

Blending Wine

Why, When, How

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**Who was this blind, French, Benedictine monk ?
For what discovery is he famous ?**



Blending

**It has been said that there are only two times that a wine
maker makes wine**

. . . Once when fermenting the grapes

. . . And again when the blending the wine

Blending Why?

“The art of blending, to me, is to take individual pieces and make the sum of what you’re blending better than those individual pieces you started out with,”

**Mike Macmorrان,
winemaker, Mark Ryan Winery.**

Blending

Why ?

There must be a purpose

- Create complexity
 - enhancing –
 - aromas
 - color
 - texture
 - body
 - finish
- Develop balance

Blending

Why?

- **Develop balance**
 - Reducing over oaked wine
 - Moderating acid, pH
 - Adding high alcohol wine to create a Port-style wine
- **Blending different vintages to create consistency**

Blending

Why?

- **Field Blending** – convenient blending of varietals at fermentation
 - is rarely done, except in Port, Côte Rôtie*
- **Consider not blending Pinot Noir with other varietals**
- **Never blend to correct a flaw –
you'll only make more flawed wine**

[*effect of viognier additions](#)

Blending

Varietal vs. Blend?

- **Varietal: expression of a single variety of grape**
 - **US: Varietal wine needs to be at least 75% of the varietal**
 - **Europe: at least 80% of the varietal**
 - **Argentine: at least 85% of the varietal**
- **Blend, using wines fermented separately**
 - **Typically 40 – 50% of one varietal and 2 to 4 other varietals**

Blending

Common French Blends

Bordeaux

Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Cabernet Franc, Petite Verdot, Malbec (rare), Carménère (rarely)

Chateauneuf-du-Pape

Grenache, Syrah, Mourvedre, Cinsault, Counoise, Muscardin, Terret Noir, Vaccarese, Bourboulaine, Clairette Blanche, Grenache, Blanc, Piquipoul Blanc, Roussane

Champagne

Chardonnay, Pinot Noir, Pinot Meunier

Blending

When ?

Assuming 2-year barrel maturation

- **Six months post fermentation is complete**
Advantage: better integration of the flavors for aging
- **12 to 14 months post fermentation**
Advantage: better understanding of flavors, textures
- **Month before bottling**
Advantage: balancing oak and tannins

Blending

How ?

- Start with the end in mind in advance of vintage
- Study wine blends and understand why you enjoy these
- Understand the varietals
- Order the appropriate grape varietals
- Order sufficient quantities
- Decide when you want to blend
- Have the proper tools

Blending

How ?

Tools for blending:

- 100 ml graduated cylinder
- Lots and lots of glasses
- A calculator
- A plan

Blending

The Plan

Starting with the end in mind, what are your goals?

- Decide which varietal will be the
 - Primary – dominant
 - Secondary
 - Tertiary
 - Quaternary – nuance
 - Etc . . .

Blending

The Plan

- Always blend on a trial basis
- Always be able to duplicate your blend
- Keep good notes
- Use a 100 ml graduated cylinder to create percentages
100 ml = 100%
- Make sure you are using representative samples
 - Blend the wine in a vessel (carboy, barrel, keg)
- Don't hurry the process
- Taste the blend after an hour or more

Blends to Consider

- Cabernet Sauvignon and Merlot
- Cabernet Sauvignon and Syrah
- CSM: Cabernet Sauvignon, Syrah, Merlot
- Blending Cabernet Sauvignon from different vineyards

Blends to Consider

Chandler Reach Cab Sauv	50%
Corvus Petite Verdot	25%
Corvus Mourvedre	25%

Chandler Reach Cab Franc	65%
Corvus Cabernet Sauvignon	25%
Corvus Petite Verdot	10%

Chandler Reach Cab Sauv	50%
Chandler Reach Cab Franc	25%
Corvus Petite Verdot	25%

Corvus Mourvedre	80%
Stillwater/Morrison Syrah	15%
Chandler Reach Cab Sauv	5%

Corvus Cabernet Sauvignon	50%
Stillwater Syrah	20%
Corvus Petite Verdot	10%
Corvus Mourvedre	10%
Chandler Reach Sangiovese	10%

