



The Wine Press



Newsletter of the Orange County Wine Society, Inc.

Volume 46, Issue 6, June 2022

President's Message

Gearing Up for Fair Fun!

With the Commercial and Home Wine Competitions quickly almost having been and gone, the 2022 OC Fair is fast approaching, and the OCWS is geared up to run our most important fundraising effort of the year—The Courtyard at the OC Fair. This year's Fair theme is "Feel the Sunshine," and runs Wednesdays through Sundays, beginning on Friday, July 15 and concluding on Sunday, August 14.

The Fair is attended by over 1,000,000 people a year, so The Courtyard clearly provides us with a perfect venue for reaching lots of people. In exchange for running the OC Fair's wine competitions, the Orange County Fair & Events Center affords us the opportunity to run The Courtyard and realize the income therefrom. In addition to the income received from The Courtyard funding the wine competitions, it also provides funds for our year-round overhead and, by way of donations, for our Scholarship Pro-

gram. Therefore, it is of utmost importance to the organization that The Courtyard be a huge success!

It takes over 300 OCWS volunteers to man The Courtyard during the Fair. Whether you are a new volunteer or a seasoned veteran at The Courtyard, this is your opportunity to support the fundraising efforts of the Orange County Wine Society. In addition to hosting The Courtyard during the OC Fair, some of our most knowledgeable and experienced OCWS members will be conducting wine seminars on Saturdays and Sundays. Check out the seminar schedule on the OCWS website and come learn something new about wines, and wine and food pairings that you may not know you don't already know. So, if you seek fun, don't miss coming out and feeling the sunshine with wine fun at the Fair!

I look forward to seeing you there.

- Fran Gitsham, President

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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 May 2022 meeting: **Cathy Swanson & Dan Teeters, Denise Casad & Dan Weddell, Sarper Unal, Jody & Mark Theissen, Cyn-di & Paul Nelson, Odett & David Conners, Amanda LaPera & Leo Canzoneri, Gayle & Mitch Pratt, Gayle Marshall, Ala-**

na Nisser, and CL Keedy. As of May 1, the OCWS has 899 members.

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.

- Brian McDonald, Director & Membership Chair

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2022 Courtyard at the OC Fair

By the time you read this article, The Courtyard signups will be in full swing. **THANK YOU** to all of you who have signed up already to support the OCWS' biggest fundraiser of the year. The look and feel of The Courtyard will mirror last year with a bistro vibe. High-top bistro tables will be scattered around and newly added benches will be placed along two walls within The Courtyard for seating. At this time, we are very excited to be bringing back in-person seminars and the Featured Winery Program, with its own location and a new bar. We are also planning to bring back award tastings, however, if County guidelines and Fair mandates change, we will adapt accordingly.



It's the enthusiasm of you, our volunteers, which creates that great feeling no matter what restrictions are placed on us. We are requesting a minimum commitment of

four shifts per volunteer. If you have not already signed up online, you can do so on the OCWS website at OCWS.org. If you have signed up and would like to add more shifts, please contact our Volunteer Scheduler, Rich Skoczylas, at Courtyardsignup@ocws.org. There are still any number of available shifts which need to be filled, and with your help, we will have another successful year! An added bonus is that with your volunteer Fair badge, you will have access to the Fair on any day, and you will have a parking pass. All Fair tickets to the public are being sold online for specific dates. There will be no walk-up ticket sales for same day entry.

If you haven't signed up already, now is the time to insure your shifts. **SUPPORT THE OCWS AND HAVE FUN - VOLUNTEER TODAY!**

- Fran Gitsham, Courtyard Chair

OCWS Varietal Hours



The OCWS Varietal Hour is completing its 17th month of Monday evening tastings! Thank you to all the hosts and attendees over the past year and a half. As we go into the busy season for the OCWS, with the wine competitions and OC Fair Wine Courtyard, the Varietal Hours will take a break.

Join us on Monday, August 29 for our next Varietal Hour, and every other Monday thereafter, through December 19. We look forward to seeing you later this year on Zoom, with a glass of wine in hand!

Until then... Cheers!

- Carolyn Christian & George Cravens, Event Co-Chairs

Winemakers Newsroom

When I first joined the OCWS and discovered the Winemakers' Group, I became so intrigued with the idea of making wine. I like to cook and it seemed to me that winemaking would be like cooking. I could just follow a recipe or some kind of instruction and voila, I'd have wine.

Well, there are "recipes" and instructions for making wine just like there are recipes for meatloaf or any other kind of meal. But I soon discovered that winemaking is more than simply following a recipe or a set of instructions. There is another aspect to it. I call it the art of winemaking. It's the personal expression and creativity that each winemaker gives to his or her wine. That's the part of winemaking that really drew me in and got me hooked.

