



# The Wine Press



Newsletter of the Orange County Wine Society, Inc.

Volume 45, Issue 4, April 2021

## President's Message

As we enter April, our summer activities are coming more into focus. Although the COVID pandemic is still affecting our lives every day, we are beginning to focus on our OCWS summer activities. Our Board members and Committee Chairs have been working with OCFC, and we were glad to hear an OC Fair executive confirm that "the Commercial Competition is **very** important to our program." The OCWS Commercial Wine Competition is on track for June 5-6, and our Home Wine Competition is scheduled to be held on June 19. Marketing materials have gone out, and we will be contacting our members over the next few months asking for volunteers.

We also now have our OCWS in-house office once again staffed Monday through Friday by Lynda Edwards and Rochelle Randel, and Liz and Lloyd Corbett will be working in Building 15 to receive wines for both of our Competitions. Thank you for continuing to work with us and helping us move back into the OCWS groove!

During April, we are continuing our virtual seminars, with several Monday night "Varietal Hours," starting April 5 with Sangiovese. On April 9, we have our Winery Webinar program with Russian River Vineyards, and on April 21, we have a Wine Education Seminar on "Wines of Central Coast." Further information is available in articles in this edition of the newsletter and on our website at [ocws.org](http://ocws.org) under the Events tab.

As I have discussed in the past two months, after suspending annual fees for the past year, we are resuming asking for annual membership fees of \$40 for singles or \$60 for doubles this month. I hope this will not inconvenience anyone, and I look forward to seeing everyone "re-upping" when your month comes up and participating in our events this year and next year!

Thank you all for your continued support during these difficult times, and I look forward to actually SEEING you in the not-too-distant future.

- Kevin Donnelly, President

## Cannonball Wine Company—Scavenger Hunt

For our March Winery Webinar with Cannonball Wine Company, winemaker Ondine Chattan invited every member to participate in a "Scavenger Hunt." Ondine would award the winner of this "hunt" with a special gift. A series of questions were posed about her winery, with the answers to be learned from Ondine's presentation or information to be researched and submitted online. Several members participated and found the answers about the Cannonball and Angels & Cowboys wine brands and related winery questions. Attendees also heard about the High Dive Napa Valley collaboration between Share A Splash and the Astrolabe brand from New Zealand, two exciting additions to the wine company.

One member's knowledge came out above the rest—**Kevin Coy**. Congratulations, Kevin, we are confident that your special gift is on its way.

- Leslie Hodowanec, Director

- Rich Skoczylas, Director & Winery Program Chair

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**Kevin Donnelly**  
**President**  
 Kevindonnelly@ocws.org



**Sara Yeoman**  
**Vice President**  
 Sara@ocws.org



**Mel Jay**  
**Treasurer**  
 Mel@ocws.org



**George Cravens**  
**Secretary**  
 George@ocws.org



**Carolyn Christian**  
**Director**  
 Carolyn@ocws.org



**Fred Heinecke**  
**Director**  
 Fred@ocws.org



**Leslie Hodowanec**  
**Director**  
 Les@ocws.org



**Linda Mihalik**  
**Director**  
 Linda@ocws.org



**Rich Skoczylas**  
**Director**  
 Rich@ocws.org

## OCWS Wine Education Webinars

We are excited to announce the Wine Education Series class for April. While we cannot hold wine education classes in person, we can help you travel the globe in search of great wines! We are partnering with Certified Sommelier Spreti Valente, who has over 15 years of experience in the industry. She will provide an in-depth look at the history, climate, and general wine information on a variety of regions.

Each class will feature wines for purchase ahead of the class, and wines available for purchase after the class, all at a discount to our OCWS members. The cost of the class is \$20 per logon – you can join us alone or make it a fun date night with your significant other! Build your wine knowledge and travel the globe virtually.

*- Carolyn Christian, Wine Education Chair*

- **Wines of California Central Coast - Wed, April 21, 2021 6:00 – 7:30 pm**
  - **Wines: TBD**

## Membership Update



The Orange County Wine Society extends an extremely warm welcome to its newest members! Membership for the following new members was approved by the Board of Directors in March 2021:

**Rick Morgan and Cindy Shingler**

As of March 1, the OCWS had 1,134 members.

