



The Wine Press



Newsletter of the Orange County Wine Society, Inc.

Volume 44, Issue 11, November 2020

President's Message

Thank you to all of our Orange County Wine Society members who sent in their electronic votes for the Board of Directors this past month. The new electronic election was flawless, and I want to congratulate both Carolyn Christian and Fred Heinecke as they join me in our 2020-2021 Board term. I am honored to say that I have been elected as the President of the Board of Directors for the upcoming year.

We have all been disappointed these past months, as our entire lives have been disrupted by the ongoing lockdown, brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic. The OCWS has been impacted, along with all other organizations, and our in-person activities have been severely impacted. We have not had a social event since March, and our two wine competitions, along with the entire OC Fair and our Wine Courtyard, were cancelled this year.

Many thanks to our creative staff, who have formatted several "virtual" wine events using Zoom in lieu of in-person events. Appreciation and recognition also goes out to our creative staff and presenters for pulling off both educational and entertaining seminars.

Membership Update



The Orange County Wine Society extends a warm welcome to its newest members! Membership for the following new members was approved by the Board of Directors in October 2020: **Jennifer Mochitani; Sean**

Leistner; Kathleen Hughes; Christine & Keith Brady; Lori Shapiro; and Esther & Rob Pock.



Every organization is a collection of assets, minus liabilities, which gives us our net worth. With the Orange County Wine Society, we don't look at our net worth in just financial terms.

From our Board of Directors, our greatest asset is **you**, our members! Without you, we would devolve to a small core of people conducting boring activities, and we would quickly fall apart. The Board is working on minimizing our outflow of funds, but our biggest objective is to keep you all involved, and to keep you all signed up as active members. We hope you will all continue to work with us as we navigate our way through these challenging times.

In the near future, you can look forward to more entertaining virtual events, and I hope you all will sign-up and participate with a glass of wine in your hand and a smile on your face!

Needless to say, we all look forward to a time when we can resume our lives, and we can all meet again in person at our events.

- Kevin Donnelly, President

As of October 1, the OCWS had 1,122 members.

- Brian McDonald, Acting Membership Chair

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Winemakers Newsroom

The Winemakers' Group completed its most difficult grape crush season in several years, with the northern California fires and the unseasonably warm weather causing cancellations and revamping of schedules. Bill Forsch made our first delivery in September which was Cabernet Franc and Rosé of Malbec from Emerald Creek Winery in Warner Springs, a newer second year supplier to the group. Chris van Aylea and Bruce Powers were able to arrange for purchase of Cabernet Sauvignon grapes from Paso Robles.



Bruce Powers also made a "solo" run up to Paso Robles and brought back Merlot from Stillwater Vineyards in Paso Robles to substitute for Chris' Dry Creek Valley Merlot which was destroyed by smoke taint. That was delivered in late September. Bill Forsch delivered Syrah and Dolcetto grapes from Lucas and Lewellen on Sunday, October 4.

Bruce made our final delivery on Sunday, October 9, when he brought down Chardonnay purchased from Lucas & Lewellen, also as a substitute for the Dry Creek Chardonnay that was destroyed by smoke taint. All of our deliveries were made to Bruce Powers' winery this year which made for a very organized process. We cannot thank Bruce enough for opening his home and winery for the group deliveries, something he has done now for at least 3 years in a row. The total of deliveries was about 17,000 lbs. of grapes and juice! Or enough to bottle about 6,000 bottles!

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The Orange County Wine Society is a non-profit 501(c)(3) educational organization incorporated under the laws of the State of California with its principal place of business in Costa Mesa, California.

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“As Long as We Make it With Love”

I had the honor and distinct pleasure to interview the brave and dynamic team of Roger and Janice Mattar and Doris and John Severs, winemakers and owners of Big Nose Family Winery who, this month, will be presenting their wines to the OCWS membership via our Virtual Winery Program.

I call them brave, as they took the leap from being OCWS Winemakers' Group amateur winemakers to commercial winemakers, and I call them dynamic in that their commercial debut entries in 2019 to the OC Fair Commercial Wine Competition garnered the highest awards, that of Double Gold, for both wines entered, not a small feat by any standards.

Upon the start of the interview, it was clear to me that the heartfelt emotion emanating from Big Nose's four principals in tandem and their personal relationships with each other are why they were a major hit right out of the gate. “You should do whatever you're passionate about and wherever your heart takes you, as long as you do it with love” and “You need good grapes to make good quality wine,” they said. Clearly a winning combination for them and for those who have had the pleasure of tasting their wines.

