

ISL S2 E10 Transcripts

Jake Waldroop

FF: What about, on that blackberry wine, now, how would you make blackberry wine?

JW: The first thing you do, I just go back up here in the field where the briars is and I pick me some blackberries. I generally pick six or eight gallons. And I got a big old six-gallon container and I just dump up in that--wash 'em and dump 'em up in that.

FF: Just whole, don't mash 'em?

JW: Don't mash 'em or nothin'. Then I'll put about, on that many, I dump in about five pound of sugar and I mash that sugar up and I tie 'em up good so no gnats or wall jackets or nothin' can get to it at'all.

FF: You wouldn't seal it so the air can get to it.

JW: The air can go--just tie a good rag though. An old rag to keep the gnats and everything out of it. Well you let it sit there and it works. It'll go to working and it'll just foam up and work over. And generally about two weeks, ten days to two weeks, it works off.

FF: How can you tell when it's done workin'?

JW: It quits. You can tell, it quits blubberin'. The blubberin' quits. Then you take it off and strain it out. Take you a cloth and you have another container and you squeeze that juice all out good into that and then you measure that juice. And if you've got five gallons of juice, why you want to use 15 pounds of sugar--three pounds of sugar to the gallon. You, best way to do that is put a pound and a half of sugar to the gallon and let it work off. It'll go right back to workin' again, just blubberin' and foamin' and a'workin'. And when it works off and quits that time, why strain it again and put the other pound and a half of sugar. Be sure to use three pounds of sugar every gallon of juice. And when it works off and quits that time, why you can go ahead and get drunk and go to Holland.

FF: So you really work it three times then don't ya?

JW: It's supposed to be worked three times.

FF: When you seal that up in bottles, do you need to seal those bottles tight?

JW: Not necessarily.

FF: Not necessarily.

JW: It'll hold. Just enough so nothin' can get in there. A good way is to take some soft cotton, a little wad of that makes a good stopper for wine. Seems like then it can, a little evaporation can come in and out of it. So that's all there was to it.

FF: Then on the grape wine...

JW: Grape wine's just about the same thing. You just pick your grapes and you pour them up, a little amount of sugar on them, and let 'em work off. And when they work off, then you strain 'em, and squeeze 'em, and get all that juice out. Measure it and see exactly how much juice you got. And put you a pound and a half of sugar to the gallon. And let it work again. And when it works off that time, strain it again and put hte other pound and a half of sugar. When it works off, why you can call it.

FF: She's ready. You don't have to put yeast or anything?

JW: No. You put that yeast or anything in, that's--did you ever hear 'em talk about drinking the wine that gave 'em a headache?

FF: Yeah.

JW: Well it's more than likely that they worked it off with yeast.

FF: The old timers make a lot of wine and that kind of thing?

JW: Oh yeah, yeah. Yeah they made it.

FF: I guess some of them used that for medicine too, didn't they? Or tonic?

JW: Well, to some extent. They boys, they'd get 'em a jug good and set it for a dollar a gallon. They'd get high on it. There'd they go.

FF: That's real interestin'.

John Bulgin

JB: I don't have enough grapes to make mine.

FF: This year?

JB: And blackberries--I've made blackberry--but it's all about made about the same.

FF: Have you ever made rhubarb?

JB: Yeah, I've got plenty of rhubarb.

FF: Do you grow it?

JB: Uh-huh.

FF: How do you make it?

JB: You take, of course the stalks, and chop it up and to a gallon of chopped up rhubarb, put a gallon of warm water and about three pounds of sugar. I don't put quite that much every time. I start it out and then let it work for about seven to nine days.

FF: With about one pound of sugar in it?

JB: And then add sugar to taste.

FF: Let's see, so when you start out, you just mixed up rhubarb in the water and just dump some sugar in there and then...

JB: Yep, I mix a gallon of chopped rhubarb and a gallon of warm water. And then when you get your jar full, take cornmeal and cap it off with cornmeal.

FF: How do you do that, you just...

JB: Just put the cornmeal on top of it.

FF: Just put it on top and it'll float up there?

JB: It floats. And then, 'course, it'll mix in really.

FF: What's the cornmeal supposed to do?

JB: Well, it adds a little to the alcohol.

FF: Gives it a little kick?

JB: Yeah. But it seals the air off first. Cover it up good.

FF: With a cloth?

JB: With four or five cheesecloths and a board on top of that.

FF: So you don't tie it off? Some people just tie the cloth around it. You put a board on top of it?

JB: I take a rubberband and put around the neck of the jar. Try to seal all the air, the outside air, off of it.

FF: Then you put a board on top of that?

JB: You put a board on.

FF: So you let it sit for seven to nine days, then what?

JB: Yeah, and then press it out good.

FF: Let it strain?

JB: Strain it and, you know, press it to get all--rhubarb's hard to get all the juice out of.

FF: I see, yeah.

JB: But I just twist it in the rag.

FF: Okay, well, so you strained it, you let it sit, then what?

