



Whole clusters, as harvested at the vineyard.



Scott chomps on the clusters to make sure the stems are lignified (ideal ripeness). Stems that are under-ripe will give the wine a bitter flavor.



Sorting; we always run the clusters up a sorting table to pull out the MOG (Material Other than Grape); leaves, bugs, rocks, etc, but when we are working with MA wines, we have to be extra vigilant in taking care that all the cluster that go in are “Just Right” because after they pass our sorters, they go straight into the fermentation bins.



Méthode Ancienne is a French phrase that translates to “ancient method.” It’s a term we use to indicate a traditional and historic method of fermentation we use on extra special small lots when conditions are “just right”. You may have heard us simply refer to these as the “MA” bottlings.

Generally most Pinot Noir makers completely de-stem the fruit prior to fermentation, for a number of reasons. This way you can harvest anytime you want without worrying about the ripeness of the stems. It also produces a wine that is ready to drink earlier – quicker to sell, quicker to drink.

We live in a fast-paced world but Talisman believes in attention to detail and that the best of life is worth the wait. By using this old-world style with lignified whole clusters, MA wines gain additional tannin which increases structure, texture and ageability. The conditions during the growing season need to be just right to ensure this will happen. The specific vineyard is also important, as it needs to lend enough richness, acidity, body and flavor to stand up to the extra tannin from the stems.

At Talisman we typically leave 25% un-de-stemmed, or whole cluster, for a bit of extra depth, complexity and ageability. Our *Méthode Ancienne* wines are fermented 100% whole cluster, or “Lucille Ball style,” complete with foot-stomping by our staff. This happens only when Scott feels the conditions and vineyard are just right.

Enjoy comparing our typical 25% whole cluster fermented vs. the 100% whole cluster fermented “MA.” We recommend pairing with a bold meal, perhaps with cheese and/or red meat. . .

The “Pigeage”

Here, Mitch performs the “pigeage,” which is when we stomp and stir the whole clusters to get the fermentation going, Lucille Ball style!



After sanitizing the feet, the designated “treader” climbs in the bin or tank and starts stomping... the grape clusters are tight little bundles and not that easy to stomp, it’s a good workout!



Once the fermentation starts, we punch down (stir) four times a day in every bin or tank, by the time every vessel finishes fermentation, our harvest interns are in pretty darn good shape.

