



The Grapevine

Newsletter of the Sacramento Home Winemakers, Inc.

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Sacramento Home Winemakers (SHW) monthly meetings are held on the 3rd Wednesdays of the month starting at 7 PM, upstairs at the Turn Verein located at 3349 J Street in midtown Sacramento. For more information on SHW membership, meetings and activities, visit:

www.SacHomeWine.org

February 15 SHW Meeting

Evaluation of 2011 White and Rosé Wines

Palate Teasers and Pleasers. Join us for the February meeting where we will enjoy the efforts of club members and taste 2011 white and rosé wines. This month's general meeting is the evaluation of "new" (made in 2011) white and rosé wines and the evening's guest evaluator is Jonathan Pack of Fair Play who also evaluated the Club's white and rosés last year. Jonathan was most recently a winemaker for Perry Creek Winery and now has a wine consulting enterprise, jpwineconsulting. Jonathan's evaluations were very well received last year, and I am sure will be on the mark again.

If you would like your wines evaluated, please:

- Bring 2 bottles (750ml each) of the same wine. Clearly label your wines with the varietal and your name. If you haven't already bottled, do not add sulfites when you do. No capsules, please.
- Also bring winemaking notes to succinctly share the wine's history and focus on issues you feel may be in your wine. The evaluator may ask for winemaking clarification.
- Vintages other than 2011 may be evaluated as time permits. Please do not bring the 2011 chardonnay varietal focus wines. Those will be evaluated at a later meeting.

Please bring 2 wine glasses for your use during the evaluations. Club glasses are available for guests and new members.

Thanks to all for helping set up before the meeting. We need to vacate the meeting room by 9:30 PM and your help in facilitating the clean-up is appreciated.

-- **Bill Staehlin, Vice President**

President's Message

Dear SHW Members:

Traditionally, February is the time that home gardeners pour over seed catalogues and gardening magazines, envisioning and planning their summer gardens. For us home winemakers, now is our time to pour *(continued on page 2)*



2012 Boards and Appointees

Executive Board

President - Donna Bettencourt
bettencourt1045@softcom.net

Vice President - Bill Staehlin
bill.staehlin@sbcglobal.net

Treasurer - Mike Touchette
pinotsyrah@yahoo.com

Secretary - Sue Summersett
sbsummer2002@yahoo.com

Membership Co-Chairs
Fred Millar & Gin Yang
fred.millar1@gmail.com
ginyangstaehlin@yahoo.com

Past President - Lynn Keay
lynn.keay@gmail.com

Board Appointees

Chief Judge - D. D. Smith
ddanjo@sbcglobal.net

Cellar Master - Henry Wilkinson
hbwilkinson@jps.net

Coordinator - Judy Pinegar
Club Competition
Mentors
jpinegar@calwisp.com

Hospitality Coordinator-Sonia Baron
soniabarons@hotmail.com

Community Relations
Debbie Moreton
dem1019@sbcglobal.net
John Avila
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Historian - Gary Young
gycats@earthlink.net

The Grapevine Editor - Gin Yang

Board of Directors

Judy Pinegar (Chair)
Mike Touchette
Fred Millar
Lynn Keay
Donna Bettencourt

over current and past editions of *WineMaker* magazine, to review or purchase home winemaking books, tend to our 2011 wines, and, most important, plan for our 2012 vintages.

All new and ongoing members receive a free subscription to *WineMaker* magazine with their membership dues. The magazine comes out bi-monthly and is full of educational articles from highlights on varietals, winemaking equipment, testing, and, my favorite, Alison Crowe's "Wine Wizard" department that answers questions from readers. I read that magazine cover to cover. As far as winemaking books, my favorites are *Home Winemaking: Step by Step* by Jon Iverson, and Alison Crowe's *Winemakers Answer Book*.

Tending to your 2011 wines becomes our focus about this time of year. With the weather warming up, we need to pay attention to SO2 levels, and late malo-lactic fermentation. Additionally, if you have not racked your wines after the first racking, now is the time to do so. And, while you are at it, adding some oak character when you rack, whether adding chips or staves, is appropriate at this time. Taste and smell your wines now, and test your wines now; it is not too late to catch a fault and correct it before it gets worse. If you made a white wine this past year, it is time to consider fining and cold stabilizing your wine. It will be ready for your Easter table.

