The Fruit Wine Industry
Production, Marketing & Promotion

Dominic Rivard
WinePlanet Consulting
Why Bother With Fruit Wines?

Fruit Wines have been made since the beginning of time.

Recently making a comeback, it’s high-growth sector, get on the bandwagon!

Raw materials are available year-round, either fresh, frozen in pulp or concentrate.

Lower cost of production, quicker to make, greater equipment use, tank space efficiency and higher potential profit margins with fruit wine.

You can access a potentially greater market reach if done right.

It’s a fun industry to be in. In the “feel good” business.
MAKING FRUIT WINES
Producing Fruit Wines
1st Step - Staring a Fruit Winery

Ask yourself these questions:

- Do you actually like drinking fruit wine??
- Do you have the right aptitude and skills?
- Do you have enough money to get going and stay going?
- Do you have a high “risk” threshold?

Educate yourself and visit as many wineries and taste as much fruit wine as you can. Ask questions!
Producing Fruit Wines
The Building Needed

What to consider in planning – obvious but often overlooked!

- Plan it big enough! You need to make wine, be able to clean up, store wine and sell wine.
- Have high ceilings! - cheaper to go up than go wide.
- Have drainage – lots of cleaning involved!
- Have the right electricity! You need at least 3ph power and 200amp service.
- Plan a “loading dock” and enough well insulated storage.
Winery Buildings
Producing Fruit Wines
The Equipment Needed

Lots of equipment needed, always more to get…

• Fruit Handling: bins, crates, conveyor, paddles, pails, etc

• Fruit Moving: tractors, forklift, pallet jacks

• Crushers: double rollers, pulverisers, destemmers...

• Press: basket, bladder, membrane, screw-press
Producing Fruit Wines
The Equipment Needed

• Pumps: impellors, centrifugal, piston, lobe, elliptical…
• Tanks: totes, plastic, stainless, cement, variable capacity?
• Filters: DE, plate, cartridge, cross-flow
• Bottling: wash, fill, cork/ROPP, shrink/spin, label, case
• Cleaning/Sanitizing: hose, hot water, steam generator, power-washer, ozone generator
• Cooling facility: air conditioning, reefer, glycol chillers
Basic Winery Equipment
Producing Fruit Wines

Laboratory Equipment Needed

Learning how to do basic lab tests and QC is important. You will need the following basic lab equipment. Budget $3-5K for it:

- Quality hydrometers and refractometer
- pH meter – for testing acid. With auto temp compensation.
- FSO2 and TSO2 testing glass assembly
- Vacuum pump used in SO2 testing
- Alcohol still for alcohol testing, or an Ebulometer
- Malolactic testing assembly, VA testing assembly
- Lots of beakers, test-tubes, pipettes, etc
Laboratory Equipment
Producing Fruit Wines
The Money Needed

All dependent on size you want to start with, where you are, building type, sell retail or wholesale, etc.

- 500-2000cs/y = $100,000 + building
- 2000-5000cs/y = $200,000 + building
- 5000-10,000cs/y = $300,000 + building

Why less than grape wineries? You need <1/3-1/2 the tank space and can do with smaller size/speed equipment.

You can produce at up to 3 production cycles a instead of just one as with grape wineries.
Producing Fruit Wines

General Production Types

The General Styles – determines your main target market and price point.

• Grape base + fruit extract – “Arbor Mist Style”
• Grape base + juice – RTD, “Wild Vine Style”
• Fruit Juice or Concentrate – “standard” fruit wine
• Whole Fruit – Premium, more “serious” fruit wine (and tastes better too!)
General Fruit Wine Types
Fruit wine is VERY versatile. Can make many types of wines for almost any application.

- Low alcohol “cider style” (2-7% alcohol)
- Dry or “off-dry” fruit wine (8.5-13.5% alcohol)
- Sweet Fruit wine (usually done with berry wines)
- Cryo-extracted fruit wines – premium, export
- Fortified or “Port-style” fruit wines (up to 24% alc.)
- Sparkling Fruit wine – CO2 injected, Charmat or Champenoise style
Low Alcohol Style

- 2-7% alcohol
- Usually made with an apple base and blended with fruit.
- High dilution ratio
- Geared for the larger volume
- Lower price due to lower taxes
- VERY popular now in Europe
Off-Dry Style

• Usually between 8.5-13.5% alcohol
• Under 30g/L RS
• Has the highest appeal for the casual wine drinker.
• Should be made “food friendly”
• Having a good balance is key. A little less forgiving if the balance is wrong (acid, flavor concentration, sugar)
Sweet Fruit Wine

