



The Wine Press



Newsletter of the Orange County Wine Society, Inc.

Volume 46, Issue 1, January 2022

President's Message

New Year's Resolutions



It's that time of year again when I traditionally start out with all good intentions of losing

those extra 15 pounds and spending less money on frivolous things. With all the years of breaking those very same resolutions over and over again, I've decided to become realistic, chuck those good intentions and focus on where I can make a difference in the things I've committed myself to, whether it be out of obligation or passion. Needless to say, my presidency is out of passion. You would immediately think of my love of wine, but my passion for the OCWS is for the people. The people who've held my hand and heart over the years, through good times and bad, the people who cross my path for just a moment and bring me to laughter or tears, and the people who just love the camaraderie as much I do.

There are eight other people, besides me, who have obligated themselves to taking the lead of the organization out of the goodness of their hearts. Your Board of Directors devotes thousands of hours a year to the business of the OCWS and long before, I suspect, most of you have even given a thought to 2022, those directors, along with many other dedicated volunteers, were putting into place the events that you'll have the opportunity to attend this year.

In addition to five member meetings, better known as the winery programs, where you'll be hosted at the Avenue of the Arts Hotel to dinner and a tasting with a winemaker or winery principal, there will be mini-tastings smattered throughout the year, spring and fall member events, the annual wine auction, a holiday dinner dance and, thanks to COVID, all the virtual programming created over the past two years. In addition to these events designed for your pleasure, and ones which take many volunteers to run, we have our three major events that support the OCWS, and which require several hundred volunteers. Those are the Commercial and Home Wine Competitions and The Courtyard at the OC Fair.

Along with all the obligations that life, in general, brings, I'm hopeful you will join me throughout the year at some, or all of, the fun events the OCWS has to offer. I encourage you to read *The Wine Press* each month to stay on top of the happenings and to consider signing up early for any events you might like to attend, as our events tend to sell out quickly.

For those of you who know me, smiles and hugs are always welcome (along with sharing a bit of wine when we can), and for those of you I've yet to have the pleasure to meet, I truly hope our paths cross in the new year sooner than later.

I wish you all a year filled with love, laughter, and exceptional wine!

- Fran Gitsham, President

Upcoming Events:

- January 9 5
Champagne Brunch
- January 14—*sold out*
Robert Hall Winery
- January 19—*sold out*
Dine with Wine
- February 11 5
Flying Goat Cellars
- February 26 6
Mini-Tasting

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With a New Year Comes New Challenges

A Seriously Important Message to our Members

COVID has left no corner of the world unaffected, including the OCWS. While so many businesses who have managed to survive to this point are still struggling financially, our organization, thanks to powers beyond ours and stars being amazingly aligned just right, has kept our head above water and is as financially strong as ever thanks to the commitment of long-time members who were willing to brave COVID and associated restrictions to support the Commercial and Home Wine Competitions, The Courtyard at the OC Fair, and the Wine Auction and worked way beyond anyone's expectations to bring us success. It was a huge struggle to fill desperately needed volunteer positions and 2022 looks to be no different.

One thing COVID opened our eyes to is the need to adapt social programs to our now ever-changing environment, hence the creation of OCWS virtual programming, which continues to be extremely popular now even with us returning to in-person events. With this being said, and I am not going to sugar coat a major concern, and that is without more volunteers willing to take on large and small tasks alike, it is unlikely that we can continue to offer the magnitude of the social programming that we have to date. All of our programs are chaired and run by volunteers and, sadly, it always seems to be the same people stepping up to the plate. Over the last few years, we have lost integral people for various reasons, the least of which has been ill health and worse, and, as the major volunteer pool continues to age, we will see increased loss of devoted volunteers.

We have several key chair positions yet to be filled for 2022 in-person events, including both the spring BBQ and fall events, and open assisting positions to other events, both in person and virtual, as well as behind the scenes committees. As the old adage goes, many hands make for light work. In order for our great organization to continue into the future, more help is needed. Although some of the tasks sound daunting, I can assure you, they are not, and we have amazing people now to mentor the next generation of OCWS volunteers and leaders.

