-the-art receiving and separation system that gently removes green material from the grapes, allowing for more pure fruit expression. Daily gentle pumpovers during fermentation extract optimal flavor and color and minimize harsh tannins.

Each fermentation lot is tasted daily to evaluate the evolution of the tannins, modify extraction techniques and find the right moment to drain the wine off of its skins. Finally, the wine is aged for 22 months in 46% new French oak, and 54% neutral oak before bottling.

[SLIDE 30]

This wine would have received a double gold medal, with an average team score of 17.5 and no score below 17.

[SLIDE 31]

Officially submitted for consideration as a new AVA on September 19, 2017, the Burn of Columbia Valley is expected to be the next AVA approved for Washington.

[SLIDE 32]

Currently over 1200 acres of the nearly 17,000 acres that will make up the AVA are planted to vine. Current plantings include Cabernet Sauvignon, Malbec, Syrah, Chardonnay and Sangiovese.

The Burn is easily distinguished from other growing areas in Washington State due to its very warm climate, higher precipitation and more moisture-retaining loess soils. This climate allows for less irrigation and longer hang times.

The Alcohol and Tobacco Tax and Trade Bureau (TTB) accepted the petition a perfected on October 31, 2017 and it completed public comment of final rule making in July 2020. So maybe by the end of the year the Burn will be born.

[SLIDE 33]

Speaking of “born”.

Let’s now get to our final wine for the day, **Borne of Fire Cabernet Sauvignon**. This is the only brand made in the proposed AVA. They have a Chardonnay label as well.

2017 was cooler than previous vintages which resulted in significantly lower yields. The weather delayed ripening and helped retain fresh fruit aromas and mouthwatering acidity.

Juan Muñoz-Oca used whole-cluster fermentation and large format, lightly toasted Hungarian oak barrels for added complexity in the wine.

[SLIDE 34]

For our final score of the day, we scored this wine with a 15 out of 20. This would equate to a silver.

[SLIDE 35]

Thank you for joining us today for the first part of our discussion on Washington Wines as part of the National Tasting Project.

If you have any further questions that Aaron and Karen weren't able to answer during the session, we can definitely make up an answer at this point.

[AFTER Q&A]

Thank you again. We look forward to seeing you next Sunday as we continue our study of Washington State Wines.

[END]