



# Swig\* Times



## Valley of the Moon Dilettante Enological Society Newsletter November, 2004

President: Michael Cooper, 939-9848

Secretary/Treasurer: Doug Ghiselin, 996-8967

Vice President & Winemaster: Jack Bertram, 938-2310

### Meeting of November 11, 2004

President Cooper called the meeting to order at 7:40 PM. 25+ persons were present. Two new members joined.

### Old Business:

1. Our web site is on line. Go to [www.vom.com/~vomdes/](http://www.vom.com/~vomdes/) and check it out!!
2. President Cooper noted that efforts towards pursuing relationships with other amateur wine clubs were held in abeyance.
3. Discussion regarding our attendance at the Farmer's Market Night on the fourth Tuesday of the month will be tabled until next Spring.
4. President Cooper discussed the Vintage Festival wine judging competition. He noted that entries to the competition were about on par with past competitions but we had very few judges. A better effort is needed next year. President Cooper postponed discussion on this subject to a later meeting.
5. Pres. Cooper reported that our Christmas Party would be held at the Herrick's Barn on Dec 12<sup>th</sup>. Volunteers are needed to assist with preparations. Please call Midge or Frank Herrick at 939-7474.

### New Business:

1. No new business was brought to the floor.

### TREASURER'S REPORT:

Treasurer Ghiselin was absent.

### Guest Speaker:

We had a real good guest speaker. The subject was wine barrels. Mr. Henry Work of Napa Valley was the speaker. It was clear that Henry had a lot of experience around wine barrels and as a winemaker he was able to relate the advantages and pitfalls. Henry has managed a cooperage (one that converted from bourbon barrels to wine barrels), has his own winery in Napa and consults to barrel makers and wineries around the country. His presentation included barrels, a discussion on TCA, recent technology within the industry, and Oak Alternatives. Had lots of interesting statistics, i.e., 1 million bourbon barrels made annually compared to 200,000 wine barrels. Different levels of toasting didn't come about until 1980's. Damn Americans figured out you could effect flavors. Discussed environmental effects on oak compounds and suggesting that it is primarily personal preference, and had a handout outlining them. Asked about the difference between French and American oak, he discussed the cellular difference and that French has to be split while American can be sawn, hence less waste which affects cost. Also different flavors; i.e., vanilla in French, dill and bourbon in American.

He brought with him a new barrel which he took apart on the floor, gave a history of barrels and how they came about and evolved over the initial years but have been essentially the same for hundreds of years since. The major exception the sapling bands being replaced with steel. He allowed inspection of the inside of the barrel and discussed toasting before reassembling. He showed simple tools used, including a drop light for inspecting inside barrel.

He also discussed TCA, which we generally associate with corks (musty, old newspaper smell) as also coming from the barrel. Apparently it can be transferred from other areas of the winery from an operation as simple as topping up. This primarily due to the combination of chlorine + mold + wood which equals TCA. Message! Don't use chlorine around winemaking!

He then discussed oak alternatives and had many samples that he passed around.

All in all a great presentation that was enjoyed by all! Many thanks to Henry, and to Jack for arranging it!

**REMINDER! REMINDER! REMINDER! REMINDER! REMINDER!**

## **HOLIDAY PARTY**

**December 12, 2004**

**HERRICK'S BARN**

**COCKTAILS @ 6:30 DINNER @ 7:30**

**\$50 PER PERSON - GUESTS WELCOME**

**RSVP: DOUG at [ghiselin@vom.com](mailto:ghiselin@vom.com)**

**Send check, payable to VOMDES, to Doug at 300 Moon Mountain Road, Sonoma or pay at the party**

**Be sure to respond promptly to assist those planning the party**