JB: Well, you strain it and put it--you know, you have to keep it stirred about, at least, every other day while it's a'workin'. From the first puttin' up, you have to keep it stirred good. And then you put it back in a container. And keep stirrin' and add a little more sugar, just a little more, you know. You know, I don't know any exact amounts. Like a pinch of salt, you know? Some people say a pinch of salt.

FF: What would it taste like, is it very tart without much sugar, or is it?

JB: Yeah, it is.

FF: So with the tart stuff, you have to put in a lot of sugar in there and make it sweet.

JB: Yeah.

FF: Do you have to be careful with how much sugar you put in?

JB: No, I don't know that you do. You just don't want to get it too sweet.

FF: It gets more alcoholic the sweeter it gets, isn't it?

JB: Well, not 'specially, unless you run it through a still. They say, just general process, you can't get 15% out of it, because from 12 to 15%, the alcohol kills the bacteria.

FF: Okay, so what do you do next?

JB: You let it, you put it back in the jug and add some more water, you can kind of taste it a little.

FF: How much water, just 'til it's not syrupy?

JB: No, I didn't mean water.

FF: Sugar?

JB: I meant, you just pour the juice in there from the crock. And add a little sugar to taste and let it work, you'll want to stir it about every day. And when it quits bubblin', then you just cover it up and let it sit.

FF: What else do you do besides rhubarb? You said grape and blackberry?

JB: Yeah, well you make it about the same way.

FF: What else have you used?

JB: Well, for the grapes, you don't have to have as much sugar. Crush your grapes up and add a little water to it. Let it work.

FF: 'Bout how much water would you use for that many grapes? How much grapes?

JB: He don't have any set amount.

Margaret Bulgin: About half and half. You've got a gallon of crushed berries and about a gallon of water.

FF: And so you put that in your crock and let it sit?

JB: Let it--add the sugar; you don't have to add as much sugar. And then after you strain it, then you can taste it and see whether it's real sour or what.

FF: And then you let that sit for the same amount of time, seven to nine days?

JB: Yeah.

FF: What time of year do you usually make it?

JB: Well...

MB: The grapes ripen in August.

FF: Y'all had that many yet?

JB: You can start makin' it as soon as rhubarb begins to come up.

FF: Usually, when's that?

JB: In early spring. Or cherries, when cherries--

FF: Do you make cherry wine?

JB: You can make wine out of anything but a rock.

Albert Greenwood

AG: What you do is you gather your grapes, and you wash 'em, you wash your grapes. Then you crush 'em up. You can put 'em in a pan or whatever you want to and crush 'em up.

FF: With your hand, just mash 'em?

AG: Yeah, or with a tater masher, that you make mashed taters with. It's pretty good. Works alright. Then, it don't make no particular difference how many you want to make at one time, that's whatever you want to do. You can make a gallon, you can make a peck, you can make a half a bushel, or--but that'd be a whole lot. Anyhow, what you do, you crush your grapes, and you put 'em in a jar, stone jar.

FF: Like a churn or somethin' like that?

AG: Yeah. Stone jar, that's what I've got. Then, then you set 'em back. You want to put a [cloth] over it and tie it around there, because there's some kind of little old gnats that'll swarm 'round it. We call 'em drunkards. You set that back then, let it ferment about--if your jar's in a warm place, you know--about three days and nights.

FF: If it's in a warm place?

AG: Yeah. It goes to blubberin' a little. But you don't let it stay in there too long. Then you take it out and strain it. And you'll have to have a pretty stout cloth, somethin' like a flour sack. And you have to have you a kettle, so big, you know. And you spread that over your jar or whatever container you're strainin' it in. And just dip out and put in so many, and just jiggle it up, and twist it and get all of it out you can. And now, you'll have to wash that cloth once in a while, 'cause that pulp in them grapes'll stick to it, then it won't go through much. Just wash it out and ring it out good. Then, you have your two cups, 'cause you can't dip your wet cup in your sugar. Then you put in about three measures of your juice. And I don't remember how much sugar I put in that last I made. Then, after you strain it, put in three juice and one of sugar.

FF: Alright, three cups of juice and one of sugar.

AG: One of sugar. Then after you do that, put it--wash your jar out and put it all back in there. Strain it, and put your sugar and everything in. Then you want to stir it every once in a while. And you want to stir your grapes. After it quits working in the jar, clean the jar again. That gets all of the drugs outs of it. There'll be so much settlings, see, fine stuff that goes through the cloth. There'll be some, not much, but it'll settle and you can drain it off. You wouldn't have to strain it again. After it settles, then--well, most of that will settle in your jar.

FF: Is it ready to drink then?

AG: Well, not 'til, yeah, it'd be alright

FF: You let it work off at four weeks there, just the juice and sugar. After it quits workin' there, it's ready to use?

AG: Well, you could put it in most any time, but you wouldn't want to stop it up, tight, you know, in a fruit jar.

FF: Leave it loose in case it works some more?

