Uncorked: Vines to Wines (FDSC 2401)
Project
Grape Information Sheet

Student Name (2 points): Kathryn A. Sampson
Student ID # (1 point): 001018949
Variety of Grape (6 points): Tempranillo
Genus of Grape (6 points): Vitis
Species of Grape (4 points): V. Vinifera or Vitis vinifera
Color of Berry Skin (4 points): glossy black

Where did this grape originate (6 points):

Fossils, from Western Europe and the Mediterranean basin, place the species of *vitis vinifera* in prehistory, and also place the cultivation of vinifera beginning in the first millennium B.C. -- in central and northern Italy, France, North Africa, and Spain. McGovern, Fleming, & Katz (1996) chapter 3. The Tempranillo grape most likely originated in northern Spain, in the Rioja region. At least one source suggests that it may have originated in Southern France (as a natural *hybrid* of Cabernet Franc and Pinot Noir). Bettiga (2003) pg. 151. The exact term *Tempranillo* was used in print at least by 1807, when it appeared in the writing of Simón de Roxas Clemente y Rubio, a Spanish botanist. Robinson, Hardy & Vouillamoz (2012) pg. 1042. By 1905, Tempranillo planting was significant enough in northern Spain that Víctor Cruz Manso de Zúñiga is reported to have mapped the Tempranillo vineyards of La Rioja and Navarra. *Ibid.*

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1 The name “*Tempranillo*” has numerous synonyms, some of which are regionally specific (*Valdepeñas* in California; *Alemtejo* and *Douro* in Portugal; *Verdill* and *Ull de Llebre* in Catalunya, Spain; Santo Stefano in Pisa, Italy); others are adopted across several regions in Spain (*Cencibel, Tinto Fino, Tinta Madrid*, and *Tinto de Madrid*). Robinson, Harding & Vouillamoz (2012) pg. 1042 (listing these, and many more, synonyms). With a name as varied as its flavoring, Tempranillo is both a constant and a changeling, challenging those who attempt to describe its essence and to explain its occasional obscurity. For an assessment of Tempranillo’s ever changing name, folded into a discussion of the relative unimportance European wine critics generally attach to Spanish varietals, see Clarke & Rand (2007), pg. 257.

2 Sickels (1992) pg. 6 (listing Tempranillo among the world’s red grape vinifera).


4 The idea of a French origin, brought to Spain by Cistercian monks, has been rejected as a mere hypothetical, a view that is bolstered by DNA analysis. Robinson, Harding & Vouillamoz (2012) pg. 1043.
**Where is grape typically grown (6 points):**

Rioja, Spain is the number one location where Tempranillo is grown; it is so dominant in Rioja that, for many Spaniards the location Rioja itself signifies Tempranillo. Since 1991 Rioja has been designated *denominación de origen calificada* which means it consistently produces wine at the very highest quality standards. Zraly (2010) pg. 20. The designation also means the Rioja wine makers follow strict regulations for sources, vinification, and aging practices. Foulkes (2001) pg. 405.

Both history and geography explain why the Rioja region is known for excellent wines. First, Rioja is close to Bordeaux, France from which wine makers migrated during the *phylloxera* infestation of the 1870s; those French wine makers brought with them time-honored French *viticulture* and *enology*. Second, the Rioja region is geographically located south of the mountain ranges of northern Spain which shield Rioja from cold, northern sea winds. To its south, Rioja has unobstructed access to warm air currents from the Mediterranean Sea. Tempranillo is the principal grape in two of the three primary Rioja grape growing zones. *Rioja Alta* and *Rioja Alavesa*, in the highlands, both benefit from geographic advantages outlined in Zraly (2010).  

The third Rioja region is Rioja Baja – a much warmer region than the other two. It produces wines with higher alcohol content than average; Rioja Baja is not noted for the growing of the Tempranillo grape. Zraly (2010) pg. 249. 

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6 The third Rioja region is Rioja Baja – a much warmer region than the other two. It produces wines with higher alcohol content than average; Rioja Baja is not noted for the growing of the Tempranillo grape. Zraly (2010) pg. 249.
In addition to Rioja, Tempranillo is grown in several other regions of Spain and adjoining Portugal. An extensive list of Spanish regions, together with the local name for “Tempranillo” appear in Jancis Robinson, Julia Harding, & Jose Vouillamoz. (2012), pg. 1042. In Northern Portugal, Tempranillo is known as “Tinta Roriz” and is grown in Dão and Douri. Tempranillo is also in Alentejo, Portugal, where it is known as “Arangonez.” 

