

# THE WINE PRESS

Volume 47, Issue 5

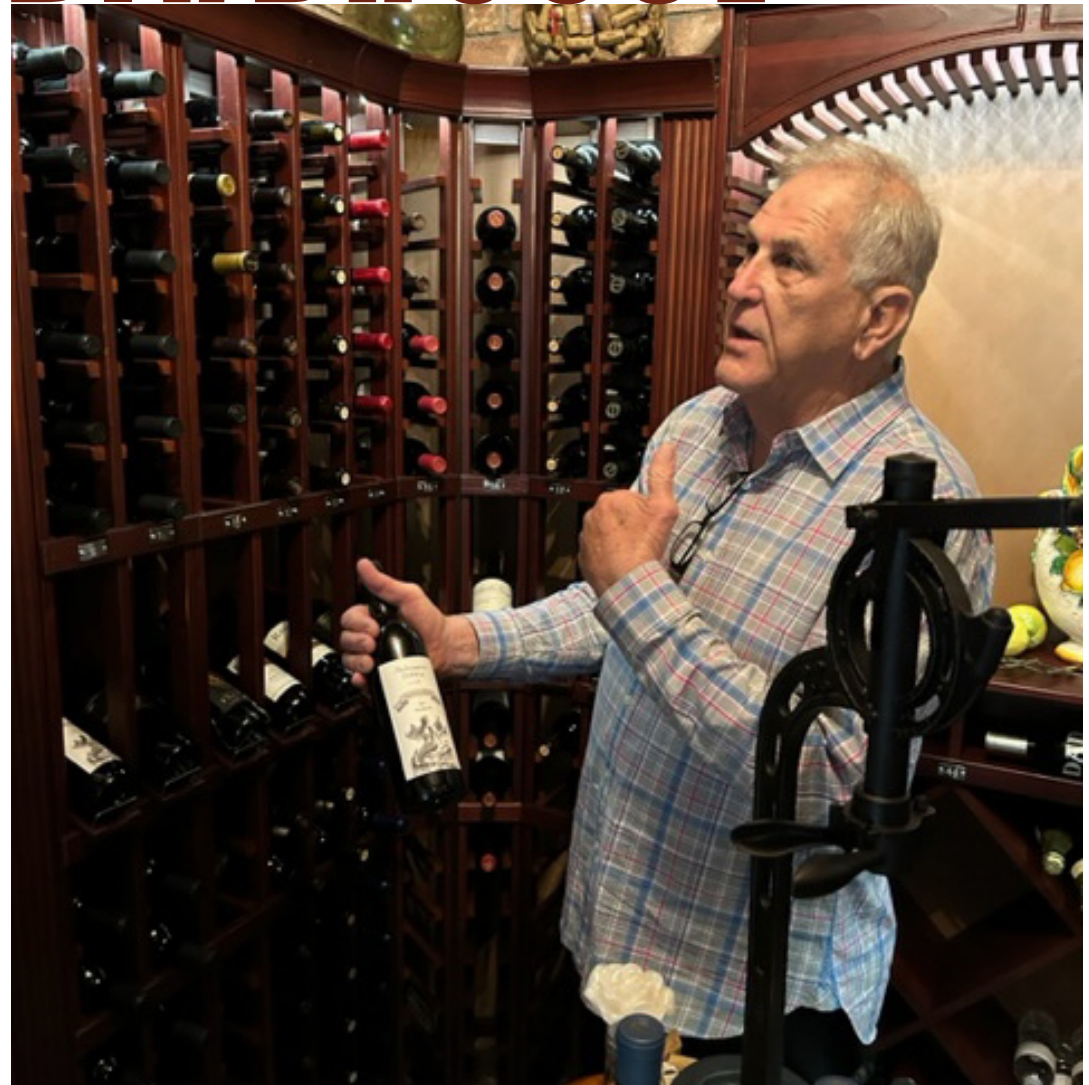
ocws.org

May 2023



## Stellar CELLARS

# Battles in the BIRDHOUSE



STORY & PHOTOS BY GREG RISLING

Pay one visit to the home of Betty Jo and Jay Newell in Yorba Linda and you will know why they enjoy hosting mini-tastings, parties and other events.

