



The Wine Press



Newsletter of the Orange County Wine Society, Inc.

Volume 46, Issue 3, March 2022

President's Message

The Vines Our Grapes Thrive On

The Orange County Wine Society is known for running The Courtyard at the OC Fair each year and reaping the benefits, but most people don't know how this came to be. Income from The Courtyard, along with the Wine Auction each year, pay for the running of the Commercial and Home Wine Competitions and sustaining the organization; however, this does not come from the OCWS alone. We are considered a non-profit partner to the Orange County Fair & Event Center (OCFEC) which affords us the opportunity to run the competitions and realize the benefits. The Competitions that we run each year are, in fact, owned by the OCFEC, but it was a small group of home winemakers that not only began our organization 46 years ago, but also approached the OC Fair with the idea of running wine competitions in tandem with the Fair each year. Hence, with a single table and a handful of wines, the OC Fair wine competitions were born.



From that handful of passionate people and one small table, the OCWS now runs one of the most prestigious commercial wine competitions in the country. The OC Fair Com-

mercial Wine Competition, which is held offsite over the first entire weekend of June, finds entries upwards of 2,800+ California commercial wines each year that are judged by a distinguished panel of nearly 90 judges comprised of mostly renowned California winemakers and winery principals. The Competition finds over 300 OCWS volunteers working hard to make each competition more successful than the one before.

The Winemakers' Group of the OCWS, which is comprised of about 80 die-hard home winemakers, many of whom are award-winners in their own right, and a couple of hundred more supporters, run the OC Fair Home Wine Competition on the second weekend of June on the OC Fairgrounds. Over 100 of the volunteers at this Competition are trained home wine judges who judge upwards of 650+ wines that are served by about 80 stewards.

The Competitions ultimately bring us to The Courtyard at the OC Fair, where we have the pleasure of serving commercial wines to the public throughout 23 days of the Fair. All of this is accomplished at the hands of hundreds of OCWS dedicated volunteers without whom this organization would not be what it is today.

I urge anyone who has not had, nor taken, the opportunity to volunteer at these events to give it a try this year. It's more fun than you can imagine! For more information about the Competitions and The Courtyard, please visit our website at ocws.org.

- Fran Gitsham, President

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OCWS Varietal Hour—Welcome to 2022

By now you have probably heard about the OCWS Varietal Hours. Every other Monday at 7 pm a group of OCWS wine enthusiasts get together on Zoom and present a wine from that week's theme from their cellar or from their favorite wine store. We welcome you to join this fun event, which is **free!** There's no driving and no dressing up required! See below for a list of the upcoming themes. Your only job is to show up with a wine that corresponds to that week's theme. You can then share a fun story about the wine or varietal and how much you like the wine!

We look forward to seeing you at one of the future Varietal Hours. Even though this event is **free**, you will need to register on the OCWS website by the Sunday night before the event. A link for the meeting is emailed to you on the day of the event.

We are also looking for hosts for each week. 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
3/7/2022 @ 7 pm	Dessert Wines (Port, Fortified, Ice, etc.)	Stuart Fricke
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
5/2/2022 @ 7 pm	Celebrity Wines	YOUR NAME HERE
5/16/2022 @ 7 pm	Non-Bottled Wines (Cans, Boxes, etc.)	YOUR NAME HERE
5/30/2022 @ 7 pm	Memorial Day Wine and Food Pairing	YOUR NAME HERE

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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In Memoriam—John David Hirstein



November 26, 1943—December 24, 2021

We regret to inform the membership of the recent passing of Dave Hirstein, a 39-year member of the Orange County Wine Society.

David can be remembered by his past services to the Wine Society as a Director and Past President during Board years 2000-2002. During this time, he was most instrumental in designing the construction and layout for The Courtyard. He chaired many events including the Commercial Wine Competition for several years.

In his life outside the OCWS, Dave was a very talented engineer and senior business manager in the aerospace industry. He spent many years with Rockwell International and then the Boeing Corporation when they acquired Rockwell. He was the owner of seven patents while in the employ of Boeing. David was a life-long member of Orange County and graduated from Cal State Long Beach with his BS and MS in Electrical Engineering.

