



The Grapevine

Newsletter of the Sacramento Home Winemakers, Inc.

March 2012

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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

March 21 SHW Meeting Sluggish and Stuck Fermentations

Can you recognize a stuck fermentation (no measurable movement a la hydrometer) or is it just slow? Join us at the March 21 general meeting when Michael Jones, fermentation specialist with Scott Laboratories and home winemaker, will be presenting on the pesky problems associated with slow, sluggish, and stuck fermentations. Discussions will ensue on how to prevent under performance and ways to get your fermentation back on track.

I am sure Michael will provide some experienced insight and explanations on the how and whys of fixing some of these issues encountered during fermentation. So, bring your questions and observations.

Club glasses are available for guests; please remember to bring a wine glass for your use, and a bottle of wine to share (optional).

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:

I can't believe that we are less than six months away from the 2012 grape harvest! Where did the time go? I know the answer – work, kids, chores, etc. But, now the fun begins – planning, organizing, committing to grapes and to the time to make good wine.

Planning – Now is the time to really start thinking about what varieties of wine you want to make. Will you make the same varieties yet again, or venture into some new varieties and styles. I for one am going to be making a Trebbiano this year, in the Italian style. Plan to attend Winemaking 101 on June 30th – space is limited. Plan to enter your wines into the many home wine competitions coming up, starting with our own June Jubilee on June 2nd.



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
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Hospitality Coordinator-Sonia Baron
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Community Relations
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John Avila
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Historian - Gary Young
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The Grapevine Editor - Gin Yang

Board of Directors

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

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Organizing – Now is the time to inventory your supplies and equipment. How many carboys or barrels will you have free come September and October? What chemicals and additives are still fresh, and which will need replenishing? Clean out the garage (oh, no, back to chores!). Organize your summer vacation plans so you are actually around to make your wine.

Committing – Now is definitely the time to enter into contracts with vineyards to purchase your 2012 wine grapes. Industry experts predict that the harvest this year will again be light, and prices are going nowhere but up. It is also time to commit to the time that it takes to make good home wine – check in with your spouses, partners, and friends, to make sure that they will back you up in your pursuit of an award winning home wine.

Happy winemaking!

-- Donna Bettencourt

April SHW Executive Board Meeting Wednesday, April 4, 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 April's Board meeting the one to attend. This is a great way to get involved and to learn more about your Club. At the April 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, at (916)454-5487, or bettencourt1045@softcom.net for location.

It Takes Many Volunteers

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

- Mike Harris for coordinating the group bottle buy;
- Gene Lemos for staging and storing the group buy bottles;
- Mike Touchette for bringing the hospitality cheese and bread for January's meeting;
- Tom Montgomery, Bob Summersett and Mike Touchette for pouring wines at the February meeting; and
- Donna Bettencourt for hosting March's executive board meeting.

Thank you for volunteering!

Club Dues

The 2012 SHW dues are being accepted! Membership is for the calendar year and your dues help cover costs for meetings, speakers, insurance, web site and more. To join or renew, please go to SHW's website:

2012 SHW Calendar

March 21 Wednesday	General Meeting: Slow or Stuck Fermentations <i>Speaker: Michael Jones, Scott Laboratories</i>
March 24 Sat	Blossom Trail Field Trip (Fresno and Madera Counties) <i>Coordinator: Gin Yang – 916 217-0294; ginyangstaehlin@yahoo.com</i>
April 4 Wednesday	Board Meeting: All Members Are Welcome <i>Contact President Donna Bettencourt – 916 454-5487; bettencourt1045@softcom.net</i>
April 18 Wednesday	General Meeting: Wine Aromas (tentative)
June 2 Saturday	Jubilee Wine Competition and Picnic <i>Coordinator: Judy Pinegar: 916 652-5198; jpinegar@calwisp.com</i>
June 30 Saturday	Winemaking 101 <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.

Blossom Trail Winery Tour

Join us for a wine tasting tour through Madera County's wine county on Saturday, March 24. We'll start at 11 AM at Quady Winery for a tour and tasting (\$5 pp tour/tasting fee; includes souvenir glass). Quady is known for their dessert wines and also makes dry and sweet vermouth. We'll then progress to Ficklin Vineyards in the early afternoon where Peter Ficklin (November 2011 meeting Port presenter) will walk us through his winery and port tastings.

