



The Wine Press



Newsletter of the Orange County Wine Society, Inc.

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OCWS Mourns the Passing of Beloved Charley Owen



The OCWS lost long-time member, Charley Owen, who passed away recently. Charley joined the OCWS in 1979, and over the years, he helped shape the Wine Society that we know today.

It is probably impossible to document everything Charley did that benefited the OCWS. He was President and Vice President during numerous years: President—1987, 1997 and Vice President—1990, 1994, 1996.

But, it was his contributions year in and year out that helped the OCWS move forward. Sometimes it was just to get through an event and at other times it was contributing his time and skills to benefit the general needs of the OCWS. For many years, he was integral to preparing and running the Wine Courtyard for the OC Fair, running the Wine Auction, supporting fundraisers by managing the setup and tear down for the Wine Classic and the Wine Extraordinaire, building out the Wine Cellar at The Courtyard or just doing the maintenance needed. And, not the least, supporting many other events too numerous to list.

Charley was many things, husband to Vivien, father to Janet and Charles (a professional brewer), grandfather to Megan and Eric, a devoted member of the OCWS and more. Somehow, he was able to weave his family into his OCWS involvement. His wife, Vivien, was by his side either assisting him or focusing on her own passion, the history of the OCWS. As a grandfather, he involved Megan and Erik at a young age in helping him with the Wine Auction and The Courtyard setup. This eventually brought his son-in-law (Paul Peal) and daughter into the OCWS as members and volunteers. The OCWS is truly a family affair for the Owen clan.

My first memories of Charley were as a volunteer are from the early '90s. I don't recall what I initially thought. It might have been who is this guy that seems to be in charge of so much? Or, it might have been to wonder how he kept that amazing handlebar mustache looking so perfect? Or, at the time, it might have been his love of Zinfandel in those early years. When it came time for volunteers to enjoy wine, Charley looked for the Zinfandel. Of course, as a wine novice, that influenced me to drink a little more Zin. Years later, I learned one of his favorite cocktails away from the OCWS was the Manhattan. He convinced me to drink one or two of those as well. As you can see, he helped me, like many other OCWS members, to develop a fondness for adult beverages. As our friendship grew, my wife, Ronna, and I worked with Charley on many

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OCWS Mourns the Passing of Beloved Charley Owen

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events, whether on committees or just helping with work parties. Through this association, we became friends with Charley and Viv and one time met up with them in Columbus, Ohio, to see the UCLA Bruins versus the Ohio State Buckeyes. Charley was very gracious when the Buckeyes stomped all over the Bruins in victory. I know this because he was still willing to share a few sips from the flask he always took to football games.



The other memory I have is of Charley and his video camera. For many years, he recorded every winemaker tasting that the OCWS hosted at hotels around Orange County. Somewhere in Charley's archives are videos of California winemakers from the 80's and 90's who were celebrated in the industry. Many were winemakers that helped spawn and develop the wine industry in California.

In later years, Charley remained involved in the OCWS. While he might not have been the OCWS member leading an event, he was involved and offered his experience to help the event be a success. Additionally, he became an OCWS Courtyard Ambassador and the Board of Directors honored him with the title of President Emeritus.

So, while Charley has passed, his spirit will live on within the OCWS for many years to come through those he befriended and through his contributions with the OCWS. Somewhere, Charley is patiently waiting for us to join him with a glass of wine in his hand and another sitting on the table for each of us.

Salute, dear friend.

- Craig Rowe, Past President

My wife, Carol, and I joined the Wine Society in 1980 and came to meet Charley and his wife, Vivien, shortly thereafter. For all the years since, we have gotten to know a man who was dedicated to the OCWS and his friends, as well as a good

big red wine. Over the years, we were lucky enough to visit Charley at his home and had the privilege of having him make us his favorite cocktail, a Manhattan.

We shared a love of golf, and I remember days on the course with Chuck Howard or John Goodnight, as well as frequent rounds with his grandson, Erik. We came to be friends with his daughter, Janet, and her husband, Paul, and through them we could appreciate the influence Charley and Vivien had on their lives and ultimately ours and all who knew him.