David had numerous hobbies and avocations. He enjoyed fine wines, fine dining, and had a huge collection of Disney memorabilia, LGB trains, among others. His best passion was cruising the high seas of which I had the pleasure of accompanying him on 42 cruises alone!

David once told me he always wanted to be remembered as a “true gentleman.” As such, I can personally attest that you, Dave, were in fact, always a perfect gentleman.

David’s first wife, Betty, preceded him in passing. He is survived by his current wife, Gail. He will be deeply missed by me and all who knew and loved him.

- John Goodnight, OCWS President Emeritus

March Winery Program—Halleck Vineyard

Friday, March 11, 2022
Dinner starts @ 6:30 pm
Avenue of the Arts Hotel
3350 Avenue of the Arts
Costa Mesa, CA



Owner Ross Halleck

Halleck Vineyard produced their first harvest in 1999. Ross Halleck found that farming grapes is as much art as science. Much of this is mystery, produced by a variety of farming techniques employed to achieve great fruit from across all their vineyards. They choose specific clones, site location and flavor profiles.

They walk the rows, paying attention to the subtleties of the vines, the architecture of the clusters, the diurnal fluctuation of the leaves, the texture and flavor development of the seeds.

The cost of the buffet meal is \$45 for members and \$50 for guests. This buffet meal includes Garlic and Herb Crusted Tri Tip of Beef, with Garlic Mashed Potatoes and Seasonal Fresh 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 Mahi Mahi with Lemon Garlic Sauce, Brown Rice and Seasonal Fresh Vegetables.

The buffet and Heart Healthy meals include a salad of Romaine Lettuce with Roasted Tomatoes, Garlic Croutons, Parmesan Cheese, Creamy Caesar Dressing, warm Artisan Breads and Rolls with Sweet Butter.

A vegetarian meal may be specially ordered for \$52 for members and \$57 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.

Volunteers Needed: We need a couple of volunteers to help with check-in from 5:30 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 sign up or cancel and receive a **refund is Sunday, March 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



2022 Wine Auction—Come Bid on your Favorite Wines!

Are you ready? The annual OCWS Wine Auction is just around the corner. Join us on Saturday, April 23 for a fun-filled day of wine, food, and bidding! This event provides a great opportunity to fill your wine cellar with wines from the 2021 OC Fair Commercial Wine Competition. Buy wines at a fraction of the retail price in both silent and verbal lots and support the OCWS! This event is limited to members only, and tickets are only \$20. Sign-up to attend and to volunteer on the OCWS website.

This year's event will take place at the OC Fair and Event Center in the Costa Mesa Building. Attendees are encouraged to bring pens, a wine glass, folding chair, and comfortable walking shoes. The Auction catalogue will be available online and in hard copy a few weeks before the event.

We look forward to seeing you in April. Cheers!

- Carolyn Christian, Wine Auction Chair

Bubbles 'n Brunch

Saturday, March 19, 2022

11 am to 2 pm

Tavern House Kitchen + Bar

333 Bayside Drive

Newport Beach, CA

Our next location on our brunch tour will be Tavern House Kitchen + Bar. Yes, it will be on **Saturday March 19!** Tavern House has a beautiful harbor view location, it's warm, comfortable, and stylish. A great place for a casual weekend brunch with your fellow wine friends.

We will brunch in the Living Room banquet room. We will order off a prix-fix menu, where you will make your entrée selection from three choices. Tavern Greens salad and walnut-carrot cake are included.

The price for this brunch is \$63 for members and guests. This price includes tax, gratuity, room fee, and no corkage! Valet parking is offered at \$6 per vehicle. Public parking is about 2 blocks away around the corner by Sol Cocina. This event will



be posted on the OCWS website for sign up. Space is limited; when the event fills up, please contact the OCWS office

to be placed on a waitlist.

Each person is requested to:

1. Bring a bottle of your favorite champagne and/or wine.
2. Bring champagne and/or wine glasses.
3. Please drink responsibly.
4. Please wear your nametag.