We may not be aware of that personal expression but we can taste it when we notice the differences in the many bottles of commercially made Syrah or any other varietal we enjoy. Each commercial winemaker uses specific techniques to "steer" a wine toward an outcome that he or she has in mind. That outcome could be fruit forward, an elegant style, complex flavors, a wine that pairs nicely with food, or one that is meant to be enjoyed simply on its own. That's the personal expression and creativity that goes into each wine. It's like taking that meatloaf recipe and tweaking it to make it in a style you enjoy. That same personal expression and creativity is in each bottle from our OCWS winemakers.

For many years our group has had the opportunity to get high quality grapes. Dedicated members in the group bring Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Syrah and other grape varietals from faraway vineyards here to Orange County where they are distributed to other winemakers. Each person takes their grapes home where they begin the winemaking process. Usually there are many winemakers making wine from the same grapes. Right now, I have a 2021 Merlot going through oak aging. There are probably 15-20 other OCWS winemakers who got those same Merlot grapes. When the finished product is finally ready to enjoy, I'm always amazed at how different each winemaker's creation is. That's the personal expression and creativity that each winemaker puts into his or her wines. You really

CAN taste it.

OCWS members have the opportunity to taste our wines at winemakers group activities. The upcoming OC Fair Home Wine Competition is another place where our wines are available to taste. When this article is published it will be about two weeks before that competition takes place. Check the OCWS website to see if volunteers are still be needed to help run it. All volunteers will get the opportunity to taste the award-winning wines after the event. It's a great way to discover what our group does and meet some of the winemakers themselves. Who knows, you just might get hooked on winemaking too.

I hope to see you at the competition. If you can't be there or if you just have questions about our Winemakers' Group, please feel free to reach out to me. You don't have to be a winemaker. You only need to enjoy wine and the camaraderie of those who have a passion for making it.

Save the Date – July Winemakers' Group Potluck

The next Winemakers' Group quarterly meeting will be on Saturday, July 9. Signups will open on the OCWS website in early June. The beach-area meeting location will be announced approximately two weeks prior to the event. Cost to attend is \$5 per person to cover supplies. All OCWS members are welcome to attend.

As usual, this is a potluck event. Attendees are asked to bring a potluck item to share and a bottle of wine per person (commercial or homemade). I'm sure some of the award-winning wines from the Home Wine Competition will be there to taste. For non-winemakers, this is an excellent opportunity to see what our group is all about and sample some of the great wines we produce.



Winemakers, our testing team will be providing SO2 testing for your wines. Watch for an email with detailed information as the date approaches.

- **Ed Reyes, Winemakers' Group**

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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2022 Wine Auction—Wrap Up

The 2022 Wine Auction was a great success this year, thanks to all our members who made it possible! The Wine Auction is our second largest fund-raiser of the year to help support the events that we do such as the Commercial Wine Competition and College Scholarships.

Hats off to our Wine Auction Committee:

- Check-in/Admin – Ellen Flynn, Karen Russell
- Check-out – Chris Bruce, Janet Riordan
- Computers – Sam Clark, Scott Green
- Food – Jean Vetri-Wilson, Kathy Fusaro
- Wine Operations/Inventory – Hank Bruce, Greg Risling, Kevin Coy
- Volunteers – Damian Christian, Kim Clark

A special thank you to Bill Redding and his team of volunteers who sorted and bagged all the wines prior to the big day!

A **BIG** thank you to our top 10 spenders for 2022, who included: Robert Maloney & Joey DeLeon, C.K. & Laurel Allen, Charles Gustafson, George Euan, James & Pamela Clauss, Sandi & Danny Jones, Julie Good, Kathy & William Schymick,

Stephen Martinez & Lindalee Iverson, and Shelly Jayne.

The event featured approximately 1300 auction lots and 138 lots of mystery wines. The lowest priced lot sold for \$31, and the highest priced lot sold for \$351. This year we tried a few new things to improve the event. We have received great feedback from attendees and hope to make the event even better in 2023! Cheers!

- Carolyn Christian, Board Member & Event Chair



Featured Winery Program at the OC Fair

Lloyd and I would like to invite you to visit us, along with Betty Jo and Jay Newell, at the Featured Winery Bar during the OC Fair. We will be presenting wines from a different winery each Friday, Saturday and Sunday. You will get to meet the wine-maker or a winery principal who will introduce you to their wines, answer your questions about their wines, their history with the winery, and any other inquiries you may have. We will be pouring tastes for you to enjoy.

