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Beverage Production Analysis

For my winery visit, I went to Brooklyn Winery at 213 N. 8th St in Brooklyn. This was an informative visit to learn about the winemaking process. This winery does not have its own vineyard but it is interesting to know that grapes are purchased throughout the country and brought to this location to be made into wine. This location had purchased grapes from Chile, but quality was diminished as the grapes had a very long travel time and the extra expenses made it not feasible. This winery purchases mostly from Washington state, California, and the Finger Lakes and Long Island regions of New York; the regions purchased from, from year to year can vary depending on quality and/or variance.

Wine Folly, who is led by Madeline Puckette, a certified sommelier with the Court of Masters Sommelier, defines vintage variation as simply “the difference in how a wine tastes from year to year based on the weather’s influence on the grapes during a growing season (Why Vintage Variation Matters.)” The business owners of Brooklyn Winery understand the importance of staying aware of environmental trends and that it is essential for producing an acceptable product, and for wine drinkers there is something new to discover every year. Currently, Brooklyn Winery offers a chardonnay, two Rieslings, a pinot noir, a cabernet

sauvignon and a zinfandel; they also offer a blended wine consisting of: merlot, petit verdot and cabernet franc.

The tour guide was overall knowledgeable and informative. My group was shown around the premises including the area where the grapes are received and stored. She gave us general information such as how they were transported and at what temperature; a delivery truck is used even for the grapes coming from California and trucks are refrigerated and kept around 42°. In the storage area, there were at least ten very large crates, about four feet cubed, and each labeled with a very detailed temperature log to ensure the quality of the grapes.





Grapes are purchased from NY, CA, and WA and delivered in temperature-controlled crates.

In the next room, there were the large stainless steel fermentation tanks. The shorter, wider tanks were used for the red grapes and the taller, thinner tanks were for the white grapes. There was a **crusher/destemmer** next to a **pneumatic press** as well which pressed the grapes before going into the **fermentation tanks**. Some wines were fermented in **barrels** as well; this tour guide noted the different locations imprinted on the barrels and this was because Brooklyn Winery purchases old barrels. She continued to inform us how the use of the barrels imparted extra flavors into the wine, allowing it to become more complex, and therefore unique.

The website of the National Museum of American History, a part of the Smithsonian network of museums, says “French oak revolutionized the storage and aging of wine, particularly reds. In the 1950s, following the example of winemakers in France, California vintners began

experimenting with storing their red wines in small oak barrels instead of large casks, discovering that the barrels concentrated the flavors and aromas (Oak Barrels.)



Large stainless steel fermentation tanks, crusher/destemmer (red), pneumatic press (sideways cylinder)

The large tanks to the left are for red grapes, the tall and thinner tanks are used for white grapes.



The fermentation tanks for white grapes.

The first wine we sampled was an **unoaked** 2014 Chardonnay. This wine was enjoyable, the tour guide stated the grapes were from the Finger Lakes and the cooler regions produces grapes that produce a light and crisp wine such as this one. This wine was light bodied and very smooth, and smelled and tasted of fruits. The second tasting was a **barrel-fermented** 2014 Riesling which smelled of citrus fruits and tasted somewhat sweet. The **acidity** was high on this wine and the **body** was light to medium.



Various wines being barrel-fermented/aged.

The next two samples were the red wines and first we tried a 2012 Pinot Noir which was interesting visually because the wine looked cloudy and it was because of a light **sediment**. This wine smelled of berries mixed with that earthy smell, and the tannins were light on this heavier-bodied wine. The next sample was a 2013 North Fork Blend. This wine was nice, the level of **tannins** was mild in this wine and normally I like wines with heavier tannins but the flavors were very rich. This dark red/pomegranate-colored wine had a lighter fruit flavors and heavier on the earthy flavors. You can also smell a rich vanilla in this wine, and this was my favorite wine that I had tried.

The tour guide spoke about the tannins of each wine during the tasting which was very interesting to me and it was a great opportunity to see if I was tasting what I should be tasting. In 'The Wine Bible,' Karen MacNeil writes tannin provides two things for a wine: structure and agreeability. She continues "Structure-which, in wine, is difficult to describe-is the sense that the wine has an underlying "architecture," and that "from a sensory standpoint, tannin has both a taste and a feel" which is very much in accordance with the tour guide was expressing to the group (MacNeil, K., p. 12)

The Brooklyn Winery was an interesting visit and is an asset to a city like New York due to limited agricultural resources. An interesting fact is that there are a couple grape vines growing on the roof, but the tour guide said it was not anything substantial to produce a wine out of. This was a great visit and is highly recommended to anyone looking to learn about the wine-making process and to experience **wine tasting**.



A large, used oak barrel.

References

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