- For continued planning and coordination please let Gin know if you'll be going. Gin can be reached at ginyangstaehlin@yahoo.com or 916 217-0294.
- Madera Wine Trail maps will be available at the March 21 meeting or can be downloaded at <http://www.maderawinetrail.com/winetrailmap.htm>.
- Lodging in Madera is limited and overnight accommodations in Fresno is suggested. There is a cluster of lodging options north of Herndon Avenue between Highway 41 and Fresno Street.
- Quady Winery: <http://www.quadywinery.com/>
- Ficklin Vineyards: <http://www.ficklin.com/>

Mentors

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

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

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

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916 446-6276
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Dave Leonard, Sacramento
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dleonardpbp@gmail.com **R**

Jim Margolis, Sacramento
916 451-4279
jamadapa@att.net **R,W**

Donna Bettencourt, Sacramento
916 454-5487
bettencourt1045@softcom.net **R,W**

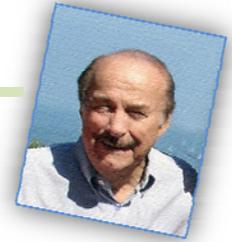
D. D. Smith, Gold River
916 638-8849
ddanjo@sbcglobal.net **I,P,R,W**

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

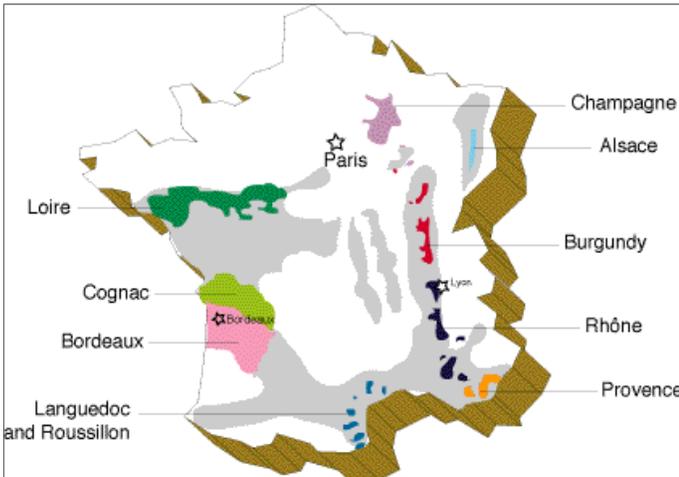
F = fruit; **I** = ice; **P** = port; **R** = red;
S = sparkler; **V** = viognier; **VM** =
vineyard management; **W** = white



Rhône Wine Region

We see an increasing number of wineries in our area producing “Rhône blends,” so let’s explore this area of the French countryside.

Below: France and its wine regions



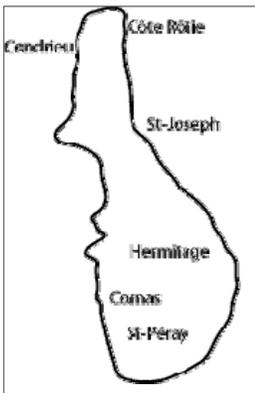
The **Rhône wine region** in Southern France is situated in the Rhône river valley and produces numerous wines under various Appellation d'origine contrôlée (AOC) designations. The region's major appellation in production volume is Côtes du Rhône AOC.

The Rhône is generally divided into two sub-regions with distinct viticultural traditions; these are the Northern Rhône and the Southern Rhône. The northern sub-region produces red wines from the Syrah grape, sometimes blended with white wine grapes (usually Viognier, Marsanne or Roussanne), and white wines from Viognier grapes.

It wasn't long ago that the myth persisted that Syrah grapes were brought to the Northern Rhone by the

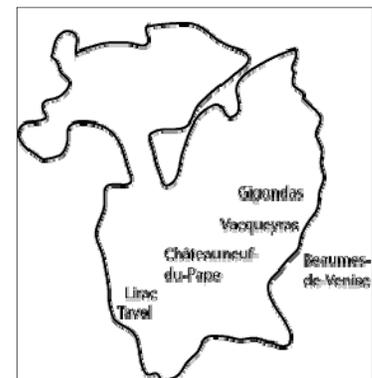
Greeks from the Persian city of Shiraz. Extensive DNA typing and viticultural research, however, has led scientists to the firm conclusion that Syrah originated in the Rhone region itself. That notwithstanding, Syrah is today widely known as Shiraz throughout much of the English-speaking world.

The various AOC wines of the Rhône Valley region are produced by more than 6,000 vineyards including 1,837 private wineries and 103 cooperatives. Last year, the Rhone valley produced 450 million bottles of wine.



The **Northern Rhône**, pictured on direct left, is characterized by a continental climate with harsh winters but warm summers. Its climate is influenced by the cool “Mistral” wind, which means that the mix of grape varieties and wine styles is different from the south. Northern Rhône reds are often identified by their signature aromas of green olive and smoky bacon.

The **Southern Rhône**, pictured on right, sub-region has a more Mediterranean climate with milder winters and hot summers. Drought can be a problem in the area, but limited irrigation is permitted. The differing terroirs, together with the rugged landscape which partly protects the valleys from the Mistral, produce



microclimates which give rise to a wide variety of wines.

The southern Rhône's most famous red wine is Châteauneuf-du-Pape, a blend containing up to 13 varieties of wine grapes (eight red and five white) as permitted by the Châteauneuf-du-Pape AOC rules.