Charley and the family were always kind and generous, which we experienced firsthand during the many days we were involved in Wine Society events. I served on the OCWS Board with Charley and greatly appreciated his support and confidence in me



as we developed new programs. Charley was instrumental in the development of the OCWS wine cellar in The Courtyard. Every time I walk in, I think about the days when I was much younger and stronger working with Charley on how to place boxes of wine in respective cubicles. I sat on the ground as he handed me a box to lift overhead and holding it up until he could be sure it was in the right position. My arms would start shaking as he contemplated his next move. In the days before the current sort procedure, Charley, Vivien, my wife and a few others did the sort over about five days. Charley loved the OCWS and always worked to make it better.

As he got older, much of what he did for maintenance at The Courtyard was turned over to his son-in-law, Paul, but Charley was always on a ladder somewhere causing all of us to worry. We eventually got him to come down and enjoy being a symbol of all that was good about the OCWS. Carol and I will always have you in our hearts when we do not have you at a Mini-Tasting or party at our house or as we visit The Courtyard.

- Sam Puzzo

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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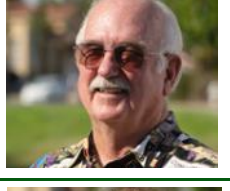



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President's Message

We've done it! We completed the 2021 OC Fair, and we did **outstanding** with our Wine Courtyard. Thanks to all of you who volunteered and spent time (and money!) at The Courtyard. Our results have been more than we ever could have hoped for, since we did not even know if we would have the Fair as late as March. For those of you who volunteered, I hope you had a great time and made some new friends. Again, a big thanks to you all!

Now that we have completed our three big events, the Commercial Wine Competition, the Home Wine Competition, and the Fair, we will be hosting our Annual Business Meeting on September 10 at 7:00 pm via Zoom. You can now sign up for the free members-only event after logging in at the Events tab located on our website at ocws.org. We will tell our members how we did financially through this year and what we have planned for the remainder of 2021 through August 2022. We will also introduce our candidates for the three vacating positions on the OCWS Board of Directors, so you can hear what they want to do if they are elected. I hope you all sign up to see and hear how we have come out from this pandemic, *Kicking and Screaming*, and *Raisin' the Roof!*

Now is the time to re-start our social events! On September 11, we will be having our Gold Medal Mini-Tasting, which will give you all a chance to taste many of the Double Gold and Gold Medal wines from this year's Commercial Wine Competition. These events are potlucks where we all bring a food dish to share, and they will be held at a variety of private homes across the County. This event is always a sell out, so we hope you signed up to attend!

Our annual election of three new members to the Board of Directors is coming up, so please pay attention to our publications later in September, listen to their presentations at the Annual Business Meeting, and read their Candidate Statements on the OCWS website. I know we are all tired of politics during these trying times, but I guarantee you won't be disappointed with the great volunteers we have lined up to help run our Society.

In October, we will have our first post-pandemic member BBQ at The Courtyard on October 9, and our Membership Wine Auction on October 16! I will talk about these events in my next newsletter, so mark your calendars to save the dates!

Thank you all, for all you do!

- Kevin Donnelly, President

2021 Board of Directors Elections: Electronic Voting



As of the writing of this article, we currently have 3 candidates running for the open positions on the Board of Directors. If no one else chooses to run for the Board, per the By-laws,

during the Annual Business Meeting we will vote as a group to induct the 3 candidates as new Board members

Electronic voting would only be used if there are more than three members who have filed a Declaration of Candidacy within the prescribed period. Below is the procedure for your reference if we have more than (3) candidates.

Here is how it will work:

1. If you have a single membership and what appears on the surface to be a valid email address, you will receive an electronic ballot. If you do not have what appears to be a valid email in the OCWS membership list, you will receive a hard copy ballot which you must complete and return. Your ballot must be received by the Chair of the Election Committee no later than 5:00 pm on Friday, October 1.
2. If you have a dual membership with only one email address that appears on the surface to be valid, two email ballots will be sent to that single email address, one addressed to each member. Each ballot will have its own unique log in and password.
3. If you have a dual membership with what appears on the surface to be a valid email address for each member, each member will receive his or her email ballot, each with a unique log in and password.
4. If you have a dual membership with what does **not** appear on the surface to be a valid email address for either member, a hard copy ballot will be mailed to each member, each of which will have to be received by the Chair of the Election Committee no later than 5:00 pm on Friday, October 1.

OCWS Fall Membership BBQ

Saturday, October 9, 2021

3:00 pm to 7:00 pm

The Courtyard at the OC Fair



The end is in sight! After 19 months of solitude and virtual socializing, it's time to change out of pajamas and into party clothes and welcome back some sorely missed live fun!