I have always told new members that volunteering is not a requirement of membership, and this is still the case. However, it is volunteers that make the organization run, so if you have any inclination to give back to the OCWS for the fun you have, please consider reaching out and, at least, seeing what volunteer opportunities are available and what you can find, big or small, to fit into your life.

I can be reached at Fran@ocws.org and am hopeful many of you will reach out to me and see what you can do to help us continue to provide the quantity and quality of programming you've come to expect and help secure the future of the Orange County Wine Society.

- Fran Gitsham, President

Winemakers Newsroom

Wannabe “wine snobs”

For those of you that know me (or think they do), you know that I love practical jokes and the more disguised, the better! And sometimes, very seldom, **true irony** is one of the greatest gifts of enjoyment that we can receive!

This true tale goes back to my days of making wine from “kits,” pre-packaged juice. I started this hobby in 2006 in a downstairs unused bedroom – perhaps 10 X 12 in size. I had a system that I liked: a 3 X 5 table that I lifted the fermenting and aging kits onto and utilized gravity to “rack” – transfer wines from container to container. With my system, I could have up to 8 kits in carboys on my small table and on several instances did fill up the table! I believe that the picture below was this exact instance I’ll refer to later in this article!



During my first 6 years of making wine, I never bought a new wine bottle, I always re-used old bottles. I took a painstaking amount of time to soak, then scrape off the front and back labels, then sanitize the insides of my wine bottles. I was

always looking for bottles, as I gave many bottles away and didn't receive many back. I had one friend that must have had a fantastic source for empties. He would drop off cases and cases of either Hess or Clos Du Bois Chardonnay bottles, all matched and I think just emptied – perhaps a busy restaurant or hotel or caterer.

The process of soaking the bottles, then scraping off the labels was okay, unless some of the types of bottles had a “**Gorilla**” style glue used. Many Australian types, especially Yellow Tail as I remember, were almost impossible to remove, so I would begrudgingly toss those bottles.

Well, the Hess and Clos Du Bois were that type of bottle, really hard to cope with. At the time, when I was making so many kits – I had a particular kit I loved, (sadly, I checked and it is not made anymore), but it was called – **Chardasia** – part Chardonnay and part Malvasia, a grape to date I have never heard of or seen. It was just a wonderful, easy drinking Chardonnay style wine, no oak, not buttery, but probably my favorite. I had 3 of these kits going at the same time – so the math says 90 bottles needed, or about 8 to 9 cases!

Yes, and you're way ahead of me – I simply left the labels on – sanitized the insides and filled them with the Chardasia kit wine and put a cork in the bottle. As most of the wine was shared

with friends or poured in house, it was a real labor saver for me.

So, that was the background, the story now! Morph forward about 2 months or so.

A former co-worker had hosted a wonderful Christmas party for years and years that we attended and really enjoyed. It was perhaps after the fifth or sixth time attending that Noel and I committed that we had to invite them to our house to show our appreciation for their hospitality.

As is mentioned in the “*Fargo*” movie and TV series, **the names have been changed to protect the innocent, but everything else is exactly true!** And we invited them – and I'll use a couple of aliases as this story has never been shared with them! **Fred and Wilma Flintstone** accepted our invitation to visit for libations and a meal on a Saturday. Knowing that they were **VERY aggressive** white wine drinkers, I put about 8 bottles – 4 of each of the “labeled” Hess and Clos Du Bois in the bottom of my refrigerator to get them chilled.

They arrived early afternoon, and we had proceeded to dip into perhaps 4 or 5 bottles of the pseudo Chardonnay! Yes, 4 or 5 bottles! As Wilma was easing into the kitchen area from the living room area, being the great host I am, I asked Wilma if she would care for another glass of wine?

