

WINE BUSINESS MONTHLY

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WBM/SVB Tasting Room Survey:

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Customer Relationship Management

Checklists: Preparing the Crush Pad
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Closure Survey Results, Trials and News

The Long, Hard Truth About Producing Spirits

Ashley Herzberg, winemaker, Amista Vineyards, Dry Creek Valley, California

“Wine Business Monthly is truly a publication for winemakers. I love that the information and research are detailed and thorough. I know I can trust the product reviews. It is always the first place I turn to when making any product changes. My favorite section is usually the Winemaker Trials. I have learned so much from these. One of my favorite trials to read about (and then follow up with tasting at the IQ seminar last year) was that of Sauvignon Blanc with two different colors of shade cloth or no shade cloth over it and how that affected grape ripeness and sunburn. In Dry Creek Valley, we can have problems with sunburn also, and I found the results very interesting.”

We are currently in the middle of a replant of some of our vineyards. *Wine Business Monthly* has been invaluable in this process. A 2006 article by Mark Greenspan on drought-tolerant versus drought-avoidant rootstock was my starting place for rootstock research. The information in this article and many other drought-specific and water-saving articles, especially in the last few years, helped me to decide which rootstocks and clones to use based on our own site. A more recent article from last year about making a weak vineyard stronger, through irrigation practices, has informed the way in which I intend to farm our new blocks. Greenspan’s article from September on pruning practices also made me think about how best to prune my existing vineyards.”

NAME AND TITLE: Ashley Herzberg, winemaker

WINERY NAME AND LOCATION: Amista Vineyards, Dry Creek Valley, Sonoma County, California. Amista Vineyards specializes in crafting estate-grown sparkling wines, using the traditional Methode Champenoise. Our sparkling wines are complemented by Chardonnay, Syrah and other Rhône varietals grown on our estate, plus Dry Creek Valley Zinfandel and Rockpile Cabernet. We have the perfect wine for celebrating all of life’s special moments.

ANNUAL TONNAGE PRODUCTION: About 55 tons per year

PLANTED ACRES: 22

CAREER BACKGROUND: I studied chemical engineering at the University of Nevada, Reno with the intention to go to medical school. I took a break, after my bachelor’s degree, to come to Sonoma County to work a harvest

and knew instantly that this was the career and place for me. I started my career at Owl Ridge Wine Services in the lab and from there went to Mauritson as assistant winemaker. I started consulting about six years ago, and I love it.

WHAT HAS BEEN YOUR BIGGEST PROFESSIONAL CHALLENGE? My biggest challenge is finding the balance between having so much technology and information at our fingertips and also finding restraint to let the wines and vineyards speak for themselves and to keep the artistry of winemaking the focus of all my wines. It has also been knowing when to let go of an outdated process or method, as our climate and growing conditions change, in favor of a better or more environmentally sound way.

VARIETALS THAT YOUR WINERY IS KNOWN FOR: We focus on sparkling wines and Rhône varietals from our estate property: Sparkling Grenache and Sparkling Syrah are two of our most unique wines.