

## **Upcoming Events:**

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Newsletter of the Orange County Wine Society, Inc.

### President's Message

After more than a year of almost no activities, we have just been through two of the hardest events of our "normal" OCWS year, our two Competitions! And yet as hard as we work to accomplish these monumental events, they are also the most rewarding for our members, both in the feeling of accomplishment at the end, and also in the ability to actually **see** each other, and not just "**Zee**" each other over the computer screen. We saw a lot of hugs and heard "It's so good to actually see you!" greetings, and it was so good to again see so many of our members! Our Commercial Wine Competition was held June 5-6 at the Hilton Orange



County Costa Mesa hotel on Bristol Street, and we were ecstatic to receive 2,440 entries! We welcomed back many of our returning judges, and a few new ones. Congratulations to Liz and Lloyd Corbett for your months of work beforehand, Leslie Brown and Kevin Coy for your leadership, and to all of you who volunteered to make this such a wonderful event. Visit <u>WineCompetition.com</u> for results from the Competition.

It always amazes me to see the "OCWS machine" that receives, prepares, and transports the wines to the hotel, and then the organization and execution of the Competition.

This was followed by our Home Wine Competition on June 12, where wines were judged from amateur winemakers. 624 wines were judged, which actually exceeded the number of wines we received in 2019.

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Thanks to Bill Forsch, David Rutledge, Rob Romano, Jim Downey, and Sam Clark for your leadership, and to all of the volunteers for your hard work. Congratulations to all of our entrants, both commercial and amateur, who submitted their wines. Without you, there would be no OCWS.

Next up is the OC Fair from July 16 through August 15, and all the efforts we are currently putting forth, our latest major work activity to make the OC Wine Society what it is today!

The Courtyard will be looking a little different this year, but we'll make it happen! Thanks to Fran Gitsham for your leadership on The Courtyard Committee, Rich Skoczylas for organizing the volunteers, Rochelle Randall for leading the TIPS training, and all the other committee members who are backing them up. We are still looking for more volunteers to staff the wine bar!

Because of the great work you have all put in during past years, we were able to survive the past year with no income or in-person activities. We look forward to welcoming you all back and seeing all of our friends, as we will be beginning our social events this coming fall!

- Kevin Donnelly, President



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# **Annual Wine Label Competition Results**

For any members who were at the Commercial Wine Competition the weekend of June 5 and 6, it is hoped you participated and enjoyed the Annual Wine Label Competition. We judged up to 10 labels in each of 12 categories. All participants voted on their favorite labels, and now the winners can be revealed. From the Gold Medal winners, the Label Committee selected a Best of Show. The Label Committee will present a display at the OC Fair similar to prior years with pictures of the labels. Best of Show winner is voted by members of the Label Committee from the Gold Medal winners. RB Cellars from Thematic Category Labels include:

- 2019 Roussane, Lake County
- 2013 Zinfandel, Napa Valley
- Bourdeaux Style Blend, Napa Valley
- Methode Champemoise, Lodi



Gold Medal winners by Category, voted on by all present for 2021 OC Fair Commercial Wine Competition:

- Architecture/Scenery: Catalina View, 2017 Chardonnay, Paso Robles
- Best Use of Color: Macchia, 2019 Notorious
- Bottle Display: Carol Shelton, 2019 Wild Thing Rendezvous Rose
- Contemporary: Allen Hancock College Winery, 2019 White Wine
- Fauna: Mira Laguna, 2018 Drift
  - Figurative: Kelsey See Canyon, 2020 Orange Muscat
- Flora: Aloria, 2018 Syrah/Grenache
- Lettering/Caligraphy: Harney Lane, Petite Sirah, Lodi
- Name Representation: Big Nose, 2018 Meritage
- Special Effects: Ron Noble, 2018 Chardonnay, Steiner Vineyard
- Thematic: Tie: RB Cellars and Second Line Wines
- Whimsical: Lost Hog, 2020 Sauvignon Blanc, Lake County

### - Sam Puzzo, Label Competition 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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# **OCWS Varietal Hour—Continues through the Summer!**



Thank you to all of the OCWS members who have been attending the Monday evening Varietal Hours. We have been introduced to some great wineries, varietals, and wine growing regions. Join us through the Summer as we virtually

share wines from our homes (or from wherever we happen to be).

