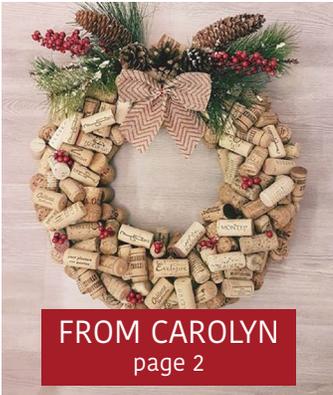


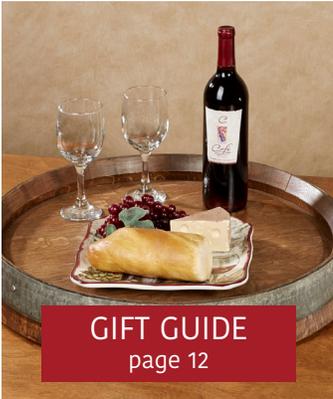
# THE WINE PRESS



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page 14



## MAGIC of the Holidays

*Enjoy the festive spirit with fun activities at these Southern California wineries.*

— By Greg Risling —

‘Tis the season to be jolly – or merry – or whatever adjective suits you best to get you into joyful spirits this time of year.

And while typically the holiday season is reserved for children and the excitement of what gifts they will receive, adults can have fun too, right?

All across California, commercial winemakers know how to make it a December to remember by hosting festive events or

offering special treats not just for their club members but for the public as well.

So if you are feeling jolly and up for making a trip to a winery in Orange County or farther afield in Solvang, here are some ideas to warm your cockles.

Over at Peltzer Family Cellars in Temecula, they celebrate over a six-week period with “Christmas on the Farm.” There is a 120x65-foot ice rink for the kids – or kids at

See **FESTIVITIES**, page 11

2023-2024  
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# President's Message

BY CAROLYN CHRISTIAN

**A**s I reflect back on this remarkable year, I am reminded of just how amazing this organization is, not just because of the astounding things we accomplish as an all-volunteer organization, but because of the wonderful people who make it happen.

We are an organization of over 1,000 individuals who are drawn together by our love and appreciation of wine. I am truly honored to be at the helm of such an amazing group of people who are so dedicated to this organization and help steer it in the right direction. After more than three decades of being an OCWS member, it warms my heart to see the ongoing commitment of so many to this incredibly unique nonprofit.

### Magnitude of Our Impact

Our organization has donated over \$780,000 to college and universities that are training the next generation of enologists, viticulturalists and culinary professionals. There is still an opportunity to donate to our scholarship fund before the end of the year (donations are eligible for tax deductions). You can bring your check to one of our holiday events or go online to donate and generate a receipt.

### Success of OCWS Events

This was our 47th year hosting the OC Fair Commercial and Home Wine competitions. The Commercial Competition judged 2,260 California wines, while the Home Wine Competition judged 598 California wines. We also sold over 1,200 lots of wine at our annual wine auction. Over 360 volunteers made this year's competitions and auction successful with a record number of new members volunteering.

We also have touched the lives and shared our wine knowledge with tens of thousands of people at the OC Fair

and brought in over 250 new members to the OCWS. The Courtyard continues to be an incredibly successful venture for the organization.

### New This Year

We've started doing OCWS Outings events at our local wineries in the OC with great success. Our events have included the continuation of an incredible array of wineries showcasing their wines at the Winery Programs, Featured Winery Program, Mini-Tastings and Varietal Hours.

### Thanks to Our Volunteers

I am so thankful to our Board of Directors, whose leadership of our many events make my job so rewarding. We have a number of new faces this year taking on leadership roles for our many events and committees (see the Responsibilities List on our website).

As you enjoy the various holiday events that the OCWS has planned for December, please take time to look around at the attendees who also volunteer their time to put together such events. It is our members who make us what we are today.

I encourage all of you to volunteer for upcoming events and be part of the magic-making that occurs with the OCWS.

