

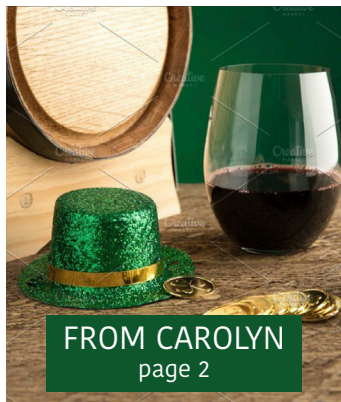
# THE WINE PRESS



Volume 48, Issue 3

ocws.org

March 2024



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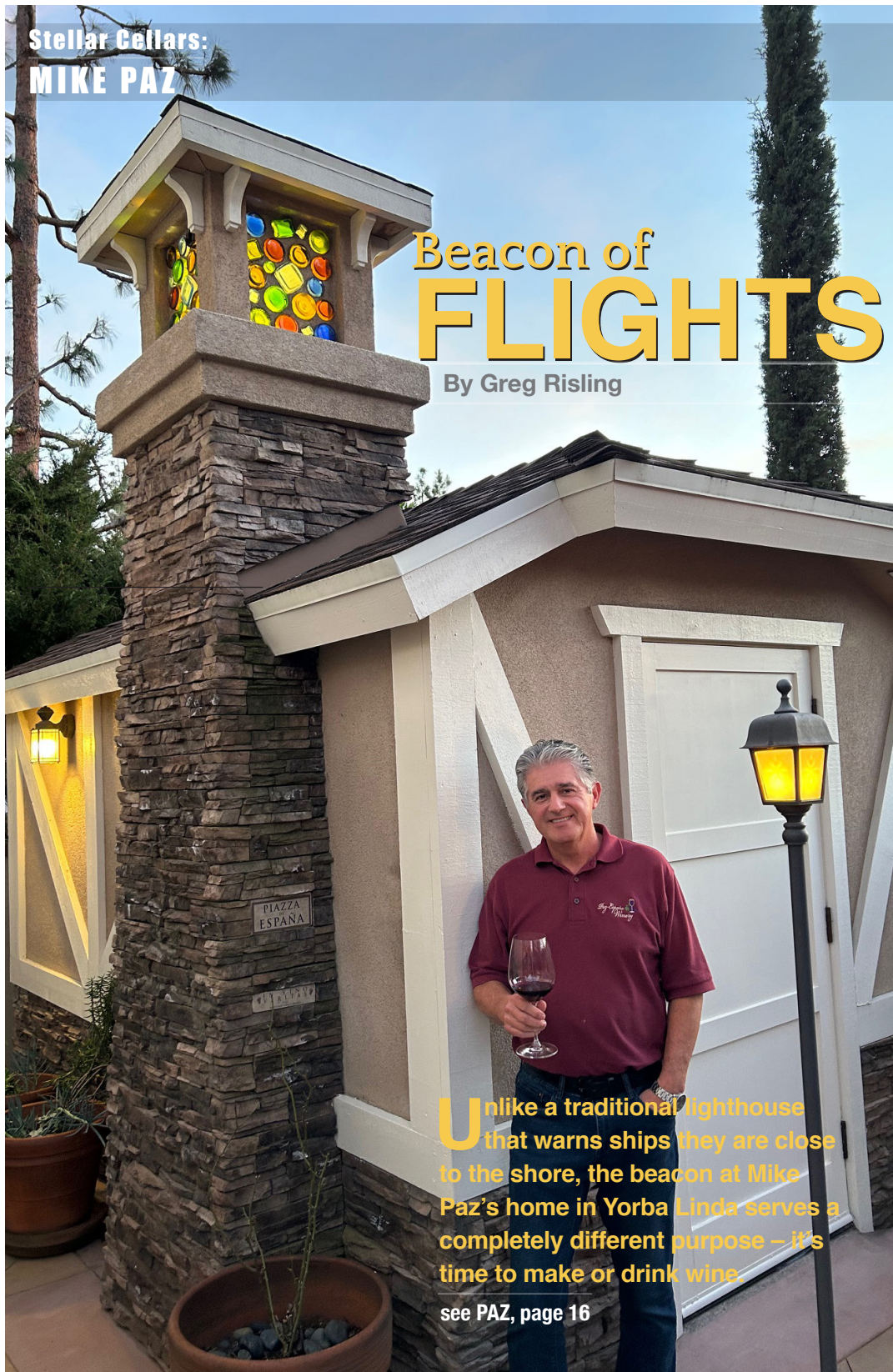


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Stellar Cellars:  
MIKE PAZ

## Beacon of FLIGHTS

By Greg Risling



Unlike a traditional lighthouse that warns ships they are close to the shore, the beacon at Mike Paz's home in Yorba Linda serves a completely different purpose – it's time to make or drink wine.

see PAZ, page 16



## 2024 Board of Directors



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# President's Message

BY CAROLYN CHRISTIAN

As we roll into March, I am reminded how truly lucky we are as an organization, built on and by volunteers and bound together by our love of wine (and food)!

On the one hand, we enjoy wine with loved ones and friends, and on the other hand, we feel strongly about educating people about wine and supporting the California wine industry. They are but two sides of the same lucky coin. And this is what makes our organization so unique.

The OC Wine Society has so many types of events, from small gatherings at members' homes or on Zoom, to larger events such as tastings at hotels, social functions at The Courtyard and wine auctions, to larger public events like the Wine Courtyard at the OC Fair. Each of these events provides us great opportunities to learn about wine, support our scholarship fund, drink and buy wines, and most importantly spend time together!

Volunteers are what make our organization work. It is not easy running an organization with over 1,000 members. And although I proudly lead this organization, I do not do it alone. Behind the scenes are groups of volunteers who keep things running smoothly, from our nine-member board of directors, to official committees that run events, to teams who help with year-round work.