For those who have not joined us for this event, this is a casual event hosted as a Zoom meeting, with all participants on the screen, featuring a different wine varietal or varietals and different hosts each week! Members share details on the wine(s) they are enjoying and the knowledge they have acquired over the years. Below is a schedule for the next few months (more dates and themes will be listed in future newsletters). We hope some of you who have not joined us for this event yet will join us for a future date.

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

#### - Carolyn Christian & George Cravens, Directors

DATE & TIME	VARIETAL	HOSTS
7/12/2021 @ 7 pm	German Wines – Wines made in Germany or wines made from German grape varieties such as: Bacchus, Elbing, Riesling, Gewurztraminer, Dornfelder, etc. Find more information here: http://winesofgermany.co.uk/german-grape-varieties/	Rochelle Randel
7/26/2021 @ 7 pm	Most Unique Varietal – Any varietal, any region. For a list of hundreds of the exist- ing varietals, check out this list: https://www.wine-searcher.com/grapes	Elle Phillips & Carolyn Christian
8/9/2021 @ 7 pm	Gewurztraminer	Dawn Bergen
8/23/2021 @ 7 pm	Wines 10 Years and Older	Don & Elee Phillips

# Winemaking Webinar—Making a Plan Before Getting Grapes



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

steps involved all through the process from grapes to your glass.

On Saturday, July 10 at 10 am, the OCWS Winemakers' Group presents an educational webinar showing you how to develop a "crush plan" for the upcoming harvest. Join Ed

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

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

Sign up to attend the Winemaking Webinar.

#### - The OCWS Winemakers' Group

## **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 June 2021:

Vanessa & Manuel Estrada, Sandra Gomez & Luis Felipe Fajardo, Anne & Chuck Hirbour, Carmella Bryan, Kumar Ramajayam, Eric Flowers, Gordon McLaren, and Rhonda & Kelsey Evans.

As of May 1, the OCWS had 1,138 members.

- Mel Jay, Membership Chair

### Winemakers Newsroom

**HOME WINE COMPETITION SUCCESS!** We held the 45th Annual Home Wine Competition (albeit for last year's cancellation due to COVID lockdown), and "flogged" our 70+ judges to evaluate 624 wines! What an event! We followed the Commercial Wine Competition by one week. As the Commercial Wine Competition is the most important part of the Wine Society's activities (along with The Courtyard during the Fair), our competition also generates a small positive revenue for the Winemakers' Group and extremely high visibility within California. It is our second largest activity behind our Sept/Oct/Nov grape and juice programs, but by far requires the most planning, staffing, and attention to detail.

Our venue this year was the "Hangar" on the Orange County Fairgrounds, an enormous and airy arena where we were able to maintain our "social distances." We also developed a unique "L" table design to allow the judging panels – 25 – to social distance, but also interact comfortably. Unlike the Commercial Wine Competition and judging, which only evaluates their wines for award placement, our judges each completed a hand -noted evaluation of each wine presented to them with their assessment and score. Their valuable feedback to the wine-makers provides insight on how to improve and make better wines in the future. We followed the judging with a modest boxed sandwich lunch and a glass or two of remaining Gold Medal wine! Yum—both the food and the wine!

As the "Chair" for this event, I am able to watch and interact throughout the event with our judges, stewards, volunteers, and section managers. The biggest takeaway for me is the genuine, positive can-do attitude that every attendee exhibits. It is so wonderful to have an entire "team" be so committed to making an event a success.