Live music, games, food and wine are to be had in person on Saturday, October 9, in The Courtyard at the OC Fairgrounds.

The OCWS is not responsible for bounced email addresses any more than it is responsible for returned hard copy ballots received after the voting deadline. OCWS members manage their own profile and are responsible to ensure their email address is accurate.

Here is how the email ballot will work:

You will receive an email ballot from electionrunner.com identifying it as being the OCWS ballot. It will have a link to the electionrunner.com OCWS portal with a log in and password. Click on the link, you will be directed to the list of candidates, their pictures, and a link that will allow you to see their candidate statements.

You can then proceed to vote for up to three candidates. Vote for the candidates of your choice, then close your ballot. You will not be able to vote a second time or change your vote. This is no different than using a hard copy ballot. Once you mail or deliver your ballot, it cannot be changed.

At the end of the day on Friday, October 1, the Chair of the Elections Committee will receive a notification from electionrunner.com indicating the number of votes cast for each candidate.

We will also be counting any hard ballots received by Friday, October 1 and forwarding the results of the election to the President of the OCWS. The President will announce the results to the candidates and then publish the results to the membership.

We will be submitting the database of qualified members to electionrunner.com by Friday, September 10. Between now and then, I encourage you to open your online profile and confirm your email address (and that of your co-member if a dual membership) is correct.

- Greg Hagadorn, 2021 Election Chair
- Leslie Brown, 2021 Election Committee Member
- Jolen Zeroski, 2021 Election Committee Member

Don't miss out. Sign up today!

Please note that this event will be following the COVID protocols outlined by the OC Fair & Event Center. All attendees should be either vaccinated or have a negative COVID test within 72 hours of the event. We ask those who are showing any symptoms or have been exposed to someone who has had COVID within the two weeks prior to the event not to attend. Attendees may choose to wear masks during the event for additional protection.

- Sara Yeoman & Fran Gitsham, Event Co-Chairs

Fire & Smoke Impacts on California Vineyards—Is there a Brighter Side?

Here in California, we have wonderful weather and fabulous wine grapes. But as with any good, we also get the bad. We have to deal with earthquakes and lots of fires! In this article, I'll discuss the fire and smoke impacts on wineries, vineyards, and ultimately our wines. So far this year, the major wine regions have been spared, but as of August 20, 56 fires are now burning in other regions in California including the Caldor, Dixie and Cache fires, with close to 1,000 homes burned thus far.

Fires

Fires are an unfortunate way of life here in the west, and we are in another serious drought season, which will lead to more fires and less water to fight the fires.



The Glass Fire in September to October 2020 was the fourth major fire in three years in the Napa wine country. By October 6, the Glass fire in September scorched over 73 square miles and destroyed about 95 structures. The

photo above shows firefighters attempting to battle the blaze at Chateau Boswell.

Moving past the horrible human and animal impact of fires, we can discuss the effects on the wine industry.

Fires don't usually directly affect vineyards. Vineyards are normally irrigated during our hot summer and fall months, and the grapes are full of water, but they are surrounded by natural forests and hills which are dry and incredibly vulnerable to fire. Vineyards are helpless to defend when fires jump, which happens when wind carries burning material beyond the main fire, igniting spot fires.



The image to the left shows the green vineyards surrounded by burned trees and buildings.

Wineries burn, and a lot of wine being aged and stored in the wineries and warehouses has been lost over the past several years.

Smoke

The damage to vineyards is usually not from the flames, but from the smoke residue that falls down onto the grapes.

"Smoke can drastically affect the quality of wine made from affected grapes. It is called smoke taint and does drastically affect the quality of wine. There has been so much smoke taint, that many wineries have decided not to make a 2020 vintage." Lewis Perdue, publisher and executive editor of *Wine*

Industry Insight.



Fire and smoke are part of nature. A natural fire wouldn't be too bad: the smoke would just be carbon, and while it would affect the taste of the grapes, it wouldn't really *contaminate* the grapes and vineyard. But, today's fires have burn-

ing buildings, homes, cars, metals: nasty chemicals, raising concerns about heavy metals—from chromium to arsenic in pressure-treated wood to asbestos—that is difficult to wash off the grapes and works its way inside the grape skins. In the long term, those chemicals work their way into the soil for lasting effects.