### Looking forward to 2024

We have so many exciting things in store, including starting off the year with a Bubbles 'n' Brunch at Citrus City Grille in Orange and a winery

See MESSAGE, page 3

## 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 November 2023 meeting: Stephen Ashley and Risa Scott, Thomas O'Keefe, Jesse Flores and Agnes Yr, and Steve Moore.

As of Nov. 1 the OCWS has 1,049 members.

New Members: For new members trying to log onto our website and who have not already created their own password, 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.

—Rochelle Randel,  
OCWS Business Administrator

## Donate to OCWS Scholarship Fund

Just a friendly reminder that it is not too late to make a donation to the OCWS Scholarship Fund in 2023.

There are several ways to donate:

• **Bring a check to a holiday event.**

Make your check out to OCWS (please write Scholarship Donation on the memo line and add the name of a school if you want it to go specifically to one of the schools the OCWS supports). I will be in attendance at the holiday events and will be happy to accept your donation check. A donation letter will be sent to you.

• **Mail a check.** Complete your

check using the same instructions as above and mail it to the OCWS office at OCWS, P.O. Box 11059, Costa Mesa, CA 92627 Attn: Scholarship Fund. A donation letter will be sent to you.

• **Donate Online.** Log on to your account at OCWS.org and go to the scholarship donation page: OCWS.org/product/scholarship-donations/. You can make your donation online and print a receipt for tax purposes at the same time.

—Damian Christian,  
OCWS Scholarship Chair

### MESSAGE, from page 2

program featuring Once & Future Wine Company run by Joel Peterson, a longtime supporter of our organization. I urge you to look at the newsletter and emails announcing our various events and sign up early, as they often sell out.

### Celebrating OCWS History

We have launched a new project to gather and archive the organization's history as we approach our 50th anniversary within the next few years. Please help us in preserving our amazing history by donating requested items such as old newsletters prior to 2000,

photos and video, event programs, wine award books and other memorabilia (we will be putting out calls for specific items in the newsletter).

### Grateful for All Members

I wish all of you a most joyous holiday season, whatever holidays you, your family and your friends celebrate. We have much to be grateful for. I find it no coincidence that when people toast, it is usually with a glass of wine, and for the OCWS, wine is truly the elixir that brings us together in one amazing organization. Happy holidays and Happy New Year to all!

## 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

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OCWS Email:  
Office@ocws.org

2023 Wine Competition Results:  
WineCompetition.com



## Bubbles 'n' Brunch

11 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.  
Sunday, Jan. 7, 2024

Citrus City Grille  
122 N. Glassell St.  
Orange, CA

### Sign Up Deadline:



Happy New Year! Let's start the year off with champagne and brunch. Citrus City Grille has a great buffet brunch.

The restaurant is located just north of the Orange Circle. Parking is in the rear of the restau-

rant or on the street. Carpooling or ride sharing is suggested.

The price for the buffet is \$67 for members and their guests, all inclusive.

The event will be posted on the OCWS website for signups.

Space is limited; when the event fills up, please email the office at [Office@ocws.org](mailto:Office@ocws.org) to be placed on a waitlist.

—**Rochelle Randel**,  
OCWS Champagne  
Brunch Coordinator

### MENU

#### Buffet:

salads & fruit bar, artisan cheeses, charcuterie bar

#### Breakfast Station:

waffles, crepes, omelets, carmel French toast, Eggs Benedict

#### Hot Entrees:

stuffed chicken, BBQ short ribs, mussels, grilled salmon

#### Carving Station:

honey-roasted ham, prime rib

#### Seafood Station:

shrimp cocktail, ahi poki

#### Bakery Station:

bread, bagels, Danishes, muffins, sweet treats

### RSVP Policy

Because we need to contract with the restaurant the attendance count, the last day to sign up, make changes, or cancel to receive a refund is Jan. 3. Any cancellations after this date would be filled and refunded from the waitlist.

### Beverages:

corkage fee, coffee, soft drinks, juice included; restaurant offers Bloody Marys and full bar for purchase

### REMINDERS

Each person is requested to:

#### No. 1

Bring a bottle of your favorite champagne and/or wine (no corkage fee)

#### No. 2

Bring champagne and/or wine glasses

#### No. 3

Please wear your OCWS name badge

#### No. 4

Please drink responsibly



## Once & Future Wine Company

6:30 p.m.