They have a sprawling and in-

viting backyard made for outdoor gatherings that once was home to a stable of horses and even a sand volleyball court. But it's the large structure in the corner of the backyard

see BIRDHOUSE, page 10

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# President's Message

BY FRAN GITSHAM

Life is all about how you handle Plan B—this is what the coaster on my desk says and is a constant reminder to me that life has a way of totally screwing with my best intentions.

I cannot recall a day in my life that went according to the way I had planned for it to go. Hence, you will hear me sigh and say, “Just step back five yards and punt.” But one thing I know for sure is that there are always reasons for changes (whether I understand them or not is another subject) and always solutions.

The workings within the OCWS are a perfect example of Plan Bs. In just the last year, we have weathered cancelled events, adverse weather conditions, illnesses, venue changes, ever-changing government-issued requirements, etc., etc., etc., and, in the long run, everything has worked out due to the ingenuity of our members and their willingness to go with the flow, step back those five yards and punt and enjoy what we are afforded. Namely, to be able to be a part of the love, camaraderie and fun.

This writing is really a THANK YOU message to all you adaptable OCWS volunteers, whether you are

one of those die-hard people constantly spearheading events and acting as members of a committee, thereby working literally hundreds, if not thousands, of hours, and to those of you who are just able to help a few hours here and there. You are all what makes the OCWS run and without you we would not continue to be what we are.

With our biggest volunteer events of the year, namely the wine competitions and The Courtyard at the OC Fair coming fast, THANK YOU in advance for your participation. Every hand, every hour counts!



## Take NOTE

### Holiday Cheer with Friends

Save the date! This year's OCWS Holiday Dinner Dance is slated for 6 p.m. Friday, Dec. 1, and includes a champagne reception and four-course meal at the Avenue of the Arts Hotel in Costa Mesa. Details coming soon.

### Clubs With Benefits

Chances are if you belong to the

Orange County Wine Society, you belong to one or more wine clubs. The driving factor in joining a wine club can be varied but is due, in large part, to the wine itself. We are inviting OCWS members to reach out and tell us the best or most unique features of your wine club. Please email editor@ocws.org so that we can include submissions in an upcoming newsletter article.



**Frisby Cellars is the only Orange County winery that also brews beer.**

## Tasting at local winery this month

Did you know there are more than a dozen wineries right here in Orange County? Some have been around for more than a decade while others are new to the game. It is the hope that in the coming months and next few years that the Orange County Wine Society will schedule events at the various locations.

When Josh Frisby decided he wanted to make wine commercially, his vision was simple: to bring his love of Central Coast wines – particularly those from Paso Robles – to his home turf in Orange County.

Fifteen years later, the 48-year-old fire captain has left his stamp in our



backyard, operating three tasting rooms in idyllic locations, one of which boasts the county's only full production combination winery and brewery. For Frisby, his passion for wine has blossomed into a rewarding venture.

OCWS members are invited to Frisby Cellars' Rancho Mission Viejo

location 6 to 8 p.m. Thursday, May 11, for tastings of six wines. Cost is \$25 and includes charcuterie boards, so plan to have an early or late dinner. There are only 50 slots available and signups are now available online at [OCWS.org](http://OCWS.org).

The sign-up deadline is Tuesday, May 9.

### **New 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 April 2023 meeting: Cinda Carbone, Debra Van Weide, Karen Fabian, Elena Yuasa, Chad Nelson and Malia Simmons, Anait and Ryan Buchman, and Larry and Rhonda Mandell.

As of Jan. 1, 2023, the OCWS has 1,085 members.

**New Members:** For new members trying to log into the website, go to [OCWS.org](http://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.

—Rochelle Randel,  
Membership Chair

### **The Wine Press Staff Box**

*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. Please forward comments, questions and suggestions to [Editor@ocws.org](mailto:Editor@ocws.org)

#### **Executive Editors**

Cathy Risling  
Greg Risling

#### **Contributing Writers**

OCWS Board of Directors  
Jim Burk  
Scott Harral  
Alice Polser  
Rochelle Randel  
Ed Reyes

#### **Website Administrator**

Wendy Taylor

#### **OCWS Photographer**

Jim Burk

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Orange County Wine Society  
P.O. Box 11059  
Costa Mesa, CA 92627  
Phone: (714) 708-1636  
Fax: (714) 546-5002

**Website:** [OCWS.org](http://OCWS.org)  
**OCWS Email:**  
[Office@ocws.org](mailto:Office@ocws.org)

**2022 Wine Competition Results:**  
[WineCompetition.com](http://WineCompetition.com)

## Chef of the EVENING

Tamara Reddy says she had some creme de cassis on hand she had brought home from a trip around the wine regions of France and wanted to use it in something chocolate and decadent for a recent OCWS mini-tasting.