*- Mel Jay, Membership Chair*

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*The Wine Press* welcomes input from the OCWS membership.

Forward comments, questions, and suggestions to

WinePress@ocws.org

**Editor-in-Chief:** Linda Mihalik

**Contributing Writers:** Board of Directors, Bill Forsch, Fran Gitsham, Bill Redding, Robyn & Dean Strom

**Contributing Editors:** John Goodnight, Ron Nickens, Rochelle Randel, Taren Weber

**Contributing Photographer:** Wendy Taylor

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## There's a Story Behind Every Wine



The OCWS Winery Webinar program is thrilled to be presenting Giovanni Balistreri, co-owner and winemaker of Russian River Vineyards, on Friday, April 9. After listening to Gio and hearing the excitement in his voice and seeing the look of sheer pleasure on his face, it was clear to see why he feels

that “wine is fun and it’s a passion.” He explained that to him, “there’s a story behind every wine,” and that his philosophy and style is that he makes wine by taste, touch and feel. With this love of his, it’s easy to understand how Russian River Vineyards garnered three awards at the 2019 OC Fair Commercial Wine Competition and overall, how RRV wines have won more than 200 medals, 75 of them gold.

From fifth generation Sonoma farmer to impassioned winemaker, Gio wears his heart on his sleeve when it comes to his passions. As a three-year-old learning at the knee of his grandmother to tend her vegetable garden, to a newly graduated high school student in 1999 planting his first four-acre vineyard of Pinot Noir on his family’s farm with his father, to his first vintage in 2004, having just graduated college, Gio exudes passion when he speaks of everything from his upbringing to his family and his love of the wine making process.

## Winemakers Newsroom

**Winemakers’ Group 9<sup>th</sup> Consecutive Kit Wine Making Class will start on May 15! Look for sign up online – NOW!**

As with last year, the class will be conducted remotely via Zoom. This has been one of our most popular classes year upon year. Since inception in 2013, approximately 175 members have enjoyed this program; roughly 2/3rds of our new winemakers have started from this introductory class! We have even educated past Board members – Liz & Lloyd Corbett, Bill Redding, Leslie Hodowanec, Ken Scott, and Wendy & Stacey Taylor, to name a few.

Many have gone on to produce Silver, Gold, and Double Gold wines as double blind judged in our Home Wine Competitions! Others have gone on to utilize grapes and fresh juices to make wines, and some have gone on to become commercial wine makers.

This year, as in 2020, we will feature **OCWS winemaker, Karyl Newton**, who will be conducting the class. Karyl is a passionate home winemaker of kits, grapes, and juice. Her expertise in kit knowledge, techniques, question answering, and delivery humor is unique! Of special note this year – an extremely **NOMINAL** fee of \$15 reserves your spot in this class! Karyl will conduct this class and cover **all** stages of winemaking from

When asked of his favorite aspect of the wine industry, Gio says that “wine is fun and not work” and that he loves to “control every aspect of growing the grapes, watching them all summer long and then harvesting them” so he can “control the quality, get the most premium fruit and make that into wine.” He also loves the social side and tries to be in the tasting room as much as possible, speaking to every single person.

Russian River Vineyards has generously offered their wines at a 30% discount, with wine sales extending from March 1<sup>st</sup> to April 12<sup>th</sup>. The three wines that will be presented are: 2019 Chardonnay/Bacigalupi, 2017 Pinot Noir/Classic Cuvee, and 2016 Red Blend/Confluence and can be purchased for just \$100 for all three. Information on ordering wines can be found on the OCWS website.

This brief article cannot possibly convey the passion emitted from the man himself. Don’t miss the opportunity to see and hear Gio live! Sign-ups close at 5 pm on Wednesday, April 7 and remember, purchasing wine does not automatically sign you up for the Zoom webinar. You must sign into your account and sign up to attend under the “Events” tab at [www.ocws.org](http://www.ocws.org). If you have any questions, please contact Rich Skoczylas at [Rich@ocws.org](mailto:Rich@ocws.org).