Friday, Jan. 19, 2024

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

### Sign Up Deadline:

Sunday, Jan. 14



Our January winery program starts with a winery legend, Joel Peterson, affectionately known as the "Godfather of Zin."

Joel is both an articulate spokesman and a gutsy trend-setter who helped make Zinfandel the phenomenon that it is today. When Joel visited us in January 2016, he was the long-time winemaker and founder of Ravenswood Winery. Today, he is the winemaker and founder of Once & Future Wine Company.

Joel's extensive wine experience includes being a sole

proprietor, a general partner in a limited partnership, the president of both a C corporation and a Senior Vice President at Constellation Wines. He has been the President of Sonoma Valley Vintners and Growers and helped to found ZAP (Zinfandel Advocates and Producers) where he had the opportunity to be its president two times. He has been part of the Board of the Sonoma County Vintners, and along the way, fellow industry members gave him the honor of being inducted into the Vintners Hall of Fame. Joel says that his current

project, Once & Future Wine Company, "is one that specializes in wines from special vineyards made with a sensitivity to place and in a style that I personally love and believe in. Wines that force me to dust off old redwood vats and get out a new punch down tool (my original is in the Smithsonian), wines that dye my hands that harvest shades of black/purple and sometimes force me to take an additional Advil some mornings. In short, wines of sweat, exertion and love."

—**Rich Skoczylas**,  
Winery Program Coordinator

### MENU

#### Salad Course:

Orange County salad of mixed baby field greens, roasted tomatoes, candied walnuts, endive, balsamic vinaigrette, warm artisan breads and rolls with sweet butter.

#### Entree Options:

• Chicken Riesling—Chicken breast, mushrooms, bacon, onions and garlic in a white wine Riesling cream sauce, buttery mashed potatoes and seasonal fresh vegetables.



• Heart Healthy—Roasted salmon, brown rice, grilled zucchini, broccolini, sweet peppers and sage brown butter.

• Veggie Option—Crispy mushroom polenta with sauteed portobello and oyster mushrooms, topped with watercress.

**\$56 members, \$61 guests**

Be sure to pick up your meal ticket when you check in to show the waiter. Meals are ordered in advance and cannot be changed at the 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, Jan. 14.



### Bella Grace Vineyards

6:30 p.m.  
Friday, Feb. 9, 2024

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

**Sign Up Deadline:**  
Sunday, Feb. 4



winemakers. From selling the high-quality grapes, Charlie and Michael started producing their own wines and Bella Grace was born. They have entered the OC Fair Commercial Wine Competition for several years and have won numerous awards. Do not miss this tasting!

—*Rich Skoczylas*,  
Winery Program Coordinator

Bella Grace started with a pair of serious wine lovers who had the same thought, “What if I quit my job and start a winery?”

The owners, husband-and-wife team Charlie and Michael Havill, who were initially involved in engineered products and life insurance and shared the love of winemaking, did just that!

They purchased land in Amador Country and started growing Primitivo, Zinfandel, Grenache, Vermentino, Grenache Blanc, Syrah, Petite Sirah and Mourvedre without the use of pesticides or inorganic substances. Working the vineyard, the estate-grown grapes were sold to regional commercial wineries and home

### Menu

#### Salad Course:

Dinner starts with a salad of butter lettuce, roasted tomatoes, crispy pancetta, bleu cheese crumbles and creamy peppercorn dressing, warm artisan breads and rolls with sweet butter.

#### Entree Options:

- Chicken Option—Grilled chicken breast with a marsala wine sauce, mushrooms, parmesan herb risotto and seasonal baby heirloom vegetables.
- Fish Option—Mahi Mahi with a macadamia nut crust, heirloom cherry tomatoes, asparagus, miso-honey brown butter.
- Vegetarian Option—Spaghetti squash with roasted mushrooms, lemon parmigiano-reggiano broth, Campari



**BELLA GRACE VINEYARDS**

tomato, sweet corn, fresh spinach and pistachio gremolata.

