



REX'S PRACTICAL TIPS #21

Achieving Maturity, and Lessons from Vintage '08

I wrote this down during Dr Daniel Roberts presentation at this year's Syrah workshop. Dr Roberts is one of California's most respected viticulturists, and if you can bring yourself to believe him (and I do!), he'll make you a better grower.

With the exception of sugar, "everything you need to mature the fruit is inside the berry at the point of veraison"

What this really means is two things:
1. You have very little (almost no) ability to influence the composition of the berry after the point of veraison. At that point your fate is sealed, and everything is handed over to the weather gods.

2. It tells you that you have to be on the ball way before veraison. At the point you can see a problem you have conceded defeat. You must anticipate for, and analyse for, nutritional, pest and disease problems well before veraison. If you haven't got these sorted by veraison, no amount of chemical or fluffing about with the canopy is going to sort it for you later. And, remember onerous pre harvest intervals are now kicking in. I'm also adamant that in terms of Botrytis control, the period from flowering to pre-bunch closure is your *only* opportunity to get it right.

There is not one single systemic Botryticide available to you that has the power to penetrate a tight Pinot Noir or Sauvignon blanc bunch and put out the botrytis fire once the bunches are closed.

PMS (Myth or Magic)

The debate still rages about the effectiveness of this product. In my experience it works if used correctly.

I suggest you do three things before you use this product for botrytis control:

1. Get permission from your winemaker or the winery buying the fruit
2. Read these instructions and make sure you understand what you are doing
3. Do number 2 again.

Think of PMS as an aid to drying weather. PMS has no persistence. Its effect is transient, so you need good weather for it's anti fungal / bacterial properties to work

- Only apply PMS in fine clear drying weather that is likely to stay that way for at least 48 hours
- Only apply to the bunch line
- Spray to just wet
- Use carbon filtered respirator or carbon filtered cab tractor as SO₂ is a mucous membrane irritant. Asthmatics and those prone to bronchitis need to exercise great care. Work upwind of the sprayed area.
- Use 1 kg PMS and 500g citric acid per 100 litres of water
- Achieve good coverage of the berries
- Spray immediately after mixing as the spray will not last in the tank

Used this way, PMS has a localized fumigation effect. Botrytis sporulation ceases almost immediately and berries infected with rots dry out. (I have also observed that this treatment checks populations of fruit fly.)

There's no point putting on PMS if it is going to rain in the next 24 hours. It is simply not enough time to dry the bot out.

2008 Delivery

The following varieties are still available for delivery this winter. Popular clones and rootstocks are selling fast so please pick up the phone now.

- Cabernet franc
- Cabernet sauvignon
- Chardonnay
- Flora
- Gewurtztraminer
- Malbec
- Merlot
- Montepulciano
- Petit Verdot
- Pinot gris
- Pinot noir
- Riesling
- Sangiovese
- Sauvignon blanc
- Syrah
- Tannat
- Uzbekistan Muscat
- Viognier

We are happy to hold vines for you if you're waiting on the boss's approval.



MISTY
VALLEY
NURSERY

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