AG: Yeah. Because it creates a gas. It'd bust the can if the lid didn't blow off. Now that's my way of makin' it. You've tasted some I've made.

FF: Yeah, it's pretty good.

Lawton Brooks

LB: You can make wine out of most any kind of thing that will sour. You can use really any kind of grape. You can make elderberry wine. You can make wine out of different kinds of things. Might anything that would sour, you might near make wine out of it. But I never did try it, but I made elderberry wine. I made blackberry wine. And I made all kinds of grape wine, muscadine wine. I made all kinds of that. If you're making something like a muscadine or blackberry, you want to get your berries, you want to mash 'em up. Put 'em in the jar or the churn--the churn is the best thing you ever tried to make 'em in. Put 'em in a churn and mash 'em up good. Just mash 'em good. Let 'em set about three days and they'll work. Then you take that out, you take that out of there and you strain that all out, to where there won't be no seed or nothin' in it. Get all that juice. Then measure your juice. Put anywhere from two and a half to three pounds of sugar to the gallon, after you strain it out. Then let her sit back a while, 'bout three more days, and it'll be worked again. Then you want to make it really strong one thing or another, you can go back again and add a little more sugar to it if you want to drink it, get drunk one thing or another on, add a little more sugar and you can make it stout.

FF: You mean the sugar makes it stouter?

LB: Yeah, yeah, it makes more alcohol in it. And muscadine wine, it's so good you just can't quit drinkin' it. That's the best stuff you ever put in your mouth. Put you in a handful of sugar and after you get it mashed up and make it work, you can tell when it gets worked, let it work about three days. Then you take that stuff out and you take it and you get that out and strain every seed and all that out of it. And just get the pure juice. Then you measure that juice, and you use about two and a half to three pounds of sugar to the gallon. And you'll have some wine that you can drink! You take your cloth and put it across and just tie it around the top to where they can't get in it. And then give it some air to it until it works off. And that'll keep them drunkards (*flys*) and all them things out of it.

It's really better to make it in the summertime, like now, 'cause you can--it's warm enough now that you can kind of set it in a cool place. But now, in the wintertime, it's hard to get anything in it, it's so cool. You got to keep it in your house to work it. Now, you can set it anywhere and work it. But when it gets to cool weather here, it won't hardly work. That stuff stays cold, it won't hardly start workin'.

Well, wine is good for anybody too. Wine is a good thing for anybody to drink. Wine's good to thin your blood. You got thick blood, the doctor will give you wine.

It's been--I don't know how long it's been. It's been years since I was drunk. But I was at a feller's place and he had wine. And what I mean, he had wine--he had kegs a'settin' along the place, like just one after another. Well, he had them kegs there and I went down there to see him one evenin'. Me and him was settin' talkin' and he said, "I just want you to taste some of my wine." Now, he had different kinds. I reckon you can make wine out of dadblamed apples.

Seemed like he had every kind of thing you could think of as wine. He says, "I just want you to taste it." Well, he had them faucets on all them barrels. That wine was done made, you know. Well, I took a swaller out of this one. Boy, it was good. Took it out of this one; seemed like that one was a little better. And just kept on tastin'. By the time I got down to tastin' 'em all, I guess I was drunk. First thing I know, my head be gettin' to go round and round. And I just took a little bit out of this one, a little be out of this one, and by the time I got around, I'd drunk a whole lot of wine. I never thought about that. My head just got to swimmin'.

I know when I got drunk on elderberry wine, it liked to kill me. I come in home and me and a fella by the name of Walden made it up above home about a mile. I was up there at the house and he called me and told me the dadblamed wine was ready and to come up, me and him will sample it out. And I went up there. And me and him got to drinking that blasted stuff, and I sat around there 'til I guess about eleven o'clock in the night. And when I started home, I couldn't hardly get on my dadblasted horse, I was so drunk. I couldn't even find him where I had him tied. I finally got on and got home, and when I got home, didn't remember gettin' home. Went in, and started the light up. Didn't have no electric lights then, had these old kerosene lights. I took the globe off and started to light it, I dropped the globe and broke it. I went into another room, hunted another one, and started to light it, and broke it. That waked my daddy up. God, he come in there; he come in and hunted up a light and wanted to know what was the matter with me. He had never seen me drunk. That was the first time I'd ever been drunk. He had never seen me drunk. He seen right away that I was drunk.

FF: Did he get mad?

LB: No he didn't. He didn't get mad at me. He didn't say nothin' to me. He said, "Now son, I want you to get into bed." And he went and fixed the bed. And I got fixed and got me to bed. So, the next morning I got up, I was so sick. Durn, I was so sick. I never drunk nothin' more I don't guess for ten or fifteen years, before I drunk anything else.

FF: Did just about everybody make wine?

LB: Yeah nearly everybody--old folks kept wine to drink all the time. But nearly everybody used it in their cake, poured wine in their cakes, make wine in their cakes, soak their cake in wine.