**\$56 members, \$61 guests**

Be sure to pick up your meal ticket when you check in to show the waiter. Meals are ordered in advance and cannot be changed at the event.

### Sign-Ups

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 promptly at 6:30 p.m. with the meeting following at about 7:30 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, Feb. 4.

### Volunteers Needed

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

# Thanks to all who contribute to our success

In this season of giving thanks, I’d like to take this opportunity to recognize those who helped make the Home Winemakers group successful in 2023.

First of all, we just finished our annual grape purchase. It’s at the core of what our group is all about. Organizing this program is a HUGE job and I cannot thank **Bruce Powers** enough for taking the lead on this. If that isn’t enough, Bruce graciously allowed us to use his home as the grape delivery/pick-up point for literally tons of grapes. This year our winemakers bought 6½ tons of red grapes and another 250 gallons of white juice.

There’s another aspect to this that many may not realize. Grapes are harvested when Mother Nature says they’re ready. We have no say. If the grower determines they must be picked on a Tuesday morning, that’s when we have to go get them. So, on short notice, someone from our group must make the pick-up run.

Many thanks to Bruce for making two solo trips up to Lucas & Lewellen Vineyards in Santa Barbara County to pick up Sauvignon Blanc and Syrah. Bruce also made a run to Solterra Winery in Encinitas to pick up Merlot and Zinfandel.

Thanks to **Jim Kerins** for accompanying Bruce on the Merlot/Zinfandel run and thanks to **Dave Weigand** and **Rob Romano** for making a trip to Solterra to pick up Petite Sirah and Cabernet Sauvignon.

A special thanks to **Kevin Donnelly** for making a solo trip to Lucas & Lewellen to pick up Viognier. Kevin’s Santa Barbara run was on a Friday with the return afternoon trip through L.A. traffic!

Another huge event for the Winemakers Group is the annual OC Fair Home Wine Competition. Thanks to **Kevin**

**Donnelly**, chairman and principal organizer for this year’s 47th annual event. Planning for the event begins in January and many people work tirelessly behind the scenes for months before competition day.

A big thank you also goes out to our **OCWS Cooks Caucus** who provided breakfast and lunch for almost 200 people on competition day. The competition is successful through the hard work and dedication of so many people.

Throughout the year the Winemakers Group conducts programs and provides education to help us winemakers improve our craft. Special thanks to our SO2 testing team, **Mike Paz** and **Ed Petros**, who conduct quarterly SO2 testing for the group.

I also want to thank **John Lane**, **Don Phillips** and **Kevin Donnelly** for giving winemaking seminars throughout the year. Thanks to **Robin McCormick** and **Don Phillips** for hosting quarterly potlucks.

Thanks to **Kevin Donnelly** for organizing our annual Holiday Party. By the way, this year’s (Dec. 3) event is coming up fast. Sign up for it today on the OCWS website.

I appreciate the support and continued involvement of both **Kevin Donnelly** and **Bill Forsch** who ran the group before me.

The Home Winemakers, like the OCWS Wine Society as a whole, could not run without the help of all who step up to organize and run our winemakers’ activities. We appreciate everyone’s help and we welcome newcomers who want to get involved and look forward to continued success in 2024.

Cheers and Happy Holidays!

—*Ed Reyes*,  
ed@ocws.org

### ADDITIONAL THANKS

**Key volunteers/held key positions in the Home Wine Competition:**

**John Lane**  
Director of Judging

•••

**Stacey Taylor**  
Competition Software Developer and Director of Wine Administration

•••

**Kim Guerin**  
Competition Day Scoring Lead

•••

**Cheryl Knapp**  
Volunteer Coordinator

•••

**Wendy Taylor**  
Label Competition Coordinator

•••

**Jerry Guerin**  
Judging Seminar Instructor

•••

**Lynda Edwards and her Awards Mailing Team**



## The Results ARE IN

The November Mini-Tasting was held at six sites (members' homes) across the county, with roughly 100 people enjoying 10 wines selected to pair with holiday dishes and comfort food.