We also must take a moment to thank our partner, the OCFEC, for its support. When we started our business plan in January, it was almost "improbable" that an event of this type could be pulled off due to the rampant COVID concerns at the time. The OCFEC provided the venue, tables, chairs, masks, sanitation gel, latex gloves, dumpsters, staffing, audio equipment, a dedicated gate to manage our entries, and on and on. Thank you!

We had wonderful wines this year. Many, many wonderful wines! Perhaps due to another year of aging (due to our COVID cancellation last year), or perhaps due to more attention, as many winemakers were home quarantined at times. In any case, they were really, really, fantastic wines!

The OCWS Home Wine Competition has the distinct advantage of nearly immediate viewing of ALL the results of our competition. (Stacey Taylor's Systems and Scoring group yeah!). This remains one of the strong benefits of our Competition, and we receive many accolades on the speed that we deliver this information. We will be sending our medals out within a month to complete our recognition of these fine wine-makers! I've listed our Best of Show winners below.

I was actually able to have a sip of the red and white winners wow, spectacular wines, both of them!

Also of special note, our own Jim Graver won again this year in



the Best of Show Dessert Wine category for his Blackberry Port. *Way to go, Jim*! Jim led our group for over 35 years and has personally taught numerous members of this group how to make wine. Jim chaired this event for decades and decades. I am told that there were several occasions that Jim's wines actually won in their category, but, Jim personally took his wines "OUT" of consideration

- he is so thoughtful, humble, and considerate of others. He did not feel that a competition that he was running should have him as a winner! If you get a chance, send Jim a note, email, or phone him with your congratulations!

The "Best of Show" winners were:

Red Category: Cabernet Franc, Drummond Macomber, 2019, El Cajon

White Category: Viognier, Paul Pyle, 2020, Napa

Berry Fruit Category: Berry Fruit, Robert Joakimson, 2019, Concord

Dessert Category: Blackberry Port, Jim Graver, NV, Mission Viejo



To see all of the results, go to <u>https://competition.ocws.org</u>.

If you have any questions, please feel free to email me at

BillForsch@ocws.org or by phone at 949.981.5087.

Best to all, cheers!

- Bill Forsch, Winemakers' Group Chair

### Time for Fun at the OC Fair



We are so excited to be bringing some sense of normalcy and lots of fun back to the OCWS by way of The Courtyard at the OC Fair this year! Come join us in person to help support

the organization and make the return of our biggest, and much needed, fundraiser of the year a huge success.

To those of you who have signed up to volunteer at The Courtyard this Fair season, *Thank You!!* If you are TIPS certified and have signed up for serving shifts at The Courtyard, you will receive Server badges. If you have signed up for any other positions, it is not required that you be TIPS certified. Due to the strange nature of COVID-19 restrictions (which seem to change by the minute), those of you who have signed up for other jobs and are not certified this year will receive alternate merchant badges and will be able to perform all functions short of handing wine to the public. We still have quite a few shift opportunities, so keep an eye out for our SOS (Save our Shifts) emails. By the time you read this, you should have received confirmation of your shift schedules and will receive your badges and parking passes via USPS prior to the opening of Fair.

If you are interested in working at the Fair, or adding additional shifts to your requests, please reach out by email to <u>courtyardsignup@ocws.org</u>.

Although The Courtyard vibe will be slightly different this year (thanks again to COVID-19 restrictions), the atmosphere that our volunteers bring to The Courtyard with their love, laughter and commitment remains the same. Remember that your badges double as entry passes to the Fair at anytime and that all other public Fair passes this year must be purchased ahead of time online.

We look forward to seeing you at The Courtyard!

- Fran Gitsham, 2021 Courtyard at the OC Fair Chair

## 2021 Courtyard Set Up and Tear Down Teams Needed



We can finally get back into The Courtyard, and I'm happy to have been asked to lead The Courtyard set up and tear down teams this year. We need volunteers to make light work of preparing the area for the OC Fair and important OCFEC and OC Health Department inspections.