**- Fran Gitsham, Contributing Writer**

kits – start, racking, fining, through bottling. **Class dates are consecutive weeks – May 15, 22, and 29.** No equipment is needed for this class, although we will indicate which kits she will be making if anyone wants to parallel her and make the same kits and utilize her expertise in answering questions with their own wine and equipment. This is a fun, enjoyable, educational experience. Please reserve your spot with Karyl and our Kit Wine Making Class.

**HOME WINE COMPETITION.** At this penning for the April newsletter (in mid-March), we are on the cusp of being approved to conduct a 2021 Home Wine Competition on the fairgrounds.

Very, very soon we will have an announcement if moving forward. The timeframe would be June! Hope with me that we



will be allowed to move forward! We expect Covid-safe protocols – with modified formats, spacing, and competition – that will be utilized. More information to follow soon!

Stay safe and best to all, cheers!

**- Bill Forsch, Winemakers’ Group Chair**

## “Best of” Recipe & Wine Pairings—April 2021

The Comfort Food and Wine Pairings seminar presented on February 21<sup>st</sup> by Ed Reyes and Sara Yeoman had a lot of us salivating and ready to comfort eat our way through several days to come. For me personally, the highlight was watching and listening to Ed describe his Chicken Pot Pie recipe. By the look on his face and the tone of his voice, I knew this one was a winner, as it's obvious that this dish is among his favorites and most soothing. For anyone who is fortunate enough to know Ed, you know he's not only one of the nicest people in the world, but an accomplished home winemaker and cook extraordinaire. He has the innate sense of taste and smell that makes the world's finest chefs stand out above the rest.



Many of us have had the pleasure of attending seminars presented by Ed on various wines and wine pairings. His understanding and explanations of what wines pair with what foods

never ceases to amaze me.

For this recipe, **Ed paired a Sauvignon Blanc** for the herbal notes of the wine as the recipe is creamy and rich and the SB cuts through the richness. Ed further suggests a Pinot Noir, for red lovers, for the exact same reason. I'd wager that a lot of us will be trying this recipe soon. Thanks, Ed, for your willingness to always share your knowledge, love and enthusiasm for food and wine.

### Chicken Pot Pie ala Ed Reyes

Makes 6 servings

- 6 tablespoons unsalted butter
- 1 large shallot, finely chopped
- 1 tablespoon chopped thyme
- ½ cup dry white wine (Sauvignon Blanc or Pinot Grigio)
- ½ cup all-purpose flour, plus more for dusting
- 3 cups low sodium chicken broth
- 1 cup heavy cream
- 1/8 teaspoon dry mustard
- Kosher salt, freshly ground pepper
- 1 large sprig fresh rosemary
- 2 bay leaves
- 2 medium carrots (about 6 oz), peeled, chopped

- 1 medium russet potato, peeled, cut into ½-inch dice
- 4 cups coarsely chopped or shredded rotisserie chicken meat (from 1 small rotisserie chicken)
- 1 ½ cups frozen pearl onions, thawed
- 1 ½ cups frozen peas, thawed
- 2 teaspoons Worcestershire sauce
- 1 sheet puff pastry, thawed in refrigerator
- 1 large egg, lightly beaten

Preheat oven to 400°. Heat butter in a large skillet over medium heat. Add shallot and thyme and cook, stirring often until shallot is translucent, about 3 minutes. Add wine and continue stirring until wine is reduced by half. Add ½ cup flour and cook, whisking constantly, until mixture is pale golden, about 5 minutes.

Whisk in broth, ½ cupful at a time, incorporating completely before adding more. Whisk in cream and dry mustard. Season with salt and pepper, add rosemary sprig and bay leaves. Bring mixture to a boil, reduce heat and simmer, whisking occasionally, until thick enough to coat a spoon, about 3 minutes. Reduce heat as needed to maintain a simmer and add carrots and potatoes. Cook until vegetables are nearly tender, about 5 to 7 minutes.

Remove rosemary sprig and bay leaves. Mix in chicken, pearl onions and peas. Add Worcestershire sauce, taste and adjust salt and pepper, if needed. Transfer mixture to a shallow 2-quart baking dish.