The Napa region suffered two fires in 2020. The wildfires started when only 10-15% of the grapes had been harvested, while most grapes were still on the vine. Vineyards under smoke plumes were tainted by smoke, and many vineyards chose not to pick grapes last year. Although many wineries chose not to release exact numbers, perhaps only 20% of the Napa crop was bottled.

"We have clients that didn't vinify any grapes this year, but none have made that public knowledge, mostly out of respect for those who are giving this year their best shot." Consulting winemaker, Thomas Rivers Brown.

Some wineries chose to bottle their wines, using filtration and reverse osmosis to minimize (but not eliminate) the taint and sell them for bargain prices under cute names like "Old Smokey," or using phrases like, "the smokey aroma will dissipate quickly, leaving you with a wonderful finish."

The end result of the 2020 fires was a huge financial impact on the wineries, as well as other vegetable and fruit (and even Cannabis) producers in California. (Question: Why does smoke affect a product that is ... ummm ... SMOKED?)

On the Brighter Side



"A lifelong Californian, the word 'wildfire' could be synonymous with 'renewal'." Bob Knebel, President and CEO of Rombauer Vineyard.

Everything burned by wildfires will turn into ashen fertilizer, which will lead to a beautiful green spring, and the 2022 vintage begins anew. I hope we have a better, fire-free summer and fall!

- Kevin Donnelly, President & Home Winemaker

OCWS Varietal Hour—Bi-weekly Happy Hours!

If you haven't joined us for the Monday Varietal Hours, you are missing out! The OC Wine Society's version of a Zoom Happy Hour happens every other Monday evening. We have all learned from each other and tried some wines that we might not otherwise have tried. This event combines the convenience of staying home and enjoying wine with family and close friends.

Please join us for this 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! Members share details on the wine(s) they are enjoying, how they ac-

quired the bottle, and any fun facts about the wine. The event is followed up with a list to all participants of all the wines that were shared. Below is a schedule for the next few months (more dates and themes will be listed in future newsletters). We hope to see you at a future Varietal Hour. All sign-ups are done through the OCWS website, and the event is FREE!

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
9/6/2021 @ 7 pm	Chilean Wines	Sam & Kim Clark
9/20/2021 @ 7 pm	Wines from Islands (Australia, New Zealand, Sicily, Santorini, Canary Islands, even Canada and Washington have islands producing wines! Google it!)	Your Name Here
10/4/2021 @ 7 pm	New Zealand Wines	Your Name Here
10/18/2021 @ 7 pm	GSM (Grenache, Syrah & Mourvèdre)	Sara Yeoman
11/1/2021 @ 7 pm	South African Wines	Linda Mihalik
11/15/2021 @ 7 pm	Portuguese Wines	Dawn Bergen Iglesias
11/29/2021 @ 7 pm	French Red Wines	Carolyn Christian

The Courtyard at the OC Fair Returns in Style as Only the OCWS Can Do!

Just a few months ago no one knew what we would, if anything, be able to do at the Fair this year, and we had very little direction as to what COVID-19 restrictions and guidelines we would need to follow until just a few weeks before opening. Now that the 2021 Courtyard at the OC Fair is becoming a fleeting memory, thanks to the dedication and commitment of 213 members (which was 100 less volunteers at The Courtyard from previous years), and a lot of last-minute changes on the fly throughout the entire run of the Fair, The Courtyard was a resounding success!

Following a very scary and unsure financial year for the organization last year, The Courtyard bounced back in high fashion to almost equal our highest grossing year (2019) under very tenuous conditions. We had members working anywhere from as many as 33 shifts to as few as 4 shifts, and off-shift members pitching in, more often than not, when they were at the Fair to just have fun. You all know who you are, and **you** were terrific! We also had the behind-the-scenes Courtyard Committee members, cash verifiers, set up and tear down crews, and employees doing whatever was needed to keep the boat afloat. This year proved resoundingly that OCWS volunteers

can accomplish anything they set their minds and hearts to.

Some amazing facts from this year included the sale of 28,116 glasses of Varietal Wines, 5,598 Champagne Splits, 3,951 glasses of House Wine, and 1,727 Thursday 3oz Tastes of Fair wines and, just into the beginning of the final week of the Fair, The Courtyard sold out of Govino cups after selling 3,040 Concert Specials and 499 empty Govino glasses.

Our scholarship fund realized \$19,800 in donations at The Courtyard and OCWS signed up 97 new dual and single memberships, which equates to 156 new members! All which can be credited to the enthusiasm of our volunteers!