There are so many people to thank for their tireless commitment to our organization. Although I don't have the space to name each and every person, as you read through the newsletter, you will see many of their names and images. You can also find the names of our top volunteers on our website.

And next time you are at one of our events, please thank the volunteers you see there.

I invite all of you to volunteer for one or more of our upcoming events. Doing so will help you get to know other members better, learn more about wine, and even rub elbows with some amazing winemakers.

Here's a preview of what is coming up the next few months...

## Winery Programs

Your chance to meet the winemaker

or winery owner and enjoy dinner and a wine tasting at a local hotel — Double Bond Wine (March), San Pasqual Winery (April) and San Simeon Wines (May).

## Varietal Hours

Every other Monday evening through July we have educational and fun wine tastings via Zoom with informative topics, knowledgeable hosts, and a chance for everyone to share information on what they are drinking. This event goes on hiatus during the OC Fair.

## Wine Auction

A great event in April for a great cause, where you can purchase wine at a fraction of retail. Tickets include wine and food throughout the event and a chance to bid on great California wines. Volunteers are needed for this event as well.

## Spring Social Event

"Let The Good Times Roll" in April is a celebratory member event with wine, food, music and dancing.

## Pinot Noir Mini-Tasting

An exciting potluck event at members' homes throughout the OC in April.

## Winemakers' Events

Informative events to help hone your own winemaking skills – Wine Blending Seminar (April) and Kit Wine Class (June).

## Bubbles 'n' Brunch

In May the brunch will be held at the OC Mining Co., a Sunday gathering where members share their favorite bubbly.

## OC Fair Commercial and Home Wine Competitions

Our flagship events in June that make the OCWS such a prestigious organization known throughout California! Please don't miss your opportunity to volunteer for these amazing competitions!

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 February 2024 meeting: Taylor Alber, Brit Freeman, Brian Halle and Karen Nguyen, Donald Lank and Olga Borodina, Dale Laube, Christopher Rivera, and Tim and Mary Sumida.

As of Feb. 1, the OCWS has 1,045 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

## Commercial Wine COMPETITION

### Volunteers needed for annual event

We are headed toward the 48th Commercial Competition June 1-2 and you should see the signups on our website in March any day now. Boy this year has gone by fast!

We understand that these are changing times and conditions; please be flexible and we can work together to make this another fun event. There are many areas where volunteer help is needed, stewarding, glass washing and drying. Continuing the efficiency, the computer input will be assigned.

A sign-up form is included on the website—[ocws.org/2024-commercial-competition-volunteers/](https://ocws.org/2024-commercial-competition-volunteers/)—that identifies stewarding days, two bagging nights and other work parties with times and dates. In order to qualify for stewarding, we need you to sign up for two additional work parties. We can offer bagging and moving of wine to and from the competition site, including sorting. We also will be assigning the ribbon mailing crew.

We definitely need your support for our work parties in order to run a successful competition. The good news is that we will have hired help for heavy lifting. No training is necessary as newer members will be teamed with competition veterans.

A quick check—if you volunteer to steward, it involves carrying trays of glasses. It's physical and can get tiring. Along with stewarding, you need to be prepared to assist your steward captain by opening wine bottles, preparing glasses for tags, cleaning up the judges' tables as needed and listening to your steward captain for direction.

It's really all about teamwork for this to be successful.

If you have any questions, please feel free to phone me at (562) 822-3382 or email [strompharms@earthlink.net](mailto:strompharms@earthlink.net).

We look forward to your participation in this very important event.

—*Robyn Strom*,  
OCWS Volunteer Coordinator

### MESSAGE, from page 2

You won't regret it. Preparations begin early for these events. Watch for eblasts, newsletter announcements and postings on how to get involved.

#### Wine Courtyard at the OC Fair

Our other claim to fame is running the Wine Courtyard for the entire length of the OC Fair in July and August with hundreds of volunteers! Make sure you get your RBS certification now and join us behind the

counter at The Courtyard! Volunteering at The Courtyard is one of the best experiences.

Details for all the events mentioned above can be found in this newsletter and on our website at OCWS.org (login required). Trouble logging on? Please contact our office for assistance.

We look forward to seeing you at one of our future events! Wishing you all the luck in the world this March!

Sláinte (Cheers)!

## The Wine Press Staff Box

*The Wine Press* is the official newsletter of the Orange County Wine Society, Inc. The newsletter is published monthly. *The Wine Press* welcomes input from the OCWS membership. Please forward comments, questions and suggestions to [Editor@ocws.org](mailto:Editor@ocws.org)

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**2023 Wine Competition Results:**  
[WineCompetition.com](https://WineCompetition.com)



## Double Bond Wine

6:30 p.m.  
Friday, March 8, 2024

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

**Sign-Up Deadline:**  
Sunday, March 3



There's a saying that a winery makes wine with the end goal to make good wine. But that simply is not Double Bond...What?! So, Double Bond doesn't just make wine. They make that moment you hope for when you open a bottle; the poured anticipation swirling around your glass, then dancing on your palate and finally lingering long after the sip has gone.

The meticulously curated grapes, unhurried aging, hand-crafted French oak barrels, heavy bottle and purple-stained natural corks sealed

with thick foils are all supporting characters in the production that is you opening a bottle of their wines and imbibing in all that Double Bond is.

John Klacking's fascination with wine started with a wine-making kit as a teenager that matured at UC Davis, where he and his collegiate roommates brewed their own beer and produced homemade wines. They spent their free time blind tasting the results of their efforts and frequented Napa wineries.