Our participants so far are:

- Seven Angels
- Double Bond Wine
- Dark Star Cellars
- Big Nose Winery
- Seis Soles Wine Co.
- Ammons Horn Winery
- Mineral Wines

- Shale Oak Winery
- Bushong Vintage Co.

All proceeds from the Featured Winery Bar go to the OCWS Scholarship Fund. Please come make new friends, learn more about wines, and enjoy yourself.

**- Liz & Lloyd Corbett,
Featured Winery Program Co-chairs**



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The Wine Press welcomes input from the OCWS membership.

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

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A Trip Around the World Must Always Include Wine!

Part 3—Greece and Israel

As Manuela and I continue our wonderful exploration of the world, this is Part 3 of my article exploring the world of wines. In my last article, I left off with visiting Corfu, Greece. I continue now with a look at wines in the eastern Mediterranean that include Greece, Israel, Jordan, Egypt, and Turkey.

That's correct! Jordan, Egypt and Turkey.

We visited Jordan stopping in Aqaba – which is a Jordanian port within sight of both Israel and Egypt and only 20 kilometers from Saudi Arabia – and on to the historical sites of Petra. There, I rode a camel right in front of the famous Petra Treasury (see Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade). But what you really want to know is that around the archaeological digs of Petra, several recovered antiquities were determined to be wine presses – eighty-two in fact – dating back more than two thousand years, proving that wine was not a happenstance, but a product of ancient societies. And, according to our tour guide, the wine served to Jesus, most likely came from Jordan.

I did taste some Jordanian wine. I found it to very good, but also different from our Southern Californian tastes!

Egypt also has a long history of winemaking going back as far as 3rd century BC. You might think of Egypt as a desert, but the areas along the Nile are quite lush with agriculture. As we have personally seen on this trip, many products are grown in Egypt: Egyptian cotton we all know of, but also bananas. Go figure. And historians say that two thousand years ago, the Nile was much grander than today. Now, with the Aswan Dam, the Nile is more controlled. While over 90% of the Egyptian population lives in only 4% of the total land area of Egypt, efforts are in place to expand further into the deserts with more irrigation and, thus, more agriculture, essentially terraforming the desert.

As for the wines, I was impressed with what I could taste. The reds were not what we know, but the whites were clearly up there with any of the whites we all know from home and other parts of the world.

In Istanbul, Turkey, one of my very favorite cities for its polite and hospitable people, we attended a very special performance of a choir comprising extremely talented performers. These performers were Muslim, Christian and Jewish. They performed and sang songs from all three religions. It was something I won't soon forget. What was also special was the Turkish wine that was served. Excellent and worthy of note. The photo is of a bottle of the red we were served.



A specific wine tasting tour of Jordanian, Egyptian or Turkish

wines was not provided on our cruise, but such was the case in southern Greece and in Israel. So let me tell you about the wines and wineries that I had the good fortune to visit.



Toward the end of March, we docked in the southern Peloponnesian region of Greece, about two hours' drive west from Athens. We took a tour of one of the 33 protected Greek wine regions (PDO) known as Nemea, which included a visit to the Skouras Winery.

Over the past twenty years, Skouras Winery has produced Peloponnesian-grown wines and has done so quite successfully. I am showing you only one photo that includes some of awards and accomplishments of the winery, but there was so much more to be seen.

As for the wines, they were excellent. We tasted two red and two white wines produced from locally grown varieties. The first was a dry white varietal known as Moscofilero. This was an excellent light wine from grapes grown in the nearby mountains at an elevation of over 2,400 feet. It had a good acidity and was refreshing. Next was Armyra (meaning salty), comprising 95% Chardonnay and 5% of a varietal called Malagousia. The story on this wine is that it was grown very near the shoreline; thus, as our host Elena Tsaka told us, there was a "salty" element that gets to the grapes. I did not find that, but the wine did not taste like a typical California Chardonnay. It was definitely a bit acidic giving it a complex aftertaste that was enjoyable.

The two reds we tried caught my attention. We started with Saint George, 100% Agiorgitiko from Nemea (yes I had to take very good notes). It also comes from the mountain vineyards. While the bottle we tasted was from 2019, according to Elena, Hercules supposedly drank this wine to enhance his strength! Perhaps he only felt strong after drinking this wine, for it was excellent. It had a peppery finish and solid black fruit aromas. I could not get enough. This was followed by Megas Oenos meaning the grand or great wine. Elena told us it was their "big wine." At 14% ABV, this 2018 vintage comprises 80% Agiorgitiko and 20% Cabernet Sauvignon. It was described as silky yet powerful. I thought it was right up there with the Saint George.



