[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. If there are differences in information, it's because the world of wine continues to change and Washington Wine is not immune to those changes.

For today's session we will be discussing the remaining 6 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 Washington wine 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 15 approved.

Today I'm going to start with a brief recap of what we discussed last weekend.

[SLIDE 3]

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 were originally planted in the Yakima and Columbia Valley.

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

Commercial-scale plantings began in the 1960s.

[SLIDE 4]

Using Washington state's 2019 precipitation map as an example.

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.

[SLIDE 5]

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 6]

Washington wine would not be where it is today, would it not be for the soils and river that flows through the eastern portion of the state. Those soils and river basin are a result of the Great Missoula floods which occurred over a 2,000-year period beginning about 15,000 years ago.

In this photo we're depicting Lake Missoula over present day Montana and Idaho. The ice cap blocks the Clark Fork River and begins to form the lake. This is amplified as the ice melts.

[SLIDE 7]

Eventually the ice weakens in the vicinity of the Clark Fork River and Lake Missoula drains. This torrent of water travelling up to 80 mph scours the landscape as it travels through western Washington state. As the water enters today's Columbia Gorge, the narrow forces the water to back-up into what is referred to as Lake Lewis.

[SLIDE 8]

Let's take a few minutes to listen to the Geologist Nick Zentner from Central Washington University describe the aftermath of the flood.

[3m:15s segment from: *Huge Floods in the Pacific Northwest: A story of Lava, Ice, and Water*; see HUGEfloods.com for more information]

[SLIDE 9]

Let's begin our discussion with the Columbia Valley AVA then work our way from the north to south within the 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 12 sub-regions:

1. Ancient Lakes
2. Candy Mountain
3. Horse Heaven Hills

4. Lake Chelan
5. Naches Heights
6. Rattlesnake Hills
7. Red Mountain
8. Royal Slope
9. Snipes Mountain
10. Wahluke Slope
11. Walla Walla Valley
12. Yakima Valley

A thirteenth region, The Burn, has just completed its public review period and is 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]
- Puget Sound
- Columbia Gorge [Shared with Oregon]

[SLIDE 11]

Vineyards are planted on predominately south-facing slopes, increasing solar radiation in summer and promoting air drainage in the 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.

[SLIDE 12]

Our first wine for discussion today is significantly sourced from Horse Heaven Hills AVA, however not sufficiently enough to be labeled from the sub-region.

Low rainfall and proximity to the Columbia River yields concentrated fruit with depth, varietal expression, and a refined textural composition.

Most of the Cab Franc comes from the Alder Ridge vineyard in the Horse Heaven Hills. This vineyard has sandy soils and southern exposure allowing the richness of the grape come through. This plays against the proximity to river creates cool nights that maintain the varietal's elegance and subtle herbal tones.

The winemaker, Juan Muñoz-Oca, keeps 50% of the grapes stayed on the skins after fermentation for approximately 9 months. This extended maceration extracted the intrinsic qualities of the grape, mellowed tannins, and created an unexpected silky texture which adds to the complexity to the wine. 10% of the fermentation is done in concrete tanks.

The Cabernet Franc juice fermented on the Malbec skins, and the Malbec juice fermented on the Cabernet Franc skins. This technique, which Winemaker Juan has developed over years of passionately blending Cabernet Franc and Malbec and studying the varieties' phenolic composition, creates a balanced blend that showcases the best of each variety in their rarest form.

Small amounts of Cabernet Sauvignon and Merlot added additional layers and complexity to the final blend. 50% of the final blend aged in 100% neutral French oak for 9 months.

Aaron, would you take us through our tasting for the audience?

[SLIDE 13]

We had the 2017 version of the blend which is 51% Malbec and 49% Cab Franc. The 2017 season was cooler and yields were a significantly lower than the 2016 season.

Our team average was 14.3 points out of 20. That would result in bronze medal at an AWS competition.

[SLIDE 14]

Our second wine is also labeled from the Columbia Valley AVA. This Merlot is sourced from Eastern Washington vineyards in the Horse Heaven Hills and the Wahluke Slope, as well as their Cold Creek Vineyard. Vineyards were selected for producing high quality, ripe fruit, yielding wine with intense color and flavor.

The grapes were destemmed and sorted using cutting edge technology to gently handle fruit and remove any green material, allowing for more pure, concentrated fruit expression. Gentle pump overs were used to extract optimal flavor and color, and minimize harsh tannins. Finally, the wine was aged in 51% new American and French oak barrels.

Aaron, please explain our analysis.

[SLIDE 15]

We would have awarded a silver medal, with an average score of 15.1.

[SLIDE 16]

In 2005, the Wahluke Slope was established. It consists of over 80,000 acres bounded by Columbia River, Saddle Mountains and Hanford Reach monument. Only about 9,000 acres are under vine, primarily red varieties: Merlot, Syrah and Cabernet Sauvignon. Also, Riesling, Chardonnay, and Chenin Blanc can be found in the vineyards.

[SLIDE 17]

Fueled by a warm, dry climate with ideal soils, the Wahluke Slope vineyards are cooled by the wind and nourished by water of the mighty Columbia River flowing nearby, creating a perfect balance.

