Grape "Cuvee" Sorbet

Back in the day before we became chocolatiers, we were winemakers. Every year around this time, harvest begins and it always make me think of those days. One of the unique things we used to do, having tanks of freshly pressed grape juice was make "must" sorbet. "Must" is the winemaker term for freshly pressed grape juice. We would wait until it had started to ferment, but was still quite sweet. We would take a jugful of "must" from the spigot to freeze in an ice cream machine. It was always such a special treat and we have missed it for 20 years, now that we no longer make wine. But then I thought, why not make my own version? It's not exactly the same thing, but it is reminiscent enough to bring back happy memories.

For the Sorbet:

1 1/2 cups freshly pressed grape juice (from around 2 lbs. seedless red grapes)1 1/2 cups Rose wine of your choice1-2 ozs. simple syrup depending on the dryness of your wine and your palate

(To make simple syrup, combine 1 part water to 3 parts sugar and heat until the sugar is dissolved and the liquid is clear. Cool and store in a bottle or jar with a lid.)

So, here is the fun part of making this sorbet. Pressing the grapes! I thought about just putting them in a blender and pureeing them, but it occured to me that the "must" we were using was never on the skins. So blending them would put tannins in the mix that shouldn't be there. Pressing them is a bit of a pain in the backside, so you choose. Bottled grape juice is just not the same, so I wouldn't do that.

I had three different citrus presses that you can see here. The aluminum contraption turned out to be the best. It is a great squeezer that has a spout and all. I got from Amazon, it's called an Automoness Manual Juicer. While none of these are meant for grapes, it can be done. The trick is to begin slowly and gently and to push the grapes down several times before pressing again. Press them until you can't get any more juice. Remove the skins from the press and re-load with more grapes. It will take about 6-8 batches to get it all done. Pour the juice from the press into your measuring cup fitted with a small strainer. You want 1 1/2 cups of strained juice.

The rest is easy. Add the wine to the juice and stir. Add 1 oz. of simple syrup, then taste to see if you want more. Some wines are sweeter than others. Just remember, that

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“must” is super sweet. Chill it, then freeze it in whatever ice cream freezer you happen to have. Enjoy!

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