Tempranillo has been grown in Lebanon, Burma, North America, South America, and Australia. Johnson & Robinson (2013); Stevenson (2005) pg. 476 (California), pg. 546 (Mendoza, Argentina), pg. 616 (Burma, Asia). It has also been grown in Switzerland, Malta, Turkey, Canada, Mexico, and New Zealand. Robinson, Hardy & Vouillamoz (2012) pgs. 1044-1045. In South America, the Cuyo region of Argentina devotes 15,705 acres to Tempranillo (behind 18,300/Merlot; 30,630/Syrah; 43,700/Cabernet Sauvignon; and 60,300/Malbec). Zraly (2010) pg. 306.


The Texas Tempranillo grape has not yet found its way into The World Atlas of Wine or The Sotheby's Wine Encyclopedia. Yet, an abundance of Tempranillo in the hill country of Texas has been attributed to the similarity of this Texas climate and geography to Tempranillo’s native Spain. Kane (2014) pg. 7. Texas winemaking is mentioned in the encyclopedias for general points about the infancy of its vineyard tradition. One source observes that post-Prohibition wine-making is relatively recent in Texas; on this point, it is noteworthy that the Texas Hill Country AVA was established in 1992. Stevenson (2005) pg. 467. Stevenson tells the story of how Texas wine making resurged accidentally when, in the mid-1950s, a professor of viticulture at Texas Tech University (Robert Reed) planted some discarded vine cuttings in his garden. Noting the vines grew astonishingly well, Dr. Reed and his colleague Clinton McPherson started an experimental vineyard at Texas Tech and later founded the Llano Estacado winery, in 1975. Ibid. pg. 529.

While Tempranillo is a relative newcomer to Texas, a number of Texas wineries now feature it, and ship Tempranillo to outlying areas within the state. Kane’s Texas Hill Country Wineries gives Tempranillo some focused treatment. Kane’s explanation for a dearth of general information about Texas wines is twofold; it was only fairly recently that European tastemakers recognized American (California) wines as wines of consequence and second, Texas has experienced experimental delay as Texas winemakers discovered the grape varieties that grow well in Texas climates. Kane (2014) pg. 7. In his photographic tour, Kane features a number of Texas vineyards that now produce Tempranillo wines, including Spicewood Vineyards (pg. 48), Fiesta Winery (51), Inwood Estates Vineyards (52), Woodrose Winery (59), Pedernales (60-61), Perissos Vineyard (68), and Alamosa Wine Cellars (72).
Lost Oak Winery (Burleson, Texas)

Pedernales Cellars (Stonewall, Texas)

Spicewood Vineyards (Spicewood, Texas)
A Texas wine country trail, starting at Clifton, Texas.

First stop: Lost Oak Winery in Burleson, Texas (just southwest of Dallas/Fort Worth).
Second stop, Pedernales (Stonewall, Texas, moving west southwest and somewhere between Austin and San Antonio.
Third stop, Spicewood Vineyards in Spicewood, Texas (a stone’s throw from Austin).

Clifton is a town in Bosque County, Texas, in the middle of the Texas Hill Country AVA, a good place for inexpensive lodging and some local color. It, too, has a winery that sells Tempranillo.
What is the typical trellis systems used for this grape (4 points):

In Spain, Tempranillo had traditionally been grown in widely spaced bushes. Robinson (1994) pg. 262. Yet, its “relatively vigorous upright” vine can be trained to a trellis system. “Ibid. Vertical-shoot-positioned or divided canopy are the two trellis systems recommended by Bettiga (2003), pgs. 151-153.

Vertical-shoot-positioned:

VSP is recommended where the vine is at high risk for fungal disease. Smart & Robinson (1991) pg. 41. VSP makes sense for growing the Tempranillo grape because it is “moderately sensitive to powdery mildew and downy mildew.” Bettiga (2003) pg. 153. Though “standard,” VSP is prone to high vigor and shading and only produces “good” and not “top” quality wines. The VSP system works best with low-vigor vines. Stevenson (2005) pg. 21.

The divided canopy (quadrilateral cordon or Geneva Double Curtain [GDC]) type trellis is also recommended, together (where needed) with cross-arm foliage wire in hotter regions. The GDC was developed for Concord grapes which naturally grow downward. It took further research and publicity from Professor Nelson Shaulis to demonstrate vinifera vines (which have an upward growing tendency) could be trained to also grow downward as the GDC requires. Smart & Robinson (1991) pg. 52; Stevenson (2005) pg. 20. Yields from GDC are 50% higher than those from the standard VSP trellis. Stevenson (2005) pg. 20. In addition, GDC keeps vines high above the ground and reduces potential for frost damage. “Ibid. Finally, GDC is excellent for mechanized crop tending and harvesting procedures. “Ibid.