It took every one of our volunteers, no matter how large or small the task, to bring The Courtyard back at full steam and to now having provided the OCWS a great financial foundation going forward. You wore your hearts on your sleeves and worked your a**es off, and the Courtyard Committee could not be more grateful! **Thank you** to each and every one!

- Fran Gitsham, Courtyard Chair
and The 2021 Courtyard Committee

OCWS History—Stories of our Vintage Members

As part of our ongoing series, we are featuring the biographies of our “Vintage Members.” Join me in this journey back through time with the stories of our amazing members who helped build the organization.

This month, we feature a couple who have been instrumental in many of the OCWS events like the Commercial Competition and Wine Cruises, Jane and John Goodnight. Enjoy this walk down memory lane in their own words.

If you would like to nominate one of our “Vintage Members” to be featured in a future article, please drop me an email at Carolyn@ocws.org. Cheers!

- Carolyn Christian, Director / Historian

OCWS...The Earlier Years

Part I – Jane’s Story



After moving to California in the early 1970’s, my first husband and I made wine from grapes we picked in Rancho Cucamonga, and we purchased our wine making supplies from Brant’s Wine Rack in Orange. We met Jerry Mead through his wine tasting group (WINO) and became his first regional directors. When

Brant and Jerry decided to go to the OC Fair to propose a Commercial Wine Competition, they organized a Steering Committee and asked me to become a member. By this time, I was writing articles on Cooking with Wine and giving presentations to interested groups, including the group of Home Wine-makers that met at Brant’s store. Although I was not an official member, I was involved with the Orange County Wine Society since the beginning, including judging the Home Wine Competition.

Jeri Hanson and I were the wine stewards at the first Orange County Fair Commercial Wine Competition when only Gamay Beaujolais and Chenin Blanc were judged; basically a beta test

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 August 2021. As of July 1, the OCWS had 1,125 members.

Markee Fritschle, Jean & John Besta, Craig Floerke, Eva Taylor & Dale Arias, Debbie & Larry Mountford, Susan Scott & Colin Mackenzie, Maria & Daniel Jauregui, Danielle & Tom Holmberg, M. Lisa Morrone, Veronica & Eric Elder, Andrea Marr & Scott Sylvester, Krystin & Paul Moberg, Ella Pennington & Randy Frank, Anita Garcia & Robert Perez, Amy Blakemore & Katie Ziglar, Karen &

for the OC Fair. Jerry Mead went on to being our Judging Chairman for many years working on contract with the OC Fair Board. In the late ‘70s, I began a career in the Wine and Spirits Industry and developed contacts, who were able to provide presentations at our monthly meetings and donate their product for many of our events.

John and I were married in 1983 and became very active members. For many years, I was the “Chief Chili Pepper” or the “Head Jalapeño” chairing the Annual Chili Cook-off, working the Wine Courtyard as a cash verifier and wine server, and hosting many of our Mini-Tastings.

Part II – John’s Story



In 1984, John Hardman urged me to run for the Board of Directors, despite being a relatively new member. I agreed, and much to my surprise, the BOD voted me in as the Treasurer with the mission of computerizing the OCWS’ financials. At that time, managing the OCWS accounting was haphazard at best. We kept a

checkbook and petty cash in a cigar box. All records were sent to an accounting agency who compiled all of our accounting reports and documents. Bear in mind, it had been quite a few years since I had accounting in college, so it was a learning experience for me. Also, during this time, software programs were just becoming available, and I had to choose one to use. Patting myself on the back, mission accomplished with a shareware program I found and bought for \$35. After changing programs another three times, I converted our financials to QuickBooks when we hired Janet Hammond, our first full-time Office Manager.

During the earlier years, the OCWS seemed to be always short of working capital. It got so bad that on several occasions, the

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Dan Papilli, Christine Lombard, Margaret Michalis, Malia Simmons & Chad Nelson, Janet Marino, Peggy & Brooks Friend, Christina & Tony Perkins, Tina & Darryl Cater, Daniele & Tom Holmberg, Holly & Richard Salsido, Julie & Abby Schneidewind, Amanda Garcia, Bridget Kaub, Doreen & Michel Crabill, Roberta & Clint Gerlach, Christine & Mike Stefani, Sandy & Eric Ehrhorn, Kathy Taylor, Chris Trela, Roula Sakellakos, Sunshine Golson, and Stacy Cooper & Wade Shepherd.