After graduation as a PhD biochemist, John eventually be-

gan collecting world-renowned premium wines and became consumed with the process of making fine wine and producing the very thing he spent so much time trying to find around the world.

Eventually in 2007 he established his own winery, Double Bond. He has earned numerous awards and distinctions from the nation's top competitions and judges, including the OC Fair Commercial Wine Competition.

—Rich Skoczylas,  
Winery Program Coordinator

### Menu

#### Salad Course:

Dinner includes a salad with warm artisan breads and rolls with sweet butter and a choice of the following entrees:

#### Entree Options:

- Chicken—Chicken parmesan with a rich tomato marinara sauce and mozzarella orzo pasta with wilted spinach.
- Fish—Herby tilapia with wilted greens and mushroom orzo pasta.
- Vegetarian—Cauliflower parmesan with a rich tomato marinara sauce and mozzarella orzo pasta with wilted spinach.

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

NOTE: *Meals are ordered in advance and cannot be changed at the event.*

DOUBLE

BOND

### Volunteers Needed

We need several volunteers to help place hand-outs on the tables at 5 p.m. and with check in 5:30 to 6:30 p.m. Please indicate you can help when you sign up to attend this event.

### Reminders

Pick up your meal ticket when you check in to show the waiter.

Sign up on the OCWS website to attend. 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.; meeting follows 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, March 3.





## San Pasqual Winery

6:30 p.m.  
Friday, April 12, 2024

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

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



San Pasqual Winery, a frequent award-winning winery, is a small, family-owned winery located in La Mesa. Owners Linda and Mike McWilliams are relative newcomers to the winery business, beginning in 2009 by establishing San Pasqual Winery.

Their tasting room became an instantly popular gathering spot with the community. In 2013, they moved winery operations to an industrial area after successfully campaigning to revise an outdated zoning statute

that prohibited “fermentation” activities.

San Pasqual produces 3,000 to 4,000 cases of small hand-crafted lots using grapes sourced from local vineyards and renowned viticulture regions throughout California. Most of these wines are sold directly from the winery and tasting room locations to give a more personal connection with the people who enjoy their wines.

Their wines include Chardonnay, Cabernet Franc and Cab-

ernet Sauvignon, plus lesser known varieties such as Tannat and Teroldego.

They also produce a line of unique passion fruit-based wines (including habanero-inspired “Hot Passion”), that goes perfectly with the San Diego climate.

One of their many achievements include their Malbec—selected to represent California-style Malbecs in Cahors, France, “home” of Malbec.

—Rich Skoczylas,  
Winery Program Coordinator

### Menu

This evening starts with a light, sit-down, plated dinner. Each attendee will receive a menu card picked up when you check in that you show your server the meal you have selected.

#### Salad Course:

Crisp Romaine lettuce hearts with roasted heirloom tomatoes, pepitas, shaved parmesan and creamy Caesar dressing, warm artisan breads and rolls with sweet butter.

#### Entree Options:

- Chicken—Herb-crusted breast of chicken with crushed fingerling potatoes, roasted baby vegetables, herb



oil, carrot puree and fennel orange reduction.

- Fish—Grilled salmon with mustard dill sauce, tomatoes and red onion on top and crushed fingerling potatoes served with grilled zucchini.

- Vegetarian—Eggplant pomodoro with fresh plum tomatoes, green olives and capers served over angel hair pasta.

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

NOTE: *Meals are ordered in advance and cannot be changed at the event.*

### Reminders

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 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, April 7.

### Volunteers Needed

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



## San Simeon Wines

6:30 p.m.

Friday, May 10, 2024

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

**Sign-Up Deadline:**  
Sunday, May 5



San Simeon wines are terroir-driven and shaped by unique soils and the Pacific Ocean's influence, which cools the vineyards at night to give the wines their distinct freshness. The fog and cool air from the sea plays a vital role in their vineyards, where their wines can only be described as...Rugged! Refined! Respected!

Their wines are 100% estate

grown and certified sustainable from two of the most prestigious regions along California's Central Coast: Monterey and Paso Robles. Their vineyards are meticulously farmed to yield grapes with concentrated flavors and aromas, while winemaking techniques create unique wines of the highest quality, character and complexity. They represent the pinnacle of vineyard-to-bottle

winemaking.

The San Simeon winemaking team includes Marty Spate, who brings over 20 years of experience to the role of winemaking, wine growing and sourcing. His career has touched multiple countries spanning from Australia to Italy and most recently California's Central Coast.

—*Rich Skoczylas,*  
Winery Program Coordinator

### Menu

#### **Salad Course:**

Dinner starts with an Orange County salad with mixed baby field greens, candied walnuts, endive, cherry tomato and balsamic vinaigrette and served with warm sourdough baguettes with sweet butter.

#### **Entree Options:**

- Buffet—Beef stroganoff served over wide egg noodles, sour cream and green onion garnish on the side and charred rainbow carrots.
- Fish—Roasted salmon with harissa, preserved lemons, chickpeas and fresh mint, orzo pasta and charred rainbow carrots.
- Vegetarian—Wild mushroom ravioli on a bed of butternut squash puree



with sage brown butter emulsion.

**\$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, May 5.

### Volunteers Needed

We need several 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.





We're going to continue our brunch journey with an old standard in Orange County. In 1974, some 90 years after the last appreciable silver was coaxed from these hills, the Orange County Mining Co. opened its doors.

Ever since, the restaurant has provided guests with a rustic, casual American steakhouse and saloon experience. We will meet in one of their private banquet rooms, Angels Camp. So, let's relax, toast, laugh and enjoy the view! Here is a sneak peek at some of their buffet options:

Pastries • Eggs Benedict  
Scrambled Eggs with Cheese  
Bacon and Sausage  
Omelet and Waffle Stations  
Carved Prime Rib • Ham  
Enchiladas • Fajitas  
Snow Crab Legs • Shrimp  
Smoked Salmon

There will also be a selection of assorted salads and desserts.