She had never made this recipe before, but she was 100 percent confident in her Ina Garten/Barefoot Contessa cookbooks. So she searched for a dessert using Cassis, found one, and made it with confidence.

“Ina is the best, I use her recipes extensively,” says Tamara, who along with husband Michael has been an Orange County Wine Society member for eight years. “To date, the recipes have won me a good number of bottles of wine at our Mini-Tasting events.”



## Chocolate Cassis Cake

### FOR THE CAKE

Baking spray, such as Baker’s Joy  
 12 Tbsp. (1½ sticks) unsalted butter  
 10 ounces bittersweet chocolate,  
 chopped  
 ½ cup unsweetened cocoa powder  
 6 Tbsp. crème de cassis liqueur  
 1 tsp. pure vanilla extract  
 5 extra-large eggs, at room  
 temperature  
 1 cup sugar  
 ¼ tsp. kosher salt

### FOR THE GLAZE

6 oz. bittersweet or semisweet  
 chocolate, chopped  
 ¼ cup heavy cream  
 2 to 3 Tbsp. crème de cassis liqueur  
 ½ tsp. pure vanilla extract

### TO SERVE

2 (½ pint) boxes fresh raspberries  
 1 pint fresh strawberries, hulled and  
 thickly sliced  
 ⅓ cup sugar  
 ⅓ cup crème de cassis liqueur

### DIRECTIONS

**PREHEAT** oven to 350 degrees. Spray a 9-inch round springform pan with baking spray. Line the bottom of the pan with parchment paper and spray it again with baking spray.

**MELT** butter and chocolate together in a heat-proof bowl set over a pan of simmering water, stirring occasionally until smooth. Set aside to cool for 5 minutes.

**WHISK** in the cocoa powder, cassis liqueur and vanilla; set aside.

**IN THE BOWL** of an electric mixer fitted with the whisk attachment (you can also use a hand mixer), beat the eggs, sugar and salt on high speed for 3 to 5 minutes, until pale yellow and tripled in volume.

**POUR** chocolate mixture into the egg mixture and carefully but thoroughly fold them together with a rubber spatula.

**POUR** batter into prepared pan and bake for 35 to 40 minutes, until just barely set in the center. Allow to cool in the pan for 30 minutes and then release the sides of the pan. Invert the cake carefully onto a flat serving plate, remove the parchment paper and cool completely.

**FOR THE GLAZE**, melt the chocolate and cream together in a heat-proof bowl set over a pan of simmering water. Stir until smooth. Off the heat, whisk in the cassis and vanilla.

**COOL** for 10 minutes and spread over just the top of the cake.

**BEFORE SERVING** (15 minutes), toss the berries gently with the sugar and cassis liqueur. Cut the cake in wedges and serve with the berries on the side.

*Do you have something delicious to share? Please send your recipes to George Cravens at [george@ocws.org](mailto:george@ocws.org) for possible publication on the OCWS website.*

Commercial Wine COMPETITION

# Attention Commercial Wine Competition Volunteers

We are headed toward the 47th Commercial Wine Competition this year. Signups are on our website, so be sure to look for them. Boy this year has gone fast!

We understand that these are changing times and conditions, so we ask that you please be flexible so we can work together to make this another highly successful and fun event. There are many areas where volunteer help is needed such as stewarding, glass washing and drying.

Continuing the standard of efficiency, the data entry, scoring verification and medals mailing teams will be pre-assigned. A sign-up form is included on the website that identifies two stewarding days, two bagging nights and other work parties with times and dates.

To qualify for stewarding, you are required to sign up for two additional work parties. We offer bagging and moving of wine to and from the competition site, as well as sorting within weeks after the competition. We need your support for our work parties in order to run a successful competition. The good news is that we will be hiring help for heavy lifting for the move to and from the competition site. No training is necessary as newer members will be teamed with competition veterans.