- Well suited for higher acid fruit such as raspberry or currants
- Easier to balance the wine, more leeway
- Less dilution, more intensity can be achieved.
- Aim for an RS of higher than 40g/L
- TA levels of higher than 7-8g/L
- Can be “cloying” if not done right.
Cryo-Extracted Style

• Geared for the premium and export markets.
• Made my freezing juice and freeze fractioning it off. Start at about 36˚B
• Gaining in popularity very fast
• High intrinsic value – good profit
• Aim for an RS of >140g/L and TA of 9g/L depending on fruit.
• Should use tree fruits for this or blend berry wine with tree fruit base.
Fortified Style

- Depending on state laws, can be fortified to 24% alcohol.
- RS levels of >80g/L
- Excellent for raspberry, blackberry or currants (Cassis).
- To pair with desserts, chocolates
- Use high acid fruit, no dilution needed as alcohol dilutes it.
- Can ferment a few % then fortify for port
- Age in neutral oak for higher complexity.
- Just add alcohol to juice for Liqueur style, usually sweeter.
Sparkling Style

• Can be made by CO2 injection, Charmat or Traditional
• Can easily be made dry to sweet with the same wine base.
• Made “frizzante” or “Sparkling”
• Sold to weddings, celebrations, summer
• Champagne corks or caps.
Fruit Selection – whole fruit

**Best Fruit makes the Best Wines**

- High sugar, low acid – easier and cheaper to adjust (esp. berries)

- “B” grade is often the slightly “over ripe” fruit and is cheaper than the “A” grade. Use that.

- As little mold or bruise as possible. Uses less SO2 initially.

- Have base wines on hand (from apple or rhubarb) to blend to help with balance.

- Make it from fruit that people know about! Cheaper to promote and sells better.
Grape and Fruit winemaking is similar except with some variations based on the fruit used.

- Field to freezer or winery (cleaning of fruit?, juicing and then freezing? Process right away? From frozen is better!

- Crushing – press right away, cold soak, ferment on pulp? Be careful of seeds!

- Pressing – when? Separate free run or use all of the pressing?

- Fermentation – carbonic maceration? Temp to ferment? Punch cap/ when? Stop early or ferment dry? How?
Winemaking Procedures

More General Procedures

- Pumping or gravity feed?
- Racking, Fining, Filtration
- Stability treatments, Final adjustments and blending
- Bottling and storing – release right away or cellar age?
The following inputs need to be considered in making quality fruit wine:

- **Enzymes**: PEC5L, HC, EX, Fructozym, BG
- **SO2, Sorbate**: only if very sweet – big IF
- **Sugar**: (also called granular sunshine)
- **Nutrients**: DAP, Fermaid, Boosters, Go-Ferm, YAN levels are important!
- **Acids or acid reducers**: (malic, citric, chalk, Pot. Carbonate)
- **Yeast**: 71B, R2 for cryo/sweet, EC1118 for cider/apple
MARKETING AND SALES
Wine Marketing 101

Fundamentals to always have in mind:

- Brand and reputation is everything!

- You don’t make wine just for yourself – have the customer’s pallet and wishes in mind.

- Do market research. Know your market target prices, know your customers.

- Know what other wineries are doing and learn from them.

- Be different, have a “gimmick” or a “niche”

- Look professional – have a professional package to present

- Sell, sell and again, sell!
What is Your Winery Identity (gimmick)?
Getting Known

Having a great location obviously helps. But to expand past winery store sales, you have to work at getting known. How?

- Trade Shows – do yourself or through agents/reps.
- Packaging – sell your 1st bottle, the wine sells the 2nd
- Competitions – win awards and tell everyone about it!
- Technology – websites, FB, Twitter, etc.
- Events – sponsorships, music, cook-offs
- Generic marketing with other local wineries, tourist agencies
- Pounding the pavement – usually the most effective!
Nice Package – Bad Package
Where to sell this stuff?

You can make the best wine in the world but unless you can sell it. You will not be making wine for long.

- Local – farmer’s market, local exposure only, often not enough
- State – Liquor boards, low margins, better exposure
- National – multi-state distributors, need a “big” brand
- Export – know what wines will sell – focus either on low end or premium.
- Alternative Markets - Kosher, Organic, Health = niche!
What's Next in the Industry?

Wines made with fruit are gaining wider acceptance in a more sophisticated, higher educated and more open minded and adventurous market. That is good news for fruit winemakers!

Some of the trends:

- Local first, 100-mile diet, all natural, low carbon footprint shoppers
- Hard Ciders – huge growth, over 25% last year in the USA
- Fruit Ciders – taking over the RTD market – better quality perception
- Ice Fruit Wines – on the Asian export markets
- Quality Grape/Fruit Blends – M&S doing a UK push
Trendy Wines
Let's drink more fruit wines!

Dominic Rivard
dominic@wineplanet.ca