The dates for set up are July 7 and 8. Although we do not have that much to transport over from the storage units this year, there are still larger items such as lightweight signs and cashier chairs that have to be moved as well. If you have a pickup truck, that would be especially helpful.

Tear down will be the morning after the end of the Fair, Monday, August 16, when we will be taking down all the items that were set up and returning them to the storage units.

I have worked with many of you on these teams in past years, and we are reaching out to you once again for your help. Please contact me if you are interested in helping on any of those days, or if you have any questions, at <u>Les@ocws.org</u>. Thank you very much for volunteering to get The Courtyard ready for the OC Fair this special 45<sup>th</sup> OCWS Anniversary year!

#### - Leslie Hodowanec, Director

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Editor-in-Chief: Linda Mihalik Contributing Writers: Board of Directors, Leslie Brown, Bill Forsch, Fran Gitsham, Greg Hagadorn, Ed Reyes Contributing Editors: John Goodnight, Ron Nickens, Rochelle Randel, Taren Weber Contributing Photographer: Wendy Taylor

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# Gold Medal Mini-Tasting

#### Saturday, September 11, 2021 6:00 pm – 9:00 pm Various Host Sites

It's been far too long since we have held an in-person event, but we will finally be re-starting the Mini-Tasting series with what's traditionally the most popular Mini-Tasting of the year, the Gold-Medal Mini-Tasting.

The Gold Medal Mini-Tasting is a chance to taste many of the Gold and Double Gold Medal wines from this year's Commercial Wine Competition. The tasting will feature different varietals that won Gold Medals, and we try to obtain as many Double Gold winners as possible.

This event is always a sell-out, so please sign up early! NOTE: If you are interested in hosting, please contact George Cravens at <u>George@ocws.org</u>. If you would like to request a specific host site or to carpool with another member, please add a comment on your sign-up.

To keep everyone safe and comfortable, we plan to have smaller groups for this first event, with ten guests and two hosts per site. When possible, the event will be held outside. This means that we will be needing a large number of host sites.

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. 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 12 people. There will be a special bottle of wine awarded that evening as a prize for Chef of the Evening. Our winning Chefs of the Evening can have their recipe published on the OCWS website.

We are planning a maximum of 15 sites for this Mini-Tasting. Sign-ups will open on Monday, August 2. Due to the high attendance at our Mini-Tasting Programs, we encourage you to sign up early as sites tend to fill quickly. 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, August 27. 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-Friday, September 3, 2021

Bon Appetit!

- George Cravens, Mini-Tasting Chair

## Graber Olive House, a Valued Supporter of the OCWS



The Orange County Wine Society would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge Graber Olive House for their friendship, generosity and continued support over the years.

Graber Olive House has provided their specialty olives to the Commercial Wine and Home Wine Competitions for many years, and this year was no different.

As you know, palate assault can be extreme even though wine

judges may expectorate every sip. The acidity in white wines and tannins in red wines can be a painful experience after a full day of tasting. A small cup of Graber olives is placed alongside each judge, and the olives neutralize the elements in both reds and whites, work wonders for the palate and taste fantastic, too.

Graber Olive House is located in quiet, serene surroundings. Visitors will be delighted to discover a bit of early California when they visit. Graber Olive House is located at 215 East Fourth Street, Ontario, CA 91764.







# **OCWS Board of Directors Election**



Well, wasn't that fun being able to get together with your friends and fellow members at the Commercial Wine Competition? If

you missed it, we missed seeing you.

With that being said: it's time to think about running for the OCWS Board of Directors. As you all know, our year has been a struggle. We have three great people whose terms are up this year.

Have you thought about getting more involved with the OCWS outside of volunteering for or attending various OCWS related events? If you are innovative, open-minded, possess good interpersonal skills, are results oriented and a problem solver, then a position as a Director of the OCWS just might be right for you.