“Oh yes, please, but **I'd really prefer the Hess** – you know, **I'm a bit of a wine snob you know!**” Her exact words! Well, my partner Noel looked at me and I looked at her, and we couldn't even get a word out to clarify the situation. I made an executive decision that we wouldn't make mention of the “wine” type, source, or difference or lack of, actually mostly based on her comment.

We had not intended to mislead or falsify what we were pouring, but after her mention of her superior level of wine appreciation, I didn't want an issue to arise on our use of sneakily pouring them “fake” wines. The remainder of the evening went well – I think we left about one bottle in the bottom of the refrigerator! We were invited again to their Christmas party. I brought several of my other “homemade” wines – each with a label indicating that they were mine that I planned to share with the guests.

Well, count me pretty surprised, but Wilma **refused, yes, refused** to even present them to the other guests! As I mentioned at the start of this article, I love irony and practical jokes! So in my mind, as neither the “Hess / Clos Du Bois” wines or the wines I brought to Flintstone's Christmas party were intended to be a prank or deceit, I did appreciate the true irony of

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Winemakers Newsroom

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both of the instances of the Pseudo Wine Snob thinking that her taste buds and palate were so exceptional that she could detect the differing notes of exactly the same homemade wine and at her house to protect her guests to not allow my other wines to even be tasted! Well, I quietly took each of the 3 bottles around to the guests throughout the party and had completely empty bottles in about 15 minutes and quite a few impressed happy home wine drinkers clamoring for more!

I really enjoy recalling this occasion; it keeps things in perspective for me. Do drink what you like and don't take yourself too seriously! We are thinking that 2022 will be a great

year for our group as we get back to quarterly educational seminars, and most of the other activities we've enjoyed prior to this COVID stuff. Wishing all safety, health, and a wonderful 2022. **Yabba Dabba Doo!**

Contact me if you have an interest in starting an enjoyable lifelong pass-time at BillForsch@ocws.org or by phoning me at 949.981.5087.



Best to all, cheers!

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

OCWS Varietal Hour—Announcing the 2022 Schedule!

It is hard to believe that the OCWS Varietal Hour is approaching its one-year anniversary! Over the course of the last year, we have explored geographic regions throughout the world, common and less common varietals, holiday themes and more. The Varietal Hour Committee has more fun themes in store for 2022!

Join us every other Monday evening at 7 pm via Zoom for the OCWS Varietal Hour! No driving, no dressing up, just a great group of OCWS members popping a cork or two of wines that correspond to that week's theme. You can dig through your cellar to find a wine that matches the theme, or you can be adventurous and buy something new from your favorite online or in person wine store. It's all up to you! Then just be prepared to share the information on the wine you brought that night, whether it is a fun story on how you acquired the bottle, or a description of what you like about the wine, or even what food you plan on pairing with the wine that evening.

We look forward to seeing you at one of the future Varietal Hours. Check the schedule below for the upcoming themes and sign up on the OCWS website no later than the Sunday before the event. A link for the meeting is emailed to you on the day of the event.

We welcome you to volunteer to be the host for one of the open weeks below. No experience is necessary, and we will guide you through the process and handle the Zoom meeting functions for you.

If you are interested in hosting or have any ideas for future themes, please contact Carolyn at Carolyn@ocws.org or George Cravens at George@ocws.org.

We look forward to seeing you virtually! Cheers!

- Carolyn Christian & George Cravens, Directors

DATE & TIME	VARIETAL	HOSTS
1/10/2022 @ 7 pm	New Favorite Wine from the Holidays	George Cravens & Ed Reyes
1/24/2022 @ 7 pm	Noble Grape Wines	Sam & Kim Clark
2/7/2022 @ 7 pm	Romantic Wines	YOUR NAME HERE
2/21/2022 @ 7 pm	Zinfandel	Don & Elee Phillips
3/7/2022 @ 7 pm	Dessert Wines (Port, Fortified, Ice, etc.)	YOUR NAME HERE
3/21/2022 @ 7 pm	Australian Wines	YOUR NAME HERE
4/4/2022 @ 7 pm	Non-Grape Wines - Wine Sans Grapes	Don & Elee Phillips
4/18/2022 @ 7 pm	Cabernet Sauvignon / Cabernet Franc	Sam & Kim Clark

Champagne Brunch

Bubbles 'n Brunch

Sunday, January 9, 2022 — 11 am to 2 pm

BLK Earth Sea Spirits

300 Pacific Coast Hwy., Suite 202

Huntington Beach



Happy New Year! It's a great time to ring in the new and **wring** out the old! Let's join on January 9 to toast the upcoming year at BLK Earth Sea Spirits in Huntington Beach.