A quick note: If you volunteer to steward, you'll be required to carry trays of glasses. It's physical and can get tiring. Along with stewarding, you



Last year, about 150 OCWS members volunteered more than 2,300 hours at the competition.

need to be prepared to assist your steward captain with opening wine bottles, preparing glasses for tags and cleaning up the judges' tables as needed, while listening to your steward captain for direction. It's really all about teamwork for this to be successful.

Some of the positions are quite physically demanding. We thank you in advance for your understanding that not all positions

requested will be fulfilled, as we need to assure the safety of all our volunteers and accept volunteer requests for positions deemed best suited to their physical capabilities.

If you have any questions, please feel free to phone me at (562) 822-3382 or email me at strompharms@earthlink.net. We look forward to your participation in this very important event.

—Robyn Strom, Volunteer Coordinator

**SAVE the DATE**  
OCWS Commercial Wine Competition  
8 a.m. to 5 p.m.  
Saturday & Sunday  
June 3-4, 2023  
Hilton Hotel  
Costa Mesa, CA

BOOK YOUR ROOM TODAY

If you plan on staying at the Costa Mesa Hilton Hotel for the weekend of the Commercial Wine Competition, please make reservations no later than May 19, 2023. The OCWS has booked a block of rooms for OCWS members at a discounted rate and this rate is guaranteed only until that date or until sold out. The special rate is \$149 per night or \$180 for the executive floor and does not require advance payment; self-parking is \$20 per night.

Reservations can be made by going to the OCWS website and using the direct booking link after logging into your account. Members who book their rooms using the OCWS block will receive a bottle of wine as a thank you for helping to meet our hotel room commitments. When making reservations by phone, call 1-800-Hiltons (1.800.445.8667). Be sure to mention the discount code "OCWS23" to receive the above rates.

—Bill Redding, Commercial Wine Competition Facilities Coordinator



**The COURTYARD**

# Get Happy Together in The Courtyard

It will be time again to be Happy Together at the 2023 OC Fair while volunteering at our major fundraiser of the year, The Courtyard at the OC Fair July 14 through Aug. 13.

Volunteer opportunities will be here before you know it! So, plan accordingly, as all willing hands and wonderful hearts will be needed and greatly appreciated.

**Wanted:** Members interested in working as cashier or steward at The Courtyard.

If you have not previously been a cashier or steward at The Courtyard, and if you have experience working in The Courtyard in past years and have considered working either of these positions, contact Rich Skoczylas. We


will consider your experience for these positions.

This year, we plan to operate The Courtyard the same as we did last year to serve award-winning wines by the taste and wines by the glass. We will also have in-person seminars.

The Featured Winery Program will be returning! More details will follow as we get closer to fair time and receive OC Fair confirmation of any parameters and restrictions at that time.

We look forward to seeing you at the fair and continuing to get back to sharing live fun, great laughs, and wine together in person!

— **Rich Skoczylas,**  
**Courtyard Scheduler**  
**Rich@ocws.org**



**VOLUNTEER NEEDS**

**Servers**  
 Sign-ups open May 1 on the OCWS website

**Managers, Stewards & Cashiers**  
 Invitations were sent to sign up for these positions

**Set Up/Take Down**  
 Dates for set-up, decorating and tear-down will be announced soon

**Varietal HOUR**

# Wine, pairing and education fun

What is a Chambourcin? Have you ever tried Malvazia Nera? What are the wine regions in South Africa? How are the wines in Missouri? Are there any good canned or boxed wines?

Answers to these questions and more can be found during the OCWS Varietal Hours!

Varietal Hours are a great way to share knowledge and fun stories about wine; we all learn something new each time we meet. And we do it from the comfort of our own homes via Zoom! Some members even continue to join us for this event even after they move out of the area or when they are on vacation.

Join us every other Monday from 7-8 p.m. via Zoom for one of these exciting events. The upcoming themes

DATE	TIME	VARIETAL	Hosts
4/3/2023	7 p.m.	Sierra Foothills Wines	Carolyn & Damian Christian
4/17/2023	7 p.m.	Spanish Varietal Wines	Don & Elee Phillips
5/1/2023	7 p.m.	Wine & Mexican Food Pairing	Ed Reyes
5/15/2023	7 p.m.	Oregon Wines	Sam & Kim Clark
5/29/2023		NO Varietal Hour Due to Holiday	
6/12/2023	7 p.m.	Wine with Crazy Labels	YOUR NAME HERE
6/26/2023	7 p.m.	Wines with a Cause	YOUR NAME HERE

are listed below. Find a wine that you already have in your cellar or use the varietal hours as an opportunity to go to your favorite wine store to buy something new. Each participant shares what they like (or didn't like) about their wine(s).

