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PEPPER BRIDGE WINERY

1704 J.B. George Road
Walla Walla, WA 99362



The Winegrower

Hello everyone,

I have brief notes on three topics for you. First and most important: grapes. Like every vintage, our 2002 vintage doesn't begin when we start picking grapes, it begins in February when we do our winter pruning in the vineyards. By February, winemaker Jean-François already knew what crop yields he wanted in each block of grapes. We pruned accordingly.



Jean-François and I hover over the vineyards throughout the entire season. We constantly compare notes as we watch bloom, fruit set, veraison, and finally harvest. We make small adjustments in each vineyard block to assist Mother Nature and our terroir in giving us a great vintage.

Cool spring weather this year caused plenty of apprehension through bloom. By mid-July the weather had turned to almost record heat and we quickly caught up with heat units. The even fruit set this year looks like the best we've ever experienced. This all bodes well for the 2002 harvest. The first Merlot grapes from Seven Hills Vineyard arrived at the winery on September 7th, and we look forward to an exciting crush season and outstanding vintage.

Next, industry activities. The Washington Wine Auction held on August 24th earned \$1.3 million to benefit Children's Hospital and a new viticulture/enology program at Washington state colleges. Pepper Bridge Winery joined with our friends at L'Ecole N°. 41 to put together a unique auction lot that included the chef/owner of the Nacional 27, one of Chicago's hottest restaurants. We'll fly Chef Randy Zweiben to Walla Walla to cook dinner for six high-bidding guests. Pepper Bridge winemaker Jean-François Pellet and Marty Clubb from L'Ecole N°. 41 will join the guests for the dinner. Needless to say, they'll bring along a few bottles of intriguing wine.

My last topic is the increase in wine tourism to the Walla Walla Valley. Hotel reservations for the

celebration weekends in 2003 are filling up fast. Those of us who have watched the local wineries grow in number and quality over the past 20 years can hardly believe the increase each year in the number of (very wine savvy) visitors. Of course, the basis for all the excitement is that numerous small wineries continue to turn out very high quality wines. Walla Walla itself has risen to the challenge. We now have our choice of upscale coffee shops and restaurants – and a welcoming population – to help make all of our visitors feel at home.

Nom McRibben

2000 Merlot Release

We put it on our Christmas list and our wish was granted. The second vintage of Pepper Bridge Winery Merlot is extremely exciting, especially since this is the first vintage crafted *entirely* at our state-of-the-art, gravity-feed winery. We always give extra care to our hand-harvested grapes, but this vintage also received very gentle handling at the winery. The gravity-feed system and proprietary shaker/sorting table allowed us to hand-sort each individual cluster before the grapes moved to the fermentation tanks, then by gravity to the caves, 38 feet below.

The 2000 Merlot is bright, featuring deep flavors of cherry, cassis and violet with an intriguing hint of roasted coffee, spice and a bit of licorice. The wine shows our trademark elegant style with a firmly sculpted framework of acid and polished tannins. It aged 19 months in 66% new and 34% seasoned oak, 95% French.

This intriguing vintage produced 1,115 9-liter cases, which we will release in November 2002 with a retail price of \$45.00/bottle. As our production levels increased, we are now able to offer *magnums* of the 2000 vintages, with a limited number of 2000 Merlot magnums available for purchase.

The 1999 Merlot sold out fast, so we encourage you to place your orders soon for the 2000 vintage. Christmas is just around the corner, and wine makes a lovely gift for the holiday season.

2000 Cabernet Sauvignon

The 2000 Cabernet Sauvignon was bottled in August and is scheduled for release in the spring of 2003. Look for full details in our next newsletter or contact Dana Lane by phone (509-525-6502) or email (dana@pepperbridge.com) for details and ordering.

Pepper Bridge Winery

1704 J.B. George Rd. Walla Walla, WA 99362

T 509-525-6502 | F 509-525-9227

info@pepperbridge.com

Quantity

1999 Cabernet Sauvignon/750ml

[] \$ 50.00 per bottle

2000 Merlot/750ml

[] \$45.00 per bottle

2000 Merlot/Magnum

[] \$90.00 per bottle

2000 Cabernet Sauvignon/750ml

[] \$50.00 per bottle

ESTIMATED Shipping

In-State

Out of State

1 Bottle

\$ 10.00

\$ 13.00

3 Bottles

\$ 19.00

\$ 25.00

6 Bottles

\$ 25.00

\$ 35.00

12 Bottles

\$ 42.00

\$ 60.00

Orders shipped 3-day express via FedEx.

(Call for a firm price quote)

Shipping Total

\$ _____

Wine & Shipping Total

\$ _____

WA State Sales Tax (7.7%)

\$ _____

(Washington State Residents only)

TOTAL DUE:

\$ _____

INVOICE TO:

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State/Zip: _____

Daytime Phone: _____

[] Hold at Winery [] Ship To the Following:

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State/Zip: _____

Daytime Phone: _____

Payment Type: [] Visa [] MasterCard [] Check

Signature: _____

Card #: _____

Expires: _____

By placing your order you represent yourself
as 21 years of age or older.