When asked how they got involved in making wine, they relayed a story about a trip to Napa in 2011, meeting a home winemaker and, as they said “after quite a bit of drinking great wines,” thought, “why not try it?” Roger, Big Nose's primary winemaker, upon return home to Orange County and some research, discovered the Orange County Wine Society and a passion was born. They had never made wine before joining the OCWS and being mentored by long-time home winemakers.

Now only two years in commercial business, and as with many other winemakers, this quartet is still working paying jobs (often more than one at a time), to sustain Big Nose, with hopes Big Nose will sustain them in the future, while fulfilling

their dreams. Sadly, they, like so many others, have been impacted by COVID-19. They said that, with hopes of moving “toward a tasting room and the whole nine yards, COVID-19 back peddled us. We had to stop knocking on doors, doing small events, and gathering our wine club members together for fun times, which we love. We've had to adapt and work in the atmosphere and society we're in right now.”



With a number of wine varietals currently in their repertoire, they are moving forward with love, laughter and the strong conviction to continue making quality wines and the necessity for their wines to be “free from defects, well balanced, and enjoyable to drink and share with others.”

To learn more about Big Nose Family Winery and their amazing ownership team, check out their video interview with Sara Yeoman, OCWS Vice President, on the OCWS Facebook and Twitter pages. Don't forget to reserve a space for the OCWS Virtual Winery Program on November 20 featuring Big Nose Family Winery.

- Fran Gitsham, Contributing Writer

Just in Time: Holiday Food & Wine Pairings



With the holidays upon us, the OCWS Seminar Committee is proud to present a fun Holiday Food & Wine pairing seminar on Sunday, November 22 at 3 pm.

Sign-ups will be open on the OCWS website starting Monday, November 2 and, if space is still available, the last day to sign-up

will be Wednesday, November 18.

Zoom links for attendance will be sent out to those who sign-up in the days prior to the event. This seminar is free for our members, but space is limited to 100 attendees.

Come join us in kicking off the Holiday Season with some ideas for festive food and wine pairings which will surely add some flair to any holiday meal.



- Sara Yeoman, Seminar Committee Chair

From the Mini-Tasting Archives: “Best of” Recipes & Wine Pairings

In food and wine pairing, the question often asked is “Wine for Food” or “Food for Wine?” Is it possible to pair the near impossible—wine with salad? Luckily for us, the latter question need not be answered since generally speaking the main dish entrées presented at our previous Mini-Tastings often fell under meat, fish or poultry.

However, I think we will all be wonderfully surprised to learn about “best of” recipes from our archives in other categories—an amazing side dish, a wonderful appetizer or a “to die for” dessert. Personally, I am looking forward to the possibility of knowing a “best of” recipe that falls under “dessert” so that my sweet tooth can be satisfied—will it be paired with a sparkling, lightly sweet, richly sweet, sweet red or fortified wine? So anxious to find out!

On second thought, considering that there might be the possibility of weight gain for some of us, or maybe just me, under

our current pandemic restrictions, I would welcome a really good salad paired with an equally good wine! Or, will it be a wonderful salad dressing with a side of salad?

Fran Gitsham and George Cravens have collaborated to bring us the “best of” recipes and wine pairings from our Mini-Tasting archives. Beginning with the December edition of *The Wine Press*, Fran will present each month a “best of” recipe and pair it with wine. George did the heavy lifting—scouring the archives for the Chef of the Evening recipes most voted across all sites.

We love wine and just about everything that goes with it. With the holiday season fast approaching, it could not be more appropriate to roll out the “best of” series beginning in December. Thank you, Fran and George, for bringing this series to us.

- Linda Mihalik, Editor

OCWS Virtual Winery Program with Big Nose Winery

Friday, November 20, 2020

Zoom event starts at 6:30 pm



This month, we will have a presentation by one of the founding members of Big Nose Winery. The Orange County Wine Society is very proud to introduce one of our very own Home Winemakers, now an award-winning commercial winemaker, Roger Mattar.

Starting as amateur winemakers, two families' love of winemaking turned them into award-winning commercial winemakers. These are the Mattar & Severs families. Their love for great wine, its complexity, flavors and aromas intrigued them to delve into the process by which wonderful grapes emerged into fabulous wines to be shared with friends and family.



Their process started after getting their first round of grapes in 2012, which is when they became home winemakers. Passions exploded and through many trials and

errors, hard work and late nights, they still managed to have lots of fun. Thus, Big Nose Wine was created and their dreams became a reality. For their first entry into a commercial competition, they won two Double Gold awards, their 2018 Rosé of Malbec (92 points) and 2018 Sauvignon Blanc (93 points).