Although the event is FREE to OCWS members, sign-ups are required. Please logon to the OCWS website to register for this event no later than the Sunday night before the Varietal Hour. Couples only need to sign up for one person since this event is via Zoom. A link for the Zoom meeting will be

emailed to you on the day of the event. You can attend as many or as few of the Varietal Hours as you wish.

Please contact Carolyn at carolyn@ocws.org or George Cravens at george@ocws.org with any questions or suggestions. We are also looking for hosts and themes for upcoming Varietal Hours. No experience is necessary.

We look forward to Zooming with you soon at one of the future Varietal Hours. Cheers!

— **Carolyn Christian,**  
**OCWS Vice President &**  
**George Cravens,**  
**OCWS Director**

# Introductory class ideal for aspiring winemakers

Here's your chance to learn how to make wine. John Lane from our Winemakers Group will be conducting a Kit Winemaking Class Saturday, June 17, at the OC Fair and Event Center. This is a great introductory class for new winemakers. It's basically like following a recipe only you'll make wine instead of a meal.

Since our first kit winemaking class in 2013, approximately 175 members have taken part in these classes. Over half of our new winemakers started as a result. Using kits, many members have produced medal-winning wines at the OC Fair Home Wine Competition. Kits are a great springboard to making wine from grapes.

At this class you will learn: kit selection, equipment needed, step-by-



step kit instructions, monitoring your wine throughout the process, racking/clarifying, storage/aging and bottling.

John will be demonstrating the process using two separate kits, a Chardonnay to begin the class and a Chilean Malbec to finish. Participants will get to take home a bottle of the Malbec.

Cost to attend is \$25 and attendance is extremely limited. The class will last roughly four to five hours. There will be a short break in the middle with light snacks served. Sign up now on the OCWS website to attend.

Maybe next year you'll be entering your wines in the 2024 OC Fair Home Wine Competition.

—Ed Reyes, ed@ocws.org



## 2023 OC Fair Home Wine COMPETITION

7:30 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Saturday, June 10

OC Fair Wine Courtyard

**Calling all winemakers!** Time is running out to enter your wines into this year's OC Fair Home Wine Competition. Online entries must be submitted and all wines must be received by May 26.

Don't miss the opportunity to compete for bragging rights with your fellow winemakers. Awards include Best of Show, Double Gold, Gold, Silver and Bronze. Last year, OCWS winemakers won awards in two of the four Best of Show categories. Can we do it again? You'll never know unless you enter. I entered three of mine, fingers crossed for success.

**Calling all volunteers!** The OC Fair Home Wine Competition is the largest home wine competition in California. It is organized by the OCWS Winemakers Group and run entirely by volunteers from the OCWS. We need your help to make it

a success.

The event runs 7:30 a.m. to about 2 p.m. All volunteers will be treated to breakfast and lunch, courtesy of the OCWS Cooks Caucus. You also will get the opportunity to taste many of the award-winning wines after the judging is complete.

Volunteer positions include registration, stewards, data entry/scoring, food service, glass washing and cleanup. There will be a brief orientation before the competition begins to familiarize everyone with their positions. New volunteers will be paired with competition veterans. It's a fun day and a great way to meet and mingle with your fellow OCWS members.

Sign up using the OCWS website Volunteer Form. I hope to see you there!

—Ed Reyes, ed@ocws.org



# ZD Winery

6:30 p.m.

Friday, May 12, 2023

**DOORS OPEN 6 P.M.**

Avenue of the Arts Hotel  
3350 Avenue of the Arts  
Costa Mesa, CA

**Sign-Up Deadline:**  
Sunday, May 7



In 1969 Norman and Rosa Lee deLeuze build a little family winery in Napa, California. They named this winery “ZD” and it is still run by the family.

They are committed to producing world-class wines, farming organically and providing first-class hospitality to guests.

Their passion and dedication to making world-class wine has helped elevate ZD Wines as one of Napa Valley’s iconic wineries.