## Orange County Mining Co.

10000 S. Crawford Canyon Road  
Orange, CA

11 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.  
Sunday, May 5, 2024

**Sign-Up Deadline:**  
Monday, April 29

The price for this buffet is \$71 for members and their guests, all inclusive. Parking is all valet, at \$8 per vehicle. Carpooling or ride sharing is suggested.

The event will be posted on the website for signups. Space is limited; when the event fills up, please contact the office to be placed on a waitlist.

Each person is requested to:

1.  
Bring a bottle of your favorite champagne and/or wine.
2.  
Bring champagne and/or wine glasses.
3.  
Please wear your OCWS name badge.
4.  
Please drink responsibly.

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 April 29. Any cancellations after this date would be filled and refunded from the waitlist. Looking forward to toasting with you again!

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



California is known for having a diverse range of excellent wines, and due to the many different micro-climates, even a single varietal can produce very different wines across the state.

For the April Mini-Tasting, we are going to explore and compare Pinot Noirs from a number of regions in California. These may include Carneros, Russian River, Monterey County, San Luis Obispo County, Santa Barbara County, Mendocino County and Sonoma.

**Hosts:** Mini-Tastings are held at various host sites around Orange County. If you would like to host this event, please e-mail George Cravens at [george@OCWS.org](mailto:george@OCWS.org) or call/text (949) 510-5318. You may need to sign up and pay until hosts are selected. Reimbursement will be made for all 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

## Pinot Noir Mini-Tasting

Various Locations  
6 p.m.  
Saturday, April 27, 2024

**Sign-Up Deadline:**  
Sunday, April 14

site is also based on the order in which your sign-up is received in the OCWS office.

**Cost:** The cost to attend the tasting is \$35 for members and \$40 for guests.

**Mini-Etiquette:** Each person attending brings a potluck dish (appetizer, entrée, side dish or dessert) ready to serve a small portion to 16 people. Please coordinate your food selection with your host site to assure an appropriate balance of food types served during the evening.

There will be a special bottle of wine

that evening as a prize for Chef of the Evening. Our winning Chefs of the Evening can have their recipe published in the OCWS Wine Press.

Please plan on arriving promptly at 6 p.m. so the event can get started on time. Please bring your own wine glasses for tasting; keep in mind the wines are served in flights of two.

After the cut-off date for online sign-ups, please contact the OCWS office to determine availability, or to be added to a wait list. The cancellation deadline is April 14 for a refund. After that date, due to the advance purchase of wines, you will not receive a refund unless there is a wait list.

**Note:** If the website says the Mini-Tasting is sold out, please call the office to be added to a wait list. If we have sufficient demand and host sites, we may be able to expand the tasting to accommodate more members.

Bon Appetit!

—George Cravens,  
OCWS Director



## Corn & Tamale Casserole

### Ingredients

2 14 oz. cans of cream corn  
2 small or 1 large beef tamale,  
broken up  
1/2 of a 4 oz. can Ortega Chiles,  
diced  
Splash of milk  
Crushed saltine or Ritz crackers  
Grated cheddar cheese

### Instructions

**PREHEAT** oven to 350 degrees.

**COMBINE** cream corn, tamale, chiles and milk and add to baking dish; crush crackers over top.

**SPRINKLE** grated cheese over all and bake uncovered for 35 to 40 minutes, or until completely bubbly.

—Recipe courtesy OCWS member  
Adrienne Davis

## Fall Off the Bone Babyback BBQ Ribs

### Ingredients

Rack of baby back ribs  
1 Tbsp. olive oil  
Equal parts sea salt and ground  
pepper  
Sriracha BBQ sauce or one with a kick

### Instructions

**PREHEAT** oven to 275 degrees.

**RINSE** and dry the ribs.

**REMOVE** any membrane material then coat top side of the ribs with olive oil.

**SPRINKLE** with equal parts salt and pepper.

**WRAP** and seal ribs in aluminum foil and



place on a baking sheet.

**PLACE** on center rack and bake for 3 to 3.5 hours. Remove and open the top of the foil.

**SLATHER** on the sauce and broil on the center rack for 8 to 10 minutes or until the sauce is bubbling to a caramelized perfection.

—Recipe courtesy OCWS members  
Kathleen Alva & Paul Wooldridge

## Wine WISDOM

### Exploring the region, wine behind Montepulciano

Do you like Montepulciano? Are you talking about geography or wine?

If you are talking geography, the town of Montepulciano, located in the Tuscany region of Italy, makes beautiful Vino Nobile di Montepulciano wines (locally called Prugnolo Gentile) using Sangiovese grapes.

There are two basic qualities of Vino Nobile di Montepulciano wines. The higher quality is Vino Nobile di Montepulciano DOCG (Denominazione di Origine Controllata e Garantita) requiring a minimum of 70% of Prugnolo Gentile Sangiovese grapes whose taste is often

referred to as combining the elegance of Chianti Classico and the power of Brunello.

The lesser quality wine, but still delicious, is referred to as Rosso di Montepulciano DOC (Denominazione di Origine Controllata). More on the four types of classification for Italian wines (DOCG, DOC, etc.) to come in a future article.

If you are talking wine, then that's Montepulciano D'Abruzzo made from the Montepulciano grape in Italy's central, eastern region of Abruzzo. In central and southern Italy, Abruzzo is the most productive region after Tuscany. In Abruzzo a majority of

the wines are produced by co-ops. Most wines in this area are unremarkable and therefore more affordable, however, you can believe that efforts are being made to change that!

Montepulciano, are you talking geography or wine? Confused? Don't be, if you like the wine then enjoy it. Cheers!