The attendees contributed a dish and each site voted for their favorite. The winners were awarded a bottle of wine as "Chef of the Evening."

The wines were served in five blind flights of two wines each and the attendees judged each wine and voted for their favorites. There were several proprietary red blends in the wine lineup along with Pinot Noir, Syrah,

Petite Sirah and Zinfandel.

The overall winner was an Estate Syrah from Halter Ranch in Paso Robles, followed by David Phinney's "Eight Years in the Desert" and two Petite Sirahs. All 10 wines were purchased at Hi-Time Wine Cellars in Costa Mesa.

In addition, attendees brought a delicious dish to share and then voted on a Chef of the Evening. Congratulations to all the winners and a big thank you to the hosts! The results of the Chef of the Evening at each host site are:

<b>Hosts Chris &amp; Hank Bruce</b> Ronna Rowe—Artichoke Dip	<b>Hosts Virginia &amp; Karl Kawai</b> Eric Kalnes—Pork Tenderloin with Balsamic Fig Reduction	<b>Hosts Beverly Genis &amp; Bob Topham</b> Barbara Greenfield—Panzanella Italian Salad
<b>Host Lora Cross</b> Germaine Romano—Salmon on a bed of Tropical Rice	<b>Hosts Denise Casad &amp; Dan Weddell</b> Adrienne Davis—Creamed Corn	<b>Hosts Don &amp; Elee Phillips</b> Kathleen Alva & Paul Wooldridge—Ribs

**1st Place**  
 2019 Halter Ranch  
 Estate Syrah  
 Adelaida District  
 Paso Robles  
 \$41.95

This is a rich and roasty style of Syrah, starting with aromas of cocoa nibs, carob and espresso beans as well as blackberry paste and baking spice. Cocoa and coffee flavors give a nutty tone to the palate, which is warmed up by chai spices.

**Accolades:** 92 points Wine Enthusiast



**2nd Place**  
 2022 Orin Swift  
 Eight Years in the Desert  
 California Red Wine  
 St. Helena  
 \$40.99

The nose is rife with notes of ripe blueberry, black plum, wild raspberry, espresso bean, sweet oak and a hint of crème de menthe and cedar. Bright acidity throughout the palate, the wine closes with round, ripe tannins, fresh pluot and dark chocolate.

**Blend:** Zinfandel, Syrah, Petite Sirah



**3rd Place**  
 2019 Rodney's Vineyard  
 Epiphany  
 Petite Sirah  
 Los Olivos  
 Santa Barbara County  
 \$51.95

Deep, powerful wine with inky dark fruit, lavender, chocolate, and black pepper. This friendly, heady Petite Sirah has a ton to offer.

—George Cravens,  
 OCWS Director



## Chefs of the EVENING



### Panzanella Italian Salad

#### Ingredients

- ½ cup plus 2 Tbsp. extra virgin olive oil, divided
- 3 garlic cloves, divided (or you can substitute garlic olive oil)
- 4-5 cups 1-inch cubed sourdough bread
- 1½ pounds tomatoes, heirloom cherry tomatoes for color or any ripe, sweet tomato works, cut into 1-inch pieces
- ½-1 English cucumber cut into ½-inch pieces
- ½ cup slivered red onion
- 2 Tbsp. capers
- ¼ cup red wine vinegar
- 1 tsp. dijon mustard
- Few sprigs of thyme (shred the "flowers" from the stems)
- 1 tsp. kosher salt
- 1 tsp. freshly ground black pepper
- ½-1 cup fresh basil leaves, roughly torn or thinly sliced
- 1 can artichoke hearts, drained and chopped in halves
- 4 oz. shaved parmesan

#### Directions

**PLACE** bread cubes in large mixing bowl and coat with 2 Tbsp. garlic or garlic olive oil.  
**SPREAD** on cookie sheet and bake for 15 minutes at 350 degrees; turn bread cubes over half way through.  
**ADD** tomatoes, cucumbers, red onion and capers in a large bowl.  
**ADD** olive oil, red wine vinegar, dijon mustard and thyme in small bowl. Use garlic press to add in garlic cloves or substitute garlic olive oil with kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper.  
**WHISK** well and pour over tomato mixture.  
**ADD** basil and bread cubes and toss to combine.  
**SPRINKLE** parmesan onto salad.  
**LET** stand at room temperature for 20-30 minutes or up to an hour and toss just before serving to blend in the cheese. This salad is best served the day it's made.

