



Winter 2022

“...through the Grapevine”

a publication of the North Carolina Wine and Grape Council (NCWGC) in partnership with UNCG’s Bryan School of Business and Economics, Hospitality and Tourism Management Program

Welcome

Welcome to the fourth edition of “... through the Grapevine,” a publication of the North Carolina Wine and Grape Council (NCWGC) in partnership with UNCG’s Bryan School and Business and Economics, Hospitality and Tourism Management Program. Direct all inquiries to sptroy@uncg.edu.

From the Desk of the Peter Thornton

I would like to start off by introducing myself. My name is Peter Thornton. I work in the Marketing Division at NCDA&CS. Some of you may have known me from my work in exports, beer, and spirits. The administration of the Wine and Grape Council has recently been transferred to my section.



You may have heard, but Whit has taken a job outside of NCDA. We are going to miss him, and especially miss his decade of experience and knowledge. But I think what we will miss the most is he friendly personality. We have all spent time with Whit and every one of us has enjoyed our time with him. It is going to be very difficult to replace him. Still, I hope to have the position posted by the time this newsletter is sent out and you read this.

It is going to be a time of transition. The board has voted to focus its marketing effort to increase traffic going into wineries and vineyards by 50% in the next three years. That is not going to be an easy task, but with the right strategy and tactics, we can do it. To that end, we are sending out a request to advertising firms, public relations firms or other qualified organizations to lead our marketing effort to achieve our goal.

NCDA has done this before with sweet potatoes in Europe and has been very successful in expanding the market. If we can find the right firm, we can do this and make a serious positive impact on our industry. The board has helped us out tremendously by focusing in on one specific goal. Instead of spreading out our efforts to thinly across many different objectives, the ability to focus on one goal will make the likelihood of success much greater.

I want to take some space in this column to thank Sam Troy and Erick Byrd for their tireless work for the wine industry, including this newsletter. I am in the process of collecting all the reports the NC wine industry has commissioned. My staff will put them in password protected directory once we have most of them in one place. It amazes me how much UNCG has done and the institutional knowledge they have of the industry. We are going to need their help and knowledge in this time of transition. We should all be comforted by knowing their knowledge of the wine industry is safely housed in Greensboro.

If you would like to speak to me, find the link to that directory or meet Whit’s replacement, who I hope is on board shortly after this is published, please feel free to contact me at peter.thornton@ncagr.gov or at 919-707-3153. See you at the winery!

Muscadine Influencer Luncheon at The Barn.... Angus Barn That Is

It isn't easy to change perceptions, but it's great when your change is a positive one. Once you have a well-made wine in front of the right people, preconceived notions of styles can be reset. The goal of this October 6, 2021, luncheon was to gather open-minded people in the Wine and Hospitality industry together to introduce or reintroduce them to some of the Muscadine wines produced in North Carolina.

This was the second of two influencer events that were funded by the NC Wine and Grape Council in a grant to the UNCG Bryan School of Business & Economics to help educate people in the Hospitality Industry about wines produced in North Carolina. On this occasion, due to the distance between vineyards, the organizers decided to have an influential group of wine peers meet at The Angus Barn in Raleigh, which has a long history of serving great food and wines. The groups' host at the Barn was Henk Schuitemaker, the Wine Director, who has been working with The Angus Barn for 35 years. Henk is also a big reason why "The Barn" continues to be a winner of the Wine Spectator Awards for the past 32 years. It is also one of less than 100 Restaurants to receive the Wine Spectator's Grand Award; so, like on Broadway, "if you can make it here, you'll make it anywhere."



Henk worked with three Muscadine wine makers representing Duplin Winery, Cypress Bend Vineyards, and Lu Mil Vineyard. He paired their wines with a 4-course luncheon. Guests were greeted with a sparkling wine from Duplin, Sweet Lily; a semi-sweet sparkling wine that was crisp and light and incorporated citrus highlights. It started the luncheon off on a great note. It was paired with the famous Angus Barn cheese and homemade crackers. Gray Fussell, a fourth generation Fussell working at Duplin, and Bill Hatcher, Vice President of Sales, provided background on Duplin's history noting that Duplin is now the 37th largest winery in the country. The pair also discussed the wines the group tasted during the luncheon.

Guests at the event were representatives from the local wine stores, wine makers, vineyard owners, restaurant representatives, several sommeliers in training, and a Master of Wine. There are only 389 WSET Masters of Wine in the world, so that was quite the honor. Henk opened the luncheon by letting everyone know that they needed to be open to a new experience, and to leave any wine baggage behind. This was going to be a "Reset" experience, where we could look at the wines from a modern perspective.