Do you have a question on wine? Please submit it to us at [office@ocws.org](mailto:office@ocws.org).

—Linda Flemings, CL Keedy and  
the Wine Education Committee



**Spring Membership SOCIAL**

# Celebrating in the spirit of New Orleans



## MARDI GRAS SPRING SOCIAL

3 to 7 p.m.

Saturday, April 6

OC Fair & Event Center  
Costa Mesa, CA



**W**hatever you call this city – The Big Easy, NOLA, Crescent City, Hollywood South, N’awlins—New Orleans offers so much to visitors.

It is a modern city surrounded with legend, distinctive music, celebrations and mystery. To celebrate this city, and to enjoy a wonderful time at the Spring Membership Social, we are converting The Courtyard into a mini-New Orleans.

At the center of the event will be the Mardi Gras celebrations. Wear your purple, green and gold! We will have masks and beads for sale.

On the walls surrounding the tables, we will pay homage to the Jazz/Zydeco music, the Garden District, downtown and the French Quarter. What a beautiful, colorful city!

### SILENT AUCTION

This event will include a silent auction to benefit the OCWS Scholarship Program. Last spring we raised \$1,000 for the scholarship program and this year we hope to exceed that amount. We already have some donations to start the following baskets: gardening, picnic, S’mores, wine and spa day, beach day, Italian dinner, a beautiful set of Waterford crystal wine glasses, hand-painted wine glasses and candleholders.

Do you have items you would like to contribute?

Please call Alice Polser at (410) 299-8810 or drop items off at the OCWS office any weekday between 9 a.m. and 4 p.m.

### FESTIVE DECOR

Additionally, we have hand-crafted holiday cork decorations, a metal wine barrel top with a heart center, a corkboard and a cork wreath with holiday interchangeable bows.

*NOTE:* All purchases for the auction can be paid by cash, check or credit cards.

### MASKS, BEADS FOR SALE

Masks and beads will be offered to help offset the new tablecloths. Masks are \$10 each and beads will be \$5 each.

The new tablecloths will greatly improve set-up and reduce the amount of paper we use during each event. Pick up your masks and beads at the event. Cash only.

### DINE & DANCE

Ready to dance? We have a DJ coming in with great music! Before we start dancing, he will play a variety of New Orleans music – Zydeco, blues and jazz.

Once everyone is ready to start shaking those beads, he will play tunes to get us moving! The last hour and half of the event will be YOUR turn to shine. We have John Goodnight, a longtime member, inviting you to sing karaoke!

### NEW ORLEANS-STYLE FOOD

Now, let’s talk food! The Cooks' Caucus is working on some amazing items for the Spring Social. Driven by the cuisine of New Orleans, some items under consideration are red beans and rice, gumbo, jambalaya, king cake bites, desserts and more. Bring your appetite and be ready to indulge!

### LOOKING FOR VOLUNTEERS

With all this going on, we, of course, need great volunteers who make our events so fun. Volunteer positions include wine servers in 30-minute shifts, set-up two hours before, clean-up an hour after, food servers 30-minute shifts, sign-in table from 2:45 to 3:15 p.m. and mask/beads table, two 30-minute shifts.

You can sign up for the volunteer shift you want or email Alice Polser at [ajpolser@gmail.com](mailto:ajpolser@gmail.com).

—Alice Polser and Betty Jo Newell,  
Event Co-Chairs



## Winemakers GROUP

# Lessons in Wine Judging 101

Ahh, to be a wine judge . . . it's a romantic notion. Whenever I tell people about the OC Fair Home Wine Competition and our volunteer wine judges, I can almost see the thought bubbles forming above their heads saying, "I'd love to be a wine judge."

I'm sure they imagine sitting around sampling endless quantities of wine giving their thumbs up or down. Judging in a wine competition is way different than that. A good and successful judge is well trained with a completely different mindset than the average wine drinker.

As wine drinkers, we already judge wine but not in a way that a good competition judge would. We like or dislike a wine to fit our personal preference or pre-conceived notions of what we think a particular wine should taste like. And, we'll judge that wine to be good or bad (thumbs up or down) based on that.

How many times have you ever thought about why you liked or didn't like it?

It sounds counterintuitive but a wine judge does not judge wine, at least not in the sense of good or bad. It's not about personal preference. A wine judge critiques how a wine is made. A judge determines if there's anything technically wrong with it. Most importantly, a wine judge looks at a wine to see that it has all the particular qualities and characteristics of the varietal being judged. Like or dislike is not part of the equation.

I like to use meatloaf as an example of how to think about this. Just about all of us have had meatloaf. We all have certain expectations of how it's supposed to taste. We probably have a particular style of meatloaf we like.

Do you like it sweet with BBQ sauce, brown sugar or ketchup? Maybe you like it savory with herbs or mushrooms. Do you like sauteed vegetables in it? Do you like your meatloaf with or without a gravy sauce? What about the meat itself? Do you prefer ground beef? Maybe you like a combination of beef and veal or maybe some pork? Maybe you'd rather have it a



little leaner with ground turkey instead.

All of these are variations of meatloaf. They all have elements of a meatloaf. If you lined them up, they'd probably all look similar and you would recognize them all as being meatloaves. If you tasted them all, you'd likely find some made in a style you prefer and call them good. Some might be made in a style you don't prefer.

But you can't judge those you don't prefer to be bad. There's nothing wrong with any them.

If the meat was undercooked or spoiled, then that would be a bad or undesirable meatloaf. If it was overcooked and so dry that you couldn't eat it, that too would be undesirable. No one wants one that has so much salt, spice or brown sugar that it would overwhelm your taste buds. If the seasonings were out of balance, that would be undesirable. If it didn't have enough egg, bread crumbs or another binder to hold it together, then it would crumble when you cut into it and that would be undesirable too.