Depending on the specific AOC rules, grapes blended into southern Rhône reds may include Grenache, Syrah, Mourvèdre, Carignan and Cinsault. These reds are full bodied, rich in tannins while young, and are characterized by their aromas of prune, chocolate and ripe black fruit. White wines are usually a blend of several local varieties, but increasingly are Viognier.

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Rhône wines do not have an official classification using "Grand cru" or similar terms, as in Bordeaux or Burgundy. However, they may be classified into four categories of AOCs:

- **Côtes du Rhône** only displays the region, and may be used in the entire wine region, in 171 communes. For some, it is the only classification they can use. It is the lowest classification for Rhône AOC wine.
- **Côtes du Rhône-Villages** is an AOC allowed for 95 communes, with a higher minimum requirement for grape maturity than basic Côtes du Rhône. It is therefore a higher classification. In general, the appellation does not allow the village name to be displayed.
- **Côtes du Rhône-Villages together with village name** is allowed for 19 communes.
- **Cru** are the 15 named appellations which display only the name of the cru, and not Côtes du Rhône. These include the most famous Rhône wines, such as Hermitage, Côte-Rôtie and Châteauneuf-du-Pape.

Next month, let's find out what Burgundy is all about.



Wine and Label Competitions

Santa Barbara Fair and Expo Homemade Wine and Wine Label competitions – Entries are due **March 23**. Go to this web site for more info: <http://www.earlwarren.com/pdfs/2012-Adult.pdf>.

Salinas Valley Amateur Wine Competition – Entries are accepted through **April 2**. Check out their website: <http://www.salinasvalleyfair.com/>

Dixon-May Fair Home Wine and Wine Label competitions - Entries are due by **April 6**. See their website for more info: <http://www.dixonmayfair.com/userfiles/file/2012-%20Dixon-%20May-%20Fair-%20exhibit-%20guidebook.pdf>.

Calaveras County Fair Amateur Wine and Wine Label competitions – Entries are due by **April 14**. Wine entries must be made from grapes grown or wines must be made in Amador, Calaveras, El Dorado, Mariposa, Nevada, Placer, Sierra, Tuolumne or Yuba counties. Find more info at: <http://www.frogtown.org/>.

Contra Costa Fair Wine and Wine Label competitions – Entries are due by **May 1**. More at this website: <http://www.contracostafair.com/fair/pdf/2012/HOME%20ARTS%20DEPARTMENT.pdf>

El Dorado County Fair Homemade Wine and Wine Label competitions - Entries are accepted through **May 11**. Wines are judged May 12; reception following judging. More info can be found at <http://www.eldoradocountyfair.org/pdf/12-fair/homemade-wine.pdf>. Treasurer Mike Touchette can deliver your entries – bring wines, entry forms and fees to the April SHW meeting

Lake County Home Winemakers Festival, Lakeport – Entries are invited and everyone is invited to pour their wines for this fundraising event. Show up with your wine entries, entry forms and fees on **June 23**. More info: http://homewinemakersfestival.com/wine_entry_information.html.

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 . |
| 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). |



What's the Solution for the Bottle Tree Rinser?

The Bottle Tree Rinser/Sulphatizer is designed to be used with a sulfite solution. What this means is that you can use either Campden Tablets, Sodium Metabisulfite or Potassium Metabisulfite with water to make the sanitizing solution that goes into the bottle rinser's reservoir.

The dosage is pretty straight-forward. You use either 16 Campden Tablets or one teaspoon of either Potassium or Sodium Metabisulfite per gallon of water. Go ahead and mix up a gallon of it in a gallon glass carboy or similar. You'll need to refill the reservoir as the process goes on.

The bottle rinser works by spraying the solution up into the wine bottles. You put the wine bottle over the nozzle and pump it up or down to cause a spray into the bottle. You then put the wine bottle on one of the bottle tree pegs to drain.

This spray action does two things: it rinses the wine bottle out, getting rid of box dust and the like; it also causes the sulfites in the water solution to release as a gas within the wine bottle. This sulfite gas lingers within the wine bottle, sanitizing it over the course of the next few minutes.

Ideally, the sulfite gas from the sodium metabisulfite, etc. would still be in the wine bottle as it is being filled with wine. This would keep contamination down to an absolute minimum. With this in mind, one of my wine making tips is that the wine bottles be filled and corked within a half-hour or so of being sprayed.

(Article courtesy of E. C. Kraus, Home Wine and Beer Making Supplies)

Prepare for SHW's June Jubilee

This year, the June Jubilee Wine Competition and Picnic is on June 2. This is the Club's annual wine competition with the judging results awarded at the picnic in the afternoon following the morning's judging.

You want to show your very best, so if you haven't already, bottle your entries soon to allow time for the wines to get over "bottle shock".

Thanks for being current on your dues as this wine competition is for SHW members only. Dare your winemaking buddies to compete with you!

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Your input is welcome! 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.com

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.