Finally, the most exciting time for me - planning for the 2012 harvest. Will I risk another Chardonnay that finished sweet the last two harvests, can I afford some outstanding Cabernet grapes from the Napa Valley, is it time to try making Nero D'Avola this year? Am I going to increase my winemaking capacity this year, and what new equipment will I need for that? Which wine competitions am I going to enter (watch out Dar and Steve!) and what does that mean for my bottling schedule? What software will I use for my labels and what will they look like? Avery is coming out with a selection of wine labels and relevant software!) All these questions to answer and so many more. What fun for us happy wine makers!

Please join us at our regular Club meeting on February 15th at 7 PM for our white wine and rose wine evaluation. More on that in this newsletter. Happy winemaking!

-- Donna Bettencourt

March SHW Executive Board Meeting Wednesday, March 7, 6:30 PM – 7:45 PM

All SHW members are encouraged to attend the Club's Executive Board Meeting at least one time, so why not make March's Board meeting the one to attend. This is a great way to get involved and to learn more about your Club. At the March meeting, we will be fleshing out the details of the Jubilee Competition and Winemaking 101. Stay for the board meeting, and later join us for a potluck and sharing of wines. Contact Donna Bettencourt, SHW President, for location.

2012 SHW Calendar

February 15 Wednesday	General Meeting: White Wine Evaluations <i>Evaluator: Jonathan Pack, jpconsulting, Fair Play</i>
March 7 Wednesday	Board Meeting: All Members Are Welcome <i>Contact President Donna Bettencourt – 916 454-5487; bettencourt1045@softcom.net</i>
March 21 Wednesday	General Meeting: TBA
March 23-24 Fri-Sat (tentative)	Blossom Trail Field Trip (Fresno and Madera Counties) <i>Coordinator: Gin Yang</i>
June 2 Saturday	Jubilee Wine Competition and Picnic <i>Coordinator: Judy Pinegar</i>

Save the Date!

Monthly meetings generally start at 7 PM on the 3rd Wednesdays of the month, upstairs at the Turn Verein, 3349 J Street, Sacramento. Show up at 6:30 PM with your wine glass and a bottle of wine and enjoy wine making camaraderie. Please bring 2 wine glasses for evaluation meetings. Thanks for helping set up and cleaning at the meetings.

Board meetings start at 6:30 PM on the 1st Wednesdays of the month.

It Takes Many Volunteers

Your Club appreciates your help in keeping the organization running smoothly and extends special thanks to:

- Donna Brown & Neal Shleffar for hosting John Munch's board reception;
- Donna Bettencourt for hosting January's executive board meeting;
- Sonia Baron for bringing the hospitality cheese and bread for January's meeting;
- Ken Hough, Steve Barrett and Chris Hoadley for pouring wines at the January meeting; and
- Dina Santos & John Avila for hosting February's executive board meeting.

Thank you for volunteering!

Blossom Trail Winery Tour

A field trip to Fresno and Madera counties is in the works for the latter half of March. Plans are pending for visits to Gusmer Enterprises in Fresno, the Department of Viticulture and Enology at Fresno State University, and wineries in Madera including Ficklin Ports and Quady Wines. More details to follow.



Wine and Label Competitions

2012 WineMaker (Magazine) International Amateur Wine Competition. Entries are accepted through **March 16, 2012**. Go to this website for entry information: <http://www.winemakermag.com/competition>.

Mentors

Judy Pinegar, Loomis (Coordinator)
916 652-5198
jpinegar@calwisp.com **F,R,W**

Carl & Lili Brust, Loomis
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Gerald Cresci, Herald
209 748-2122 **F,P,VM**

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916 684-2086
pbaldwin@frontiernet.net **R,VM,W**

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Dave Leonard, Sacramento
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doleonardpbp@gmail.com **R**

Jim Margolis, Sacramento
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jamadapa@att.net **R,W**

Donna Bettencourt, Sacramento
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bettencourt1045@softcom.net **R,W**

D. D. Smith, Gold River
916 638-8849
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Lynn Keay, Gold River
lynn.keay@gmail.com **F,R,W**

Rex Johnston, East Bay
925 930-2897
Wine4rex@yahoo.com **F,R,W**

Wine Legend

F = fruit; **I** = ice; **P** = port; **R** = red;
S = sparkler; **V** = viognier; **VM** = vineyard management; **W** = white

2011 Annual Awards

SHW's annual awards for education, volunteerism and most improved winemaker are decided upon by the Board of Directors (BOD), and are awarded at the Club's December Holiday Party. Recipients of SHW's 2011 awards are as follows:

Bob Beck Memorial Award - "Wine Educator of the Year" – D.D. Smith. D.D. continues to serve as chief judge and contributes winemaking and varietal articles to *The Grapevine*, along with providing guidance on wine making issues.