Divided canopy:
A divided canopy is suggested for high-vigor sites, but in hotter areas, growers need to use cross-arm foliage wire to avoid excessive fruit exposure to the sun. Bettiga (2003) pg. 153. An anomaly is noted, because the primary reason to use a divided canopy is to increase exposure to sunlight. Smart (1991) pg. 52.
What type of wine does this grape make (6 points):

The Tempranillo grape is used to make red table wine, and it is the dominant grape in numerous red table wine blends. Tempranillo blends include, for example, Grenache, Cariñena, Graciano, Merlot, and Cabernet Sauvignon. Part of the reason Tempranillo is blended is because the Tempranillo grape has a low sugar content (of around 20.6 BRIX). Another reason Tempranillo is blended is to give it a flavor identity and to enhance the attributes of the grapes with which it is blended. Its low acidity musts have the ability to age well, [even though] they do not produce “a particularly strong flavor identity.” Robinson (1994) pg. 262.

In Rioja, a typical red wine blend uses 70% Tempranillo grapes (for bouquet, acidity, and aging quality). Stevenson (2015) pg. 305. The traditional Rioja “mix” might blend the 70% Tempranillo with Garnacha (15%), Mazuelo (10%), and Graciano (5%). Foulkes (2001) pg. 406. Tempranillo has “a naturally low oxidizing enzyme content,” giving Tempranillo wines “exceptional longevity.” Stevenson (2015) pg. 305. At Blecua (an 11-hectare estate owned by the Ruta del Vino Vineyard, in Somontano, Aragón, Spain), the wine is “usually a Cabernet, Merlot, Garnacha and Tempranillo blend” with “a huge nose, beautiful maturity with freshness and lots of tannins.” Heckle (2012), pgs. 44-45.

Flavors attributed to Tempranillo are flavors usually related to its aging process (and barreling containers, particularly oak) as well as wine grapes with which it is blended. Tempranillo ripens early (mid- to late-September) (its name signifies “early”). Because it ripens early, “[b]y itself Tempranillo would not age for the length of time and in the graceful manner for which [e.g.] Rioja is renowned, so it is nearly always mixed with other grapes.” Foulkes (2001) pg. 406. If Tempranillo has a distinct flavor, it may be strawberry, spice, leather – but from the oak in which it ages – not from the grape itself. Ibid. It has also been described as tasting of tobacco leaves. Johnson & Robinson (2013) pg. 18.

The region in which the grape was grown has some bearing on the taste of the wine it produces. For Tempranillo, the regions of Navarra and Rioja are suggested for gentle oaky (older) flavors. The Ribera del Duero region is suggested for intense fruity (younger) flavors. Oz & Rand (2007) pg. 264. In Toro, Castille, Spain, a clone of Tempranillo (“Tinta de Toro”) produces a wine with “plenty of character and reflect[ing] the underlying and remarkably stony terroir of the region.”

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In the Douro region of Portugal, “Tinto Roriz” (one of many synonyms for Tempranillo) adds color and body to port wine, “with elegant aromas of crushed black pepper and wild flowers and flavours of wild cherries with a hint of vegetables.” Robinson, Hardy & Vouillamoz (2012) pg. 1044. The range of flavors is expansive: bright flavors of raspberry and strawberry; savory flavors of licorice, leather and spice (in cooler, higher-elevation areas). Borg (2012) location 66 of 194. Low in acidity, it is blended with Grenache (for a sweet fruit flavor) or Syrah (for a silky earthy flavor).

Oz & Rand provide several discrete descriptions of the taste and feel of Tempranillo wines. As a general overview, they place it between Cabernet Sauvignon (for deep color and rich flavor) and Pinot Noir (for a strawberry fruity characteristic), but they then observe that Tempranillo is not as complex as either the Cabernet or the Pinot. Tempranillo **acidity** moves from low to very high, and its **tannins** are generally “soft and ripe.” Its main asset, they suggest, is its lush texture which then showcases “supple, exuberant fruit” like blackberries, black cherries, mulberries, and raspberries. Oz & Rand (2007) pg. 264.

Oz & Rand continue, to Ribera del Duero and also Toro, Spain, where the young (“joven”) Tempranillo wine features a “savory butter and black current slant.” As it ages, Tempranillo’s dominant flavors shift to tobacco, plums, prunes and cocoa. The early Tempranillo wine tastes of “strawberries and plum jam”; the overripe moves to the “figgy, sweet”; and after long oak aging its flavors shift to “savory, “strawberryish” with a touch of coffee and dried fruits.” Oz & Rand (2007) pg. 264.

Finally, Oz & Rand list several food partners for Tempranillo wine. Food partners include game, [Iberian] smoked hams and sausages (especially spicy chorizo), casseroles, meat grilled with herbs, roast lamb, Indian dishes, and soft cheeses like ripe Brie. Oz & Rand (2007) pg. 264.
**Grammar/spelling (2 points):**

**References (8 points):**


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8 The “e” designation appears in the ISBN for this electronic Kindle book.


https://geographyofwine.wordpress.com/2013/04/22/varietal-tempranillo/rioja-region/

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