At the University of Minnesota, we're known worldwide for expertise in cold hardy varieties. We've bred grapes over a century and formally initiated a wine grape breeding program in 1978. In 2000, we completed a state-of-the-art enology lab and research winery. Today, we're recognized as one of the top wine grape programs in the United States. Our goal is to develop high quality, cold hardy, and disease resistant wine and table grape cultivars.

Our program encompasses over 12 acres of research vineyards with approximately 12,000 experimental vines. Seedlings are produced each year using a diverse genetic base that includes classic Vitis vinifera cultivars, quality French hybrids, and cold hardy, disease resistant selections based on V. riparia, Minnesota’s native grape. Over 3,000 vines are planted each year and subjected to high standards of rigorous evaluation.

Currently over 100 U of M advanced selections are being tested, as well as over 400 cultivars and selections from other breeding programs. In addition to cold hardness and disease resistance, viticultural traits such as productivity, cluster size, growth habit, bud break, and ripening times are evaluated.

Expertise Results in High Quality Wine Grapes

U of M Varieties Make Award Winning Wines

Our winemakers make over 125 wines each year. Our goals are to identify hybrids with superior winemaking potential, and to optimize the wine production from our new cultivars. We experiment with different styles to help the industry make the best possible wines.

In our state-of-the-art facility, an expert staff uses numerous instruments to evaluate all aspects of our experimental wines. Instruments are used to measure polyphenols (pigment and tannins), acidity, and sugar, as well as aroma and flavor. A trained taste panel evaluates various sensory aspects, including visual appeal, bouquet, flavor, and mouthfeel.

Proof that excellent wine can be made when U of M varieties are well grown and vinified is being demonstrated not only in cold climates, but also in more temperate wine growing areas. Numerous prestigious awards in national and international competitions, including Best of Class, Double Gold, and Gold, are being awarded for wines produced from varieties developed by the University of Minnesota.

Frontenac blanc, a white-fruited mutation of Frontenac and Frontenac gris, is being evaluated to determine if it provides the same outstanding vine growth, disease resistance traits, and award winning vinification opportunities. Visit our grape website for updates, licensed and MNRC nursery listings, licensing information, and viticulture and enology guidance.

www.grapes.umn.edu

Expertise in High Quality Wine Grapes

Visit our grape website for updates, licensed and MNRC nursery listings, licensing information, and viticulture and enology guidance.

www.grapes.umn.edu

Cold Hardy Wine Grapes

Medal Winners

Our winemakers make over 125 wines each year. Our goals are to identify hybrids with superior winemaking potential, and to optimize the wine production from our new cultivars. We experiment with different styles to help the industry make the best possible wines.

Wine Evaluation

In our state-of-the-art facility, an expert staff uses numerous instruments to evaluate all aspects of our experimental wines. Instruments are used to measure polyphenols (pigment and tannins), acidity, and sugar, as well as aroma and flavor. A trained taste panel evaluates various sensory aspects, including visual appeal, bouquet, flavor, and mouthfeel.

Medal Winners

Proof that excellent wine can be made when U of M varieties are well grown and vinified is being demonstrated not only in cold climates, but also in more temperate wine growing areas. Numerous prestigious awards in national and international competitions, including Best of Class, Double Gold, and Gold, are being awarded for wines produced from varieties developed by the University of Minnesota.

Availability

Frontenac gris, La Crescent, and Marquette are patented varieties that can only be propagated by licensed nurseries. Propagation of Frontenac and Frontenac blanc by Minnesota Nursery Research Corporation (MNRC) participants supports continued research at the U of M.

Discover More

Frontenac blanc, a white-fruited mutation of Frontenac and Frontenac gris, is being evaluated to determine if it provides the same outstanding vine growth, disease resistance traits, and award winning vinification opportunities. Visit our grape website for updates, licensed and MNRC nursery listings, licensing information, and viticulture and enology guidance.

www.grapes.umn.edu

University of Minnesota

Driven to Discover™

Printed by University of Minnesota Printing Services using soy-based inks.
Copyright © 2011, Regents of the University of Minnesota. All rights reserved.
Frontenac gris, started as a single bud mutation of Frontenac, yielding gray (gris, in French) fruit and amber-colored juice. The vine exhibits the same optimum growth characteristics as Frontenac, and requires the same cultural practices. Arching canes and minimal tendrils provide easy training and pruning to simplify vine management. In Minnesota, Frontenac and Frontenac gris ripen in late mid-season, and are good sugar producers with 24-25° Brix not uncommon.

Wine Profile
Frontenac gris wines present aromas of peach and apricot with hints of enticing citrus and tropical fruit. A brilliant balance of fruit and acidity creates lively, refreshing wines. Unique and complex flavors make this an excellent grape for table, dessert, and ice wines.

La Crescent combines St. Pepin and a Swenson selection from V. riparia × Muscat Hamburg. With this hardy heritage, trunks have survived -36° F when well cared for in good vineyard sites. Moderately disease resistant, leaves sometimes exhibit downy mildew, which can be controlled with a standard spray program. Proper conditions and care result in very productive vines.

Wine Profile
La Crescent’s intense nose of apricot, peach, and citrus lends itself to superior quality off-dry or sweet white wines. Produced in a Germanic style, La Crescent wine is reminiscent of Vignoles or Riesling. The grape’s high acidity provides good structure for excellent dessert or late-harvest style wines.

Marquette is a cousin of Frontenac and grandson of Pinot noir. It originated from a cross of MN 1094, a complex hybrid of V. riparia, V. vinifera, and other Vitis species, with Ravat 262. Viticulturally, Marquette is outstanding. Resistance to downy mildew, powdery mildew, and black rot has been very good. Its open, orderly growth habit makes vine canopy management efficient.

Wine Profile
Marquette’s high sugar and moderate acidity make it very manageable in the winery. Finished wines are complex, with attractive ruby color, pronounced tannins, and desirable notes of cherry, berry, black pepper, and spice on both nose and palate. As a red wine, Marquette represents a new standard in cold hardy viticulture and enology.