The restaurant is located on

Pacific Coast Highway, on the second floor, overlooking the beautiful Pacific Ocean and the HB pier. We will enjoy our private buffet brunch on the restaurant's large terrace.

The price for this brunch is \$61 for members **and** guests. This price includes tax, gratuity and validated parking for two hours, and our favorite, no corkage!. The event will be posted on the OCWS website for sign ups. Space is limited; when the event fills up, please contact the OCWS office to be placed on a waitlist.

Each person is expected to:

1. Bring a bottle of your favorite champagne and/or wine
2. Drink responsibly
3. Bring champagne and/or wine glasses
4. Wear your nametag

Because we need to contract with the restaurant the attendance count, the last day to sign up, make changes or cancel and receive a refund is Tuesday, January 4, 2022. Any cancellations after this date would be filled and refunded from the waitlist.

Underground Parking: The entrance to the underground parking structure for BLK is located on the south side of Walnut Avenue, between Main Street and 2nd Street, directly across from 3rd Street. To access the restaurant from the garage, take the elevator directly to the second floor. Your parking ticket will be validated for two hours in **this** garage only. There is also a separate parking garage on the north side of Walnut and 3rd street that does **not** take validation.

- **Rochelle Randel, Champagne Brunch Chair**

February Winery Program—Flying Goat Cellars

Friday, February 11, 2022

Dinner starts @ 6:30 pm

Avenue of the Arts Hotel

3350 Avenue of the Arts

Costa Mesa, CA



February tends to be a romantic month since it has Valentine's Day. In thoughts of this, our "sparkling" winery will be Flying Goat Cellars. Flying Goat is a family owned and operated winery dedicated to producing age worthy Pinot and Spar-

kling Wine since 2000.

Winemaker Norm Yost has many years in the wine industry, having graduated from UC Davis and as an instructor at Allan Hancock College (two of our Scholarship recipient schools). Norm has worked for diverse wineries in Napa Valley, Russian River in Sonoma County, Margaret River in Western Australia and Oregon's Willamette Valley. He refined his cool weather winemaking techniques in Santa Barbara County. Norm is also one of our judges in the Commercial Wine Competition.



Winemaker Norm Yost

The cost of the buffet meal is \$45 for members and \$50 for guests. This buffet meal includes Roasted Chicken with Mustard, Fresh Basil and Garlic, Garlic Mashed Potatoes, Seasonal Heirloom Baby Vegetables

We offer a separate option of a "Heart Healthy" sit-down meal for \$52 for members and \$57 for guests. This meal is served at your table and includes Grilled Branzino on Butternut Squash Puree with Herb Salad, Roasted Butternut Squash Hash.

The Buffet and Heart Healthy meals include a salad of Mixed Baby Greens with Sundried Cranberries, Fresh Raspberries, Goat Cheese and Glazed Walnuts with Raspberry Vinaigrette, with Warm Artisan Breads and Rolls with Sweet Butter.

A vegetarian meal may be specially ordered for \$52.00 for members and \$57.00 for guests.

Sign up on the OCWS website to attend this event. Attendees can either self-park in the hotel garage and get their ticket validated at OCWS check-in or pay \$10 for valet parking. Dinner begins at 6:30 pm with the meeting following about 7:15 pm. Members may bring their own wine to enjoy and share during dinner. Be sure to wear your nametag.