Those undesirable qualities are not true to what a correctly prepared meatloaf should have.

## 2024 OC Fair Home Wine Competition

Hello to all of our OCWS Winemakers, and all of our Winemaker wannabes and friends! Our upcoming Home Wine Competition will be held on June 8, 2024, and as with every year, we will be looking for volunteers to act as stewards, support tasks, and even judges.

In return, the Cooks' Caucus will provide a hot breakfast and lunch, wine tasting at the end of the event, and LOTS of FUN will be had by all!

If you would like to be involved with this year's Home Wine Competition, please go to our website at [OCWS.org/home-wine-competition/](http://OCWS.org/home-wine-competition/) and watch for our 2024 update, or contact me at [kevindonnelly@ocws.org](mailto:kevindonnelly@ocws.org). I look forward to seeing you all on June 8!

**—Kevin Donnelly, Chairman,  
2024 OC Fair Home  
Wine Competition**

It's the same idea with wine. Using Pinot Noir as an example, we all likely prefer it to be a certain way. We'll taste one and say we like it or not based on what we think a Pinot Noir should taste like.

Maybe you like one with more body or mouthfeel. Maybe you like a more fruit-forward style with lots of strawberry upfront.

see WINEMAKERS page 13

## Wine AUCTION

# Fill your cellar with great deals at wine auction

Are you ready to restock your wine cellars (or wine racks), and support the amazing work the OCWS does each year? The 2024 OCWS Wine Auction is scheduled for Saturday, April 20 at the OC Fair and Event Center in the Huntington Beach building (next to The Courtyard).

I can't tell you how many times I hear OCWS members say, "We just opened our last bottle of wine that we bought at last year's auction. When is the next one?" Whether this is the case for you or not, I highly recommend attending this long-standing OCWS tradition.

This event is a great way to spend time with OCWS friends, share some wine and great food, and fill our personal cellars with great California wines at amazing prices! Next to The Courtyard at the fair, this is our second most important fundraiser of the year. As a reminder, the OCWS is a 501c(3) organization with a mission to support wine education.

We do this through our programming at the OC Fair (wine tasting, seminars, featured wineries), Winery Programs during the spring and the Wine Competition.

But by far our biggest support of



wine education is the OCWS Scholarship Fund, which this year surpassed \$820,000 in donations to eight California colleges and universities with wine and culinary arts-related programs.

So whether you are looking to fill your wine cellar with some great deals on California wines, spend time with friends enjoying great wine and food, or you want to show your support for the wine industry by contributing to the OCWS Scholarship Fund, the OCWS auction has you covered. The OCWS has

been pairing wine education and fun for decades, and this event is no exception. At only \$25 per person for wine, food, friends and a chance to get some great deals on wine, the auction is the best deal in town.

You can get even more involved by contributing your time as a volunteer during part of the event. As a reminder, this is a MEMBERS ONLY event – no guests.

**—Carolyn Christian,  
Wine Auction Chair**

### WHAT TO EXPECT

- 1** Nearly 1,000 Silent Auction Lots – Placed in order on tables that span the event venue.
- 2** Nearly 100 Verbal Auction Lots – Auctioned off randomly by our professional auctioneer.
- 3** All lots consist of four bottles of quality California wine curated by our own cellar master and his team who have spent weeks putting together the lots.
- 4** Printed and electronic catalogues of the auction lots will be available for attendees a few weeks before the event.
- 5** Food and wine are served throughout the event in several courses (appetizers, entrees and desserts).
- 6** Mystery lots of wine are available at low prices and can be ordered at the beginning of the event, guaranteeing you will go home with something.
- 7** Doors open at 11 a.m. and bidding starts immediately. Silent auction lots will be picked up randomly throughout the event until 4:30 p.m.
- 8** The checkout process will begin shortly after 5 p.m. and will conclude when all wines have been paid for and picked up.
- 9** No early checkout is available under any circumstances. Please plan to stay until 6 p.m.



## OCWS SCHOLARSHIPS

## 2024 Scholarship Allocations

The OC Wine Society is excited to announce the 2024 scholarship donations in the amount of \$46,640. These funds were awarded as scholarships to the eight programs listed in the table below. This year's donations raised the total amount of OCWS scholarships awarded since 1996 to \$828,663.

The scholarship funds come from a variety of sources, including tips at the OC Fair Wine Courtyard, OCWS Wine Auction, the featured winery program, and judges' stipend and member donations. We thank our members for their hard work and support that made this year's scholarships possible.

UNIVERSITY/COLLEGE	PROGRAM SCHOOL	TOTAL
Allan Hancock (AHC)	Viticulture and Enology	\$5,750
Cal Poly Pomona	Agricultural Science	\$5,790
Cal Poly SLO	Wine and Viticulture	\$5,750
CSU Fresno	Viticulture and Enology	\$5,750
Orange Coast College	Culinary Arts	\$8,150
UC Davis	Viticulture and Enology	\$5,850
Napa Valley College	Viticulture & Winery Technology	\$5,850
CSU Sonoma/Cunningham	Wine Business	\$3,750
TOTAL DISBURSEMENTS		\$46,640

Just a friendly reminder that you can make a donation to the OCWS Scholarship Fund anytime. There are two ways to donate:

1. 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.
2. Donate Online — Log on to your account at [ocws.org](https://ocws.org) and go to the scholarship donation page: [ocws.org/product/scholarship-donations/](https://ocws.org/product/scholarship-donations/). You can make your donation online and print a receipt for tax purposes at the same time.

