



# The Wine Press



Newsletter of the Orange County Wine Society, Inc.

Volume 45, Issue 12, December 2021

## President's Message

### *The Ultimate Gift of the Orange County Wine Society*

With the season of gift giving upon us I have already bought toys, books, wine gadgets, and even underwear (my son and son-in-law traditionally get just what a man wants from a mother in their holiday stockings ... funny briefs, and not the legal kind, lol). But, seriously, my thoughts at this time of year turn to gifts from the heart and, having had the honor of knowing some of the founding members of this organization, I know just what a gift their passions and foresight have given us to this day.



The ultimate gift of the OCWS was conceived by a small group of people who, for their love of wine, created the Wine Society in the late 1970s. This amazing organization of over 1,000 members today was begun by a small band of like-minded people in 1976. A group of about sixteen would meet the first Friday of each month in the back room of Brant's Wine Rack, a wine and beer supply store on Tustin Avenue in Orange, where the store's owner advised the group on winemaking. Soon friends wanted to sample the wines and the wine drinkers, as today, began to outnumber the winemakers. Early in 1976 the group, out of necessity and wanting to be able to invite more people to share their passion, discussed ways to expand. Brant Horton suggested getting a booth at the OC Fair and offered his business as the sponsor. He went to OC Fair management. It just so happened that the OC Fair general manag-

er had previously managed the Indiana State Fair, where fruit wines were made, and an amateur wine competition was held. Jerry Mead went on to become a renowned wine writer, and Brant Horton suggested the creation of a commercial wine competition. Thankfully for us, the OC Fair loved the idea so much that they gave the group a ten-foot booth at the Fair that year. The Fair also wanted a home wine competition and, hence, the forefathers of the current OC Fair wine competitions were born.

At that time, the run of the OC Fair was a grand total of one week, which found the newly created home wine competition with forty-nine home wine entries and the commercial wine competition having a whooping three varietals to be judged (sadly, the information of the total number of actual entries has long gone missing).

With interest having been generated from the exposure at the OC Fair, the Friday night meeting grew. Coupled with the love of home wines by the original founders and the OC Fair wanting to continue a commercial wine group, the Orange County Wine Society was formed in late 1977 and incorporated as a non-profit educational organization in 1978. The OCWS subsequently rented an office on the fairgrounds in 1980, which has been called home ever since.

Jim Graver, who spearheaded the home wine group for 38 years and is still a strong presence today, was the first president of the organization. Who could have imagined that what was started by a small band of wine lovers and makers would evolve into

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## President's Message

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the OCWS as it is today? I, for one, am grateful to these people for laying the foundation of an organization of which I love being a part.

I thank those that came first for gifting us with their vision and commitment to their passions

and I wish for all of you the gift of passions that make your hearts happy.

Happy Holidays, Cheers and L' Chaim.

- Fran Gitsham, President

## Celebrate the Holiday Season



What better way to take a break to celebrate the Holiday Season than with champagne, sweets, and friends?

Join us on Sunday, December 19 from 3 pm to 4 pm for a virtual celebration of life's blessings.



Sign-ups are now open on the OCWS website at ocws.org.

We look forward to seeing everyone on Sunday, December 19!

- Presented by Sara Yeoman & Fran Gitsham

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## Scott & Manuela's European Winetasting Experience (and Winemaking)

Fellow OC wine enthusiasts, you bared with me a few issues back as I relayed my anniversary/wine tasting experience in Northern California. Perhaps I can keep your interest as I tell you of Manuela's and my six-week trip through France, Switzerland, Germany, Czech Republic and, of course, Manuela's home country of Italy. It was there that I not only sampled great wine, I got a chance to make it—the old fashioned way!

But that is to come later.

We started off on a river cruise up the Rhône River, from Avignon to Lyon, France, with two other wine-drinking couples. If you are familiar with this region you know we passed through the Rhône Valley appellation. Along the way, we tasted some very good wines such as the Rhône blends, similar to our GSM's, as well as some Pinots and Syrahs. Among the whites, we found the Viogniers to be excellent. The wines here in France tended to be earthy, dry and subtle in flavor. Very drinkable now but worthy of aging some. Then there is the famous Champagne! We shared quite a bit of that product, I can tell you. My personal favorite was Drappier, Corte d'Or, Brut.



What was to be a highlight of the trip was a stop in the Châteauneuf-du-Pape. We attended a tasting set up by the cruise line. The wines were inexpensive and, to my taste, reflected that. Most of the Americans there did not favor these wines. Not giving up, however, the guys sought out a better experience while the wives went shopping! In fact, we found the best wine

tasting shop – appropriately named “Best Wine Shop.” We enjoyed thoroughly the one-on-one experience with the shop owner and ultimately shipped a case of wine back to the US! Closer to Lyon, we encountered Burgundy and Beaujolais wines from further north. These were excellent wines that included Gamay, Pinot, Merlot, Chardonnay and a few names I could not possibly pronounce. Not as earthy as the Rhône wines, but excellent to our California pallets. In fact, I would say, they save the best for themselves and export the lesser quality wines abroad! And these wines were not expensive.