Members can sign-up for the Big Nose Winery virtual seminar on our website to watch via Zoom. After you sign-up to attend, you will receive a confirmation email with details on connecting.

You have the option to order the wines to be presented at a 20% discounted price to us; tax and shipping fee will be added. The wines include: the 2018 Malbec, 2018 Merlot and the 2018 Cabernet Sauvignon. You may order these wines **now!** Use the link on our website! Order several days in advance to receive them in time for the seminar on November 20.

- Leslie Hodowanec, Director

- Rich Skoczylas, Director & Winery Program Chair

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The Wine Press welcomes input from the OCWS membership.

Forward comments, questions, and suggestions to WinePress@ocws.org.

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Winemakers Newsroom

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This year Bill Forsch experimented by providing a “packet” of enzymes, yeasts, yeast foods, and other additives to be used for the complete fermentation of each winemakers’ wines that they purchased, all as a part of their grape purchases. This was done to assist the newer winemakers, in particular, to ensure they were able to ferment grapes to completion in a stable manner with the prospect of having a nice wine when completed. We received very positive feedback on these pre-prepared kits.



We want to thank Bruce and Bill for the enormous amount of work they did in arranging for the purchase, transport and delivery of the grapes, and for Bill’s efforts in preparing the fermentation kits. It is this kind of consistent effort that makes the group grape purchases so successful.

40 Years of OCWS Scholarships



Our members have been pleased to learn about the scholarship colleges and universities the OCWS has supported **since 1981**, beginning with two colleges. Benefits of OCWS membership include

the enjoyment of knowing about our contributions to the students in the educational world of campus agriculture, business and research, and their appreciation of our generosity.

This season will be **40 years** that the OCWS has consistently provided scholarship funding, building to our current list of eight colleges and universities. We need to Wine-Up our scholarship funds this year as the end of December is the beginning of the 2021 scholarship distributions.

College wineries have acquired commercially bonded licenses; hosting tasting events and selling their own wines on campus and locally. For many years, several of the colleges we have supported won awards in the Commercial Wine Competition, which wines were proudly featured and poured at The Courtyard during the OC Fair. Culinary arts students have also served as judges in our Chili Cook-offs.

Student recipient thank you letters are regularly posted on the OCWS website under Scholarship. This summer we have had the pleasure of meeting appreciative students on the Zoom

As you now know, Kevin Donnelly has been elected to the OCWS Board of Directors and has also been named its President for the coming year. Kevin has done a tremendous job of steering the Winemakers’ Group following the many years of Jim Graver’s excellent leadership. Now that Kevin has taken on new responsibilities, he has asked for volunteers to lead the Winemakers’ Group, and Bill Forsch has agreed to take on that role, with the assistance of others in supportive roles.

Bill has been an integral part of the Winemakers’ Group for many years and has consistently gone above and beyond what was needed for the group. Bill also consistently thinks of others—as part of the most recent Syrah purchase, he delivered Syrah grapes to an elderly group of winemakers who were making a “tribute” wine for one of the former OCWS members and winemakers. He has taught classes for several years about making wine from kits and is always thinking of ideas for how to make winemaking easier for the newer winemakers. Please join us in thanking Bill for his past efforts and agreeing to help him in this new role.

- **David Rutledge, Contributing Writer**

platform, which meetings were set up by the college foundations. We heard first-hand from the students about the impact of the fires that have ravaged northern California. Although cancelled for now, the OCWS has received several invitations to tour campus facilities, which we hope to provide virtually to our members next year.

COVID-19 has forced students to study virtually from home this year. Many students in wildfire areas were evacuated and some lost their homes. The colleges we support allowed on-campus learning for them, but then the colleges were evacuated. Some foundations have set aside their own funds that may be utilized for extreme student hardship as well.

The CARES Act allows a universal deduction for donations up to \$300. Please always check with your tax professional as how it applies to you. The Scholarship page on the OCWS website will help you choose an allocation and provide a printable receipt for your tax records.

Dedicated students who are not even old enough to drink are still tending fields, vines, and bottling potential award-winning wines.

And yet with all of these hardships, they send us letters of gratitude for our support. Help us fill the 2021 scholarship glass, for they are the future educators for the next 40 OCWS years.

- **Leslie Hodowanec, Director & Scholarship Chair**



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OCWS Save the Date Calendar

- November 20 Virtual Winery Program—Big Nose Winery
- November 22 Holiday Food & Wine Parings Seminar
- January 22 Winery Program—Rock Wall Wine Company

Sundays, December 6 through February 28:

Virtual Winter Entertainment Seminars



www.ocws.org