Each vineyard represented had their opportunity to speak about their wines, their family farms, and businesses. They also spoke on behalf of the other vineyards that weren't at the table and recommended those in attendance to visit their local wineries to experience them firsthand. The group tasted 11 wines in total. Henk and the chef paired Duplin's Summertime Strut and Coastal Shag with fresh Chesapeake Bay oysters with Black Pepper Mignonette. The 2nd Course was heirloom tomatoes with whipped Chevre, Basil and Extra Virgin Olive Oil with Cypress Bend Vineyards' Sundown and Catherine wines. Both paired well with the Goat Cheese and strong basil and olive oil notes with just a hint of sweetness in the fruit. The next course was Korean Red Chili Glazed Chicken with baby Bok Choy, paired with Lu Mil Vineyards' Taylor Devine, Cypress Bend Vineyards' Autumn Red, and Duplin Winery's Mothervine Reserve. Mothervine Reserve is produced from grapes grown from actual cuttings of the Mothervine in Manteo, that dates to 1584. Each of the wines blended with the spiciness of the chicken and complemented the Bok Choy. Finally, desert was Citrus Panna Cotta and Roasted Apple,



Ginger Snap, and Toasted Benne that came with two Lu Mil Vineyard's wines Sir Walter Raleigh and Harmony Hill.

A lively discussion then ensued among those there about how food and wine pairings can really enlighten tasters to new and untried options. The industry continues to learn, and wines made now are made by more technically astute winemakers. Also, vineyards continue to adapt to the evolving flavor profiles and trends. Henk spoke to the Riesling's sweetness, and how it's one of the most important wines in Europe. Because it is a wine that can have residual sugar, it works with many types of dishes across the board, depending upon the sweetness. He sees North Carolina Muscadines taking that same approach, adapting to the spectrum, and being paired with food to enhance the meal.



Nadia Hetzel, winemaker from Cypress Bend Vineyards, said that her German background helped her appreciate the Muscadine wine's flavors and how to respect the grapes' nature. Cypress Bend Vineyards wines run the spectrum of dry to sweet, like a German Riesling can run from dry to sweet. "It's all about paying respect to the grape and trying to bring out the best in each style."

Karla Ward, who represented the Lu Mil Winery, shared her experience with their vineyard. Lu Mil Winery is all about hospitality; inviting people to come and see their vineyard and experience their wines. Karla also said that this event wasn't just about the three vineyards at the table, it was about the many wineries out there in North Carolina that are adapting and learning in these times. She added, having the luncheon at the Angus Barn in Raleigh really shows that Muscadine wines, given the opportunity, can be served well at the state's top restaurants.

At the conclusion of the meal, Whit Winslow, former Executive Director of the NC Wine and Grape Council, shared "Blackberry" wine with the group, which had just been awarded the 2021 Best in Show Muscadine wine. It is made from Muscadine Noble grapes and blackberries and produced by Sanders Ridge Vineyard and Winery, Booneville, North Carolina.

The most important feedback from this event was that it was a giant "reset" in the way to think about the Muscadine Wines and how to enjoy them.

NC Fine Wines Society Members Receive Awards

North Carolina Fine Wines members had great results from this year's James Suckling tasting of wines submitted for reviews. For the past 5 years, The Society has submitted the top wines from the yearly NC Fine Wines Competition. In 2021, the Fine Wines Society submitted the top 25 scoring wines from the competition to be judged blind by the Suckling organization.

Of the 25 wines submitted, a total of 13 wines were rated in the 90-93 range! This is a huge leap forward for member producers and, in general, all North Carolina wine. The 2021 ratings bested by far all previous years. The results for all 25 submitted wines were:

90-93 Ratings - 13

86-89 Ratings - 11

83-85 Ratings - 1

News from Surry Community College

Dormant Season Update from Surry Cellars Vineyard

Sarah Bowman: Viticulture Instructor

The dormant season is a great time to reflect on the previous season and think about goals and objectives for the coming season. It's helpful to keep field notes, scouting records, or take pictures to help you remember your successes and where there is room for improvement. While the vines are in their winter slumber your chore list might include trellis maintenance, vine removal, equipment maintenance, spray program development, inventory updates and seasonal supply ordering. It's also a great time to taste through and assess the quality of the 2021 vintage with your winemaker. Just after the new year is an ideal time to plan out your pruning strategies. Cordons should be assessed for their health and need for renewal, and vine size and vigor should aid in your balanced pruning and cropping plans. At Surry Cellars Vineyard, we utilize mechanical pre-pruning, followed by rough and fine pruning for all of our spur pruned vines. We will wait to final prune until our best judgment tells us that the risk of spring cold injury has passed. Rough and fine pruning might not be practical for your entire vineyard, but it may be beneficial in low lying areas or frost pockets, and in early budbreak varieties.