Departing the ship in Lyon, we drove to just past Lausanne, Switzerland, staying at an Airbnb in the home of a winemaker

on the mountain slope overlooking Lake Geneva. It was beautiful! Take a look at the shot from our dining room window. We ate fondue and raclette but also enjoyed some very nice Swiss wine. The grapes grown here were predominately white varietals, but there were some good reds as well. I don't think I've run across Swiss wine in our wine shops. My guess, they just don't make enough. Although the hillsides were overwhelmingly covered by vines. My friends and I had no qualms about drinking the local product! Of particular note was the 2020 Heida made by Yvonne & Yvo Mathier. I hope to find that here in California.

At the end of our stay in Switzerland, our friends returned home, but Manuela and I drove over the Great St. Bernard Pass and down into the Piemonte region of Italy – where Manuela was born – for a three-week stay in Chiaverano, Italy, near Ivrea. Yeah, you will need to Google those names. Here we were immersed in Northern Italian wines from Piemonte, Asti and, of course, Tuscany. Some of my personal favorite wines come from these regions such as Nebbiolo, Barbera, Dolcetto, Montepulciano and little-known, Erbaluce (grown predominately around Ivrea). Sixty-eight percent of these wines are red, and for good reason: It's the weather and terroir.

While drinking great wine from the regions we visit is always a pleasure, the true joy of this trip – and the reason behind my writing this article – was the chance to join one of Manuela's relatives, Pierluigi, in the winemaking process! Timing for our trip was just right, and being a home winemaker myself, that when I got invited to see the crush and participate, I was all in. As is common with the decades-old homes of the area, Pierluigi's comes equipped with a wine cellar, where he has been making wine all his life.



This was the real thing ... well, the real old-world thing. We put several kilograms of grapes and stems in an old wine press. As you can see from the photo, I was an “instrumental” part of the process. When all was done, we opened one of his 40-year-old bottles of wine. OK, it wasn't that good at that point, but it sure was exciting to know we were drinking something that old and very special.

Toward the end of our three weeks in Italy, my brother and his wife joined us for a few days of Alpine experience, her first. But

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## OCWS Varietal Hour—Announcing the 2022 Schedule

With the reopening of public spaces, OCWS is now presenting most of its events in person once again. However, at the request of our members, we are continuing to hold the OCWS Varietal Hours via Zoom every other Monday evening in 2022, beginning on January 10th. The event provides a great opportunity for members to explore new varietals and engage in lively discussions about their favorite wines and wine regions. And it has the added benefit of enjoying it from the comfort of your own home, without the need to drive anywhere afterwards.

The premise of this event is simple. The Varietal Hour committee has chosen a number of themes for the next few months to test your wine knowledge and push you to try things you might not otherwise try. Each attendee is asked to bring to the Zoom meeting a wine related to that week's theme (you can choose something from your cellar or be adventurous in trying something new from your favorite wine store). Each attendee shares a brief description of their wine during the meeting, and all at-

tendees are provided with a written list via email of the wines that were shared during the event. Sign-ups for this event are done in advance on the OCWS website and 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](mailto:Carolyn@ocws.org) or George Cravens at [George@ocws.org](mailto:George@ocws.org).

The OCWS Varietal Hour Committee is proud to offer the following themes for the first few months of 2022. 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

## Scott & Manuela's European Winetasting Experience (and Winemaking)

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soon we were flying from Milan to Prague, Czech Republic. The city of Prague is on my personal top ten places that I have been fortunate enough to visit in my lifetime. It has a rich heritage and beautiful buildings, bridges and structures nearly everywhere in its massive old city. And yes, Czech Republic makes wine! Almost exclusively white wine, but there are a small percentage of reds. And the varietals include many you know and some you most likely do not.

After a few days in Prague, we commenced another river cruise that primarily sailed west along the Main River through southern Germany, part of the Rhine River and finally the Moselle River. We had stops in wonderful old world cities such as

Nuremberg, Bamberg, Wurzburg, Heidelberg, Cochem and Trier. More local wine, predominately white, was to be had everywhere along these rivers. The dry Gewürztraminers and Viogniers were great. Reds were a bit more challenging to our taste. Ultimately we ended our trip with four days in Paris. I treated my brother, his wife, and a former colleague and his wife to a dinner cruise on the Seine River in Paris. We had great local cuisine and fine white wines. In return, he treated us at a very high-end, old world (established in the 1600's he says) Parisian restaurant that was outstanding. All told, our six weeks in Europe was one for the books!