Hal Ellis Memorial Award – "For Service Above and Beyond the Crush" – Gin Yang volunteers as SHW's membership co-chair and *The Grapevine* editor.

Stu Shafer Memorial Award – "Most Improved Winemaker of the Year" – Henry Wilkinson was bestowed this honor as several of his wines already good wines got even better and took double gold honors in 2011 competitions.

This year, the BOD honored David Pinegar (posthumously) with "Rookie of the Year" award. David made a cactus wine that won a gold award at the 2011 SHW Jubilee. His mother, SHW member Judy Pinegar, accepted this award on David's behalf.

Congratulations to the 2011 annual award recipients!

SHW Winemaker of the Year 2011

Well, it was a rough and tumble competition this year with only 1.16 points separating the top three finishers! In fact, the top two finishers TIED – a first for our Winemaker of the Year competition! Further, the scores were well above any we have seen in our competition, ever; Steve Barrett's winning score last year (104.6) would have copped him only fifth place in this year's contest! Wow!

Our visiting judges in the June Jubilee wine competition have repeatedly noted the remarkable quality of the SHW competition wines – they are by far the best of any of the surrounding contests. I believe thanks are due to our mentors, our Winemaking 101 instructors and to our continuing education program.

The first-place tie this year was unusual, for sure. I want to stress that we do not view these winners as co-awards or anything short of *individual Winemaker of the Year*. *Each earned the award and each deserves the full measure of recognition associated with Winemaker of the Year*. So here they are:

FIRST PLACE – Steve Barrett (116.63 points). Double Gold (DG) and three Gold's at the SHW Jubilee, a Gold and two Silvers at the California State Fair (State), and three Gold's at L.A. Cellarmasters. (Pictured on left.)

FIRST PLACE—Dar Geramian (116.63 points). Two Gold's and Best of Red at the SHW Jubilee, a Gold and two Silvers at State, and a DG + a Silver at Sonoma Home Winemakers (Sonoma). (Pictured in middle.)

SECOND PLACE – Donna Bettencourt (115.0 points). Two Gold's at the SHW Jubilee, two Silvers at State, and a DG and Best of Red at Sonoma.

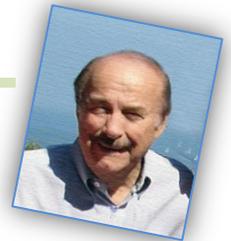
THIRD PLACE – Danyal Kasapliligil (106.10 points). At the SHW Jubilee: Two Gold's, Best of Whites, Best of Deserts, Best of Show. Three Gold's at State and three Gold's at Monterey County Fair.

FOURTH PLACE – Henry Wilkinson (96.6 points). Three DG's at the Jubilee, a DG at State, and a Silver and a Bronze at Orange County Fair.

My thanks to all who make this competition such a great success!

-- D.D. Smith, Chief Judge (pictured on right)





Bordeaux Grape Varietals

Map of France's wine regions.



If you've made the decision to get serious about making some fine wine, chances are that your friends are looking to you for answers to some of their most pressing questions about wine. To provide some assistance in this regard, and to enhance your overall cocktail party savvy, let's explore some common French viticulture, starting this month with Bordeaux.

Bordeaux is a city of about one million population located on the west coast of France exactly half way between the equator and the North Pole – that is, at 45° north latitude, the same latitude as Minneapolis. While its climate is greatly tempered by its proximity to the sea, it nonetheless is plagued by a short growing season and by severe vicissitudes in wind and weather. A winemaker I visited there told me that they see California-style brix “only one year in twenty.” Chaptalization (addition of sugar) is mandatory. Thus, Bordeaux wines leave the gate with muscular tannins, a good dose of acid and only a nod at the

warm fruitiness we have come to expect in California.