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February Winery Program—Flying Goat Cellars

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Volunteers Needed. We need a couple of volunteers to help with check-in from 5:30 pm to 6:40 pm. Please indicate you can help when you sign up to attend this event.

As we need to contract the meals with the hotel, the last day to

Syrah/Petite Sirah Mini-Tasting

Saturday, February 26, 2022

6:00 pm – 9:00 pm

Various Host Sites



We haven't had a Syrah/Petite Sirah Mini-Tasting for quite some time. These two grapes are known for creating

very interesting, food-worthy wines which should pair well with holiday comfort food.

While Petite Sirah is not nearly as widely planted as Syrah, there are a number of very good examples available, especially from California. Syrah originated in the Rhone Valley of France, but is widely planted in Australia and California. We plan to offer examples from different regions to compare.

This event may sell out, so please sign up early! **NOTE:** If you are interested in hosting please contact George Cravens at George@ocws.org. We will keep the sites a bit smaller than in past years, with 14 guests plus the hosts.

If you'd like to request a specific host site or to carpool with another member, please add a comment on your sign-up.

NOTE. Per OCWS policy, all attendees must either have proof of COVID vaccination or a negative COVID test within 72 hours of the event.

sign up or cancel and receive a **refund is Sunday, February 6**. Since we must contract for each meal with the hotel, any cancellation after this date will be refunded only if the reservation is filled from the waitlist.

- Rich Skoczylas, Winery Program Coordinator

LOCATIONS. Host sites and directions will be announced to those attending approximately one week prior to the event. We try to place you at the location nearest your home or to accommodate your specific site request; however, your assigned host site is also based on the order in which your sign-up is received in the OCWS office.

COST. The cost to attend the tasting is \$30 for members and \$35 for guests.

DISH. Each person/couple attending will sign up with their host to bring a potluck dish (appetizer, entrée, side dish, or dessert) to serve a small portion to 16 people. There will be a special bottle of wine that evening as a prize for Chef of the Evening. Our winning Chefs of the Evening can have their recipes published on the OCWS website.

We are planning a maximum of seven sites for this Mini-Tasting. Sign-ups will open on Monday, January 3. Once sign-ups fill up, please call the OCWS office to be added to the waiting list.

The cut-off date for online sign-up is Friday, February 11, 2022. After this date please contact the OCWS office to determine availability. Due to the advance purchase of wines, you will not receive a refund if you cancel after the cancellation deadline, which is Tuesday, February 15, 2022.

- Bon Appetit, George Cravens

The Wine Press is the official newsletter of the Orange County Wine Society, Inc. The newsletter is published monthly.

The Wine Press welcomes input from the OCWS membership.

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

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Membership Corner



The Orange County Wine Society extends a warm welcome to its newest members! Membership for the following members were approved by the Board of Directors at the December meeting: **Wendy Clark, Barbara Adams, Marlane & Jim Nebel, Jan Larnard, Eugene Micco, and Lisa & Jeff Silbar.**

For new members trying to log on to the website, go to ocws.org. Your default logon is the primary member's email address. The default password is the primary member's zip code. Both of these may be changed under the tab "My Account" once you log on. However, there may be only one logon/password per membership.

- **Brian McDonald, Director & Membership 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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2021 Wine Competition Results: WineCompetition.com
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OCWS Save the Date Calendar

OCWS Varietal Hour @ 7 pm:

January 10	New Favorite Wine from the Holidays
January 24	Noble Grape Wines
February 7	Romantic Wines
February 21	Zinfandel
March 7	Dessert Wines (Port, Fortified, Ice, etc.)
March 21	Australian Wines
April 4	Non-Grape Wines—Wine Sans Grapes
April 18	Cabernet Sauvignon/Cabernet Franc

January 9	Bubbles 'n Brunch
January 19	Moulin Bouillon—Dine with Wine— sold out

2022 OCWS Winery Program:

January 14	Robert Hall Winery— sold out
February 11	Flying Goat Cellars
March 11	Halleck Vineyard
April 8	Artisan Uprising
May 13	McClain Cellars



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