

Ten Favorites from Unified

Unified Wine and Grape Symposium Highlights

Curtis Phillips



The mood at this year's **Unified Wine and Grape Symposium** could be best described as cautiously optimistic. The sessions I was able to attend were all filled to capacity while the trade show seemed busy, if not absolutely packed. The attendance was higher than in previous years, but anecdotally, the attendees seemed to be looking rather than buying.

I think the biggest surprise of the show was the announcement that the Italian winemaking and chemical products supplier the **Esseco Group** bought longtime California wine industry stalwart **Vinquiry**. Esseco has been trying to expand its foothold in the U.S. wine industry for a number of years. With the dollar lan-

guishing against the euro, I suppose that U.S. firms are attractive acquisition targets for European corporations. Neither **Lallemand** nor **Vinquiry** had any comment as to any changes in **Vinquiry's** relationship with **Lallemand**, which has long marketed its **Enoferm** yeast line exclusively through **Vinquiry**.

The annual **Unified Wine and Grape Symposium** remains the foremost vineyard and winery trade show in North America. I have been attending "Unified" since before it was, well, unified. For the past several years, I've been picking those products that catch my eye as well as have the greatest potential to change the industry.

1. P&L SPECIALTIES • THE RAKE

I was kind of expecting to include **P&L Specialties'** new automated vineyard lug washer in my list this year right up until I saw "The Rake." As most **WBM** readers should know, **P&L Specialties** has been producing an automated post-destemmer berry sorter called **Le Trieur**. Now familiarly known as the **LT**, the sorter does a good job of getting shot berries and raisins away from the grapes. The **Rake** is meant to work with the **LT**, although it could be used by itself, and gets the lightweight **MOG** (leaves, stems, etc.) away from the fruit. The **Rake** is a simple air-knife that is attached at the point where the **LT** drops the berries to the next conveyor. Compressed air blows the lightweight **MOG** so that it misses the next conveyor. Simple, effective—I like it.



For more information contact: **P&L Specialties**, 888-313-7947, www.pnlspecialties.com.

2. ASTORIA-PACIFIC • THE ASTORIA DISCRETE ANALYZER

Astoria-Pacific International introduced its new **Astoria Discrete** wine analyzer at this year's **Unified**. According to **Astoria-Pacific**, "Astoria Discrete has been developed with the wine lab in mind. **Astoria-Pacific** has designed robust, field-proven methods with intuitive, easy-to-use software while always providing excellent technical and customer support." Be that as it may, it certainly appears that the **Discrete** is intended for larger winery labs.

I've long been an advocate of automating winemaking and wine analysis when it either saves money or improves quality. The **Astoria Discrete** is designed to work either as a stand-alone analyzer or as a complement to the more capable **Astoria** and **Astoria 2** analyzers. The **Astoria Discrete** may be much more analyzer than some wineries need, but I could see it as being an absolute necessity for winery labs confronted with more than a hundred samples per day.

For more information contact: **Astoria Pacific**, 800-536-3111

3. CARLSEN & ASSOCIATES • CARLSEN BASKET PRESS

(now in all stainless steel)

Carlsen & Associates licensed the design from American Basket Press a few years ago. Carlsen continues to improve the design; this year they introduced a number of changes to their original design with the most notable being that they are now making the entire superstructure out of stainless steel. Carlsen noted that the change allowed them to fabricate the entire press in their own facility and it sure makes for a slick looking press.



For more information contact: Carlsen & Associates, 707-431-2000, www.carlsenassociates.com.

4. CANALS PACKAGING • DIGITALLY PRINTED CAPSULES

I heard a fair amount of buzz around the new digitally printed capsules from Canals Packaging. The printing on the polylam samples that were being passed around at the show was incredibly sharp. I overheard more than one winemaker declare that they looked so good they were seriously considering moving to the Canals capsules. Canals is sweetening the deal by making the minimum order just 1,000 capsules.



For more information contact: Canals Packaging, 707-433-4398, www.canalspackaging.com.

5. PHYTERRA & AB MAURI • ANNOUNCING "LOW H₂S" YEAST

As if the entire Esseco/Enartis/Vinquiry announcement wasn't a sufficient indicator that growing yeast is a competitive business, it looks like both Phytterra and AB Mauri are trying to corner the market on low- or no-H₂S yeast strains. Phytterra has already brought a compelling urea-degrading yeast onto the market and it looks like they're trying to solve another fermentation problem by commercializing UCD professor Linda Bisson's research into minimizing H₂S production during fermentation.



At the same time, AB Mauri has teamed up with the AWRI and expanded its Maurivin line to include a "Next Generation" line of yeast strains. According to AB Mauri, the new strains have "distinct variations in the genes encoding the sulfite reductase protein complex." The end result should be a reduction in the amount of H₂S, cysteine and methionine produced during fermentation.

For more information contact: Phytterra, 707-258-8333, www.phytterra.com; or AB Mauri, 415-477-2800, www.maurivinyeast.com.

6. DRYFOG.US • BARREL ROOM HUMIDIFICATION SYSTEM

The tricky thing about barrel rooms is that usually you want to maintain pretty high humidity, say anywhere between 70 and 90 percent, while making sure that there is no standing water anywhere. DryFog.US's solution to this problem is the very clever ES100 Humidification System. According to DryFog.US, the ES100 features the smallest droplet size (4.2 microns) and lowest energy consumption in the market.

For more information contact: DryFog.US, 800-921-5230, www.dryfog.us or www.smartfog.com.

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7. TOM BEARD • GREEN BARREL WASHING SYSTEM

The Unified Symposium was actively pushing "green winemaking" as the theme of the week. The Tom Beard Company's new Green Barrel Washing System was even one of the subjects of the "Green Production Practices" session on Tuesday. The Tom Beard barrel washers can be built with several options that dramatically reduce water consumption and wastewater while getting your barrels clean. Options include: hot water recycling systems, cold water recycling systems and high pressure barrel washing systems.



For more information contact: Tom Beard Company, 800-386-6232, www.tombeard.com.

8. AWS/PROSPERO • SK STACKABLE TANKS

The AWS/Prospero line of tanks and fermentors from the Slovenian SK group (Škrlič d.o.o.) continues to expand, giving the AWS/PEC booth a lot of eye-appeal to those of us that like shiny stainless steel. I particularly like the way SK's stackable fermentors/VC-tanks are designed to fit with each other and the SK pidgeage rig that Prospero was showing off. If I were making more Pinot Noir than the little drop I currently do, I'd be sorely tempted by this stuff.



For more information contact: Associated Winery Systems, 707-838-2812; or Prospero Equipment Corp., 914-769-6252; shared AWS/PEC website: www.wineryequipment.com.

9. AGRICULTURAL ELECTRONICS • CLUSTER WATER-CONTENT SENSOR

I'm including the Agricultural Electronics Cluster Water-Content Sensor out of a sheer sense of "gee-whiz." The sensor automatically measures water content inside the cluster and the berry from post-set to harvest. Water-content sensors are implanted inside the peduncle of the cluster and inside the berry. Irrigation decisions are based on keeping these water content levels within a desired range. Time-to-harvest decisions can be based on a numerical scale of berry water content at harvest.

The sensors are wired to a solar-powered unit, called a POD, and transmitted via cellular phone back to AEC if used with AEC's monitoring service or to a server with a computer modem if the equipment is purchased outright. Other communication options include landline to relay or server, line-of-sight radio communications or direct serial data connection to a laptop using a RS232 port.

For more information contact: Agricultural Electronics Corporation, 520-624-7656, www.phytogram.com.



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