**- W. Scott Herral, Contributing Writer**

## Champagne Brunch

**Bubbles 'n Brunch**  
**Sunday, January 9, 2022**  
**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**

## 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 November meeting: **Julie & Jeffrey Blomstrom, Alicia & Paul Vujovich, Denise Schriedel, Yolanda & Lawrence Shelton, Leann & Edison Noboa, Adrienne Yi, David Frascchetti, Daniel Shimell, Anna & Thomas Christie and Mary Lou Williams.**

For new members trying to log on to the web site, go to [ocsw.org](http://ocsw.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 logon. However, there may be only one logon/password per membership.

## NEW MEMBER MIXER



A new Member Mixer was held on October 17 and attended by over 35 New Members. If you are a new member and were unable to attend October's Mixer, another Mixer is scheduled for January 23. It is a free event to new members only.

Sign-ups will be available on the OCWS website in December.

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



## Winemakers Newsroom

### *How I Met Your “Mother,” aka The O.C.W.S.*

I'm not sure if everyone remembers how or why or the circumstances that caused them to join the Orange County Wine Society, but I do! And it remains amusing to me to this day.

Many years ago, almost 30, my partner Noel and I would make an annual trek to Cancun. Noel had a timeshare week in mid-May at a resort called the Royal Mayan. We so enjoyed the villa which was right on the beach that we never exchanged that villa for another resort or time slot. I had many, many frequent flier miles on American to redeem; so the trip for us was quite economical. As it many times was our only longer vacation away from work; we began to add days on each end of the week and at one point I think had almost a 3 week stay in and around Cancun. Others also made use of their villas during that same week of May, and we became extremely good friends with several others that we hit tennis balls, played beach volleyball, and socialized with during the week.

Probably our best friends were from Indiana, Mike and Marti. About 15 years into seeing them each May, I began making wine from kits, prepackaged juice. I shared that with Mike and he mentioned that he had tried and not had good results—more like made a lot of vinegar and not good wine! Perhaps in my 3<sup>rd</sup> year of making wine from kits I had bottled a couple of wines and as was my habit, I stuffed them into my golf bag with socks on the bottom and clubs around the bottles. I got pretty good at it and was able to put about ½ a case in the bottom of my golf bag. (It had been so difficult to find any good wines in Mexico and thankfully that has changed as many Mexican and South American wines now are available). At that time, weight limits were pretty lax and although the bag might have weighed in excess of 90 lbs, a good tip to the baggage handler got the bags on the flight and to Cancun. I experienced only one mishap—a broken bottle—so I was pretty lucky, I guess.

At this resort, “Happy Hour” started at a ridiculous hour of maybe 2 pm and we rarely missed sitting in the bar area with our friends. I told Mike that I had brought several wines down with me that I had made and he was quite interested. I mentioned that we would do some tastings in a day or two in our villa. Now, try to grasp—these wines were all of 7 weeks old from fermentation, clearing, and into the bottle, so quite juvenile!

Sitting to my other side in the outdoor bar area was well, to be polite, a **very elderly** lady, extremely tanned, but very well dressed and accessorized. At her side was by an elderly gentleman, but not as old as she. When I mentioned to Mike of the wines she was kibitzing and quickly stated, that they “like wine” too. At first I kind of ignored her but as she persisted, I began to chat with her.

Well, the next phrase she mentioned pretty much blew me away. She and several others had been founding members of the original Santa Barbara Wine Society, (and I think I'm getting the formal name wrong, as I Googled it and couldn't find the name to reference), but other of the founding members as I recall were **Julia Child, Robert Mondavi, and the founder of the Culinary Institute** to name drop a few names that I remember. Needless to say, I was quite captivated and quickly asked if she would like to attend the tasting of my wines. She quickly said sure.

That interest, after I thought about it, turned into panic and horror as I envisioned them tasting my wines and immediately spitting them on the floor in disgust. I anguished about “disinviting” them, but decided that I would face the music on whatever the comments or impressions were.

The afternoon came and they appeared and with some very nice crackers and cheeses, which at the time were very difficult to find in Cancun—so I was impressed. The wine tasting went well and they were thoughtful in their comments—with very nice mention of good fruit, nice finish, and drinkable now. I'm sure that the comments were generous. I then shared with them, how in a panic I was about having such knowledgeable and veteran wine experts tasting my wine.

The point they made that stayed with me was: **we don't try to find the best \$150 bottle** in price of wine, or up, we try to find the least expensive wine that we like! And if it is \$25, or \$20, or \$15, or \$10—and we like it, all the better!