Stillwater Syrah	75%
Corvus, Cabernet Sauvignon	25%

Blending Trial

Blending Sample

Cab Sauv, Merlot, Petite Syrah

1. **51% Kiona Petit Syrah, 47% RMV Merlot, 2% CRV Cab**
2. **50% Kiona Petit Syrah, 43% CRV Cab, 7% RMV Merlot**
3. **93% RMV Merlot, 4% CRV Cab, 3% Kiona Petit Syrah**
4. **55% RMV Merlot, 43% CRV Cab, 2% Kiona Petit Syrah**
5. **84% CRV Cab, 13% RMV Merlot, 3% Kiona Petit Syrah**

2
50% Kiona PS
43% CRV Cab
7% RMV Merlot

3
93% RMV Merlot
4% CRV Cab
3% Kiona PS

4
55% RMV Merlot
43% CRV Cab
2% Kiona PS

1
51% Kiona PS
47% RMV Merlot
2% CRV Cab

5
84% CRV Cab
13% RMV Merlot
3% Kiona PS

Blending a CSM

Blending 3 wines

- Cabernet Sauvignon
- Syrah
- Merlot

Blending a CSM

Blending 3 wines

- Which will be the primary ?
- Which will be secondary ?
- Tertiary ?

Taste and decide

Blending a CSM

One approach, make the following blends
Between the primary and secondary wine

- 90 : 10
- 80 : 20
- 70 : 30
- 60 : 40

Assess which one you prefer and fine tune

Blending a CSM

Another approach if you don't know which will be primary

- 100 % Cab
- 75 : 25 Cab, Syrah
- 50 : 50 Cab, Syrah
- 25 : 75 Cab, Syrah
- 100 % Syrah

Assess which one you prefer and fine tune

Blending a CSM

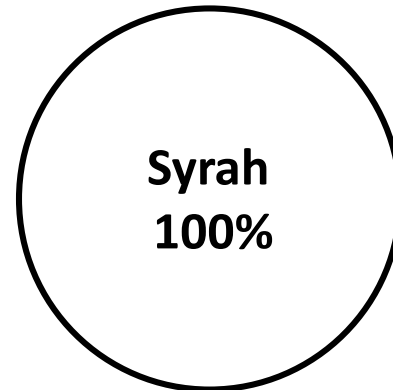
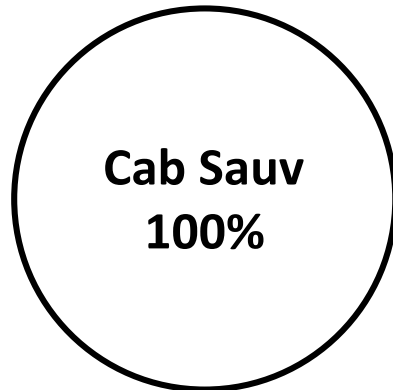
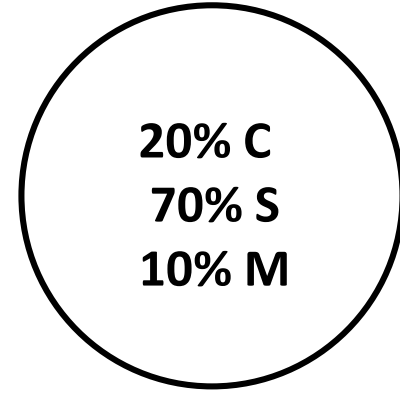
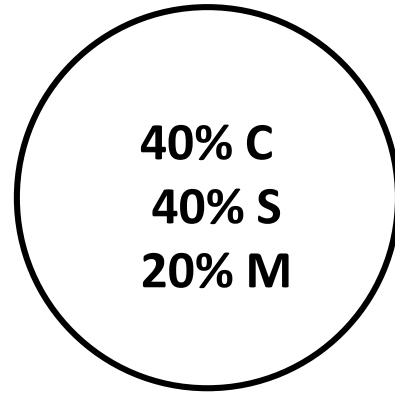
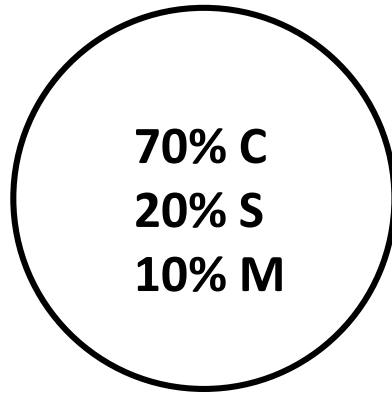
Add to that blend the tertiary wine

- 2.5%
- 5%
- 10%
- 20%

Assess which one you prefer and fine tune

Repeat

Blending a CSM



Impact of Small Percentages

