Orangewood Wines

Small Wineries, Great Wines

Volume 5, Issue 2 March 23, 2015

Introduction

The Super Bowl and Phoenix Open are behind us and Spring training is in full swing. The temperature will reach 88 Fahrenheit degrees today. It doesn't get any better.

I did get a lot of positive feedback on the new format for the newsletter. Thank you.

Topic of the Month - Arsenic

Arsenic was in the news this week. A laboratory had been testing a lot of wines for arsenic content and found that some wines had elevated levels - levels above those mandated for drinking water. The lab contacted the wineries in question and were blown off, so they have begun a class action suit. This will rattle around for years, but I thought I could try to give a little background about this before you check the wine you are drinking and call 999. (In the USA this would be 911).

Arsenic has the atomic number 33, which puts it in the fourth row of the periodic table, along with such common elements as potassium (the lightest in this row), iron, zinc and, less common, krypton (the heaviest in the row). As you might expect, it is a metal, but the compound we would normally see is the trioxide version, a white powder. Arsenic is a relatively common element, tons and tons of it are used each year. It used to be the poison of choice for would be murderers. My research suggests that 2 1/2 grains (about a smidgeon) is the lethal dose.

Many things contain arsenic. Common soil has 1 to 10 parts per million. Rain leaches this into the ground water so that, in Cave Creek, the ground water is above the EPA limit of 5 parts per billion. Fortunately the EPA only changed the limit to 5 ppb in 2006. Cave Creek is able to dilute the ground water with Colorado River water that is conveniently pumped across Arizona in the Central Arizona Project canal.

In addition to this leaching from soil to ground water, arsenic has been used as an insecticide to protect wooden fence posts as recently as 2002. This is why organic regimens include review of fence posts close to

In This Issue

New Customers

Bisbee Royale
94 Main Street
Bisbee, AZ 85603
(520) 432-6750

Convenient Corner Market #1
9330 E Poinsettia Drive,
Scottsdale, AZ 85260

Maryland Deli and Liquor
6502 North 7th Street,
Phoenix, AZ 85014
(602) 277-6269

Eddie's House
7042 East Indian School,
Scottsdale AZ 85251
- (480) 946-1622

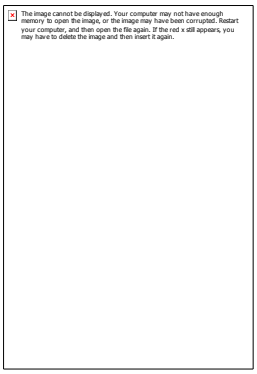
George & Son Asian Cuisine
3049 West Agua Fria Freeway
Phoenix, AZ 85027
(623) 434-1888

Tortoise Shell Café
at Prescott Racquetball Club
1 Kingswood Drive,
Prescott, AZ 86305
(928) 227-0821

crops.

So how does the EPA limit relate to a lethal dose, you might ask? If I did my sums right, a lethal dose would be something over 10,000 litres, or 2,500 gallons, thank you for asking. So, you certainly do not need to worry about drinking water killing you. OK, but what levels are being detected in wine? The numbers I saw ran from 20 to 50 parts per billion, which is 4 to 10 times the EPA limit, implying that only 250 gallons of wine would need to be drunk (I use the word advisably) to reach the lethal dose. Cheers.

Rambling



It seems that our NPR affiliate has settled on the first Saturday of March for their annual wine paired, dinner. Orangewood continues to support them and to get a few of our wineries to join the fun. This year we had 6 wineries represented, which is far too many pictures for me to deal with, so instead, you can get the general feel with a picture of yours truly in a tux, including a black tie left over from my time in the RAF Volunteer Reserve during my college days. The picture comes courtesy of Robert Westerman Photography - more pictures available at the First Press website.

The Rambler rambles on...

Cheers,

Richard (newsletter writer) and Laurie (editor)
Orangewood Wines

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