Unfold pastry and gently roll out on a lightly floured work surface just to smooth out creases and, if needed, make it large enough to fit over dish. Drape over baking dish and trim pastry so it is slightly larger than the dish (you want a little overhang). Brush with egg and make 2 or 3 slits in the pastry with a sharp knife.

Place baking dish on a rimmed baking sheet (to catch any filling that may drip over) and bake until puff pastry is golden brown, and filling is bubbling through slits, about 20–30 minutes. Reduce oven temperature to 350° and continue to bake until crust is deep golden and cooked through, 30–35 minutes longer. Let sit 10 minutes before serving.

- Fran Gitsham, Contributing Writer

*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.*

PO Box 11059, Costa Mesa, CA 92627

Phone: 714.708.1636 ■ Fax: 714.546.5002

Website: OCWS.org ■ OCWS Facebook ■ Twitter: @OCWineSociety

OCWS Website Administrator: Wendy Taylor

OCWS Photographer: Jim Burk

## OCWS Winery Webinar Program—Russian River Vineyards

Friday, April 9, 2021 @ 6:30 pm  
Via Zoom Webinar Platform



Russian River Vineyards winemaker, Giovanni "Gio" Balistreri, will be our featured speaker. He comes from four generations of farmers, and he would not have it any other way. Gio is a farmer, first and foremost.

To produce great wine, Gio believes that you must first produce excellent fruit. And it is the essential character and flavor of that fruit, when it is harvested, that will determine its potential to become a superior wine. There is no shortcut. You must be there and manage the crop at every step.



The Russian River Valley is one of the world's greatest winemaking regions where true devotees of great wine are familiar with the magic of this valley. So, just over a decade ago, he set out to make the most of an incredible environment to make great wine. The Russian River area

enjoys warm summer days, which are important for sugar production in grapes, and cool night temperatures to preserve the

acidity in the grapes. This provides a combination to achieve and maintain the delicate balance of sugar and acid. These attributes, combined with rich and diverse soil conditions, make the Russian River Valley a winemaker's dream for Gio to work his magic.

**Wine Ordering Offer:** You have the option to order the wines at a 30% discount; tax and shipping fee will be added. This wine sale period extends from March 1 to April 12. The information to order the wines for the event is located on the Wine Society website. The wines to order (\$100 for all three) for the webinar include:

2019 Chardonnay/Bacigalupi Vineyard  
2017 Pinot Noir/Classic Cuvee  
2016 Red Blend/Confluence

NOTE: you must sign up separately on the website to attend this webinar on Zoom. Buying the wines does NOT sign you up for the webinar.

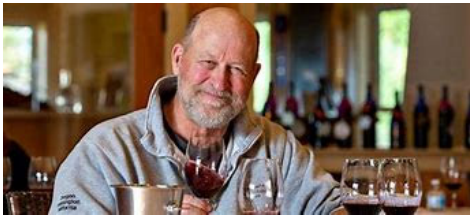
Sign-ups close 5 pm on Wednesday, April 7. After you sign up to attend, you will receive a confirmation email by Thursday Noon, April 8 with details to connect. If you cannot find your confirmation, contact Rich@ocws.org.

- Leslie Hodowanec, Director  
- Rich Skoczylas, Director & Winery Program Chair

## OCWS Winery Webinar Program—Jeff Runquist Wines

Friday, May 14, 2021 @ 6:30 pm  
Via Zoom Webinar Platform

Our mystery winemaker for May will be—**Jeff Runquist!**



Jeff Runquist has a passion for red wines. He produces 22 different red varietals and has received dozens of medals. Jeff wins

many competitions from Orange County, San Francisco to the California State Fair; his wines are recognized to bring in Gold and Double Gold Awards.

Jeff's numerous and recognizable wines are easily found with their "R" on the bottles, and an exceptional "Z" for his Zinfandel. His wines are balanced to be enjoyed in their youth as well as age to become more complex. They have zest and vibrant flavors.

Jeff has previously visited us and gave a wonderful presentation. Our members loved his wines, and we are excited to have him virtually visit to tell us about his wines. Don't miss out on this occasion!