Those comments got me thinking different about a snobby “**Wine Society**” and what the objectives might be. Upon returning we joined the Orange County Wine Society and have been members for about 15 years now. I do remember the “new member” event that we went to and our hosts were Leslie and Dave Brown. I quite appreciated Dave's deprecating wry humor and, of course, Leslie's genuine sincere hospitality.

So, don't be snobby and enjoy your wines with some new friends, and keep looking for that “least” expensive bottle you love! BTW: most home kit wines end up in the bottle and ready to drink for under less than \$6!



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

Best to all, cheers!

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

## January Winery Program—Robert Hall Winery

**Friday, January 14, 2022**  
**Dinner starts 6:30 PM**  
**Avenue of the Arts Hotel**  
**3350 Avenue of the Arts**  
**Costa Mesa, CA**

Our 2022 Winery Program starts with Robert Hall Winery. Acclaimed winemaker Don Brady has been the creative force behind their award-winning wines since the beginning of Robert Hall Winery. Through his hands-on approach, Don has been pivotal in bringing acclaim to Paso Robles wines, and instrumental in elevating the valley's status as the premier winemaking region.

The cost of the buffet meal is \$45 for members and \$50 for guests. This buffet meal includes Pan Roasted Chicken, Fig Demi, Wild Rice Pilaf, Purple Wax Beans with a Beet Salad of Baby Arugula, Fresh Mint, Shaved Red Onion and Orange Segments, Champagne Vinaigrette, and Warm Artisan Breads & Rolls with Sweet Butter.

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 Seasonal Salmon with Tarragon Demi and Herb Roasted Mushrooms, Wild Rice Pilaf, Purple Wax Beans with a Beet Salad of Baby Arugula, Fresh Mint,

Shaved Red Onion and Orange Segments, Champagne Vinaigrette, and Warm Artisan Breads & 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 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 if 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, January 9. 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 wait list.

*- Rich Skoczylas, Winery Program Coordinator*

## Dine with Wine Enjoys a Taste of Paris at Moulin Bouillon

**Wednesday, January 19, 2022**  
**Dinner starts 6:30 pm**  
**Moulin Bouillon**  
**(Corner of Bristol & Jamboree)**  
**1000 Bristol Street, Suite 11**  
**Newport Beach, CA**



**Trés Chic and Trés Bien!** The Orange County Wine society is delighted to invite you to join Dine with Wine in helping us celebrate Moulin Bouillon, the latest jewel in Laurent's burgeoning Moulin restaurant dynasty. Laurent is reserving the entire restaurant for

OCWS on January 19 for a French feast at 6:30 pm. He characterizes this newest restaurant as similar to the Parisian bistros frequented by workmen in Paris craving a hearty French dinner at the end of a busy workday.

The price for this Parisian dinner is \$62 for members and \$67 for guests, all-inclusive. Our menu will feature a three-course dinner with the following choices including:

### Appetizers (Choose One)

- Soupe a l'Oignon - Traditional French Onion Soup
- Escargots - Escargots, garlic and butter herb sauce
- Salade Frisee - Frisée salad greens, smoked bacon, poached egg, sherry vinaigrette

### Entrees (Choose One)

- Steak au Poivre - Hanger steak, peppercorn sauce, green salad
- Sea Bream Fish Filet - Creamy spinach and steamed potatoes and beurre blanc sauce
- Jidori Chicken Breast - Mashed potatoes, broccolinis, champagne and whole grain mustard sauce

### Dessert (Choose One)

- Warm Apple Tart - with salted caramel ice cream
- Profiteroles - Choux Pastry filled with vanilla ice cream, topped with chocolate drizzle and silvered almonds
- L'assiette Fraicheur - Sorbet cup with Fresh seasonal berries

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## Dine with Wine Enjoys a Taste of Paris at Moulin Bouillon

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The all-inclusive menu also includes Regular Coffee and De-caf. Cash bar for others.

### IMPORTANT - Members should:

- Bring your own wine or champagne glasses
- Bring one bottle of wine per person to share
- Laurent will also offer for purchase delicious French wines

- by the bottle or the glass
- Wear your name tag
- Sign up before Wednesday, January 12 – last day for changes (refunds will be made from the wait list)

This will be a great start to the Dine with Wine new year and a welcome opportunity to celebrate this newest star in the Orange County dining scene. Join us! Merci et Bon Appétit!

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

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## OCWS Save the Date Calendar

### OCWS Varietal Hour @ 7 pm:

December 13	Holiday Wines
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

December 4	Holiday Dinner & Dance
December 18	Winemakers' Group Holiday Potluck
December 19	Sparkling & Sweets Seminar
January 9	Bubbles 'n Brunch
January 19	Moulin Bouillon—Dine with Wine

### 2022 OCWS Winery Program:

January 14	Robert Hall Winery
February 11	Flying Goat Cellars
March 11	Halleck Vineyard
April 8	Artisan Uprising



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