We are excited to announce that construction of our Agrochemical Building is complete and we will move into the new facility in the coming weeks! The facility is heated and features a pesticide storage room, decontamination area, secondary containment, water supply tank, and access to the mixing and loading area via overhead doors.



As the end of winter approaches, we will be collecting soil samples, conducting our pre-season inspections and calibrations on all spray equipment so we are ready to go for the 2022 growing season. Cheers to a new year!

Updates for Surry Cellars Winery – Surry Community College

As we move into the winter season, the winery begins to gear up as start to think about getting some wines into the bottle. We try and focus on the finishing of white wines from the previous vintage (2021) for bottling in February and March for a Spring release, and discuss and perform blending and finishing for red wines that have been aging that will be bottled sometime in the early summer months for a Fall release. It's great to have the red wines blended and marrying for a bit before they are bottled.

Stabilization in white wines is a major topic that we discuss in classes leading up to bottling. While stabilization is a multi-faceted concept that should be thought about constantly during the life of the wine, the winter months are a time where we check stability and ensure we are ready to bottle. I like to think about wine stability as having four pillars: microbial stability, cold stability, heat stability, and chemical stability. Microbial stability looks

at ensuring proper sulfur dioxide levels based on pH and performing sterile filtration on the way to the bottling line as ways to prevent microbial spoilage. Ensuring minimum bubble point before and after bottling is essential to determine if your filtration has been successful. Cold stability is specifically for white or rose wines and looks at removing unstable amounts of potassium bi-tartrate within the wine. This process should be performed before heat stability checks are determined. This is because cold stability has the potential to change pH and confirmation of heat stability depends on pH. Cold stability can be accomplished without a chiller during the winter months if you put some tanks outside and you seed your wines (make sure you stir). I've always been a fan of cream of tartar seeding but there are other new ways to ensure cold stability, too. Heat Stability looks at removing the heat-unstable protein fraction in a white or rose wine, it's accomplished with Bentonite. Over the last 4 years we've moved away from Bentonite additions after fermentation and add almost all of our Bentonite during fermentation (sometimes we don't get the amount just right). In my opinion, it makes a better wine in the end. Finally, chemical stability is a mindset looks at the different ways that pH and TA can change throughout the life of a wine, including MLF in reds and some whites, and how we can keep those ideas in mind when we approach bottling and if any adjustments should be made.

For more information on these topics and more, join us in class! Surry Community College has been offering Viticulture and Enology degree coursework since 1999 as the only college on the East Coast with a fully-licensed and bonded winery combined with a teaching vineyard, Sustainable Agriculture facility, and Agrochemical learning facilities. It's not too late to sign-up for late start Spring semester classes. Wine Finance, Wine Marketing, and Organic Crop Production are being offered in a condensed 8-week format. Wine Finance and Wine Marketing are offered completely online.

For more information, contact Viticulture and Enology Program Instructors:

Sarah Bowman – Viticulture Instructor, 336-386-3631, bowmanse@surry.edu

David Bower – Enology Instructor, 336-386-3569, bowerd@surry.edu

NC Wine Stakeholder Familiarization Tours (FAM)

Over the summer and fall of 2021 two events were held by UNCG's Bryan School and CLINNEAM (through funding by the NC Wine and Grape Council) that exposed NC wine to wine influencers: the NC Wine Influencer Tour and the Muscadine Wine Pairing Luncheon (described earlier in this newsletter). The purpose of these events was to increase the perception of NC wine. Both events highlighted multiple NC wineries and were targeted toward regional wine influencers. One requirement for all participating wineries, was that they were required to serve only NC wine. Participants at each event were asked to complete a survey before visiting any winery or before the luncheon. Once all the wineries were visited on the trip or after all wines were tasted at the luncheon, the participants were asked to complete an additional survey.



