

# Acid Management in White Winemaking from a Practical Winery Perspective

Javier Alfonso  
Pomum Cellars / Idilico Wines

# About Me

---

Owner and Winemaker for Pomum Cellars and Idilico wines in Woodinville

First Commercial Vintage in 2004

Originally from the Ribera del Duero of Spain

We make whites under two labels including Riesling, Sauvignon Blanc, Chardonnay and Albariño



# When I Started Making wine I was Told

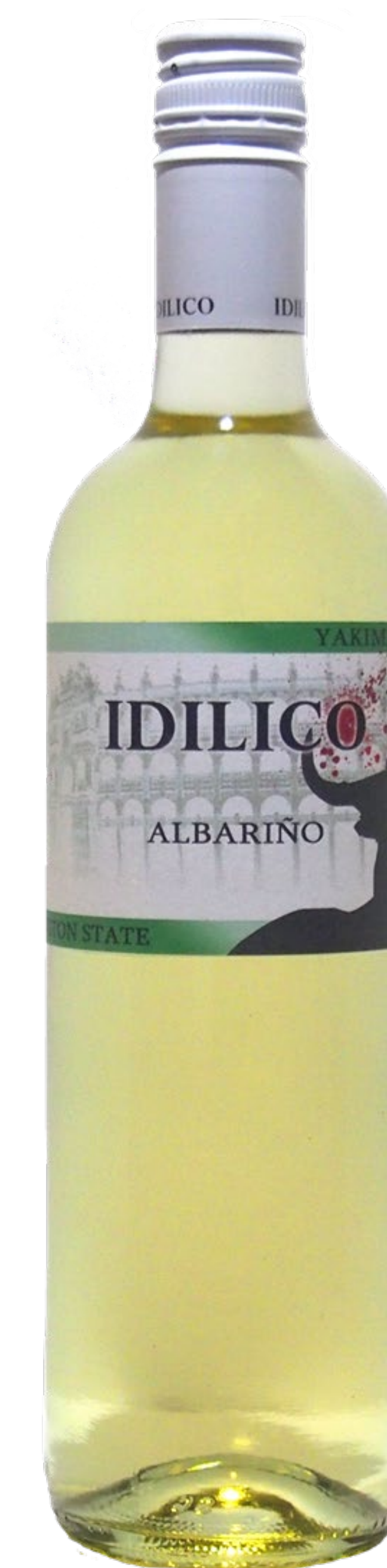
- You can determine acidity by measuring two numbers. Titratable acidity and PH.  
Titratable acidity is a direct measurement of acid in wine and accounts for malic acid.  
PH is a measurement of the inverse logarithmic concentration of hydrogen ions in solution.
- As grapes ripen on the vine acidity drops and sugar content increases.
- For whites you need to “cold settle” juice to clarify it. This may precipitate some tartaric acid.
- Primary fermentation may affect acidity.
- Malolactic or secondary fermentation replaces malic for less harsh lactic acid and also affects acidity
- Whites must undergo cold stabilization to avoid crystals in the bottle. Thus precipitating even more Tartaric acid