- Mel Jay, Membership Chair

OCWS History—Stories of our Vintage Members

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Board Members used their own credit cards to pay our vendors. Before the OC Fair could generate any cash, I remember calling many of our vendors to see if they would extend our credit terms. Fortunately, most did. I was very apprehensive when the Fair Board built our current venue, as it seemed “out of the way.” Fortunate for us, the first year we operated our new venue, we grossed over \$50,000, a gain of about \$15,000 more that we had expected. At that time, Marcia Brechtel worked as the sole manager for the morning shifts, and Al Barber and I took turns managing the evening shifts. This lasted for two years, at which time we realized we needed a lot more help with shift managers and began a training program and procedures that now affords us plenty of managers, assistant managers, and volunteers.

I ultimately completed four terms on the Board, having served as President for three years, Director for one year, and Treas-

urer for eight years. Additionally, at one time I was doing the books as Treasurer, acting as the Membership Chairman, and publishing the monthly newsletter—all this while working full time! During my involvement with the OCWS, I have chaired many events including the Wine Courtyard, the Wine Extravaganza, the Wine Classic, the Wine Extraordinaire, the Chili Cook-off, and eight Wine Cruises, among others. After my last tenure on the Board, I continued to handle all of the OCWS accounting and to publish the monthly newsletter, until finally giving up these two tasks to Charles English and Linda Mihalik, respectively. Since my retirement, I am now down to being a member of the Finance Committee and volunteering for a few events.

We have really enjoyed our participation over the years, have met many wonderful people, developed long-lasting friendships, and enjoyed a lot of great wine and food! In summary, it has been quite a ride!

- Jane & John Goodnight

Winemakers Newsroom

At this time of the year, we have the *calm* before the *storm* for our winemakers. Many have already bottled and are awaiting our 2021 grape and juice offerings. As I write this article, today is the last day of the OC Fair, and although I did not pour wine this year, I have heard that it has gone well, so I think even though with some upticks in COVID-19, we are aiming towards getting back to normal.

As I think everyone has seen at the supermarkets and stores, everything has gone up in price – maybe 15-25%! We are seeing in our initial information gathering for our grape and juice offerings that will be the case for us, too. We do expect that we will find some excellent fruit and provide it to our members in their quest to make great wines.

Personally, I have been involved in the grape sourcing, pickup, and delivery for about 7 years, and from that time, with the efforts of many, many of our members, we have seen our refinement of quality and timely optimum delivery improve year

to year. In many instances we are “handing off” crushed/destemmed/cooled fruit to our members that just 6 hours before was hanging on the vine! We know that the quality of the fruit impacts the quality of the finished wine. The old adage that you can’t make great wine out of poor fruit is so true.

So, I’ll be short this month and certainly have some good stories and successes to share for next month’s article.

If you have an interest in making wine, helping others to make wine, or to help with our coordination and delivery of fruit, send me a text or call me at 949.981.5087 or email me at BillForsch@ocws.org.



We always appreciate help. We do have a lot of fun and enjoy our interactions. Best to all, cheers!

- Bill Forsch, Winemakers' Group 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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Summer Wine Tasting (Part 2)... Finally!

Manuela and I continued our trip north leaving behind Paso Robles and Santa Rosa. Our ultimate destination – Point Arena, Mendocino County. Okay, you probably never heard of it; it's a very small town, and there are no nearby wineries, but we had a great stay at an extremely cozy timeshare resort tucked in among some beautiful trees and rolling hills. During our seven-day stay, we traveled the area. We went a bit farther north to the city of Mendocino and east in the Russian River, Alexander Valley and Anderson Valley, where we made every effort to hit some of our favorite wineries but to also have that chance encounter with new ones. Manuela did the research, I did the driving!

On Day 8, we did a precarious trip over the mountains to Boonville in Anderson Valley, where our first stop was **Bee Hunter Wine**. It was a country-style shop on the main street of Boonville built in the 1920's that looked to have been there awhile. We arrived a tad early and found the winery open but no one there. Shortly, though, Andy, of the husband-wife owners, showed up with a puppy in hand. He had to run, but asked

if we would puppy-sit until his wife Alisa showed up. Well that's trust! What could I say: we agreed!



