

If Pomace Processing is such a great opportunity, why aren't more people capitalizing on it?

Given the profit making opportunities that can be realized through production of grape related products, it would be a fair question to ask why many are not developing this potential.

1. The primary reason that pomace has not been seen as a profitable input is based on culture and tradition of the industry. For centuries, grapes have been grown for the juice they provide and the pomace (skins, seeds and pulp) has always been seen as garbage to be disposed of. Wineries are geared toward obtaining juice, fermenting and creating high value wine products from grapes. Playing with the 'garbage' from the plant clearly runs against the culture and traditions of the industry and winery managers are doubtful of the value.
2. Most winery managers also ignore these opportunities because it also presents itself at a time during harvest when they are at their busiest. Pomace is created at a time when grapes are being delivered, destemmed, crushed and processed. Dedicating time to processing the discarded pomace is perceived to put their primary product at risk. Wet pomace has a shelf life of about one week and if not immediately separated and dried, it is ruined. Few winemakers want to add this to their list of things to do in during harvest, for good reason.
3. Actually, many are looking at the opportunity to develop products from grape seed. Increasing awareness of the tremendous health benefits of grape seed oil and the gluten free properties of grape seed/skin flours have seen tremendous growth in an increasingly health conscious consumer. Many such oils have blossomed in recent years because of these market trends including black cumin, chia, coconut and hemp just to name a few. The associated flours are also seeing tremendous growth trends in health food and gluten free markets. Because of these trends, food producers are also reducing questionable ingredients and looking for healthier ones.
4. There is tremendous interest in this process worldwide with customers ranging from Australia, South Africa, Ukraine/Georgia, California, Canada, Oklahoma and others. This is a growing industry creating products that are in demand at a premium cost. The tremendous opportunity in this growing market is that it will create a unique set of products that few could hope to emulate. These products have been created in the more mature European wine making regions for some time.
5. Obtaining grape seed from pomace takes a lot of work and tremendous research has gone into development of an efficient process. Even then, significant capital equipment is required with the associated energy required to process the seed so that it is shelf stable. Because grape seed is very low oil and a very hard seed, it is one of the most difficult seeds to process and requires specialized high pressure equipment. Our process equipment is specifically designed for this purpose. Many successful ventures involving pomace processing involve a third party entity who collects the pomace from one or more wineries to process. When significant distances must be traveled to collect pomace, this results in a significant impact on profitability. This is a localized opportunity.