



Lets look at NOB wines from multiple sales perspectives

As a Retailer

- Small bottle shop on Orcas Island
- Unique, seasonal setting
- Tourist vs local tastes

As a Sommelier

- Former wine director and sommelier
- Seattle, Vail, Las Vegas, Spain
- Classically trained

As a Negotiant

- The Orcas Project
- Modeled on “Long Shadows” + Mezcaleros
- 50-100 cases, seven winemakers



How do NOB wines fit into these different roles within the industry?

Retail

- Flourishing in small bottle shops
- Northwest is an incubator
- The demand is real

Restaurant

- The original gateway drug
- Movements are built here
- Farm to table & Chef driven concepts

Distribution

- Proliferation of “Natural” focused niche operations
- Mid-size attempts to diversify
- Changing habits with wine buyers and gatekeepers



How do we choose which wines to put on our retail shelves?

Can I sell it?

- Will my customers buy it?
- The experience factor. How do we know?
- Does it have a story?

The Price

- QPR = Quality to price ratio
- How does it stack up to other wines?
- Tasting blind. Do we like it?

The Packaging

- The label (Retail vs Restaurant)
- Does the look match the brand?
- Will people pick it up? More psychology involved



How does my business reconcile selling both conventional & NOB wines?

Diversity

- We want to have a diverse selection
- Our relationships
- Do we believe you?

Something for everyone

- There are many types of wine drinkers out there
- What exactly is natural?
- Grey area

Classic vs New wave

- Paying respect to those who came before
- There are lots of upstarts
- Respect



How do we respond to questions about winemaking from consumers?

Education

- One of the most important things we can do
- Organic, Biodynamic and Natural
- Encourage tasting. Look at history

Misinformation

- What are people learning?
- How do we get information in 2020?
- Us vs. Them

Subjectivity

- Consumers should drink what they like
- No judgement
- I'm constantly surprised by wine lists



What percentage of my customers are requesting these wines?

Then

- In the late 1990's early 2000's there was little demand
- "Flawed" wines were sent back
- Nicolas Joly and Stanislao Radikon were cult stars

Now

- I'm impressed with demand (remember my location..)
- It's "cool" (magazines, chefs, Instagram, Noma)
- Fueled by the younger generation

The Future

- Your guess is as good as mine
- Experimentation reminds me of craft brewing
- The issue of brand loyalty



What are the differences between Domestic vs. European NOB wines?

History

- History of natural wines in Europe
- The Jura, Slovenia, Rudolf Steiner
- History in the US is relatively new

Pricing

- Domestic producers could adjust pricing?
- No oak, no aging, field blends, etc
- Domestic producers still trying to capture \$\$

Trends

- They start in Europe and spread
- Oregon has embraced NBO wines
- What's coming next?



What does the future of NOB wines look like?

Category is growing

- No longer fringe
- Younger generation is on board
- Lots of investment

PNW vs The World

- Unlike O/B everyone can play the N game
- You don't need the same access to capital
- Start by looking across the pond

Staying power

- Younger generation will continue to purchase
- Taste preferences will evolve
- Identification with this movement is strong



The Good!

Exciting & Interesting

- A (small) movement of interested people
- This energy is good for the wine world
- There are some fascinating personalities

Diversity of grapes/regions/styles

- I sell cases of skin contact grillo!
- Lots of love shining on smaller regions
- Professionals are excited to sell new wines

A platform for the people

- It can be inclusive for the novice
- Rebellion against sommeliers and aristocracy
- Embraces freedom of expression



The maybe, perhaps not so good

Things can get dogmatic

- A new type of elitism
- Give me natural or give me death
- Can we read all natural lists?

Misinformation & Confusion

- There is a lot of it
- This is a challenging subject (even for professionals)
- If it's not natural it's not good

Variable levels of quality

- Kombucha, cider, funky beer
- "I want something weird"
- Tastes can be polarizing



What would I do?

Bottom Line

- Does it make you money?
- What is your brand?
- What are your goals?

Your customer base

- Who pays your bills?
- Find out what they want
- Prepare for the future

Experimentation

- Always fun
- Can be hard to toe line between conventional & NOB
- Set yourself up for success