When Alisa, aka Ali, arrived with a second puppy in hand, we enjoyed a very pleasant conversation and, along with it, some excellent wines including several outstanding Pinot Noirs. I particularly liked their 2014 Pinot. The tasting room had only opened in 2019, pre-pandemic. And, the owners had not participated in the OC Fair wine competition, but had several awards

from more local competitions. I encouraged them to submit to our commercial competition, which only requires that it be obtainable in SoCal. I think it will happen, so watch for Bee Hunter Wine next year! The photo shows our two new friends at Bee Hunter Wine!

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2021 OCWS Wine Auction

Saturday, October 16, 2021

11 am - 5 pm

OC Fair & Event Center

Costa Mesa Building (next to the Parade of Products)

Please plan to stay for the entire event

No early checkout is available



Attention new and long-time members of the OC Wine Society: mark your calendars for Saturday, October 16, 2021! We will be having our annual Wine Auction at a special time this year from 11 AM to 5 PM in the Costa

Mesa Building of the OC Fair & Event Center. This is an extraordinary opportunity to score some great wines at amazing prices! This event replaces the 2020 Wine Auction which was scheduled for April 2020 and had to be cancelled due to the pandemic. Those who already had tickets to the 2020 event will be able to use those tickets for this year's event. The auction will feature the wines from the 2019 OC Fair Commercial Wine Competition, which have been stored in a temperature and humidity-controlled cellar since June 2019.

The Wine Auction features both silent and verbal auction lots from some of the best wines submitted for the Commercial Wine Competition. Enjoy an afternoon of delicious food and wine with your OC Wine Society friends as you bid on your favorite varietals and wineries. Special lots will also be available for purchase without having to bid.

This is your annual opportunity to purchase these wines at a fraction of their retail value. Tickets are only \$20 per member for this **Member-Only** event! Please bring your own wine glass and a few pens, and wear comfortable shoes. You must plan to stay for the entire event, as we cannot accommodate early checkouts! We will be adding a new type of checkout through online payment this year to help speed up the process (the standard check and credit card checkout will still be available).

We also require volunteers for this event. Positions include moving wines, serving wines or food during the event, assisting with checkout, and more. Watch for weekly reminders for upcoming volunteer opportunities for the Wine Auction and sign-up early.

Please note that this event will be following the COVID protocols outlined by the OC Fair & Event Center. All attendees should be either vaccinated or have a negative COVID test within 72 hours of the event. We ask those who are showing any symptoms or have been exposed to someone who has had COVID within the two weeks prior to the event not to attend. Attendees may choose to wear masks during the event for additional protection.

We look forward to seeing you at this year's Wine Auction! Cheers!

- Carolyn Christian, OCWS Director/Wine Auction Chair

Summer Wine Tasting (Part 2)... Finally!

(Continued from page 9)

Still in Anderson Valley, we stopped at an old favorite – **Toulouse Vineyards** in Philo, California. Toulouse produces some great Pinot Noir. As they like to say, “Too tense? Toulouse!”

This was followed by a new find, **Husch Vineyards**, also in Philo. Tucked among some hills as a backdrop, this was a very charming and friendly winery with some outstanding Pinots, Merlot and Gewürztraminers. Husch, a family-owned winery, showed a creativity in presenting its tasting options – six tastes already poured in very small carafes and brought out in a six-place cardboard carrier. And, should you decide to purchase any of these wines, its price list came with the six tastes already highlighted. No need to hunt them down. Very smart!

What I discovered later was that Husch Vineyards submits to the OC Fair Wine Competition. For 2021, Husch was an award winner, receiving 12 medals, including one Double Gold and Best in Class for its 2017 dry, late harvest Gewürztraminer.

We encountered several more wineries in the Mendocino area, but a highlight was a very small, very out-of-the-way place called **Annapolis Winery** in Sonoma County. And what a great find it was! Run by Aaron and his mother, Barbara Scablirini (Italian if I ever heard it), we found these wines to be stellar, potential award winners in their own right! The locally grown Pinot Noirs and Gewürztraminers were remarkable. Served by Aaron personally, it was clear that he was very proud of what he, his family and friends had achieved.

Aaron told me that his production was too small to compete in the local Northern California wine competitions – they produce about a thousand cases. I have since sent him info about the OC Fair Wine Competition since production size is not a factor for entering. Let’s see what happens next year!

