

Session 3: Medium-Sweet and
Late Harvest Styles



“Clean” Riesling fruit harvested from Silver Thread Oct. 24, 2019 at Spatlese level.

Botrytis-infected clusters at Gridley Bluff Point Vineyard in 2017, showing multiples stages of infection. Auslese level.



Botrytis-infected cluster at Doyle Fournier Vineyard in 2019, showing raisining and fuzzy mold. Auslese level.



Picking in Tries



October 7, 2018

Riesling cluster at Silver Thread showing splitting and rot. If it passes the smell test, this fruit is usable. It will be picked early to prevent spread of the disease to other clusters.



October 16, 2014

Sour rot forming on Riesling clusters at the Gridley Bluff Point Vineyard. This type of rot imparts a vinegar aroma and infected berries must be discarded.



October 11, 2016

Skilled hand-picking is necessary when picking in tries.

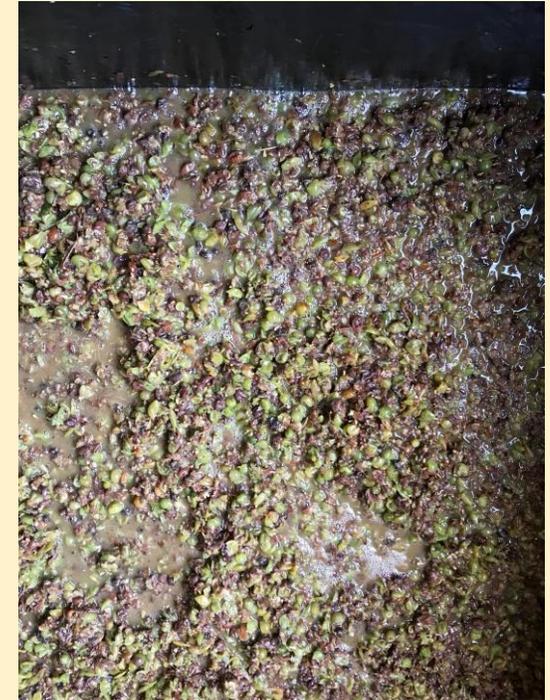
Late Harvest Winemaking



Step 1: Botrytis-infected clusters were hand-picked by the Gridley's and delivered to Silver Thread.