Because we need to contract with the restaurant the attendance count, the last day to sign up, make changes or cancel to receive a refund is Monday, March 14. Any cancellations after this date would be filled and refunded from the waitlist.

Looking forward to toasting with you again!

- Rochelle Randel, Champagne Brunch Chair

2022 OCWS Spring Social

Date: Saturday, May 7

Place: The Courtyard @ OC Fairgrounds

Time: TBD

The Cooks' Caucus is getting ready to serve up a gourmet meal. We have our own OCWS band, the **Three 2 Sevens**,

booked. So come out and get ready to eat, dance and enjoy. More to follow, but **mark your calendar now**. After years of confinement, we are ready to cut loose OCWS style.

- Brian McDonald, Spring Social 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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Website: OCWS.org ■ OCWS Facebook ■ Twitter: OCWineSociety

2021 Wine Competition Results: WineCompetition.com

OCWS Website Administrator: Wendy Taylor

OCWS Photographer: Jim Burk

Winemakers Newsroom: In Memoriam—Jim Graver



The OCWS Winemakers' Group and the OCWS Society has lost a dear friend, Jim Graver. As one of the originators of the Orange County Wine Society and the founder of the OCWS Home Wine Group in 1980, Jim passed away on February 6.

Jim Graver was the first President of the OCWS and continued to lead the Winemakers' Group and the OC Fair's Home Wine Competition for many years, until he finally retired from these positions **after 36 years** in 2015.

In 2016, the OCWS recognized him by naming him an OCWS President Emeritus. He was a really good overall winemaker, but he was a **fabulous fruit winemaker**. Jim won the 2019 and 2020 Best of Show for fruit wines.

Legendary stories of Jim "taking" his wines out of consideration for Best of Show when he was the Home Wine Competition Chairman are retold often! Jim was so humble he did not feel that a wine that he had submitted should overshadow others! He simply made his own wines ineligible to receive any Best of Show consideration!

Syrah/Petite Sirah Mini-Tasting

Saturday, March 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 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.

View a short clip of an impromptu interview of Jim taken during a Home Wine Competition conducted by Wendy Taylor at: <https://ocws-winemakers-webinars.s3.us-west-1.amazonaws.com/Jim+Graver.3gp>.

He was a friend and a mentor to every single one of us, teaching us the intricacies of winemaking and bringing us up from mediocre quality from those early days to wines we are highly proud of in today's Home Wine Competitions, matching and exceeding many commercial wines.

Jim was an avid photographer and nearly all of us through the years have received copies of photos Jim took of us at some event or competition that served to remind us of those wonderful times we had and allowed us to recall those fond memories.

As great a leader and mentor as Jim was for so many of us, he was also one of the finest "men" that we've ever met. Truly humble, genuinely sincere, and always engaged and interested in "you." Jim will be so much missed, but will never be forgotten!

- Kevin Donnelly & Bill Forsch,
Thoughts and comments contributed by two friends

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 eight 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, March 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, March 15, 2022.

- Bon Appetit, George Cravens

Members Corner



The Orange County Wine Society extends a warm welcome to its newest members! Membership for the following members was approved by the Board of Directors at the

February 2022 meeting: **Heather & Brianna Bernard, Sherri & Scott Fottler, Judy Oswald, William O'Neill, and Diana & John Moore.**

For new members trying to log into the website, go to OCWS.org. Your default login 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 login/password per membership.

NEW MEMBER MIXER

A New Member Mixer is scheduled for Sunday, March 20, between 2 pm and 4 pm for members who joined **after** October 1, 2019 and have not previously attended a New Member

Dine with Wine—Zov's Bistro Tustin

Zov's Bistro Tustin

March 23, 2022 @ 6 pm

17440 17th Street, Suite A

Tustin, CA 92780



Founded in 1987 by Chef Zov Karamardian, legendary Zov's Bistro and Bakery in Tustin, CA has become a culinary institution. Recognized by James Beard, Zov's is a "must" for gourmands in Orange County, serving unique cuisine that blends contemporary with Eastern Mediterranean influences in an upscale chic environment.

Located in Enderle Square in Tustin, the OCWS is pleased to offer members the opportunity to enjoy award-winning cuisine.