Members have to sign-up for this virtual webinar on our website to watch via Zoom. Sign-ups close Wednesday, May 12 at 5 pm.

After you sign-up to attend, you will receive a confirmation email by Thursday noon, May 13, with details to connect. If you cannot find your confirmation, contact Rich@ocws.org.

- Leslie Hodowanec, Director  
- Rich Skoczylas, Director & Winery Program Chair



## The OCWS Varietal Hour



Thank you to everyone who has made the OCWS Varietal Hour such a great success! Our weekly OCWS Varietal Hour continues every Monday at 7 pm. Come join your OCWS friends and make new

friends as you share a wine from the weekly theme.

This free event is in a Zoom meeting format, with all participants visible on the screen. Sign-up today on the OCWS website.

A special thank you to the OCWS members who have volunteered their time to serve as hosts for the events: Don Phillips, Linda Mihalik, Ken Knapp, Dawn Iglesias, Rochelle Randel, Sara Yeoman, Fred and Cheryl Heinecke, Kim and Sam Clark, Jim Burk, Rich Skoczylas, and Ed Reyes.

If you are interested in hosting one of the future Varietal Hours, please contact Carolyn at [Carolyn@ocws.org](mailto:Carolyn@ocws.org) or George at [George@ocws.org](mailto:George@ocws.org).

**- George Cravens & Carolyn Christian, Directors**

Below is a listing of **upcoming Varietal Hour themes**:

- Monday, April 5 (7-8 pm) Host: Kevin Donnelly—Varietal: Sangiovese
- Monday, April 12 (7-8 pm) Hosts: Don & Elee Phillips—Varietal: Pinot Grigio
- Monday, April 19 (7-8 pm) Hosts: Sara Yeoman & Carolyn Christian—Varietal: Wine Cocktails (watch for recipes or bring your own)
- Monday, April 26 (7-8 pm) Host: Ken Knapp—Varietal: Italian Red Varietals (Sangiovese, Nebbiolo, Barbera, Dolcetto, Primitivo, Montepulciano, Aglianico, etc.)
- Monday, May 3 (7-8 pm) Host: Ken Knapp—Varietal: Italian White Varietals (Moscato, Pinot Grigio, Vermentino, Greco, Arneis, Trebbiano, Cortese, etc.)
- Monday, May 10 (7-8 pm) Hosts: Sam & Kim Clark—Varietal: Fortified Wines (Port, Sherry, Madeira, Marsala, Vermouth, Fortified Dessert Wines, etc.)
- Monday, May 17 (7-8 pm) Host: Jim Burk & Carolyn Christian—Varietal: Syrah / Petite Sirah
- Monday, May 24 (7-8 pm) Host: Fran Gitsham—Varietal: Riesling
- Monday, May 31 (7-8 pm) Hosts: Don & Elee Phillips—Varietal: Rosé

## Commercial Wine Competition Volunteers Needed

We're still calling all volunteers! The 2021 Commercial Wine Competition will be held **early June 2021 (June 5-6)** and volunteers are crucial to its success!



**Please note the date change this year and save the date!** This event offers many opportunities to enjoy getting to know your fellow OCWS members and experience some great California wines.

We continue to work with the OC Fair & Event Center Administration, taking all the necessary steps for your safety. You are each very important to us, and we ask you remain flexible as this event rolls out. With your excellent help, we can make it another success on our books!

There are many tasks where volunteer help is needed including stewarding, glass drying, and computer input and verifica-

tion of scores. **No training is necessary** as newer volunteers will be teamed with experienced competition volunteers.

**All** volunteer signups are now done **online!** The volunteer site identifies bagging nights, stewarding days, and other work tasks with dates and times. In order to qualify for stewarding, you will need to sign up for two additional work tasks. We can offer bagging, hotel setup, and moving of wine to and from the competition site. In addition, volunteers can elect to work the sorting event in June.

Breakfast will be provided to those members who have booked their rooms using the OCWS block.

Sign-ups are available on our website at [ocws.org](http://ocws.org) under Menu>Members Corner. Please make sure your email address is up to date as we will be using your email address to send you confirmations.