—Damian Christian,  
Scholarship Chair

## WINEMAKERS, from page 12

Maybe you like it to be earthy or have a “barnyard” nose. Does this make the other styles bad? No. There’s nothing wrong with the other styles. You just don’t prefer them.

Now if the wine was bitter from being in contact with the grape skins and seeds for too long then that would be undesirable. A Pinot Noir that didn’t finish fermenting would have excess residual sugar, an undesirable quality. Too much tannic bitterness from excessive oak is undesirable. A thin, watery wine or one that doesn’t taste like a Pinot Noir at all is an undesirable quality. In winemaking we call these faults.

I’m sure we’ve all seen wines that are cloudy or hazy. We’ve probably tasted wines that were oxidized and starting to turn brown from exposure to air or improper storage. We’re familiar with “corked” wines with that wet cardboard smell. Those too are all wine faults.

So, a competition wine judge looks for faults in a wine, or more correctly, lack of faults in a wine, which indicates a well-crafted wine. As a judge at the Home Wine Competition, I always want to see (and taste) those excellent wines as I appreciate the work and attention to detail it takes to create them.

Competition judging is a thoughtful process that requires stamina and mental discipline, not the first thing you might think of when you hear the words “wine judge.” It’s our job to evaluate and give honest feedback for every wine we judge. To me it’s one of the most rewarding things I’ve done in the wine society.

The Winemakers Group is gearing up for this year’s OC Fair Home Wine Competition on Saturday, June 8. We are always looking for new judges. We provide training and you’ll work with experienced judges on competition day.

If you’re interested, feel free to reach out to our Director of Judges, John Lane, our Competition Chairman, Kevin Donnelly, or myself and we’ll be happy to talk with you about wine judging.

Cheers!

—Ed Reyes, [ed@ocws.org](mailto:ed@ocws.org)

## The COURTYARD

### Sign-Up Planning for The Courtyard

March is here and we are getting ready for the series of sign-ups for The Courtyard. Volunteering to help is an exciting opportunity to meet members, learn about different wines and enjoy the OC Fair.

Cashiers will be able to sit throughout their shift. Other work involves standing to pick up and serve from a bottle or moving several bottles of wine.

Signing up for the fair will be opened in several phases. All members are required to sign up for a minimum of four shifts. Other things to know:

1. RBS Certification is required before signing up for The Courtyard.
2. Selected manager members sign ups open April 1.
3. Cashier and steward sign ups open on the OCWS website April 15.
4. Server sign ups open on the OCWS website May 1.
5. All Courtyard sign ups close on the OCWS website June 15.

We will have five daily shifts during the 23 days of The Courtyard, Wednesdays through Sundays, July 19 through Aug. 18. The sooner you sign up for your shifts, the greater the opportunity to get the shifts you want. The times of these shifts will be:

10 a.m. to 1 p.m.

1 to 4 p.m.

4 to 8 p.m.

8 to 10:30 p.m. (Wed., Thurs.) OR

8 to 11:30 p.m. (Fri., Sat., Sun.)

Express Bar: 5 to 9 p.m.

Note that The Courtyard closes one hour before the fair closes.

In the past couple of years, the OC Fair has limited fair attendance where only a certain maximum number of people are allowed entry. One of the benefits of volunteering at The Courtyard is entering the fair any day to work or just to enjoy the fair and parking is included.

— **Rich Skoczylas,**  
Courtyard Scheduler

## RBS certification: 1 month closer

*You must be RBS certified before signing up to volunteer. Here's how:*

Before we know it, the OC Fair will be upon us again. The largest OCWS fundraising effort of the year will be taking place for a total of 23 days, Wednesdays through Sundays, July 19 through Aug. 18.

Volunteering at The Courtyard is a unique and fun experience. All Courtyard volunteers handling wine in any capacity are required to be RBS (Responsible Beverage Server) certified through the ABC (Alcohol Beverage Commission) pursuant to fair requirements.

It is highly recommended that new members obtain certification sooner than later to be ready when sign-ups open. All OCWS volunteers who are managers, stewards and servers need to be certified. The only volunteers who



are or will be cashiers do not need to be certified; however, getting RBS certified offers more opportunities to volunteer for different positions.

How do I get started? Check out our tips below!

— **Linda Flemins and Sue England,**  
OCWS Directors

### EMAIL US

Please send an email to RBS team members Sue England and Linda Flemins at [RBS@ocws.org](mailto:RBS@ocws.org), letting them know you need to be RBS certified this year.

### ONLINE CLASS

Once you have sent your request for certification you will receive an email from #1 Premiere with your username and password and a link to the online course. You may take the class one chapter at a time or all at once. The online course is followed by an online exam with ABC. Once you are RBS certified you are ready to serve at the OC Fair.

### 3-STEP PROCESS

Instructions will be sent to you when you register.

1. Create an RBS account with Alcoholic Beverage Control (ABC).
2. Take a course with the RBS course provider that the OCWS has selected.
3. Take a final quiz with ABC online and obtain the RBS certificate, which is valid for three years.

### PLEASE NOTE

Each OCWS member will need a valid individual email address that will be used to set up your account. Your own individual email address will be your username for the online system. Thank you so much for your volunteer efforts! You are what makes the OCWS the great success it is.



## Varietal HOUR

# Check out where the fun is FREE

Let's go back to the word FREE! 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?

You won't even need to get up off your couch! 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.

So picture this... Your own comfortable furniture. A glass of wine in your hand. Chatting with fun friends, some you know, some you may not. Right there in your own house with friends, old and new.

And here's the best part! You don't even have to clean up everyone's mess!

