



The Wine Press



Newsletter of the Orange County Wine Society, Inc.

Volume 45, Issue 6, June 2021

President's Message

June has arrived, and we enter the most important three months of the OC Wine Society's calendar from a business perspective. On June 5 and 6 we host the OC Fair's Commercial Wine Competition, on June 12 we host the Home Wine Competition, and from July 16 to August 15 we host the OC Fair's Wine Courtyard. The Commercial Wine Competition is when the OCWS brings in the wines, and The Courtyard at the OC Fair, our largest fundraiser of the year, coupled with income from our Wine Auction, sustains the organization financially for the following year.

During these months, we appreciate all of the time you, our members, volunteer to work at these events. But these are also the times when we get to know other members, and many of these members will become your lifelong friends. The bonds we make at our events are what gives the *heart* to the Orange County Wine Society and are the reason so many of our members have

stayed as members for 10, 20, 30, and even more than 40 years! If you haven't worked at one or all of these events in past years, I encourage you to explore openings and see where you can fit in, and I hope you all become long-term members!

Looking out into the future, we are hoping to start resuming our social activities this fall. The upcoming relieving of the COVID-19 restrictions by the State and the Orange County Health Department and scheduling The Courtyard during the OC Fair are issues we are currently dealing with. We will also look at the ability to conduct our long-delayed Wine Auction sometime in the fall, so keep your eyes open for our upcoming announcements once we get past the OC Fair.

I hope to see many of you over the next few weeks and months! Social time is coming, cheers!

- Kevin Donnelly, President

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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 May 2021:

David Imboden; Maria Gutierrez & Laura Duarte; Catherine Miller & John Nelson; Rochelle Donovan; DeeAnn & Mark

Caples; Kari Black; Kristin Kuwahara & Chris Diaz; Cassandra Hansen

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

- Mel Jay, Membership Chair

	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

Gold Medal Mini-Tasting

It's been quite a long time since we've been able to hold a Mini-Tasting, and the Gold Medal Mini-Tasting is traditionally the most popular one of the year. This year, since we're still working towards opening up from the pandemic, we are planning to schedule the Gold Medal Mini-Tasting after the OC Fair. This will allow time to arrange for a larger number of host sites, each with a smaller guest list so that everyone will be comfortable and safe.

Tentatively, we are thinking about Saturday, September 11 (the week after Labor Day). We hope to be able to have as many sites as possible host the tasting outdoors, so smaller groups will make this easier to facilitate. If you are interested in hosting the mini-tasting, please contact George Cravens at George@ocws.org. We plan to have the details worked out in time for the July Newsletter, with sign-ups starting in August. **Thank you for your patience. We are all looking forward to getting back together again. Cheers!**

- George Cravens, Mini-Tasting Committee Chair

2021 Wine Auction

The Wine Auction Committee would like to update the OCWS membership with the latest information on the 2021 Wine Auction. We, like so many of you, look forward to this event every year. With the closure of the Fairgrounds in 2020, we were forced to cancel the Auction last year. Over the last several months, we were anxiously awaiting the confirmation that the OC Fair and the OC Fair Commercial Wine Competition would be held as scheduled. With both the Fair and Competition just around the corner, we are all focused on making both events a success for the OCWS.

While we were not able to hold the Auction in the spring, which is our typical timeframe, we still plan to have a Wine Auction in 2021. Stay tuned for more details on the upcoming Wine Auction which we plan to hold in person this fall, if at all possible. We look forward to seeing you there!

If you are interested in being on the Wine Auction Committee, we are still looking for more committee members. Please reach out to me at Carolyn@ocws.org.

- Carolyn Christian, Wine Auction Committee Chair

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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Winemakers Newsroom

As I pen this article about a month before the Home Wine Competition date of June 12, one thought continues to recur in my mind, **Volunteers!**

Many of our winemaker activities are small tasks or events which do not require too much staffing, planning, or logistics. We have cork and bottle programs, pre-crush and post-crush discussion, grape and juice pick-up and deliveries – not that they are easy, carefree activities. But, nothing within our group compares to the logistics and people power we need for the Home Wine Competition.