—Recipe courtesy OCWS member  
 Barbara Greenfield



### Blackberry Cheesecake Mousse

#### Ingredients

- 1 ¼ cup heavy whipping cream, chilled
- 8 oz. cream cheese, softened to room temperature
- 1 tsp. vanilla
- ¾ cup powdered sugar, sifted
- 6 oz. fresh blackberries (about 1 cup) plus 1 per serving for decoration

#### Directions

**WHISK** whipping cream on high in the stand mixer bowl until it holds stiff peaks.  
**BEAT** softened cream cheese on medium speed until smooth.  
**MIX** cream and cream cheese together.  
**FOLD** in fresh berries, then mix on medium low until evenly combined.  
**ADD** vanilla and powdered sugar.  
**MIX** on medium low until smooth.  
**USING** a piping bag (or cut corner off large ziplock bag) fitted with a large tip, pipe the mixture into small ramekins (or shot glasses).  
**TOP** with fresh berries.  
**NOTE:** Flavors meld best when chilled 12 to 24 hours. Keep any leftovers chilled, up to four days. Makes eight 4 oz. servings, or 10 shot glass servings. Prep time is about 15 minutes.

—Recipe courtesy  
 OCWS member Kim Rizzuto

**Varietal HOUR**

# Learn about wine while sipping on ZOOM

Who would like to attend a FREE wine event and not even need a designated driver?

How about attending an event with like-minded people who enjoy wine?

How about attending without even getting up off your couch?

Well, the OCWS has been hosting these exact events for the past three years and we've been fine tuning and improving them as we go. Could we solidify the deal by promising that you will laugh, learn about wine and talk with other OCWS members via Zoom? I thought so!

We're always happy to have new members join the fun and you will likely learn something new (or have the chance to teach us something new) and meet some people who enjoy wine. Each event has a theme, but we never "kick anyone off the island," so it never matters if you follow the theme.

The setting is very casual, with stories told about each of the wines we're drinking, what we do (or don't) like about them, where we got them, and more.

Regardless of your knowledge of wine, the Varietal Hours have some-



thing for everyone. Varietal Hours are held every other Monday from 7 to 8 p.m. All you need is a computer (or phone) and internet connection. If you are new to the Varietal Hours or to Zoom, please feel free to contact

Don Phillips at don@OCWS.org or George Cravens at george@OCWS.org for help and information, even if it means contacting us days before the event, and we will walk you through the process and even do a short Zoom meeting just for you to get you comfortable with the process.

The event is open to all OCWS members, but sign-ups are required. Please log on to the OCWS website to register for the event no later than the Sunday night before the event. 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.

We are also looking for hosts for upcoming Varietal Hours. It's fun and easy to do.

Please contact Don or George at the above emails if you wish to host, or with any questions or suggestions. We look forward to Zooming with you soon at one of the future Varietal Hours. Bottoms Up!

**—Don Phillips,  
Varietal Hour  
Committee Member**

DATE	TIME	VARIETAL	HOSTS
Dec. 4	7 p.m.	Varietals with Multiple Names (at least 3)	CL & Adrienne Keedy
Dec. 18	7 p.m.	Holiday Wines	Scott & Manuela Harral
Jan. 8	7 p.m.	New Wine for the New Year	Don & Elee Phillips
Jan. 22	7 p.m.	Hard-to-Pronounce Varietals	Damian & Carolyn Christian
Feb. 5	7 p.m.	Your Theme HERE	Your Name HERE
Feb. 19	7 p.m.	Women of Color Wines	Dione McCrea & Danielle Duenas

**FESTIVITIES, from page 1**

heart – local food trucks peppered throughout the property and local live music. And if you are looking for a “holidate,” there’s a wine and cupcake pairing at the winery on Dec. 28. For \$30, guests get three mini cupcakes and receive three 2-ounce tastings.