We're always happy to have new members join the fun and you will likely learn something new (or better yet, 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 something 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](mailto:don@OCWS.org) or George Cravens at [george@OCWS.org](mailto: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 10 p.m., 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 Co-Chair

DATE	TIME	VARIETAL	HOSTS
March 4	7 p.m.	San Diego County Wines	CL & Adrienne Keedy
March 18	7 p.m.	African Wine	Janet Riordan
April 1	7 p.m.	Fool Us With Something Different	David Price
April 15	7 p.m.	Favorite Springtime Wine	Ed Reyes
April 29	7 p.m.	NY/East Coast Wines	CL & Adrienne Keedy
May 13	7 p.m.	Unusual Varietals	Elee & Don Phillips

## PAZ, from page 1

When he's in the cellar, the 15-foot-high tower built with stacked stone and adorned with the colorful bottoms of wine bottles is illuminated signaling Paz is inside.

Curious neighbors had to know what was going on, so they stopped by and they were fortunate they did.

Not only does he make wine out of his 93 square-foot cellar located in his yard, he also has a wide selection of fine wine that will delight any palate.

"When the light is on, my wife knows I'm in the cellar," Paz cracked. "Neighbors would come over to see what I was making and word started to spread."

The cellar, which serves as a laboratory as well as storage, cost \$5,000 to build and was partly inspired by Paz's desire to make wine in 2010. As a member of the Orange County Wine Society, he and other members would go on trips to different regions in California to learn about winemaking.

"For me, it was about developing relationships with winemakers," Paz said. "I want to know the latest and greatest techniques. They give you a lot of hints and are able to share ideas."

His cellar can accommodate about 300 bottles and about 85 percent of his collection is wine made under his label — Paz-Espana.

Paz's grandfather designed a house for a man in Mexico who opened his doors to those who were persecuted for their religious beliefs during the Cristeros War. In 1977, Paz was able to make the trek to Polanco, Mexico and visit the home.

When he knocked on the door to the tri-level house that sat on a corner (similar to the Flatiron Building in New York City), the man who was well into his 90s let Paz inside for a tour. He also gave Paz a sheet with his grandfather's original drawing that now serves as the design for the wine label along with the family coat of arms from Spain.

Paz makes about eight to 10 cases of wine a year, primarily reds like Cabernet Sauvignon and Petite Sirah. He has quite a few medals from home wine competitions but maybe most impressive is winning a Double Gold and being named Best in



Class at the California State Fair in 2017 for his Chardonnay.

"You eventually become your own critic," Paz said of his wines. "I've learned you can't make good wine from bad grapes."

His cellar is always 85 to 90 percent stocked and the star of his collection is a bottle of the renowned Sassicaia. Much of the wine he produces he shares with others or gives away. His niece is getting married soon, and take a guess what the guests will be drinking?

As for those neighbors, they not only drink the wine, they have helped Paz along the way.

"They feel like they are part of it. It's something they would never experience," Paz said. "There's a whole romance to wine. It becomes a talking point, a conversation starter and it's something we all enjoy."



*photos courtesy Greg Risling*

**Mike Paz's Yorba Linda cellar houses about 300 bottles. The star of his collection is a bottle of Sassicaia.**

“

**When the light is on,  
my wife knows I'm  
in the cellar.**

**—Mike Paz  
Home Winemaker**

”



## THE RULES

- 1** Entrants must be OCWS members in good standing and the submitted photo must have been photographed by the OCWS member when he/she was an active member.
  - 2** The photo must be somehow wine oriented. It may be of a winery, vineyard, the winemaking process, the finished product or simply the consumption. But don't limit yourself just to these ideas!
  - 3** The photo or photos may be submitted to the OCWS photography committee anytime but will be considered only for the month it was submitted. There is a limit of five (5) submissions per month.
  - 4** Upon submission, rights to the photo are given to the OCWS for marketing purposes, so before you submit it make sure it is your property. Please get permission from any people in the photo.
  - 5** 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.
  - 6** 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.



### **SORTING PARTY**

This month's winning photo is courtesy member Virginia Kawai.

## 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).



**2024**

# UPCOMING EVENTS

<b>MARCH 2</b>	<b>OCWS MINI-OUTING</b> DEFALCO FAMILY WINES & FOODS / FOUNTAIN VALLEY
<b>MARCH 4</b>	<b>VARIETAL HOUR / SAN DIEGO COUNTY WINES</b> VIA ZOOM
<b>MARCH 8</b>	<b>FEATURED WINERY / DOUBLE BOND WINE</b> AVENUE OF THE ARTS HOTEL / COSTA MESA
<b>MARCH 18</b>	<b>VARIETAL HOUR / AFRICAN WINE</b> VIA ZOOM
<b>APRIL 6</b>	<b>SPRING SOCIAL</b> OC FAIR & EVENT CENTER / COSTA MESA
<b>APRIL 7</b>	<b>WINEMAKERS BLENDING SEMINAR</b> COURTYARD, OC FAIR & EVENT CENTER / 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 / COSTA MESA
<b>APRIL 21</b>	<b>HOME WINE COMPETITION JUDGING SEMINAR</b> COURTYARD, OC FAIR & EVENT CENTER / COSTA MESA
<b>MAY 5</b>	<b>BUBBLES 'N' BRUNCH</b> ORANGE COUNTY MINING CO. / ORANGE
<b>MAY 10</b>	<b>FEATURED WINERY / SAN SIMEON WINES</b> AVENUE OF THE ARTS HOTEL / COSTA MESA
<b>JUNE 1-2</b>	<b>COMMERCIAL COMPETITION</b> OC FAIR & EVENT CENTER / COSTA MESA
<b>JUNE 8</b>	<b>HOME WINE COMPETITION</b> COURTYARD, OC FAIR & EVENT CENTER / COSTA MESA
<b>JUNE 29</b>	<b>KIT WINE CLASS</b> OC FAIR & EVENT CENTER / BLDG. 15 / COSTA MESA