The Home Wine Competition, which we hold on the OC Fairgrounds, is the exact opposite. With this being my first year as the Chair (aka - very symbolic lead organizer) of this event, I cannot believe the energized group that has stepped forward to help with all facets to make this one of the finest run, most well respected home wine judging events in the United States.

This week we received a surprise notification by our OC Fair partners that we needed to move our competition to “The Hangar,” as the normal location would evolve into a COVID-19 vaccination center. To avoid belaboring this topic, there have been and are **many, many** challenges and “pivots” to cope with in order to have a successful Competition. The volunteer team leaders have in each instance only said, “Okay, what do we need to do in order to turn and stay on track?”

We normally evaluate over 600 to 700 entries with our Home Wine Competition in a “normal” year; and expect our number this year to be in the 400+ bottle range (currently at about 325 – with a little more than 2 weeks left before our cutoff).

To complete this activity in a day requires people – lots of people (and at the tail end of a pandemic, too), and we must provide a safe environment to work. We have about three judges

per panel that are able to look, smell, taste, and evaluate perhaps 20 to 25 wines each before their taste buds are shot for the day. To support those panels, we typically have a couple of stewards per panel to bring those “double blind” wines to their table for judging. We have a complete data entry team that records those judges’ ratings for each and every wine. Team leaders for each area coordinate their groups – from check in, to coffee, to stewards, to judges, to panel flow, to data management, to computer entry, to label judging, to best of show judging panel, and teams to package and send out awards and the evaluation sheets, and on and on.

The math works out to just under 200 bodies! All volunteers – what a group! So, the main point of this article is to “pre-thank” our volunteers! Without you we have **no** Home Wine Competition. In past years, we have been able to “thank” those volunteers with an after event the day after our competition – sharing some food and some of the remaining wine from our medal winning wine “leftovers.” Unfortunately, we will not have that luxury this year due to the pandemic restrictions, and have ceded our “space” to the TIPS training group that will use The Hangar location to get us ready for our Fair pouring in The Courtyard.



So, in closing – a **GREAT BIG THANK YOU** to all our volunteers! Without you we have no Competition, no home wine group, no main group, no OCWS! **Thank you so much!**

If you have any questions, I can be reached by email at BillForsch@ocws.org or by phone at 949.981.5087. Best to all, cheers!

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

Winemaking Webinar—Making a Plan Before Getting Grapes



The winemaking process starts long before the grapes arrive. There is much more to it than just deciding what wine you want to make. A successful winemaker develops a “crush plan” ahead of time to determine the equipment, supplies and steps involved all

through the process from grapes to your glass.

On Saturday, July 10 at 10 am, the OCWS Winemakers’ Group presents an educational webinar showing you how to develop a “crush plan” for the upcoming harvest. Join Ed Reyes as he

explains what you need to consider before jumping into making wine from grapes this fall. Ed will map out the steps involved throughout the winemaking process. Learn about any special treatment particular varietals may need. He will also share some of the tips and techniques learned from over 10 years of winemaking with the OCWS.

Whether you are a first-time winemaker, an experienced kit winemaker, or just curious about the process, join us for this informative webinar which is sure to educate and entertain.

Sign up to attend the winemaking webinar at ocws.org.

- **The OCWS Winemakers' Group**

In Memoriam

ERIC W. MARTENS

February 23, 1940 – April 12, 2021



We regret to inform the membership of the recent passing of Eric Martens, a many-year member of the Orange County Wine Society.

Eric can be remembered by his willingness and enthusiasm to work The Courtyard every year serving wine, managing, and acting as Wine Steward. He was also an avid member of the Cooks' Caucus, where he delighted in cooking delicious meals for our members during many of our events.

In his life outside the OCWS, Eric was a prominent attorney who practiced law in both Orange and Los Angeles County. Additionally, as an avid patriot and historian, Eric was a professional officer in the California State Guard, recently retiring as a full colonel in the Judge Advocate General's Corps.

Eric's wife, Barbara, preceded him in passing. He is survived by his daughters, Erin and Elise, as well as four stepchildren, Zane, Zach, Zale, and Kim, and many grandchildren.