In the end, I purchased a few bottles of the reds that I shared with some fellow passengers and crew. They were very well received. After further research, I have learned that Domain

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A Trip Around the World Must Always Include Wine!

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Skouras, as it is formally known, distributes to JVS Wines Import in Commerce, close to where I live. I will have to check that out when I do return to the US.



Over the next three weeks of travel is when we discovered the Jordanian and Egyptian wines. By mid-March, however, we spent a few days in Israel. And side note, I will have so many more stories to share with you about our northern African and Middle Eastern journey, just not here.

From Haifa, Israel, Manuela and I, of course, ventured out on another wine tasting opportunity. This time we went south along the incredibly green and fertile Israeli coast to a small town called Zichron Yaakov. There, we arrived at Somek Winery. Totally different from the very modern, well established Greek wine production facility of Skouras Winery, Somek Winery was created in the backyard of the home of the owners, Barak Dahan and his wife, Hila. Notice the coffee pot placed among the various equipment items! It couldn't have been a better experience.

Allow me to give you some background. For five generations, going back to 1882, the Dahan family has produced grapes in their family vineyard, all naturally irrigated by the way, selling the grapes to other local Israeli wineries. In 2003, Barak and Hila decided to produce their own wine under the name Somek, which means "blush" in Hebrew. Barak told me that of the 200 tons harvested, he keeps 35 tons for his wines. And each varietal that he uses for his wine production is harvested by hand in a single day. Needless to say, they keep the best for themselves! Sediment and lees are allowed to settle out

naturally over a two- to three-month period. Barak said "it's very hard to wait." Reds are aged for one to three years in French oak, but he checks the quality personally as he does not want "carpenter wine," that is over-oaked wine.

Of the twelve varietals that they grow, Barak uses nine in his production. Somek currently produces 30,000 bottles annually. Barak only produces bone dry wines "because this is what I like." And they were excellent.



As for the wine that we tasted, there were four offered. First up was a Rosé made from Grenache. It was extremely light in color but had a great aroma and taste. Though I am not a Rosé fan normally, this wine was exceptional. I had to get a bottle.

Next was a blend of Roussanne, Viognier and Chenin Blanc. To me it was unique with a light but mineral taste. Our first red was a 2017 Syrah. It was amazing and much like our California Syrahs. Our fourth tasting was a 2017 Carignan that I absolutely loved. Once again, I found myself buying several bottles that I could share with fellow passengers and crew.

I cannot say enough about these two very special wineries. We were treated like good friends and we were treated to some phenomenal wines as well.



Our voyage continues...

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

Congratulations 2022 Graduates

Congratulations everyone! Generated during our events, activities and our members volunteering during 2021, the 2022 OCWS Scholarship Fund disbursed **\$29,202** to eight California colleges and universities. Since 1996, **\$741,713** has been contributed toward wine education and appreciation.



Thank you for your special donations, and our gratitude to the BOD and committees for being very supportive by promoting college logos at our events everywhere you look. More recently, college students staffed our Wine Auction. The recent An American Picnic Wine Wall generated funds as well. The Fea-

tured Winery Program returns to the OC Fair Courtyard, and we know our servers will proudly pour for scholarships, which is the best way you can volunteer.

The Scholarship Committee is expanding with member Colette Hadley who will soon be socially linking you to "our" colleges in connection with their research and upcoming events. This is scholarship season, and we are waiting to hear who our 2022 student recipients will be.

The OCWS celebrates the achievements of the Class of 2022 with cheers for a successful future!

- **Leslie Hodowanec, 2022 Scholarship Chair**

May 2022 Rhône Wine Mini-Tasting Wrap Up

The May Mini-Tasting featured four varietals and one blend. There were four host sites throughout the county.

The first flight was a pair of Grenache Blancs, one from California and one from Rhône France. This was followed by three flights featuring the primary varietals of a classic Rhone blend, the GSM. Each of these flights featured a California wine against an "old world" wine. The GSM flight had a California GSM against one from Chateaneuf du Pape, and the California wine was preferred by most of the attendees. The four favorite wines across the four host sites:

