

Cornell Releases Three New Wine Varieties: Noiret, Corot noir and Valvin Muscat

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CORNELL OFFICIALLY DEBUTED three new wine grapes July 10, 2006: Noiret, Corot noir and Valvin Muscat, which are broadly adapted to the wine-growing regions in the East and produce high-quality varietal wines superior to those currently available to eastern growers today, says grape breeder Bruce Reisch, professor of horticultural sciences at Cornell's New York State Agricultural Experiment Station in Geneva, N.Y.

Reisch developed and tested the grapes with Thomas Henick-Kling, professor of enology at the Experiment Station and leader of Cornell's enology program.

The announcement of the release was made at the 31st annual American Society for Enology and Viticulture/Eastern Section Conference and Symposium, held July 9-11 in Rochester, N.Y.

TOP PHOTO - Noiret (pronounced nwahr-ay), a mid-season red wine grape, is a complex interspecific hybrid resulting from a cross made in 1973 between NY65.0467.08 and Steuben. Corot noir, a mid- to late-season red wine grape, is a complex interspecific hybrid resulting from a cross in 1970 between Seyve Villard 18-307 and Steuben.

"Both Noiret and Corot noir represent distinct improvements in the red wine varietal options available to cold-climate grape growers," said Reisch.

"Wines are free of the hybrid aromas typical of many other red hybrid grapes," Henick-Kling added. "Noiret is richly colored and has notes of black pepper, with raspberry and mint aromas and a fine tannin structure. The mouthfeel of Corot noir is round and heavy, and the tannins are big and a bit edgier than in Noiret" he said. Care should be taken to grow Noiret on sites less susceptible to extreme winter temperatures and downy mildew.

CENTER PHOTO - Corot noir can be used for varietal wine production or for blending. The distinctive red wine has a deep red color and attractive berry and cherry fruit aromas, the researchers said.

BOTTOM PHOTO - Valvin Muscat is a mid-season white wine grape with a distinctive muscat flavor and aroma that is desirable for blending as well as for varietal wines. The complex interspecific hybrid grape resulted from a cross in 1962 between Couderc 299-35 (an interspecific hybrid known as Muscat du Moulin) and Muscat Ottonel.

"Valvin Muscat is recommended for the production of high-quality muscat wines," said Reisch. "Vines are well suited to good grape-growing sites in the eastern United States, and should only be grown on suitable rootstocks." Some care should be exercised to control disease, and fruit should be picked when the muscat flavor reaches its peak, he noted.

"Historically, one of the unique strengths of Cornell's wine grape breeding program is the extent to which the breeders and enologists work together to select new grape crosses based on the flavor profile of the wine we are seeking to develop," said Henick-Kling. "All three of these new grapes were extensively



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The National Grape Registry: A New Website Fills an Information Gap

by Ed Stover, Curator and Research Leader, USDA-ARS National Clonal Germplasm Repository, Davis, and Nancy Sweet, Foundation Plant Services

A PROJECT IS UNDERWAY to develop a National Registry for Grape Varieties and Clones (NGR) which will provide user-friendly, single-site access to information on virtually all grape material in the U.S. It is currently difficult to get information on availability and status for many grape varieties. Growers and researchers have expressed strong interest in tracking down distinctive grape varieties or clones and it is expensive and wasteful to re-import varieties that are already in the country. Development of a national grape registry has been identified as one of the highest priorities of the National Grape and Wine Initiative (NGWI) and the National Clean Plant Network (NCPN).

FPS and the National Clonal Germplasm Repository (NCGR) in Davis have received a two-year grant from the Viticulture Consortium to develop this registry. Nancy Sweet has been assigned full-time work on this project; collecting and assembling varietal information, developing the registry framework, and both helping to create and posting information to the NGR website. The initial development effort is expected to require two years.




Nancy Sweet

Dr. Deborah Golino, FPS director, states, "We are extremely fortunate to interest Nancy Sweet in this project. She has the extraordinary combination of skills, knowledge and sheer tenacity necessary to achieve these ambitious goals. In addition to finishing her Master's Degree in Viticulture, Nancy is a lawyer who served as a judge in Sacramento County for 12 years. She is an astonishing force!"

One of the first steps in developing the registry is deciding what information should be included. Facts related to the identity and origin of each grape, with appropriate uses, will help growers track down varieties or clones. There is confusion in naming for many grape varieties, with many synonyms and even sharing of names.

The NGR will contain a complete list of synonyms and naming discrepancies for the varieties available in the United States. Information on disease testing (methods, dates, and cleanup procedures used) and identity verification will fill a much-needed gap in existing databases. Sources for grapes described in the NGR will include the National Plant Germplasm System (Davis, California and Geneva, NY), the FPS collection, the Pacific Northwest Grape Program, other university collections, and any nursery collections wishing to be included.

Several viticultural experts will provide guidance on the database content and structure, but it is critical to get input from the grower community that will be the primary user of the NGR. Discussions with expected users of the NGR have been initiated, but input is both crucial and welcomed. Workshops to obtain client input will occur on a regular basis during development and after the website is up and running. An important element of the new registry is to develop a plan for regular updating to maintain accuracy and completeness.

Nurseries interested in including their data should contact Nancy Sweet at nlsweet@ucdavis.edu. 

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screened and evaluated by the Cornell enology group, in the field by Bruce Reisch, and by cooperators in industry wineries. It is a team effort."

With the new varieties, whose names are trademarked, the Experiment Station now has nine wine grapes to its credit. The previous Cornell releases are: Melody, Horizon, Cayuga White (grown widely throughout New York and beyond), Chardonel (now the No. 2 grape in Missouri), Traminette

(quickly gaining in popularity throughout the East) and GR7 (used in red wine blends).

Vines of the three new grapes are available from licensed commercial nurseries. Contact Reisch, bir1@nysaes.cornell.edu for a list of sources. Commercial nurseries may be licensed by contacting Cornell Research Foundation, 20 Thornwood Drive, Suite 105, Ithaca, NY 14850. Phone: 607-257-1081; fax: 607-257-1015; e-mail des33@cornell.edu. 