He will be deeply missed by all who knew and loved him.

- John Goodnight, OCWS President Emeritus

OCWS Varietal Hour—Back by Popular Demand!



The OCWS Varietal Hour has been very popular this year. While we are taking a few weeks' break to focus on the OC Fair Commercial and Home Wine Competitions, we are planning to resume because of the positive feedback from

our participants. We appreciate the great enthusiasm of our members in trying some new varietals that they might not otherwise try. We hope some of you who have not joined us for this event yet will join us for a future date.

Join us beginning on June 14th for the continuation of our happy hour we call the OCWS Varietal Hour! This is a casual

event hosted as a Zoom meeting, with all participants on the screen, featuring a different wine varietal or varietals and different hosts each week! Below is a schedule for the next few months (more dates and themes will be listed in future newsletters). Beginning in June, we will be hosting these events every other week.

If you have an idea for a future theme or are interested in hosting, please contact Carolyn at Carolyn@ocws.org or George Cravens at George@ocws.org.

Cheers!

- Carolyn Christian & George Cravens, Directors

DATE & TIME	VARIETAL	HOSTS
6/14/2021 @ 7 pm	ASBC (Any State But California) Wines – 49 other states to choose from!	Carolyn Christian
6/28/2021 @ 7 pm	Malbec	George Cravens
7/12/2021 @ 7 pm	German Wines – Wines made in Germany or wines made from German grape varieties such as: Bacchus, Elbing, Riesling, Gewurztraminer, Dornfelder, etc. Find more information here: http://winesofgermany.co.uk/german-grape-varieties/	Rochelle Randel
7/26/2021 @ 7 pm	Most Unique Varietal – Any varietal, any region. For a list of hundreds of the existing varietals, check out this list: https://www.wine-searcher.com/grapes	Elle Phillips & Carolyn Christian

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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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2021 Courtyard at the OC Fair



By the time you read this article, The Courtyard sign-ups will be in full swing. **THANK YOU** to all of you who have signed up

already to support the OCWS' biggest fundraiser of the year. Needless to say, this year presents unforeseen challenges and restrictions, and we need lots of volunteer support.

The look and feel of The Courtyard will definitely be new, as we are restricted to a wine-by-the-glass sales only scenario and social distancing. Fortunately, The Courtyard has been designated by the Fair as an eating and drinking area, so gathering will be allowed. With that in mind, we will be going for more of a bistro vibe with high-top bistro tables scattered around, while maintaining space for socially-distanced serving lines. With COVID-19 restrictions ever changing, this too may change, but only for the better and a more creative and fun atmosphere. It's the enthusiasm of you, our volunteers, that creates that great feeling no matter what restrictions are placed on us.

We are requesting a minimum commitment of four shifts per volunteer. If you have not already signed up online you can do so on the OCWS website at www.ocws.org, or if you have and would like to add more shifts, please contact our Volunteer

Sign Up & Get Your VRPs

The re-opening of the OC Fair is providing our members many opportunities for volunteering, and we need your help. Now is the time the OCWS can use help from our members in a variety of areas for which you may find yourself well suited! VRPs, or **Volunteer Recognition Points**, are incentives designated to members who volunteer, and now that we are getting re-established, there are many ways your time and effort will be greatly appreciated and rewarded.

Consider signing up to serve at The Courtyard. The Courtyard is also a nice place to enjoy the Fair from the other side of the counter—get there before your shift or come on your day off using your OCWS pass. However, before we can open The Courtyard, we need a set-up and tear-down team in order to pass the inspections to serve our award-winning wines at the Fair. Wines need to be judged at the Commercial Wine Competition, and volunteers are needed several days prior for sorting, bagging and transporting to the Hilton hotel and back. Coinciding with these activities, the OCWS Winemakers' Group also requires members access to The Hangar for this year's

Scheduler, Rich Skoczylas, at Courtyardsignup@ocws.org. There are still any number of available shifts which will need to be filled, and with your help, will make The Courtyard a success this year!