If you have questions about volunteering, please email us at [Robyn@ocws.org](mailto:Robyn@ocws.org). We look forward to your participation in this very important event!

**- Robyn & Dean Strom, Volunteer Coordinators  
Commercial Wine Competition Committee**

## 2021: 40 Years of Scholarship Awards

The OCWS Board of Directors is pleased to announce the 2021 Scholarship Awards to our eight OCWS colleges and universities totaling **\$5,830.01**. Since 1996, the OCWS Scholarship Account has generated **\$712,511**.

We are thankful for the support from our members, and especially the BOD this past year, making sure that our scholarship students, on and off campus, have a reason to celebrate after extreme wildfires and pandemic challenges.



2021 funding is only a fraction of last year mainly because we lost our COVID-cancelled events which generated donations and also membership dues extensions. The Chris Cunningham Endowment gets the Gold as the OCWS did not miss any opportunity for scholarship allocations this special 40th year.

Also, the CARES Act (Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Securities Act) from 2020 has been extended with specifics through 2021. The IRS now allows an above the

line tax deduction toward charitable 501(c)(3) organizations, including the OCWS, for individuals up to the amount of \$300 and \$600 for those who file jointly. Please contact your tax professional for advice.

Members may officially make qualifying OCWS scholarship contributions on our website at the following link, <https://ocws.org/product/scholarship-donations/> with the option to designate a donation to all or individual colleges of your choice. After your selection and payment, you can print a receipt for your records.

Any amount is appreciated! With the promising gradual re-openings and your continued support, another valuable goal of our organization this year is to encourage additional funding toward our Scholarship Account for 2022.

Cheers to 40 Years of providing OCWS scholarship awards and enjoying each of the many more award-winning college wines!

*- Leslie Hodowanec, Scholarship Chair*

## Hotel Reservations for the 2021 Commercial Wine Competition



If you plan on staying at the Hilton Hotel located at 3050 Bristol Street, Costa Mesa, for the weekend of the Commercial Wine Competition, please make reservations no later than May 15, 2021. The OCWS has booked a block of rooms for OCWS members at a discounted rate and this rate is guaranteed only until that date. The special rate does not require advance payment and is \$145 per night plus \$16 per night parking.

If you want to stay on the 7th floor Executive Level, the rate is \$180. Members who book their rooms using the OCWS block will receive a bottle of wine in thanks for their help in meeting our room commitments. Breakfast will also be provided to those members who have booked their rooms using the OCWS block.

Reservations can be made by phoning the hotel directly at 714.540.7000 or if you prefer to book online, please go to the OCWS website for the OCWS direct booking link after logging into your account.

When making reservations by phone at 1-800-Hiltons (1.800.445.8667), be sure to mention the discount code "OCWS Wine Competition 2021" to receive the above rates.

*- Bill Redding, Facilities Coordinator  
Commercial Wine Competition Committee*



**There's a Light at the end of the Tunnel;  
Wine in The Courtyard, and It's**

**TIME FOR FUN**

**at the 2021 OC FAIR**

**July 16 through August 15**

**Volunteer sign-ups starting May 1. Detailed information coming soon.**

*- Fran Gitsham, Courtyard Chair*



## *The Wine Press*

Orange County Wine Society, Inc.  
PO Box 11059  
Costa Mesa, CA 92627

## OCWS Save the Date Calendar

### Winery Webinar Events:

April 9 Russian River Vineyards  
May 14 Jeff Runquist Wine Company

### OCWS Varietal Hour:

April 5 Sangiovese  
April 12 Pinot Grigio  
April 19 Wine Cocktails  
April 26 Italian Red Varietals

May 3 Italian White Varietals  
May 10 Fortified Wines  
May 17 Syrah / Petite Sirah  
May 24 Riesling  
May 31 Rosé

### Wine Education Webinars:

April 21 Wines of California Central Coast

May 15 Winemakers' Group Kit Wine Making Class Begins  
June 5 and 6 2021 Commercial Wine Competition  
June 19 2021 Home Wine Competition (tentative)  
July 16 through August 15 2021 OC Fair



[www.ocws.org](http://www.ocws.org)