1999 Merlot

THANK YOU to all our customers who purchased the 1999 Merlot. This was our *first* Merlot and was received extremely well, as evidenced by the “sold out” inventory. This vintage received 94 POINTS from Anthony Dias Blue, wine writer for numerous publications, including *Bon Appetit Magazine*.

If you were mesmerized by the 1999, don't wait to order the 2000 Merlot. Production was held to 1,115 9-liter cases and orders have already begun.

Holiday Barrel Tasting December 7-8, 2002

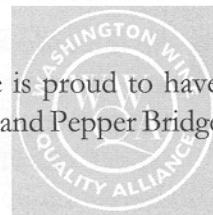
We encourage you to attend the Walla Walla Holiday Barrel Tasting weekend December 7-8, 2002 in Walla Walla and visit your favorite wineries, many of which set up donation centers for local charities. We will be barrel tasting the 2001 Cabernet Sauvignon from Pepper Bridge Vineyard and 2001 Cabernet Sauvignon from Seven Hills Vineyard. We will also be pouring the 2000 Merlot and 1999 Cabernet Sauvignon, both of which will be available for holiday purchases. A fee of \$8.00/person will be charged for the bottled wine, but will be credited to any wine purchases made that day. If you are a current customer, be sure to see Dana Lane to receive your complimentary pass for the bottle pourings. The holiday atmosphere will be in full swing and we look forward to seeing you.



Bob Smasne (Assistant Winemaker), Tim Kerrigan (Cellar Master), and Jean-François Pellet (Winemaker) toasting the 2002 vintage.

Washington Wine Quality Alliance

Washington State is proud to have a Wine Quality Alliance program and Pepper Bridge Winery is proud to be a member.



Thank You

As a way of saying “Thank You” to our customers, all full-case orders (12 bottles) received prior May 10, 2003 will be shipped free of charge.

Calendar of Events

November 2-3, 2002

Walla Walla Valley Wine Auction
Marcus Whitman Hotel

December 7-8, 2002

Holiday Barrel Tasting
Walla Walla, WA

March 4, 2003

Taste Washington
Chicago, IL

March 15-16, 2003

Cabernet Sauvignon Release Event
Pepper Bridge Winery

April 6, 2003

Taste Washington
Seattle, WA
Stadium Exhibition Center

May 3-4, 2003

Spring Barrel Tasting
Walla Walla, WA

May 19, 2003

Taste Washington
New York, NY
The Whitney Museum

August 23, 2003

Auction of Washington Wines
Chateau Ste. Michelle
Woodinville, WA

The Winemaker

Corks vs Screw Caps



As the industry is changing, and consumers are becoming more aware of the quality aspect of wine purchases, there have been many questions regarding screw caps. New Zealand, Australian and some California wineries plan on replacing corks with

screw caps. Will Pepper Bridge Winery change from the traditional cork to screw cap closures?

Cork is a natural product, which comes from the bark of an oak tree, the *Quercus Suber*. Eighty percent of corks come from an area that straddles the southern border of Portugal and Spain (45% Spain and 35% Portugal). Every 9-12 years growers harvest the cork bark and dry it outside for a minimum of nine months before processing begins. During this time the bark flattens out and the rain removes tannin. One might think that harvesting every 9-12 years would cause a shortage of quality cork, but the wine industry utilizes only 15% of the total cork production. Following are the steps for making corks from the harvested and dried bark:

- Boil the bark
- Slice the bark to determine the length of cork (we use 2" corks at Pepper Bridge)
- Punch out the corks
- Wash the corks
- Brand the corks (adding the winery information)
- Add a coat of paraffin and silicone to assist with insertion and extraction



Cork has the unique capability to be compressed, and then to return to its original diameter. This is critical for developing a good seal in a bottle of wine. The major problem with cork is that some corks release TCA, which taints wine. TCA is a chemical compound that comes from natural cork molds. Some cork suppliers are working on methods of removing the TCA from their cork, but we know that 1-3% of all corks will have TCA at some level.

As winemakers, we are always interested in alternative methods of corking or sealing and preserving our wines. Examples of alternative methods include plastic corks, aggregate corks and screw caps. Recently screw caps have received an enormous amount of attention, but they've been around a long time. Screw caps for wine were developed in the early 70's by a French company to help the Swiss winemakers.

For over 10 years I worked with screw caps in Switzerland, and my father is still using them, because Swiss wines are very delicate and susceptible to TCA. Screw caps do indeed prevent TCA problems, but they are not designed for a wine with a long-aging potential. Screw caps are so tight that the wines can barely breath.

There is nothing more frustrating than to open a nice bottle of wine only to discover it's been infected with TCA. At Pepper Bridge Winery, we take every step possible to diminish the cork taint problem. The cork industry just came up with a very sophisticated and expensive analysis to evaluate the TCA content of corks, in which every bale of cork is checked before shipping. We do additional sensory analysis and quality tests at the winery prior to purchasing corks from any supplier.

We would like to say that 100% of our wines will not experience a TCA problem, but we know this is not true. Still, we fully believe that real, quality cork enhances the elegant, long-aging wines we produce at Pepper Bridge Winery.