Consistent weather produces consistent vintages. This AVA is the warmest and driest in the state, averaging less than 6 inches of rain annually.

The entire appellation lies on a broad, south-facing slope and sits on a large alluvial fan, with deep topsoil, gravelly sand, rocks, and loam. This soil style allows for ample drainage.

Wahluke Slope wines tend to be ripe and full-bodied with pure varietal fruit flavors.

[SLIDE 18]

Seven Falls Cellars was inspired by a series of seven waterfalls that once flowed along the Columbia River through what is now known as the Wahluke Slope.

Grapes were sourced from four select vineyards in the Wahluke Slope AVA, all bringing their own distinct characteristics to the final blend. Indian Wells and Mrachek vineyards bring lighter, smoother tannins and red fruit. Jones vineyards bring bold, sweet tannins and dark fruit. And Mattawa vineyards bring high acid, bright fruit and structured tannins.

The final blend was put together very early, just as fermentation was finishing; this allowed the whole blend to marry and age together in harmony. The wine was then barrel-aged in 37% new oak for 18 months, in 34% French oak, and 66% American oak.

Aaron, over to you.

[SLIDE 19]

We received the 2015 vintage. We would have awarded a bronze medal, with an average score of 14.8.

[SLIDE 20]

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 21]

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. Strong wind patterns in the Horse Heaven Hills reduce canopy size and density and contribute to even ripening by moderating temperature extremes.

[SLIDE 22]

The vineyards in Horse Heaven Hills are the source and inspiration behind the **H3** wines. The hills have been home to the **Columbia Crest** winery for more than two decades, and it is this heritage, combined with innovative winemaking and vineyard knowledge, that allow their winemaker to create wines that capture the unique terroir of the region. As new vintages are released, expect new labels as **Columbia Crest** has spun off the **H3** line of wines into their own winery.

For this vintage of their Chardonnay, as the grapes were delivered to the winery, they were pressed quickly but gently. 60% of the juice was fermented in a combination of new and older oak barrels from France and the US. The remaining 40% was fermented in stainless steel to retain the minerality and fruit-forward characters unique to the Horse Heaven Hills region. All barrels were hand stirred weekly; the wine aged in barrel for a total of nine months.

Aaron, would you please let our audience know what we thought of the wine?

[SLIDE 23]

We received the 2018 vintage. Our team average was 15.8 points out of 20. That would result in silver medal at an AWS competition.

[SLIDE 24]

Also, from **Columbia Crest's H3** line let us look at their 2015 Merlot. Winemaker Juan Muñoz-Oca combines innovative and traditional winemaking practices to highlight bold flavors in the wines that capture the unique terroir of the region.

Grapes were crushed and then fermented 7-14 days on the skins to extract optimum fruit and structural components. Malolactic fermentation occurred in stainless steel tanks and oak barrels. The wine was barrel-aged in 66% older oak and in 34% new oak barrels, both French and American, for approximately 15 months.

Aaron, how did we evaluate this wine?

[SLIDE 25]

We would have awarded a silver medal, with an average score of 15.5.

[SLIDE 26]

One of the earliest Washington AVAs, the Walla Walla Valley is shared with Oregon. There is about 3,000 acres of land south-east of the Columbia River. While The Rocks District of Milton-Freewater AVA lies within the Walla Walla Valley AVA, it is not an AVA of Washington state.

[SLIDE 27]

The area has hot days and cool nights and is prone to sudden temperature shifts.

The soil is based upon Missoula Flood Sediments, wind-deposited silt/loess and Basalt cobblestone gravel. These soil types provide good drainage.

This AVA is known for its superb Syrah. However, you'll also find Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Cabernet Franc, Malbec, Sangiovese, Chardonnay and Viognier in the vineyards. Walla Walla reds tend to have distinctive savory notes—earthy, black olives, smoked meat and brine.

[SLIDE 28]

Spring Valley Vineyard was established in 1897. The vineyards on the 111 acres farm was replanted in 1993. The grapes are hand tended from planting to harvest.

Spring Valley Vineyard lies 12 miles northeast of the city of Walla Walla, amid the picturesque wheat fields of southeastern Washington and the Blue Mountains in the distance.

[SLIDE 29]

Uriah is named after the owner's grandfather who purchased the location in 1897.

Spring Valley Vineyard fruit is hand-picked, hand-sorted and gently de-stemmed by gravity. During the 10- to 20-day fermentation, each tank is tasted daily until **Spring Valley Vineyard** winemaker Serge Laville decides it is time to press using wooden cage basket presses. In keeping with **Spring Valley** tradition, originally instituted by founding winemaker Devin Corkrum Derby, hand punch-downs occur twice a day until the end of alcoholic fermentation. The wine is transferred by pump into barrels for secondary fermentation and gets racked several times for clarity.

Aaron, would provide our final evaluation?

[SLIDE 30]

We would have provided a double gold medal, with our team average of 17.5.

[SLIDE 31]

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

If you have any further questions that Aaron, Melissa, and Sharyn 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 appreciate you joining us in our study of Washington State Wines and participating in our National Tasting Project.

The videos from last week's and today's presentations will be posted to the AWS YouTube page with a link from the Chapter Resource library on the AWS website.

[END]