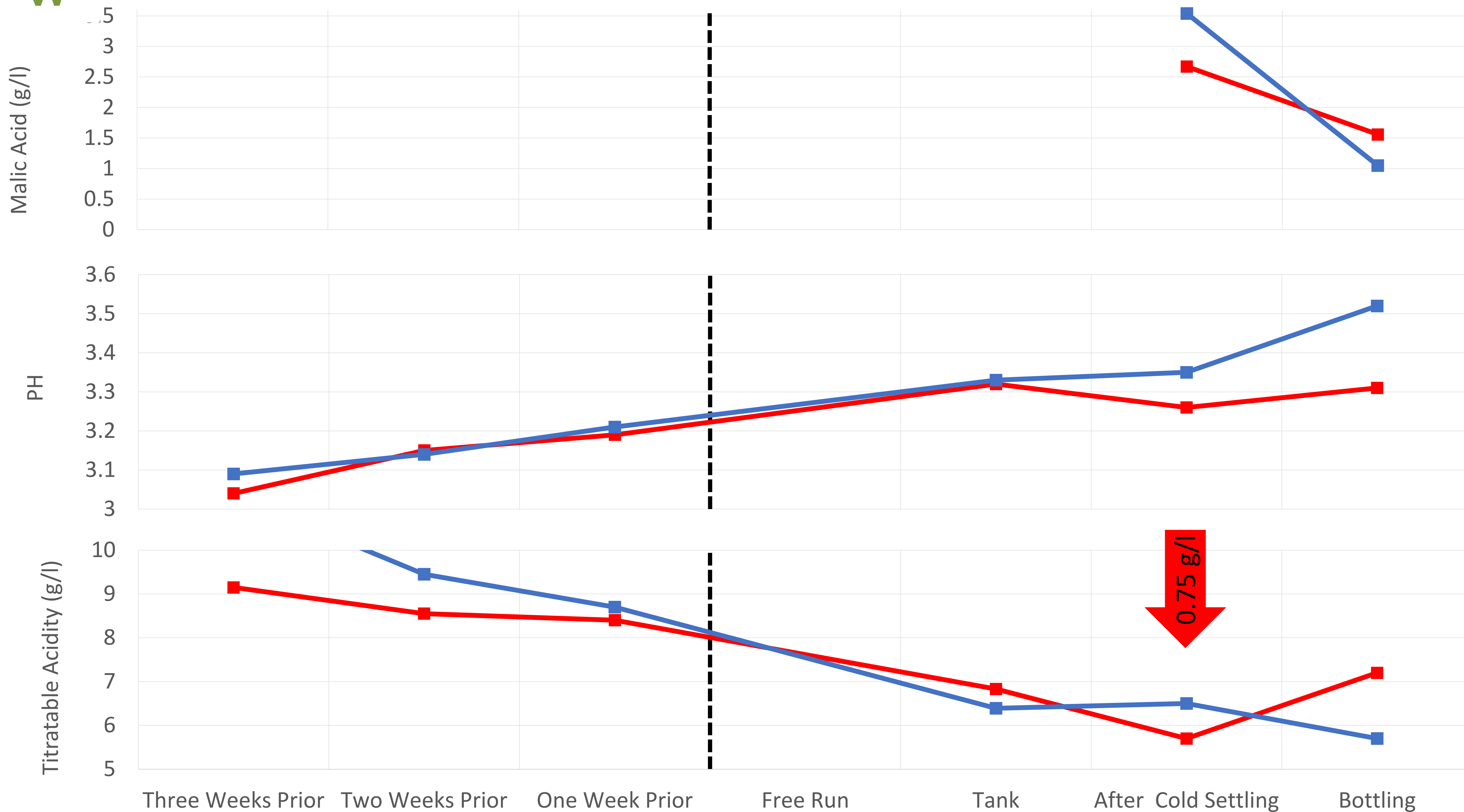


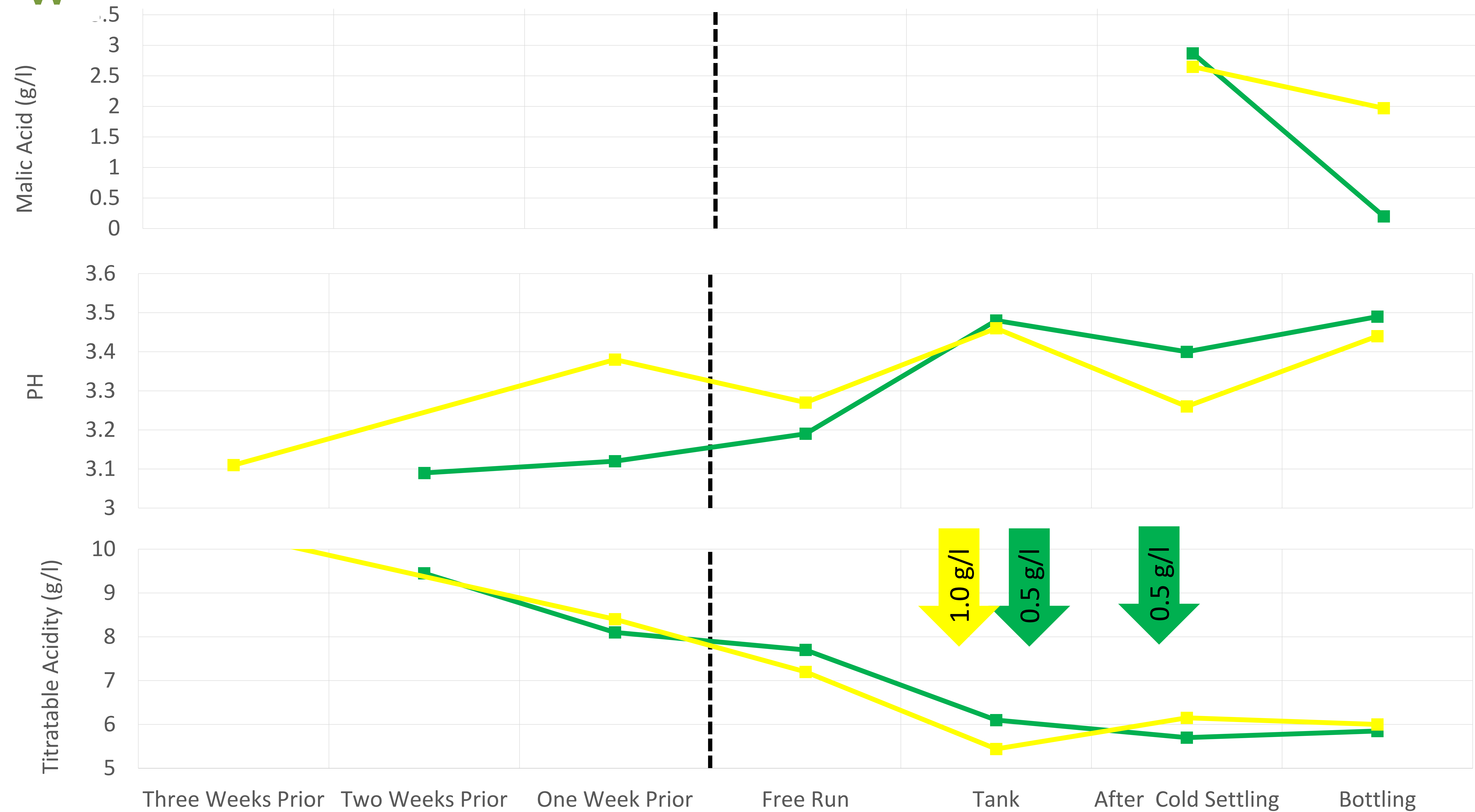
# Let's Look at Data for one of our White Wines

## We've collected acidity data for our Idilico Albarino

- Single vineyard wine from Dutchmen Vineyard near Prosser in the Yakima Valley AVA.
  - Planted in 2006-07. First vintage in 2009
    - Own rooted and trained to VSP
      - Crop target of 5 tons/acre
  - Fermented in Stainless Steel tanks no oak contact.
- Standard white winemaking practices of pre-fermentation cold settling, heat and cold stabilization and filtering.
  - Malolactic fermentation is discouraged.









# Some Observations

- Be aware, acidity tends to drop.
  - Skin contact
  - Cold settling
  - Primary Fermentation
  - Malolactic Fermentation
  - Cold stabilization
- Difficult to predict final acidity values but you can broadly guide the outcome
- Preemptive action is probably better than reactionary corrections
- Data is important. Collect as much as you can during the busy harvest season





# What Have We Learned?

- It is likely that acidity is the primary factor for choosing a picking date for white wines
- Acidity is very important as it greatly affects the stability and the taste/mouthfeel of white wine
- Managing acidity is not trivial due to measurement accuracy and unpredictable behavior throughout the process
- Yes. Both Titratable Acidity and PH are essential to managing acidity in white winemaking
  - TA gives you guidance on the appropriate acid management procedures
  - PH will determine the ultimate stability of the wine
- Knowing the malic acid content is also very helpful
  - High amounts of Malic acid indicate a high potential of TA drop and subsequent PH rise
  - Preserving Malic Acid may be desirable for most crisp whites





# Conclusions

- Know what wine are you trying to make and understand how your actions affect that goal.
  - Know your site and the fruit coming from it
  - Experience matters
- You still need to balance acidity and other ripening parameters

# Thank You

# Questions?

## Contact Info

 Pomum Cellars, Woodinville

 [info@pomumcellars.com](mailto:info@pomumcellars.com)

 (206) 362-9203

