**Rationale for Blending Wines in Colorado**

**(Nancy Janes and Stephen Menke)**

**Why would we choose to blend wines?**

Ideal reason for blending wines: **(Menke)**

-to always make the blend better than the components by themselves

-to create a wine with structural and flavor balance

Pragmatic reasons for blending: **(Janes)**

 -to build the wines we need

 -recreate existing product

 -create new product

**How do we determine what to blend?**

Analyze your product plan ahead of harvest: **(Menke and Janes)**

1. Evaluate past and projected sales of each existing niche wine in current portfolio.
2. Is a new product niche desired and how is it defined?
3. What is your inventory pipeline situation?
	1. Existing wines: quantity and quality
	2. Grapes available: volume and cultivar
	3. Available tanks and barrels: total volume and individual volumes
4. How do you match inventory to niches needed?
5. Do you need 75-100% varietal blend or <75% blend for each niche
6. 100% varietal may not have the complete range of integrated aromas, flavors, textures, and aging potential desired.
7. What range of integrated aromas, flavors, textures, and aging potential are desired.

Analyze your components

-Once one determines why a blend is needed and what kind of blend is desired, then the components of the blend need to be analyzed for sensory and chemical characteristics by the winemaker and a panel of people with diverse tasting experiences.

 -Chemical characteristics (pH, color, protein and acid stability, color)

-Sensory characteristics (fitness to desired aroma and flavor, flawed aroma and flavor, mouthfeel weight and tannins, complexity, balance)

-Additional tools (chaptalization, tannin additions, malolactic fermentation, fining removal, oak additions, filtering, SO2, potassium sorbate)

**What are the principles of component blending?**

Logically project blend composition through test blends

-When each blend component is characterized, a principled guess on composition of the blend must be tested. These test blends use several principles that are based on how the characteristics of each blend component will meld with the others.

Use principles of blending to create test blends

-The principles of blending are complementation and synergy.

-Complementation can involve major components, such as acidity, alcohol, fruit

intensity, aromatics, tannin fractions, bitterness, body, etc.

-Synergy involves creating new characteristics that are not easily identifiable as coming from the existing components, but work well in knitting components into a more complete and integrated wine, especially for fruit and floral aromatics, for completeness of wine impression from presentation through mid-palate through finish, and for complexity.

Create bracketed test blends and test for sensory and chemical characteristics

-Do bracketed blend compositions until desired sensory profile reached.

-Make bottles of selected blend, test a bottle for stability and chemical composition, and taste 1 to 6 weeks later. Re-blend test blends if necessary.

Create ½ of final blend

Start final blend to ½ volume, do tasting, adjust if necessary.

Create final blend from ½ blend, let sit several days, re-taste and adjust if needed

Stabilize as long as needed, re-taste, filter, re-taste, bottle

COLORADO PROBLEMS THAT MAY BE SOLVED WITH BLENDING

Inconsistency in supply and maturity of cold sensitive varieties, mid-palate holes, excess alcohol, overripe and flabby flavors or alternatively excess acidity, tannin imbalances, flaws, aging stability