That the raw cabernets of Bordeaux needed taming became apparent hundreds of years ago, when five main wines rose to the top and became what we now call the Blends of Bordeaux. These are Cabernet Sauvignon, Cabernet Franc, Merlot, Malbec and Petit Verdot. Though, in truth, one would be hard pressed to find many Bordeaux's containing Malbec today. Bordeaux is also home to some white wines – Semillon and Sauvignon Blanc principally; and to the richly sweet Sauternes of Graves'. More than 80% of Bordeaux wines are reds.

There are 57 appellations, 13,000 growers and 10,000 wineries in Bordeaux. Together, they blanket the world with nearly 900 million bottles of wine annually.

Cabernet Sauvignon, structured and intense, forms the backbone of all red Bordeaux's. Merlot, round and supple; is the flesh on Cabernet Sauvignon's bones. Cabernet Franc, used in most Bordeaux's, provides some violet and spice. Malbec, if used at all, contributes softness. Petit Verdot, used like Malbec in small quantities or not at all, helps with alcohol and structure.

Any two of these wines used in combination may be called a Bordeaux, though a typical blend in the west (near the city of Bordeaux) is 70% Cabernet Sauvignon, 15% Merlot and 15% Cabernet Franc and others. In the east (near St. Emilion), the blend might be 70% Merlot, 15% Cabernet Sauvignon and 15% others. Chateau Petrus uses a blend of 91% Merlot and 9% Cabernet Sauvignon. The British call Bordeaux's “clarets.” In the U.S., we call them anything BUT Bordeaux's, since the TTB requires that 75% of a wine's fruit originate in the viticultural area represented on the label. “Meritage” (rhymes with “heritage”), is a registered term used by some California wineries to denote a wine made with California Bordeaux varietals.

Next month – we'll take a look at the Rhone Valley.

Club Resources

- Oak Cubes** Vice President Bill Staehlin volunteers to coordinate the purchase of oak cubes (beans) for the Club. He can be reached at (916) 216-1753 or bill.staehlin@sbcglobal.net.
- Bottles** Need glass? Mike Harris is coordinating a group buy of bottles in 750, 500 and 375 ml sizes. Please look for an email blast in your email box soon. If you don't have access to the Internet and am interested in participating, please contact Mike ASAP at 916 712-1912.
- Mentors** Looking for wine making help? Judy Pinegar is the Club's mentor coordinator - jpinegar@calwisp.com or 916 652-5198.
- Logo Glassware** Large clear wine glasses deep-etched with the SHW logo are available for purchase. Contact Sue Summersett, 916 354-205 or sbsummer2002@yahoo.com to place your order.
- Logowear** Get your own SHW polo shirt and baseball cap (modeled by Bob Summersett on right). Please contact Sue Summersett (see above for contact info).



2012 Club Dues are Due

Join or renew by March 1 and your membership also includes a one-year 6-month subscription to Winemaker magazine. Your memberships also gains you access to compete in the SHW Jubilee Wine Competition plus enjoying member rates for special events, participation in members only resources and group buys, and the advantage of basking in the fine karma of fellow winemakers at the Club's monthly meetings.

Please use the membership form included in this newsletter to renew or join if you haven't already done so. 2012 Club dues are \$45 and membership runs from January – December. For additional information, please contact membership co-chairs Fred Millar at fredmillar1@gmail.com or 916 576-9596 or Gin Yang at ginyangstaehlin@yahoo.com or 916 217-0294.

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Your input is welcome! The Editor welcomes. Please send your comments and letters to ginyangstaehlin@yahoo.com.

-- Gin Yang, *The Grapevine* Editor

Club Equipment

Club equipment can be borrowed by SHW members. Reservations are handled on a first come, first served basis with a signed "Release Agreement" on file.

Destemmer-Crusher

Contact:

Andy Walter, 916 955-6373
andrew.walter@sbcglobal.net

Basket Press

Contact:

Lynn Keay, 916 969-4924
lynn.keay@gmail

Filter

Contact:

Donna Bettencourt, 916 454-5487
bettencourt1045@softcom.net

Please help keep Club equipment in optimum shape for everyone to use.

- Thoroughly clean and return equipment within 24 hours.
- Notify equipment coordinator of equipment malfunctions or damage.
- Provide your own paper filters for the filter.
- Schedule thoughtfully during peak season as several members may need to borrow the equipment on the same day.

"Release Agreements" are available at the monthly SHW meetings. Be proactive: if you're planning to borrow Club equipment, attend the equipment training and complete the form. See Prez Donna Bettencourt for additional information.