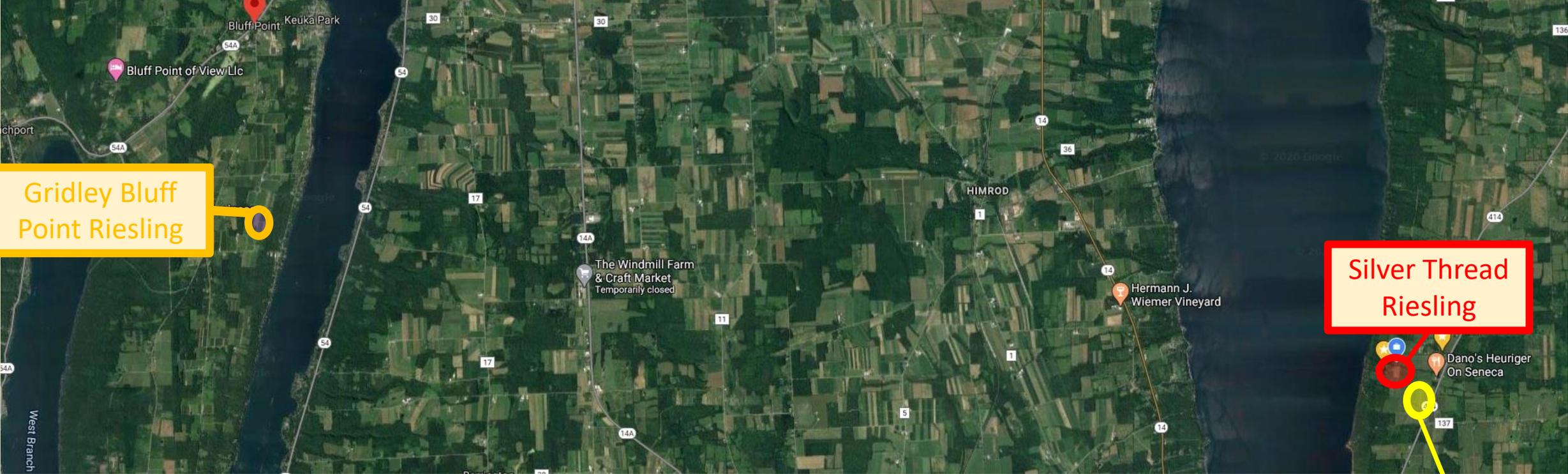


Step 2: Clusters were hand-sorted at the winery to select for an overall 70% botrytis infection rate. Berries with sour rot were discarded; clusters without much botrytis were diverted to a different fermentation.



Step 3: Clusters were destemmed, crushed and then cold-soaked overnight to extract flavor. The next day, this mixture was pressed and the juice transferred to a stainless steel tank for fermentation.

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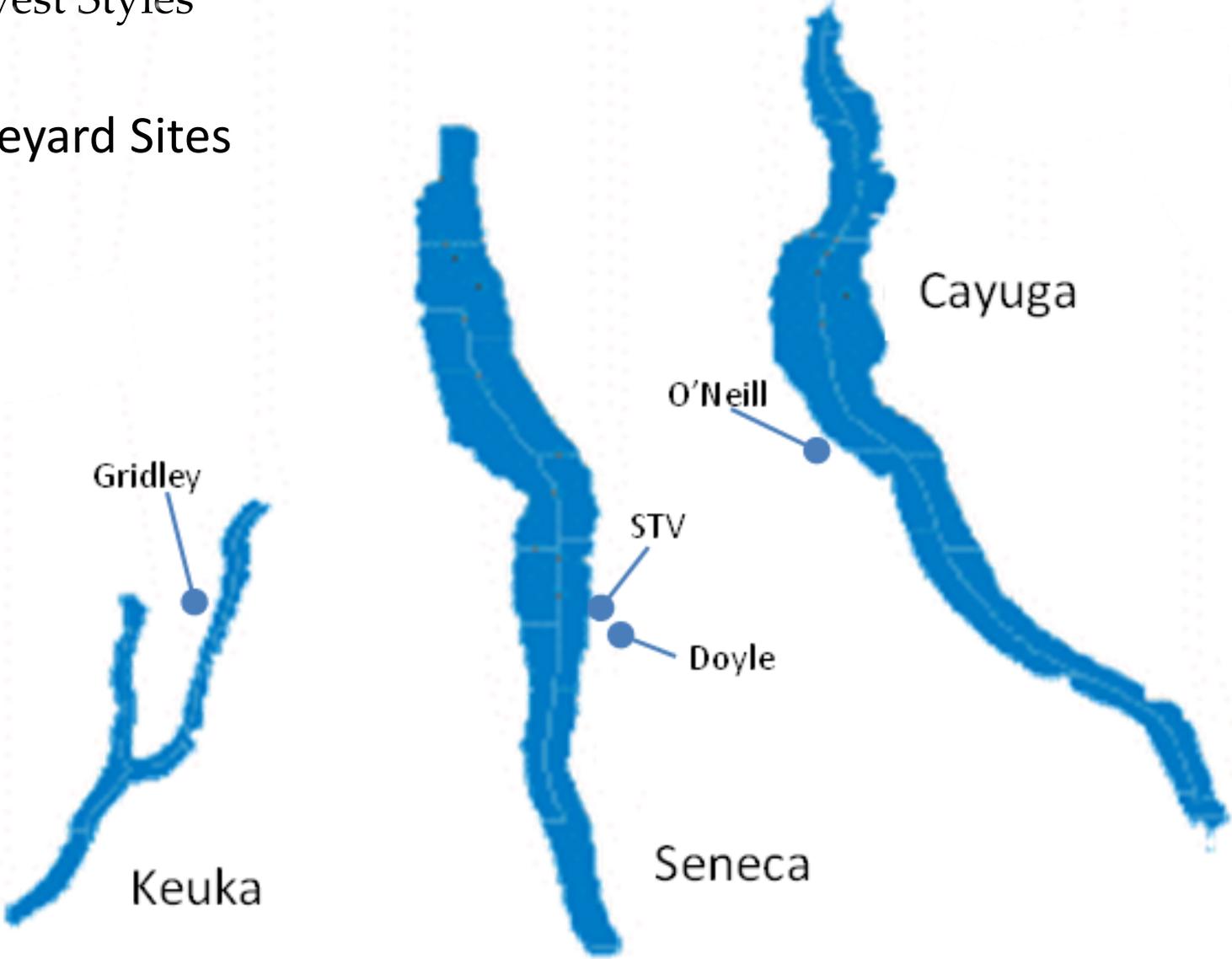
Gridley Bluff
Point Riesling