ZD’s premium mainstay wines include Chardonnay, Pinot Noir and Cabernet Sauvignon. Once you try one of these, you have tasted ex-

ceptional wine. Of course, ZD produces other wines – Tempranillo, a Port-style wine of multi-vintage blend of diverse reds and a sparkling Reserve Blanc de Noir.

—Rich Skoczylas,  
Winery Program Coordinator

## MENU

**Buffet:** Beef stroganoff with mushroom and sour cream gravy, buttery egg noodles and heirloom baby carrots. **\$56 members, \$61 guests**

**Heart Healthy Meal:** Pan-roasted Mahi Mahi with pistachio crusted with caper sauce, herb quinoa pilaf and heirloom baby carrots. **\$63 members, \$68 guests**

**Both meals:** Include baby mixed greens with strawberries, crumbled goat cheese, glazed walnuts and a light raspberry vinaigrette with warm artisan breads and rolls with sweet butter.

**Vegetarian Meal:** May be specially ordered. **\$63 members, \$68 guests**



**ZD WINES**  
N A P A V A L L E Y

### **Volunteers Needed**

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

For this special event, we also will include dessert with an apple tart with toasted almonds and caramel. A selection of dessert wines from the OCWS cellar will be provided by our cellarmaster to accompany this tart.

Sign up on the OCWS website to attend this event. Attendees can 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 p.m. with the meeting following about 7:15 p.m.

Members may bring their own wine to enjoy and share during dinner. Be sure to wear your name tag. As we need to contract the meals with the hotel, the last day to sign up or cancel and receive a refund is Sunday, May 7.



# Calling all photographers

The OCWS sponsors a photography contest and you are invited to participate! As you might have guessed, the subject is “wine,” but this can mean many things to many people.

Do you have a great shot of the sun filtering through the vines just before picking? Or an action shot of wine being poured with some great swirls in the glass? Perhaps a romantic shot of a couple toasting each other?

These are a few ideas and I’m sure you have many more of that great shot involving wine in some way.

Each month the photography committee will select a Photo of the Month for publication in the upcoming The Wine Press as well as on the OCWS website. The winner will also receive a bottle of wine from the OCWS wine cellar. The ultimate goal is to publish an OCWS calendar consisting of the 12 best photos of the year. These may or may not be the 12 monthly winners.

If you have any questions, email Jim@JBurk.net. Jim is the OCWS photographer and head of the OCWS photography committee.



## A CASTLE FILLED WITH WINE BARRELS

This month’s repeat winner—Orange County Wine Society member Manuela Harral—snapped her Photo of the Month in Neive-Borgonovo, Italy, with her iPhone.

### THE RULES

- 1** Entrants must be OCWS members in good standing and the submitted photo must have been photographed by the OCWS member when he/she was an active member.
- 2** The photo must be somehow wine oriented. It may be of a winery, vineyard, the winemaking process, the finished product or simply the consumption. But don’t limit yourself just to these ideas!
- 3** The photo or photos may be submitted to the OCWS photography committee anytime but will be considered only for the month it was submitted. There is a limit of five (5) submissions per month.

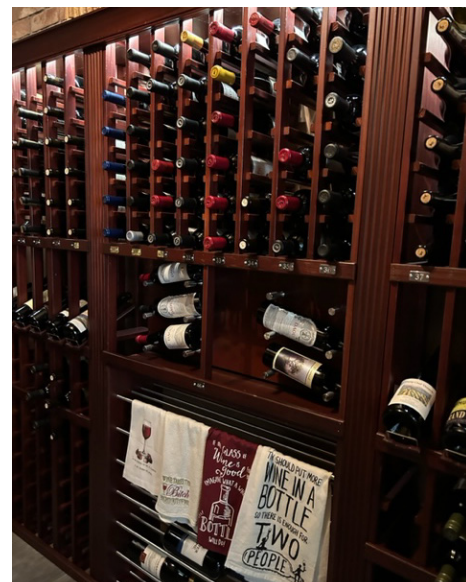
**4** Upon submission, rights to the photo are given to the OCWS for marketing purposes, so before you submit it make sure it is your property. Please get permission from any people in the photo to use for OCWS marketing purposes.