The beginning of a three-year term of the nine members of the Board of Directors, according to the Bylaws, shall be staggered such that three members' terms will expire each year. The three vacated Board positions will be filled each year by a vote of the OCWS membership, following the Annual Business Meeting on September 10. The meeting will be held virtually again this year.

The overall time commitment for a member of the Board varies, based on assignments and participation. We are moving from having the Board manage some events to having our members run the event with a Board coordinator being the

### 2021 OCWS Wine Auction

Saturday, October 16, 2021 11 am - 5 pm OC Fair & Event Center Huntington Beach Building (next to Wine Courtyard) Please plan to stay for the entire event No early checkout is available

Is your wine supply running low due to the pandemic? We have a great opportunity for you to load up your wine cellar. Join us for the 2021 OCWS Wine Auction on Saturday, October 16 from 11 am to 5 pm. This event replaces the 2020 Wine Auction which was cancelled due to the pandemic and will feature the wines from the 2019 OC Fair Commercial Wine Competition. These wines 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

liaison to the Board regarding budgets, event timing and placement.

A candidate should possess some of the following skills and experience as well:

- General knowledge of OCWS events and activities
- Experience as a volunteer in some events
- The ability and time to organize events during the year
- Selected event and budget management skills
- Be a member in good standing

To declare your candidacy for a position on the Board, the candidate must present their Declaration of Candidacy in writing, by mail or via electronic media to the Election Chair no later than fourteen (14) calendar days prior to the scheduled Annual Business Meeting which is Friday, August 27, 2021.

During the Annual Business Meeting, you will have the opportunity to speak to the membership and present your qualifications. A written Statement of Qualifications must be presented to the Election Committee no later than five (5) calendar days after your Declaration of Candidacy.

If being an OCWS leader interests you, feel free to contact Greg Hagadorn with any questions related to Director Responsibilities, the election process or anything related to the election. I can be reached at 714.388.8803 or at <u>Greg@ocws.org</u>.

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

Wine Competition. Enjoy an afternoon of delicious food and wine with your OC Wine Society friends as you bid on your favorite varietals and wines from your favorite wineries. Special lots will also be available for purchase without having to bid.

Don't miss this great opportunity to purchase these wines at a fraction of their retail value. Tickets are only \$20 per member for this **members-only** event! We recommend that you bring your own wine glass and pens and wear comfortable shoes. We look forward to seeing you there!

Interested in volunteering for this event? Watch the weekly reminders for upcoming volunteer opportunities for the Wine Auction.

- Carolyn Christian, OCWS Director/Wine Auction Chair

# 2021 Orange County Fair Commercial Wine Competition Recap

The 45<sup>th</sup> OC Fair Wine Competition was held June 5-6 at the Hilton Hotel in Costa Mesa. After having to cancel the 44<sup>th</sup> Competition due to the pandemic, the Committee was not certain we would be able to hold this year's event. We were notified in late March that the Fair had decided that the Event could go forward. The Committee had approximately nine weeks to plan, advertise, promote, obtain and catalog wines for the event. This was a monumental task, and there is no way it could have occurred without the hard work of the Committee, as well as many other OCWS members.

The Committee deserves credit for working diligently and under difficult conditions to ensure that the event was a success. Virtual meetings, COVID-19 mitigations and a shortened timeline were all obstacles to be overcome. The Committee did an excellent job. Each committee member went above and beyond in their efforts this year.

During the weekend, we remembered two of our members and one judge who sadly are no longer with us.



Dennis Esslinger served as Director of Judges for several years, and Bob Trout led the Label Competition. Both worked closely with their wives, Carol and Marj, who continued to volunteer this year.

We also remembered Don Galleano who sadly passed away June 2. His wines won two Double Gold awards this year—a fitting tribute.