To determine the impact the trip had on the influencer's perception of NC wine, 8 questions were asked about how they would rate the quality of NC wine and the NC wine experience, before the trip and then after the trip. They were asked to rate quality on a 5-item scale with 1 representing Poor/ Flawed and 5 representing Excellent. In all 8 questions the perception of quality increased after the trip. Of note, the perception of the quality of NC wine (overall), NC white wine and NC rosé increased by at least 1 point. The perception of the quality of NC sparkling wines and NC hybrid wine increased by 0.6 point.

NC Influencer Tour Pre-Trip vs Post-Trip Perceptions

Item	Pre-Trip Mean	Post-Trip Mean	Difference in Means	Pre-Trip Minimum Rating	Post-Trip Minimum Rating
Overall, how would you rate the quality of NC wine?	3.2	4.2	1.0	2	3
How would you rate the quality of NC red wines?	3.5	3.6	0.1	3	3
How would you rate the quality of NC white wines?	3.4	4.6	1.2	3	4
How would you rate the quality of NC rosé wines?	3.0	4.2	1.2	2	4
How would you rate the quality of NC sparkling wines?	3.0	3.6	0.6	2	3
How would you rate the quality of NC dessert/port wines?	3.3	3.6	0.3	2	2
How would you rate the quality of NC hybrid wines?	3.0	3.6	0.6	2	2
How would you rate the quality of NC winery experience? The experience visiting a winery.	4.0	4.8	0.8	3	4

To determine the impact the luncheon had on the influencer's perception of NC wine, 9 questions were asked about how they would rate the quality of NC wine and the NC wine experience before and after the luncheon. They were asked to rate quality on a 5-item scale with 1 representing Poor/ Flawed and 5 representing Excellent. In all 9 questions the perception of quality increased after the luncheon. Of note, the perception of the quality of NC wine (overall), NC muscadine wine, NC red wine, NC white wine, NC rosé, NC sparkling wine and NC hybrid wine increased by at least 0.5 point.

Muscadine Wine Pairing Luncheon Pre-Lunch vs Post-Lunch Perceptions

Item	Pre-Lunch Mean	Post-Lunch Mean	Difference in Means	Pre-Lunch Minimum Rating	Post-Lunch Minimum Rating
Overall, how would you rate the quality of NC wine?	3.6	4.2	0.6	2	3
How would you rate the quality of NC muscadine wines?	3.4	4.3	0.9	2	3
How would you rate the quality of NC red wines?	3.5	4.0	0.5	1	3
How would you rate the quality of NC white wines?	3.5	4.2	0.7	2	3
How would you rate the quality of NC rosé wines?	3.6	4.2	0.6	2	3
How would you rate the quality of NC sparkling wines?	3.5	4.0	0.5	2	3
How would you rate the quality of NC dessert/port wines?	3.9	4.2	0.3	2	2
How would you rate the quality of NC hybrid wines?	3.6	4.1	0.5	1	3
How would you rate the quality of NC winery experience? The experience visiting a winery.	4.4	4.6	0.2	3	3

While both events increased perception of NC wine in every category, the largest increases (especially the quality of NC winery experience) were seen when influencers were able to visit the winery, taste the wine and meet the wine maker. This holistic experience emphasizes the importance of the wine tourism experience. Continued efforts should be made to support wine tourism in the state and assist wineries in enhance the visitor's tourism experience.

While visiting wineries helps increase a positive perception of NC wine, the results also showed the importance of creating basic awareness for NC wine and pairing wine (especially muscadine) with food. Holding an event where wine is paired with food, allows the wine to be highlighted in a way that is different than you get in a traditional tasting room. The results of this project demonstrate that this will significantly increase the perception of not only the wine being tasted, but also NC wine in general. Industry leaders should consider developing additional opportunities to link NC wine with food.

“Healthy Hope” A Documentary on the Muscadine Grape Extract

A documentary on the Muscadine Grape Extract and the ongoing health benefit research was filmed in North Carolina, Maryland, Washington DC, and Virginia in 2021. The story follows six doctors from five universities (Wake Forest University, NC State University, Howard University, Morgan State University, and Johns Hopkins University) and their ongoing research into the health benefits of the Muscadine Grape.



The research that started back as early as 2003 shows in cellular testing to kill cancer cells and to help slow or stop metastatic growth. These tests run the gamut from lab assays, in vitro (cellular), In Vivo (animal) through Clinical Studies (Human Trials). The results have been very promising, and some extraordinary discoveries are being made. Not only does the grape help with fighting cancers, but it also helps with fatigue in recent In Vivo studies, which they want to bring to Human Trials. This only confirms what Indian folklore and ethnobotanical history has recorded for hundreds of years; the grape has curative components.