An added bonus is that with your volunteer Fair badge, you will have access to the Fair on any day, and you will have a parking pass. All Fair tickets to the public are being sold online for specific dates. There will be no walk-up ticket sales for same-day entry.

TIPS RECERTIFICATION

As with everything else, a wrench has been put into the works where TIPS recertification is concerned. To date, we have been unable to hold in-person training sessions, but have now, with the approval and cooperation of the OCFEC, have tentatively scheduled one large, socially-distanced, training session on the Fairgrounds on Sunday, June 13 from 10 am to noon. **Only** volunteers who have signed up for shifts and are in need of recertification will be considered for this class, particularly, if you work as a server. If you have already volunteered for this year, our TIPS team will be reaching out to you with further information. If you haven't, now is the time to sign up to insure your shifts and recertification.

SUPPORT THE OCWS AND HAVE FUN - VOLUNTEER TODAY!

- Fran Gitsham, Courtyard Chair

Home Wine Competition. And looking further ahead, volunteers will be needed for the Wine Auction.

Volunteers are always welcome to engage with hosting a Zoom evening of Varietal Hours and other educational and entertaining tastings. Our OCWS production team will help set it up. As you can see, there are many ways for members to stay involved, contribute and earn VRPs.

We encourage our members to get involved and back together with each other. We can always count on you to help the OCWS set an example for success this special 45th Anniversary year.

You can do it all and sign up for upcoming activities on the ocws.org website. And remember to wear your OCWS name tags during all events. We will be happy to see you and be able to serve together again.

*- George Cravens, Volunteer Recognition Chair
- Leslie Hodowanec, Director*

OCWS Wine Education Program—Spring Wrap-Up

The OCWS Wine Education Program has been working with a few new instructors this year.

In April, we welcomed certified Sommelier Spreti Valente, who was joined by Tom Bracamontes, for a very informative class on Wines of Mexico. Their decades of experience provided a great historical overview of the developing wine industry in the Valle de Guadalupe in Mexico. The class included the tasting of four amazing wines:

- 2020 Rose of Sangiovese from Bruma
- 2019 Chardonnay-Vermentino blend from Casa Magoni
- 2016 Tempranillo from Corona del Valle
- 2018 O Positivo Red Blend (Cabernet Sauvignon and Syrah) from Solar Fortun

This past month, we welcomed Jackson Family Wines for a class on the Wines of the California Central Coast. Wine Educators Ben Fine and Pedro Rusk presented an incredibly detailed comparison of the Santa Barbara and Monterey AVAs. Attendees learned about the diverse wineries owned by Jackson Family Wines and the exciting wines produced from

grapes grown in locations such as the Santa Rita Hills and Santa Maria Valley in Santa Barbara, and the Santa Lucia Highlands in Monterey. Our presenters shared the numerous weather and environmental factors that contribute to the exquisite characteristics of the six wines they presented:

- 2019 Kendall-Jackson Monterey County Vintner's Reserve Riesling
- 2020 Diatom Santa Rita Hills Chardonnay
- 2019 Cambria Santa Maria County Katherine's Vineyard Chardonnay
- 2017 Carmel Road Monterey Pinot Noir
- 2017 Brewer-Clifton Santa Rita Hills Pinot Noir
- 2018 Ex Post Facto Santa Barbara County Syrah

As always, our wine education classes will be on hiatus during the summer months while we focus on the wine competitions and OC Fair in June, July, and August. Stay tuned for more details on wine education classes planned for the fall of 2021.

Cheers!

- Carolyn Christian, Wine Education Chair

OCWS Save the Date Calendar

OCWS Varietal Hour @ 7 pm:

June 14	ASBC (Any State But California)
June 28	Malbec
July 12	German Wines
July 26	Most Unique Varietal
June 5 and 6	2021 Commercial Wine Competition
June 12	2021 Home Wine Competition
June 13	TIPs Training @ The Hangar
June 27	Fair Food & Wine Pairing Seminar @ 3 pm
July 10	Winemaking Webinar—Making a Plan Before Getting Grapes @ 10 am—Ed Reyes
July 16 through August 15	2021 OC Fair
September 11	Gold Medal Mini-Tasting (tentative)



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