

# Sour Grapes



Enologist Carlos Corteza proudly gazed over the vast tract of northern Nebraska vineyards that represented Gossip brand Fine Wines. From such humble beginnings had his “spirits-raising” enterprise begun! He’d grown up on the family farm outside of Wynot resigned to follow in his dad Claymore’s footsteps. But Claymore wore huge shoes – size 19 – and Carlos figured, even with radical ankle-stretching surgery, he’d never be able to fill them. So instead, he fooled around with the grape arbor that abutted the barn. The grapes produced a sweetly robust juice that his sister, Eurydice, jarred each autumn. But Carlos had an idea, and he added sauerkraut and buttermilk to the fertilizer. The result was a crop of the sourest grapes imaginable! He ignored the protestations of Eurydice and set up a wine making operation in a corner of the barn. Using the sour grapes as a base, he eventually created a uniquely acerbic wine, one that patently eschewed the hoity-toity velvety nose that elitist winebibbers gravitated to. And because he placed the wine in convenience stores and motel kiosks and marketed it as an alternative to overpriced Bordeaux and Chiantis, his business took off. Sure, Carlos had to weather a two-year storm during the 1970s when the term “sour grapes” had negative connotations, but he eventually emerged stronger than ever, and went on to expand into the sour cream, sourdough and even the sour-puss arenas.