As our week in Mendocino County came to an end and we



started to head back south, we made a stop along the Russian River. Finding a “winery open” sign on the road, we stopped at a barn-like structure of **Davis Family Vineyards**. Guy Davis, the owner, was out in the fields, but our server Sheila was both accommodating and informative. She told us that Guy goes full French style in the production of his wines. It was quite evident. The wines that we were able to taste were incredi-

ble. She also told us that Guy Davis provides his grapes to well-known restaurateur, Guy Fieri, for the production of his wine under the name Hunt & Ryde (named after his children Hunter and Ryder). That should be taken as a testimonial of the quality of the grapes.

We stayed in the Santa Cruz area for our last three days, joined by our OCWS friends, Kelly and Dimitri. And as before, we continued to find great wineries with interesting nuances to them. For example, at **Wrights Station** of Los Gatos, we arrived to witness a truck in the parking lot that was a focus of activity. It was a fully functional mobile bottling operation that was serving the local very-small wineries. Who knew? I was privileged to get a tour of the system. The photo shows a bit of the operation from the back end.

There were several other wineries that we got to visit on this trip, but I will tell you of one more, the last one we visited. In an attempt to find another winery along the back roads near Salinas, Manuela says, “Hey, there’s an ‘open’ sign.” So, of course, we had to check it out. And it was the best thing we did. We encountered **Odonata Wines**, out in the middle of Salinas farmland. We arrived before the crowds which gave us the opportunity to not only taste some excellent wines, but to chat with the Hospitality Manager, Jorge Muñoz, and later, the assistant winemaker, Junior Bañuelos. We spent several hours there with Jorge and Junior enjoying the Odonata wines, learning that the name refers to the dragonfly. Much later we found out that the owner of Odonata was helping Junior become his own winemaker.

Soon we were tasting his own wine under the label of **Sling | Stone**, a reference to taking on Goliath. We couldn’t leave without ordering a case of both wines! It was quite the trip.

I would be amiss if I did not at least list the other wonderful wineries we found. I would love to share our experiences with them, but for now, I will list them for you to go check them out:

- **Ferrari-Carano**, Dry Creek Valley, Healdsburg
- **Foley Sonoma**, Geyserville
- **Testarossa Winery**, Los Gatos
- **Byington Vineyard and Winery**, Los Gatos
- **Left Bend**, Los Gatos

- **Scott Herral, Contributing Writer**

2022 OCWS Winery Program—Save the Dates



The Orange County Wine Society starts our 2022 Winery Program in January and is conducted monthly through May. This annual series promotes the knowledge of winemaking, viticulture, and wine appreciation. We invite award-winning wineries to visit us for wine tastings to introduce

our members to different wines made from some of the best wine producing regions in California. Save the Friday dates below and mark your calendars to attend.

<u>Dates</u>	<u>Winery</u>
January 14, 2022	Robert Hall Winery
February 11, 2022	Flying Goat Cellars
March 11, 2022	Halleck Vineyard
April 8, 2022	Artisan Uprising
May 13, 2022	McClain Cellars

We invite the winemakers to come and talk about their wines and answer your questions. This is a great benefit that we provide our members to actually meet with the winemakers. If you consider, that if you visit a winery, how often are you able to hear and talk personally with the winemakers themselves? You

can do that by participating in this program.

At the end of the evening, you may order the wines at a discounted price. The wines will then be shipped directly to your home.



Our Winery Program is an opportunity to attend a tasting in our local area by a well-known and established winery or a newer winery just starting, but one that produces outstanding wines. We bring you award-winning wineries so you can taste their wines, learn if you enjoy a particular style and order the wines served that evening.

Look for information about each tasting in *The Wine Press* and on the Wine Society website. We will hold our Winery Program on Friday evenings at the Avenue of the Arts Hotel in Costa Mesa. Each tasting starts with a light dinner and self-parking is included in the price. With our large membership and limited attendance space, we encourage you to sign up early.

- Rich Skoczylas, Winery Program Coordinator

OCWS Save the Date Calendar

OCWS Varietal Hour @ 7 pm:

September 6	Chilean Wines
September 20	Wines from Islands
October 4	New Zealand Wines
October 18	GSM (Grenache, Syrah & Mourvèdre)
November 1	South African Wines
November 15	Portuguese Wines
November 29	French Red Wines

September 10	Annual Business Meeting
September 11	Gold Medal Mini-Tasting
October 9	Fall Membership BBQ
October 16	OCWS Wine Auction
December 4	Holiday Dinner / Dance
December 18	Winemakers' Group Holiday Potluck

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www.ocws.org