Silver Thread
Riesling

Doyle
Fournier
Riesling

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Map of Vineyard Sites



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Glossary of Terms: *Oxford Companion to Wine third ed.; Robinson J.; 2006*

Sweet Wines—have been popular since ancient times; the most admired wines of ancient Rome, Italian City-states of the Middle Ages, and 17th and 18th Century Europe were sweet white wines. Examples include Sauternes, Tokaji, Constantia and Vin Doux Naturel.

Sweet Wine Making—sweetness in wine can be achieved by 1.) concentrating the sugar in grapes (noble rot, frozen grapes, or dried grapes), 2.) adding sugar or sweet grape juice (sussreserve) after fermentation, 3.) arresting fermentation (through chilling, filtering out yeast and/or addition of sulfur dioxide) and 4.) adding spirit to grape juice during fermentation (vin doux naturel).

Botrytis Bunch Rot-- a fungal disease that can develop in vineyards in humid climates, especially when it rains during harvest. The malevolent form is called grey rot. The benevolent form is called noble rot, which is responsible for some of the world's finest sweet wines. Botrytis is never desirable in red wines.

Botrytized Wines—wine made from white grapes affected by the benevolent form of botrytis bunch rot, also known as noble rot. Distinctively scented with considerably more extract than most wines, they are the most complex and longest lived of all the sweet, white table wines. The noble rot aroma is often described as honeyed, but it can also have notes of rye grain and marmalade.

Tri(e)— French for “sorting process,” or selection of suitable grapes. This can take the form of a sorting table at the winery, or pickers proceeding along the rows and only selecting desired clusters.

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Pradikats—per the German Wine Law of 1971, grapes for quality wines (QMP) are classified by must weight (or sugar level) using one of the following distinctions on the label (in ascending order of must weight)

Kabinett—wine made from grapes with the lowest sugar level, with potential alcohol as low as 7 or 8%, often used for medium dry and medium sweet wines in order to balance the high acidity. 16.4-19.8 brix

Spatlese-- means literally “late harvest,” but refers to higher sugar levels in the grapes that lead to higher potential alcohol in the wine; these grapes are often used for dry wines. 18.5-21.6 brix

Auslese-- means literally “selected harvest,” and is usually associated with botrytis and sweet wine. However, these grapes can be made into a dry, high-alcohol wine. 20-24 brix

Beerenauslese—a rich, sweet wine made from individually selected overripe clusters or individual grapes affected by noble rot. Tastes like honey-soaked raisins. 26-29 brix

Eiswein— wine produced from grapes frozen on the vine and pressed while still frozen; Grapes should be free of botrytis. 26-29 brix

Trockenbeerenauslese— ripest and rarest of pradikats, refers to grapes shriveled by noble rot; Expensive, rare and difficult to make. 30+ brix