



project23 is a winemaking experiment. It comes at a time when there is much discussion and criticism of California wines being "too big", "too extracted", "too ripe", "lacking regional character" and "too hot".

project23 aims to explore what type of wine could be made by using a different approach than currently employed.

A recent article on appellationamerica.com* by enologist Clark Smith of Vinovation gives a good overview of the rise of alcohol levels in California wine. It also points to historical precedents for making quality wines by picking with potential alcohol in mind.

Certainly these wines will be of a different character than most California wines available today. However, our hope is that they will:

- be more balanced
- offer more structure and complexity
- have greater aging potential
- give better expression of terroir
- be more food-friendly
- contain lower levels of alcohol

project23 asks all willing wine makers to make a small amount of wine conforming to parameters below. This will be an on-going project. Some may be able to participate with the 2007 vintage. Others, may choose to plan for the 2008 vintage. In either case, all are welcome!

To participate in **project23**, produce a wine from grapes picked at sugar levels not exceeding 23.5 Brix. While it may be easy for some to make a barrel, others may find this amount cost-prohibitive. If you already pick at several sugar levels to blend later, and you have a batch of wine that does not exceed 23.5 Bx. at harvest you may bottle a case or two of that batch for the project.

project23 is NOT:

- About alcohol levels alone. It is about balance, varietal character, food friendliness, longevity and possibly even regional identity.
- About finding alcohol "sweet spots" for wines harvested at a very ripe level and then de-alced. We can do control-type comparisons with portions of a batch de-alced to different levels. That might contribute to the discussion and what we will ultimately learn about this style of wine vis-a-vis a wine made from grapes harvested at an optimal balance of sugar and physiological ripeness.
- About emulating or mimicking old world wines. We are exploring stylistic possibilities. This predicated on the understanding that terroir of each wine growing region is unique.
- About bashing or demeaning any particular person for their preference in wine, farming practices as well as their winemaking methods. We can, however, discuss and offer constructive and respectful commentary, analysis and even criticism of farming and winemaking methods and practices as they relate to the finished product.

project23 wine requirements:

- Must be made from grapes **picked** at no more than 23.5 degrees Brix. This is an absolute for red varieties. While it would be preferred to use white grapes registering 22.5 degrees Brix or less, this may be too confining for some white varieties. This parameters should be discussed and agreed upon by participating winemakers. Ultimately, no grapes above 23.5 degrees Brix may be used regardless of variety.
 - These parameters are not for the must weight but for the actual readings from the grapes on the vine. This is with the understanding that must weight increases a point or two after soaking.
- No new barrels are allowed. Barrels should be 1-2 years old or older. Cooperage selection is left to the winemaker.
- Co-fermentation of multiple varieties is permitted as long as the grapes used meet criterion #1.

The winemakers involved will participate in refining the parameters of this project as well as evaluating the finished wines.

All interested are invited to join the **project23** discussion forum installed on redwinebuzz.com (www.redwinebuzz.com/forum).

The production of these wines as well as the finished products will then be featured in **redwinebuzz.com** as well as by the journalists participating in the tasting. Other wine media may also be brought in to cover the project.

To participate, contact us at: 23wine@redwinebuzz.com

* <http://wine.appellationamerica.com/wine-review/466/Some-Like-it-Hot.html>