A little farther south at San Pasqual Winery in La Mesa, they offer a seasonal hot spiced wine kit, just right for those chilly evenings. The \$48 kit is a blend of passionfruit wine, red wine and mulling spices. The winery also has a tasting room in Seaport Village and is a prime viewing spot for the annual San Diego Bay Parade of Lights that features more than 80 boats. The parade will be on Dec. 10 and 17.

Back in Orange County, Frisby Cellars has its 10th Annual Christmas in the Cellar at its Rancho Mission Viejo location on Dec. 10 from noon to 4 p.m. Attendees can sip and shop as local vendors set up tables in the cellar and hawk their wares. There also will be a DJ pumping up the jam and of course a slew of treats to go with the array of wine.

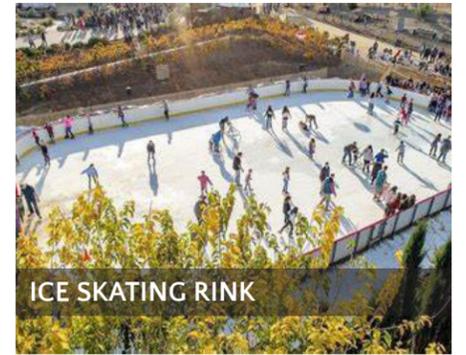
Bellante Family Winery in Mission Viejo has two events that might strike your interest. The winery hosts a succulent Christmas tree workshop that aims to make your desk at work or your dinner table the envy of others. The workshop is \$110 plus tax and includes all the materials needed to

make your tree, a glass of wine and cheese and charcuterie. The event will be held on Dec. 5 from 6 to 8:30 p.m. The winery also has its 4th Annual Christmas Cookie Exchange on Dec. 22 beginning at 5 p.m. Amateur bakers are asked to bring about a dozen cookies to share and make sure to don your ugly Christmas sweater since the winner will be rewarded a prize.

And, if there’s one place that is a perfect Winter Wonderland setting in California it is Solvang. The Danish hamlet known for its renowned wineries and fabled Aebleskivers takes it up a notch during the holidays with its Julefest celebration.

Head up the first weekend of December for the tree lighting and parade as more than 400 participants cruise down the town’s main avenues. If you can’t make it, then try one of the candlelight tours on Dec. 8-9, 15-16 and 18-23 beginning at 5 p.m. Participants sing carols and learn Danish traditions as they comb the streets (and maybe stop in at one of the more than a dozen tasting rooms). You can also be on the hunt for the elusive Nisser – aka Danish gnomes – that are hidden throughout the town. Find them all and you get a special gift.

So many decisions for us wine lovers and so little time. Happy Holidays to all and enjoy the good times. 



ICE SKATING RINK



SUCCULENT CHRISTMAS TREE



UGLY SWEATER CONTEST



COOKIE EXCHANGE



SAN DIEGO BOAT PARADE

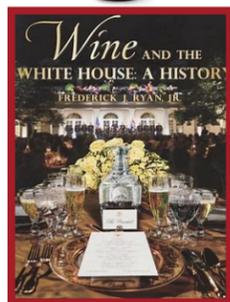
Holiday Gift GUIDE

# Unique Gifts for EVERY Wine Lover on your list

**1** Chateau Spill Red Wine Stain Remover  
\$8.95

*HateStains.com*

This may look like a bottle of wine but don't be fooled! The 4 oz. spray stain remover can actually clean up a bottle of spilled wine. Removes both fresh stains and set-in markings on rugs, carpeting, clothing and other textiles.



**2** Wine and the White House: A History  
\$29.95

*Amazon.com*

Where there was a U.S. president, there was a bottle of wine—or two or three. This impressive pictorial tome explores the fine wines produced in the United States that were served at the White House—and the glassware used to enjoy them. Also includes toasts and detailed menus that went along with state dinners, diplomatic events and other significant happenings.