Place	Wine & Winery	YR	PRICE	DESCRIPTION
1st	Morcha Garnacha Bodegas Morca Campo de Borja, Aragon, Spain	2018	\$39.98	VINOUS 94 POINTS—"Deep, lurid violet. Ripe dark berries, cherry cola, vanilla and pungent flowers on the deeply perfumed nose. Smooth, broad and sweet on entry, then tighter in the midpalate, offering impressively concentrated cherry and blackberry flavors and hints of vanilla, licorice and spicecake. A smoky nuance builds with air and carries through a very long, gently tannic finish that repeats the floral and licorice notes."
2nd	Mourvèdre (Monastrell) Bodegas Sierra Salinas Mira Salinas Allicante, Spain	2017	\$17.99	Deep ruby/plum color is followed by a Bandol-like bouquet of smoked black fruits, earth, meat, and spice. It's rich, medium to full-bodied, has beautiful fruit, good acidity, and plenty of tannins, and it's a classic, balanced Monastrell that more than over-delivers at the price. These are custom cuvées for Jorge Ordóñez that are only brought into the US.
3rd	GSM Fundamental Central Coast, CA	2019	\$17.96	JEB DUNNUCK 91 POINTS—"The 2019 Red Wine checks in as 50% Syrah, 35% Grenache, 12% Mourvèdre, and the balance Viognier, all of which was 85% destemmed, and it spent 10 months in neutral oak. Lots of red, blue, and black fruits as well as peppery and spice dominate the nose, and it's medium to full-bodied, with plenty of fruit, surprising complexity, and good overall freshness. It's a smoking good red as well as a value."
4th	Grenache Blanc LAFAGE 2019 CUVÉE CENTENAIRE Rhône, France	2019	\$13.95	JEB DUNNUCK 93 POINTS—Based on 60% Grenache Blanc and 20% each Grenache Gris and Roussanne, from very old vines, the 2019 Côtes Catalanes Cuvée Centenaire is another thrilling white from Jean-Marc Lafage. Caramelized grapefruit, crushed citrus, mint, white flowers, and lots of salty minerality emerge from this medium-bodied white that has both richness and freshness.

NOTE: The Garnacha, GSM, and Grenache Blanc are all available at Hi-Times Wine Cellars in Costa Mesa.

In addition, attendees brought a delicious dish to share and then voted on a Chef of the Evening. The results of the Chef of the Evening at each Host site are:

- **Hosts Mike and Cathy MacKenzie:** Katie Leary - Mushroom Appetizer
- **Host Kathy Nalty:** Linda Shepard - Strawberry Dream Cake
- **Hosts Greg and Cathy Risling:** Denise Casad/Dan Weddell - Charcuterie Board
- **Hosts Wendy and Stacey Taylor:** Kevin Donnelly - Key Lime Pie

The detail scores by site will be posted on the OCWS website.

Congratulations to all the winners! A big **Thank You** to the Hosts!

Please send your recipes to me at George@ocws.org for possible publication on the website.

- **George Cravens, Director**

NOTE: The Gold Medal Mini-Tasting will be held in August after the OC Fair (like last year). Many of the wines entered in the Commercial Wine Competition are not released in time for a July Mini-Tasting, and we'd like to feature as many Double Gold winners as possible. Look for more details in the July *Wine Press*.

An American Picnic—Wrap Up!

On Saturday, May 7, 121 OCWS members and guests enjoyed a beautiful spring day at The Courtyard for “**An American Picnic.**” The red, white and blue was everywhere to be seen. Everyone danced to the music of the **Three 2 Sevens**, OCWS’s favorite band. The dance floor was full to the very end.

A special thank you to BettyJo and Jay Newell for the fabulous decorations. The Courtyard looked like a 4th of July Parade. And special thanks to Alice and Glenn Polser for directing the set up. It was Alice's first time directing part of a major event and she totally stepped up to the plate. People were working on the set up as early as 9 am.

And, of course, to the Cooks’ Caucus led by Lynda Edwards for a great dinner (and a special mention to George Cravens’ sous vide tri tip, Craig Rowe’s special marinated grilled chicken, Rich Skoczylas for a Great American desert, Cheryl Heineke for homemade beans, Pamela Clauss’ Caesar salad, and Bonnie Gausewitz’ homemade potato salad).

And to all those who volunteered to work short shifts pouring wine, doing check in, serving food, etc. This organization only works because of our wonderful volunteers.

And thanks to the generosity of our members who donated wines, we raised **\$1,220 at the Wine Wall** which will go directly into the OCWS scholarship fund. Thank you Rochelle for all your work.

We had a lot of new members who came to their first OCWS event. They were on the dance floor until the last song. I hope this event shows what a fun-loving group we are and that we will see them back for future events.

- Brian McDonald, Event Chair



OCWS Save the Date Calendar

June 4-5	Commercial Wine Competition
June 11	Home Wine Competition
July 9	Winemakers’ Group Potluck
July 15—August 14	OC Fair
August 29	OCWS Varietal Hour



www.ocws.org

