

GRAB BAG

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UNCORKED RAMBLINGS

Which type of wine drinker are you?

By STEVE SINKLER
FOR EO MEDIA GROUP

Wine drinkers come in every shape and size. They also come with every type of opinion and knowledge level as well.

I have now survived five summers as owner of The Wine Shack and have come to the conclusion that wine drinkers come in a couple of categories. My guess is that you'll find yourself in here somewhere.

"I'm not a wine aficionado."

The most honest wine drinkers are also the newest to the world of wine. People in this group are just starting out, don't know much and are usually willing to talk about what they like, what they're looking for and — gasp! — try something new. I enjoy working with this type of wine drinker, and I typically steer them to an affordable, yet easy drinking bottle of wine.

"Where are your sweet wines?"

This group is also a beginner's group: They have started drinking wine but still find red wines to be too big, too tannic or too dry for their taste buds. Dessert wines, sweet rieslings and moscatos are this wine drinker's safe zone. In the future, I'll get them to pick up a bottle of pinot gris or off-dry riesling, but for now, bring on the sugar.

"I drink anything but ..."

The exclusionary wine drinkers are an interesting group. These wine drinkers have had a bad experience

with a bottle (or two) and have written off that grape entirely. These wine drinkers usually finish the "anything but" sentence with either "chardonnay" or "merlot."

Chardonnay typically makes this list because the customer has tried a cheap California chardonnay that tastes like a buttery piece of lumber. I can't say I blame them. These bulk-manufactured wines don't help the cause of the world's best-selling wine.

Merlot, a delicious, soft red wine, makes the list for a completely different reason. In the 2004 movie "Sideways," one of the main characters announces his total dislike and refusal to drink merlot. This single movie scene sent merlot sales into a nosedive. Fortunately for those of us in Oregon, the same movie praised pinot noir and has resulted in a surge in sales over the past 10 years. It's not easy to combat the "Sideways" effect, so I usually steer the customer to a red blend (which may be mostly merlot). Don't tell them.

"I only drink ..."

Another type of exclusionary wine drinker, the "I only drink" group is a bit peculiar. The sentence usually ends with "red wine," but it could also end with "cabernet sauvignon." Very rarely does the sentence end with "white wine." The people in this group are trapped in a small box, yet tend to wear their statement as a status symbol, as if one wine is more prestigious than another.

I often wonder if this wine drinker is similar to the brilliant scientist who wears the same style of clothing every

day, so he or she can spend more time thinking about important things. Or, does this person eat the same food every day, as in "I only eat pork chops"? A bit strange.

Typically, when a customer proudly exclaims they only drink red wine, I'll ask them what they have when it's 85 degrees outside. Of course, they say "red wine" and give me the "what part of 'I only drink red wine' don't you understand?" look. Oh well, I don't try to change this group, but I will talk to them about trying a lighter red wine, such as gamay, grenache or pinot noir during summer.

"I never spend more than \$20 for a bottle of wine."

I love the frugal wine drinker and consider myself a member of this group. This wine drinker will go through my store in search of the best bang for the buck. They aren't usually looking for a specific wine, just a great wine at a great price. We're happy to oblige and have a great selection for the frugal wine drinker to choose from. I'll show them our "two for \$20" wines and the wines that are second labels from top producers, both incredible bargains.

"I'll try whatever you're pouring."

These are my favorite wine drinkers! This group is ready and willing to try something new. We usually have a bottle (or three) of Puffin wine open for tasting, and many customers have never tried them before. It's fun when a customer is willing to try them all. It gives us a chance to



talk about Cannon Beach, The Wine Shack, Puffin wines and the specific wine they are enjoying. The customer may have come in looking for a sauvignon blanc or red blend, but after the tasting, they may be leaving with a bottle of Puffin pinot gris or cabernet sauvignon.

This group is flexible and tends to follow their taste buds. I am a proud member of this group as I can't pass up a wine tasting. I'm always on the lookout for a new favorite wine.

No matter what type of wine drinker you are, remember to have fun. Wine is best when it's served with friends, family and food. We often take wine way too seriously.

Tonight, try this: Open a bottle of rosé with whoever you're hanging out with, whatever you're doing (except driving) and whatever you're eating. You may find yourself in a new category: "I only drink rosé." Cheers!

Please drink responsibly.
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Steve Sinkler is the owner of The Wine Shack in Cannon Beach. He writes a monthly column about wine in the Cannon Beach Gazette.

word nerd

By RYAN HUME

Megler [meg•lə]r

noun

1. a small unincorporated community in southwest Washington located in Pacific County on the north bank of the Columbia River. Megler's docks handled the north end of ferry traffic across the Columbia from 1921 until 1966

2. *Astoria-Megler Bridge*: a 4.1-mile steel-and-concrete truss bridge that spans the Columbia River between Astoria, Oregon and Point Ellice near Megler, Washington. After years of negotiation, construction of the bridge began in 1962 as a joint venture between the Oregon and Washington departments of transportation. When it opened in July of 1966, more than 240,000 cars crossed the bridge in the last five months of that inaugural year, and it now carries more than 7,000 vehicles a day. The total cost of building the bridge was roughly \$24 million; this was initially repaid to the states through a toll, which was abolished in 1993 after the cost had been recompensed a full two years before it was scheduled to end. As the last link of U.S. 101 to be completed, the bridge has the honor of joining the entire West Coast of the U.S. between the Mexican and Canadian borders with uninterrupted highway. The Astoria-Megler Bridge is still the longest continuous truss bridge in the nation

Origin:

The Washington community is named in honor of Joseph G. Megler, better known as J.G. Megler, a

German-born pioneer who first moved to Wahkiakum County, Washington in 1871 to pursue salmon canning. In 1873, Megler built his own cannery, which would come to be one of the largest in the region. Megler was elected as a Republican to the first Washington legislature in 1889 to represent Wahkiakum County. He won re-election once but lost his seat in 1893. Megler himself named the area and the town that grew up around his cannery Brookfield in honor of his wife's Massachusetts birth place of the same name. Following his death in 1915, Megler Cove in Pacific County, which Megler himself always called "Hungry Harbor," is where Megler and his wife had a fish-receiving station for their cannery, and the spot was named for him. Later, a rest stop in the area took on his name, but it was changed to Dismal Nitch in 2005 in accordance with the Lewis and Clark Bicentennial. After plenty of discussion, the bridge was eventually named, like the ferry service that came before it, after the two communities that it connects.

"Joseph G. Megler, one of the pioneer salmon packers on the Columbia River, and one of the most widely known and highly respected citizens of the Pacific Northwest, died suddenly about 4:30 o'clock this morning at his home in Brookfield, Wash., of heart failure."

—"J.G. Megler dies," *The Morning Oregonian*, Saturday, Sept. 11, 1915, P. 5

"Wilson and his team studied the Chinook Indian Middle Village, once located at the mouth of the Columbia River in an area on the Washington side of the Astoria-Megler Bridge."

—"What yesterday's rubbish means today," *Cannon Beach Gazette*, Friday, Aug. 12, 1916