Located in Enderle Square in Tustin, the OCWS is pleased to offer members the opportunity to enjoy award-winning cuisine.

IMPORTANT - Members should:

- Bring your own wine glasses
- Bring one bottle of wine per person to share
- Wear your name tag
- Sign up before Wednesday, March 16 – last day for changes

- **Marcia Vaughan & Rich Skoczylas, Director**

Mixer. This is an **invitation only** event and requires an online RSVP.

Invitations were sent via Constant Contact last month on February 7. If you did not receive an invitation and believe you should have, please contact me directly.

MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL MONTH

Some of you may be wondering why your membership "renewal month" has changed. When COVID first struck and the State prohibited all in-person activities, the Board decided to grant everyone a three month extension on their membership anticipating the COVID lockdown would be three months or less (or so everyone was told). As the State continued to extend the lockdown, additional membership renewal extensions were approved by the Board. Once things "opened up" again, the OCWS began to again collect dues but after all the extensions, renewal months changed. So if your renewal month is now different, that is why. If you have any questions about your renewal, please call the office at 714.708.1636.

- **Brian McDonald, Director & Membership Chair**

Choose from the following outstanding selections for \$62 per member and \$67 for a guest, all-inclusive.

Starter (choose one)

Mixed Green Salad

or

Award winning Golden Lentil Soup

(recipe passed down through four generations)

Entrees (choose one)

2-Way Kabobs, one chicken and one beef,

Angus beef tenderloin, marinated grilled chicken breast,

Jasmine rice pilaf, tomato cucumber salad, yogurt mint sauce

or

Encrusted Salmon, wild arugula, crispy potato cake,

Pinot Noir reduction, crispy onions

Dessert

Tiramisu

Includes Soft Beverage or Iced Tea

The corkage fee is generously waived, and you may also purchase beverages from Zov's cellar.

Space is limited, so sign up today on the OCWS website to be a part of this memorable, first-ever experience in Zov's private Wine Room. Parking is available in the front and back at the corner of Enderle Center Drive and 17th Street.

Commercial Wine Competition Volunteers

We are headed toward the 46th Commercial Competition this year!! As in previous years, we will have signups online in March.



We understand that these are changing times and conditions, so we appreciate your flexibility in working together to make this another fun event. There are many areas where volunteer help is needed such as stewarding, glass washing and drying, as well as computer verification. Continuing the efficiency of the past, the computer input positions will be assigned. A sign-up form is included on the website that identifies stewarding days, bagging nights, and other work parties with times and dates. In order to qualify for stewarding, it is required of you to

sign up for two additional work parties.

We offer bagging and moving of wine to and from the Competition site, including sorting. We definitely need your support for our work parties in order to run a successful competition. The good news is that we will have some hired help for heavy lifting. No training is necessary as newer members will be teamed with competition veterans.

A heads up, if you volunteer to steward, it means carrying trays of glasses. It's physical and can get tiring. Along with stewarding, you need to be prepared to assist your Steward Captain with opening wine bottles, preparing glasses for tags and cleanup of the judges' tables as needed, under the direction of your designated Steward Captain.

If you have any questions, please feel free to phone me at 562.822.3382 or email at Strompharms@earthlink.net.

We look forward to your participation in making this very important event as successful as ever.

- Robyn Strom, Volunteer Coordinator

OCWS Save the Date Calendar

OCWS Varietal Hour @ 7 pm:

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
May 2	Celebrity Wines
May 16	Non-Bottled Wines (Cans, Boxes, etc.)
May 30	Memorial Day Wine and Food Pairing

OCWS Winery Program:

March 11	Halleck Vineyard
April 8	Artisan Uprising
May 13	McClain Cellars

March 19	Bubbles 'n Brunch—Tavern House Kitchen & Bar
March 23	Dine with Wine—Zov's Bistro Tustin
March 26	Mini-Tasting—Syrah/Petite Sirah
April 9	Winemakers' Quarterly Meeting
April 23	2022 Wine Auction
May 7	2022 OCWS Spring Social
May 14	Mini-Tasting—Rhone Style Wines



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