The film has been entered into eight various Film Festivals in North Carolina and around the country in Biotech and Grape Growing areas to increase knowledge of what is happening with the grape. Once the film has gone through the film festival cycles, it is hoped that it will be picked up by a streaming service to help raise awareness with the general public. “We’re really looking forward to coming out the Film Festival Season with some recognition that we can get it to the Streaming channels. With the film festivals you must wait until premiere’s are done, and then you can move to the Public sphere” explained Dan McLaughlin. Dan and Cathy McLaughlin produced the film with some support from the North Carolina Wine and Grape Council. According to Dan and Kathy, “Feedback from initial private screenings has been very positive, and that’s exactly the Healthy Hope we want to convey to people.”

Muscadine Meeting of Generations

By Amanda Lewis, Communication Assistant, Department of Horticultural Science, NC State University, and Mark Hoffmann, NCSU Small Fruits Extension Specialist. Photo credit: Amanda Lewis

A meeting was arranged for a generation of experts in muscadine breeding. to come together to sample a wide variety of selections at the North Carolina State University (NCSU) horticulture research station in Castle Hayne.

Six experts came together at the Horticulture Research Station in Castle Hayne, on September 24th, 2021 (Figure 1). But they not just met to share their love and appreciation for muscadines and muscadine breeding. The main reason for this meeting was to evaluate seedlings from the North Carolina State University muscadine breeding program and lay the groundwork to make possible crosses available to collaborating breeding programs in the Southeast. For this reason, the NCSU Small Fruits Research and Extension Group (#theveryberrylabNCSU) under the lead of Dr. Hoffmann initiated, planned and hosted a meeting with breeders from University of Arkansas (Dr. Margaret Worthington) and University of Georgia (Dr. Patrick Conner) as well as active (Jessica Spencer) and retired muscadine breeders from NC State University (Terry Bland and Dr. Jim Ballington).



Figure 1. From left to right Terry Bland, Dr. Patrick J. Conner, Dr. Jim Ballington, Dr. Margaret Worthington, Dr. Mark Hoffmann, and Jessica Spencer.

The start of a fruitful collaboration

This meeting was most unusual, because it brought together generations of muscadine breeders to select seedlings derived from another breeding program. We experienced one full day of beautiful sunny weather, when the world's knowledge on muscadine breeding came together in one place. We had no other aim than to discuss the properties and parents of hundreds of seedlings planted in Castle Hayne. Jim Ballington, Jessica Spencer and Terry Bland were guiding the team through the several fields of seedlings planted at the Horticulture Research Station in Castle Hayne, NC. Drs. Worthington and Conner looked for several traits in fruit texture, color and taste, as well as parent plant background. The evaluation started around 9:30 am, after coffee and breakfast outside and the group tirelessly evaluated vines until around 2 pm (Figure 2). We then joined the NCSU blackberry field day at Lewis Farms before everyone returned home. This meeting was the start of a hopefully fruitful collaboration between the world's leading muscadine breeding programs and the NCSU Small Fruits Research and Extension Program, which started a muscadine cultivar trail at the very same research station in 2021. Click for [Here](#) Detailed Article

Upcoming Association Conferences

North Carolina Muscadine Grape Association Annual Conference: March 11-12, 2022. Winery tours and workshops Friday, March 11; Conference March 12 at the Southeastern NC Agricultural Events Center, Lumberton, NC. Details and registration coming soon. Contact NCMGA.



Current Membership of the NCWGC

The NC Wine and Grape Council is a state government organization, created by the NC legislature in the mid-1980's, it is charged with increasing the size of the grape and wine industry in NC through marketing and education. The current Council members include:

- 🍇 Ethan Brown – Shelton Vineyards
- 🍇 Mark Friszolowski – Childress Vineyards
- 🍇 Bill Hatcher – Duplin Winery
- 🍇 Amy Helton – Hanover Park Vineyards
- 🍇 Nadia Hetzel - Cypress Bend Vineyards
- 🍇 Diana Jones - Jones von Drehle Vineyards and Winery
- 🍇 David Myrick - Myrick Vineyards
- 🍇 Mark Pickel – Biltmore Estate
- 🍇 Thomas Salley – Wilkesboro Tourism
- 🍇 Ron Taylor – Lu Mil Vineyard