**3** Le Creuset Champagne Stopper  
\$50  
*WilliamsSonoma.com*

Keep the bubbles bubbling with this crafty stopper featuring an airtight rubber seal that anchors to the bottle where everyday stoppers are unable to latch on.



**4** Ceramic Wine Bottle Holders  
\$30-\$45  
*Instagram.com/waterimages*

Wine stays cool and tablecloths stain free with WineKeeps from our very own OCWS member Wendy Taylor—custom, handmade ceramic wine bottle holders. They can be stored in the freezer then used tableside to help chilled bottles stay cold. To order, email [wtaylor@waterimages.com](mailto:wtaylor@waterimages.com).



**5** Reclaimed Wine Barrel Lazy Susan  
\$209.99

*TouchofClass.com*

Perfect for a bar or dining room, this 21" walnut tray rotates to allow easy access to a bottle of wine, wine glasses, napkins or whatever else you may have on the table.



**A TASTING WORTH TOUTING**  
OCWS member Don Phillips (right) snapped this month's winning photo using a self timer. "We were touring Dos Alamos Winery in Bulgaria and the winemaker gave us a special treat consisting of a barrel tasting of Gamza," Don says. "A fantastic day!"

## Calling all OCWS 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 newsletter as well as on the OCWS website. The winner also will 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 [Photo@OCWS.org](mailto:Photo@OCWS.org).

### THE RULES

- 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.
- 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!
- 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.
- 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.
- The photo must be submitted in one of the following formats: JPEG, RAW, TIFF or Photoshop. 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.
- In the event that insufficient entries are entered in a month, the committee reserves the right to move any contributed photos to the next month. To submit a picture, attach it in an email to [Photo@OCWS.org](mailto:Photo@OCWS.org). 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 that month's winner.



Pairing Wine Education and Fun Since 1978

**2023-24**

# UPCOMING EVENTS

<b>DECEMBER 1</b>	<b>OCWS HOLIDAY DINNER DANCE</b> AVENUE OF THE ARTS HOTEL / COSTA MESA
<b>DECEMBER 3</b>	<b>WINEMAKERS GROUP HOLIDAY PARTY &amp; POTLUCK</b> / YORBA LINDA
<b>DECEMBER 4</b>	<b>VARIETAL HOUR / VARIETALS WITH MULTIPLE NAMES</b> / VIA ZOOM
<b>DECEMBER 18</b>	<b>VARIETAL HOUR / HOLIDAY WINES</b> VIA ZOOM
<b>JANUARY 7</b>	<b>BUBBLES 'N' BRUNCH</b> CITRUS CITY GRILLE / ORANGE
<b>JANUARY 8</b>	<b>VARIETAL HOUR / NEW WINE FOR THE NEW YEAR</b> VIA ZOOM
<b>JANUARY 19</b>	<b>FEATURED WINERY / ONCE &amp; FUTURE WINE</b> AVENUE OF THE ARTS HOTEL / COSTA MESA
<b>FEBRUARY 9</b>	<b>FEATURED WINERY / BELLA GRACE VINEYARDS</b> AVENUE OF THE ARTS HOTEL / COSTA MESA
<b>FEBRUARY 19</b>	<b>VARIETAL HOUR / WOMEN OF COLOR WINES</b> VIA ZOOM
<b>FEBRUARY 24</b>	<b>MINI-TASTING / OLD WORLD EUROPE VS. CALIFORNIA WINES</b> / VARIOUS LOCATIONS
<b>MARCH 8</b>	<b>FEATURED WINERY / DOUBLE BOND WINE</b> AVENUE OF THE ARTS HOTEL / COSTA MESA
<b>APRIL 12</b>	<b>FEATURED WINERY / SAN PASQUAL WINERY</b> AVENUE OF THE ARTS HOTEL / COSTA MESA
<b>APRIL 20</b>	<b>WINE AUCTION</b> OC FAIR & EVENT CENTER
<b>MAY 10</b>	<b>FEATURED WINERY / SAN SIMEON WINES</b> AVENUE OF THE ARTS HOTEL / COSTA MESA