## Judges with Hearts of Gold



All of our OC Fair Commercial Competition judges have huge hearts, but there are always a handful whose love and support of the OCWS goes above and beyond. This year six judges donated their stipends back to the OCWS

as contributions to our scholarship fund. Thanks to the following judges, our scholarship fund now has an additional \$1,800.00 to grant to students in the future. An impressive 1,400 phone calls were made by volunteers to wineries to personally request that they enter the Competition. Without these phone calls, we would not have had a sufficient number of entries to hold the event. Thank you to all of our members who made these calls—they were invaluable.

Thank you to all the volunteers who helped Liz and Lloyd Corbett with cataloging over 2,440 wines in such a brief period of time.

Of course, a major thank you to all the volunteers who worked the event, a task made more daunting due to mask-wearing and other COVID-19 mitigations.

I would also like to thank the computer entry and verifying people working with Dave Stancil who came in early on Sunday morning of the Competition weekend to catch up due to an internet issue on Saturday. And another "thank you" to Dave for doing computer entry during the Steering Committee meeting following the Competition.

Integral to the success of the event are our judges, all winemakers or winery principals. They agreed to judge even as conditions were uncertain. We are very fortunate that Orange County was in the yellow tier which allowed more flexibility for the venue and more confidence in being together in groups.

It was a pleasure to work with the staff at the Hilton Hotel in Costa Mesa. They know our event and were extremely accommodating in working with us.

I would love to list the names of everyone who made the weekend a success, but this article is way too long as it is. Please know that your efforts are appreciated, and I cannot express my gratitude enough.

All 2021 Commercial Wine Competition results can be accessed on <u>WineCompetition.com</u>.

- Leslie Brown, 2021 Commercial Wine Competition Chair

- Joseph S. Franzia, Forest Glen Winery
- Linda McWilliams, San Pasqual Winery
- Joel Peterson, Once and Future Wines
- Oscar Ramos, Ramos Torres Wines
- H. Marty Spate, O'Neill Vintners & Distillers
- Fred Wiebel, Weibel Family Vineyards & Winery

Should you have the good fortune to cross paths with any of these amazing people, please remember to thank them for their kindness and generosity on behalf of the OCWS.

- Fran Gitsham, Commercial Wine Competition Committee

# Eight Medals Awarded to Allan Hancock College Winery

As the Scholarship Program Chair, I personally reached out to five of our viticulture and enology colleges and universities to encourage them to enter the 2021 Commercial Wine Competition.

Sadly, some replies were "maybe next year" due to recent pandemic and wildfire restrictions on campus. There has been excellent research, however, the revenue generated for wine and grape sales barely covered campus operational costs.

We were delighted that Allan Hancock College entered the Competition this year and congratulate them on their winning wines and contemporary label design.

This is the **100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Allan Hancock College**, and they have entered wines in the Competition since 2016 and have been consistent medal winners. This year they were awarded seven wine medals, all 2019 vintages. Some were produced from vineyards in Paso Robles and Santa Ynez Valley, and some from their own on-campus vineyard in Santa Maria. Please visit their website at <u>hancockcollege.edu/winery</u>, (try their Centennial Blanc de Noirs). The judges awarded Allen Hancock College two Gold Medals for their Chardonnay and Torrontes, and five Silver Medals for Albarino, Grenache, Merlot, Pinot Noir and Zinfandel. Another Gold Medal was awarded in the Contemporary Design category during our Label Competition, which took place during the event.

While serving Allan Hancock College wines during the OC Fair, please remind our guests how especially proud the OCWS is to support the college and university scholarship programs and all the students who rose to the challenges.

#### - Leslie Hodowanec, Director & Scholarship Chair



### **OCWS Save the Date Calendar**

#### OCWS Varietal Hour @ 7 pm:

July 12 July 26 August 9 August 23	German Wines Most Unique Varietal Gewurztraminer Wines 10 Years and Older
July 10	Winemaking Webinar—Making a Plan Before Getting Grapes @ 10 am—Ed Reyes
July 16 through August 15	2021 OC Fair
September 10	Annual Business Meeting
September 11	Gold Medal Mini-Tasting
October 16	OCWS Wine Auction



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