**5** The photo must be submitted in one of the following formats: JPEG, RAW, TIFF or Photo-shop. Any size is acceptable, but it is preferred to be at least 3000x2400 pixels, which is an 8”x10” shot at 300 dpi for printing.

To submit a picture, attach it in an email to Jim Burk at Jim@JBurk.net. Be sure to include your name, phone number, picture location and picture title. Photos are due by the last day of the month to be considered for the next month’s winner.



Jay Newell (above) punches in the code to enter his cellar. (Right) The 800-square-foot cellar stores up to 800 bottles.



“  
**Joining the wine society expanded our appreciation of different varietals. We have a whole circle of friends who are society members thanks to joining.**

—Betty Jo Newell

”

**BIRDHOUSE, from page 1**

that houses one of the couple’s favorite spots.

Affectionately known as the “Birdhouse”— named after Jay found a weather vane that now sits affixed at the top of what looks like an oversized garage – the building serves several functions but none better than the wine cellar tucked away in the corner.

When Jay, a retired investigator with the Orange County District Attorney’s Office, was diagnosed with cancer in 2017, he knew putting in a wine cellar was a priority “in case things didn’t work out.”

He got right to work, designing their dream cellar and doing much of the work himself. He arched the ceiling in an expressive manner, coated the space tightly with insulation (the cellar sometimes doubles as a backup refrigerator) and had the wine racks specially designed.

“I really researched it,” Jay fondly recalls. “I wanted it to be easily accessible and easy enough where you don’t have to search for that certain bottle. It is bigger than what I planned.”

The result is an 850-square-foot showpiece that can store up to 800 bottles. The rows are all numbered 1 to 46 and Jay meticulously keeps a binder of

his inventory and cataloging that gives him quick access to find the right wine to serve to guests or to bring to their favorite restaurant.

“If we feel like drinking a certain type of wine, we go right to the cellar and grab a bottle,” Betty Jo says. “We always take a bottle with us to a restaurant. There is enough variety in the cellar that makes the decision easy for us.”

Mind you, the cellar isn’t completely stocked. Jay estimates there are somewhere between 400 and 500 bottles on average, worth somewhere in the neighborhood of \$15,000 to \$20,000. The Newells’ most expensive bottle is a \$400-plus 2013 Daou Cabernet Sauvignon.

When the couple first joined the OCWS about six years ago, they stuck to drinking Cabernet Sauvignon and other popular varietals. But that all changed once they got involved, attended OCWS events and met new friends. Now, any OCWS member who has the fortune to visit their home will get an added bonus of marveling at their cellar.

“Joining the wine society expanded our appreciation of different varietals,” Betty Jo said. “We have a whole circle of friends who are society members thanks to joining.”



**2023**

# UPCOMING EVENTS

**MAY 1**

**VARIETAL HOUR**  
WINE & MEXICAN FOOD TASTING / ED REYES

**MAY 6**

**MINI-TASTING**  
PINOT NOIR / VARIOUS HOST SITES

**MAY 11**

**OCWS OUTING**  
FRISBY CELLARS / RANCHO MISSION VIEJO

**MAY 12**

**2023 SPECIAL WINERY PROGRAM**  
ZD WINERY / AVENUE OF THE ARTS HOTEL

**MAY 15**

**VARIETAL HOUR**  
OREGON WINES / HOSTED BY SAM & KIM CLARK

**JUNE 3-4**

**OC FAIR COMMERCIAL WINE COMPETITION**  
HILTON HOTEL / COSTA MESA

**JUNE 10**

**OC FAIR HOME WINEMAKERS COMPETITION**  
ORANGE COUNTY FAIRGROUNDS / COSTA MESA

**JUNE 12**

**VARIETAL HOUR**  
WINE WITH CRAZY LABELS / HOST TBD

**JUNE 16**

**INTIMATE DINNER WITH AL LAGO WINES**  
AVENUE OF THE ARTS HOTEL / COSTA MESA

**JUNE 17**

**KIT WINEMAKING CLASS**  
ORANGE COUNTY FAIRGROUNDS / COSTA MESA

**JUNE 26**

**VARIETAL HOUR**  
WINES WITH A CAUSE / HOST TBD

**DECEMBER 1**

**OCWS HOLIDAY DINNER DANCE**  
AVENUE OF THE ARTS HOTEL / COSTA MESA