

# Clean Plants, New AVA, Collaborative Support

Posted by steven.reynolds | February 19, 2009

## WSU and the National Clean Plant Network

The Northwest Grape Foundation Service is part of the National Clean Plant Network, a nationwide effort to supply agricultural producers with “clean,” virus-free plant material. Considerable scientific expertise and rigor is needed to thoroughly screen plant material for viruses and to propagate the clean material. The clean material is then released to certified commercial nurseries throughout the Pacific Northwest where it is grown for sale to producers. Considering the prevalence of viruses and the expense of keeping them at bay, the National Clean Plant Network is not only a great investment, it is a necessary one.

The 2008 Farm Bill provided the Clean Plant Network with \$20 million to be apportioned over five years. A significant portion of that funding will go to WSU for the management of Network facilities at the WSU Irrigated Agriculture Research and Extension Center in Prosser. Significant interchange has occurred with USDA-APHIS and other Network participants to assure that policies, staffing and facilities are in full

Just one of two regional services in the United States, WSU’s Northwest Grape Foundation Service grows over 125 varieties and is

compliance with federal guidelines.

The Clean Plant Network at WSU is co-directed by plant pathologist Ken Eastwell, who specializes in plant virus diseases, and horticulturist Markus Keller, an expert in the viticulture of both wine and table grapes.

### The Northwest Grape Foundation Service

Originally established in 1961 by Walter Clore, the grandfather of the state's wine industry, the Northwest Grape Foundation Service propagates and distributes certified virus-free material to wine grape growers of the Pacific Northwest. Just one of two regional services in the United States, WSU's Northwest Grape Foundation Service grows over 125 varieties and is regularly adding more.

Every plant that goes into the block is first indexed or "cleaned" of viruses. After a year in the foundation block, the plants are tested again. If clean, they are then released to nurseries to be propagated for the industry. As for the location of varieties in the foundation block, there's a map, but it's locked in a vault—literally.

"The map's something not to be given to anybody," said Gary Ballard, manager of the foundation block vineyards. It's just another way of insuring the health and longevity of the state's booming wine industry.

## WSU Researcher Helps Establish Newest Washington AVA

Joan Davenport, a soil scientist based at WSU's research and extension center in Prosser, helped research and write the petition that established Snipes Mountain as Washington's tenth federally recognized American Viticultural Area. Establishment of the Snipes Mountain AVA in Yakima County was published in the Federal Register last week and becomes official Feb. 20, according to the *TriCity Herald*.

Davenport assisted Todd Newhouse, owner of Upland Estates Winery, with the petition by conducting

regularly adding more.

Learn more about the Northwest Grape Foundation Service by visiting

<http://nwgfs.wsu.edu/>

Learn more about WSU's effort to fight diseases in the vineyard and educate growers about what they can do to keep their plants healthy by visiting

<http://wine.wsu.edu/virology/>

Snipes Mountain

geological research and providing information about the area's history and more.

Snipes Mountain has had vineyards since 1914, according to Ron Irvine's authoritative *The Wine Project: Washington State's Winemaking History*.

Alan Busacca, a former WSU professor and owner of Vinitas Vineyards Consultants, told Ingrid Stegemoeller of the *Herald* that the new AVA is "a big deal, because as the industry moves forward one of the things we hope to accomplish is to develop some geographic branding."

Several features distinguish eastern Washington, including its location in the rain shadow of the Cascade Mountain range and the effects the Lake Missoula floods had on the soils where many grapes are grown, Busacca told the *Herald*. Busacca has worked on petitions for several other AVAs in Washington.

But on Snipes Mountain and neighboring Harrison Hill, the soils are different. The area is dominated by fist- and melon-sized gravel deposited by the ancient flow of the Columbia River.

"It's a modest-sized hill that sticks up right in the middle of the Yakima Valley," Busacca said. "The climate is different than surrounding lands, and the geology is different."

A petition for the Lake Chelan AVA is pending, the *Herald* reported.

"The proliferation of AVAs really speaks to the growth of the Washington wine industry," Robin Pollard, executive director of the Washington Wine Commission, told the *Herald*. "We put so much emphasis on the climate and the soils of the various regions within the state. It gives us more to talk about when we're describing the wines from Washington."

## Community and Collaborates in Support of WSU V&E

When Seattle's renowned "Chef in the Hat" was approached by Chateau Ste. Michelle Winery about participating in a program to raise funds for WSU's viticulture and enology program he not only agreed, he offered to make his own contribution. Chef Thierry Rautureau, owner of the highly acclaimed

Snipes Mountain is Washington's tenth and newest AVA.

To view the location of Snipes Mountain on a map, please visit:

<http://tinyurl.com/bbzze4>

To learn more about appellations, check out this article by political economist Paul Veseth:

<http://tinyurl.com/cxvfj7>

Rover's Restaurant, says he contributed out of a sense of community.

Last fall, Chateau Ste. Michelle Winery in Woodinville launched a program dedicating a portion of their wines sales to the WSU Viticulture and Enology Program. A total of 123 restaurants joined the effort, raising \$40,000 to fund scholarships, research and equipment.

The program is the brainchild of Ste. Michelle's director of global accounts N.W. region Joe Aschbacher (WSU Class of '87, School of Hospitality). Aschbacher says when he approached Ste. Michelle Wine Estates president and CEO Ted Baseler ('76, Communications) with the idea, "he really sank his teeth into it."

The concept is simple. Ste. Michelle provided marketing materials and information to generate awareness of the WSU program that trains the next generation of grape growers and winemakers and fuels research in support of the industry. The winery offered training and materials for participating restaurants and donated a portion of the sale of each bottle or glass of their wines to the V&E program.

For Rover's owner and chef, Thierry Rautureau, joining the effort was a no-brainer.

"When I heard about it, I felt it was an easy one for us as well," Rautureau says. "They offered me a discount on their premium wine, Col Solare, so I decided to discount it for my customers and donate \$5 a bottle from my proceeds. They gave me a deal, and I simply passed it on. It was a win-win."

When asked about his motivation, the internationally acclaimed chef simply replied, "community."

"I feel very much a part of the wine equation in Washington state," says Rautureau. "It's a circle. Someone in eastern Washington grows the grapes. Someone buys them and makes wine. Someone distributes it, and I sell it. We're all involved in the community."

Top: The "chef in the hat," Thierry Rautureau. Bottom: Joe Aschbacher, Ste. Michelle's director of global accounts N.W. region

For more information on viticulture and enology at WSU, please visit: <http://wine.wsu.edu/>

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