

The Grapevine

Newsletter of the Sacramento Home Winemakers, Inc.

March 2011

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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 16 SHW Meeting

Local Requirements for Transforming from Home Winemaking to Small Commercial Venture

Learn what it takes to transition from home winemaking to a commercial winery - come hear about the regulatory joys and pitfalls of going pro. Sharing their adventures are three guest speakers who have established commercial ventures and continue to support SHW. Phil Maddux of Lone Buffalo Vineyards has been in Placer County since 2007 with a current production of 1,200 cases. In Sacramento County, John Troiano and his partners of Wreckless Blenders are bonded to sell 100 cases. With partners, Jason Fernandez, formerly with Revolution Wines, partners started the City of Sacramento urban winery boom, with their Revolution Wines Winery bonded in 2007.

They'll be talking about the differences in local regulations and requirements providing glimpses of what's in store for those wanting to sell their wines. Bring your questions! Arrive a little early with a bottle of wine and wine glass and enjoy wine making camaraderie. The meeting starts at 7 PM.

President's Message

Dear SHW Members:

We sit midway between the harvest season and the ever-important finishing season, while probably sipping a beer. It is "Beer Week", right?

Five months have passed since we feverishly harvested, pressed, and stored our wines away. It is now decision time. If we introduced malo-lactic bacteria, has it finished? Are the SO₂ levels adequate to preserve the wine. Will I be blending the wine? How will I store the wine through our notoriously hot Sacramento summers? How much oak is enough oak? Which competitions shall I enter, and which wines? What wines will I make in October? All decisions which must be made, and must be made by you and only you, the home winemaker.

(continued on page 3)



2011 Boards and Appointees

Executive Board

Donna Bettencourt, President
bettencourt1045@softcom.net

Bill Staehlin, Vice President
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Mike Touchette, Treasurer
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Sue Summersett, Secretary
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Fred Millar & Gin Yang
Membership Co-Chairs
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Lynn Keay, Past President
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Board Appointees

D. D. Smith, Chief Judge
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Henry Wilkinson, Cellar Master
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Judy Pinegar Coordinator
for Club Competition & Mentors
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Vacant, Web Manager

John Avila, Hospitality Coordinator
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Gary Young, Historian
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Gin Yang, *The Grapevine* Editor

Board of Directors

Judy Pinegar, Chair

Fred Millar

Mike Touchette

Lynn Keay

Donna Bettencourt

2011 SHW Calendar

March 16 Wednesday	General Meeting: Local Requirements for Transforming from Home Winemaking to Small Commercial Venture <i>Speakers: Phil Maddux - Lone Buffalo Vineyards, John Troiano - Wreckless Blenders, and Jason Fernandez</i>
April 2 Wednesday	Board Meeting: All Members Are Welcome <i>Contact President Donna Bettencourt – 916 454-5487; bettencourt1045@softcom.net</i>
April 20 Wednesday	General Meeting: Non-Bordeaux Red Wine Evaluations <i>Evaluators: Bill Giglieri - Scribner Bend Vineyards and Bob Peak - The Beverage People</i>
May 18 Wednesday	General Meeting: Bordeaux Red Wine Evaluations <i>Evaluators: TBA</i>
June 4 Saturday	June Jubilee Wine Competition and Picnic <i>Coordinator: Judy Pinegar</i>
June 15 Wednesday	General Meeting: Testing Your Wines and Additions <i>Mad Scientists: D.D. Smith, Henry Wilkinson, John Troiano, Bill Staehlin</i>
July 20 Wednesday	General Meeting: 2010 Zinfandel Club Project Evaluations <i>Evaluator: John Smith - Oakstone Winery</i>
July 30 Saturday	Winemaking 101 with Club Equipment Training <i>Coordinator: Gin Yang</i>

Monthly meetings 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.

Program Notes from February's Meeting

January's program was the evaluation of 2010 white and rosé wines. Evaluators Peter Marks of Six Hands Winery in Walnut Grove, and Jonathan Pack of Perry Creek Winery in Fair Play shared their assessments of members' wines along with generous professional tips on improving the wines' taste, nose and appearance. Visit their wineries and show your support for their support of SHW. More winery information is available on the last page of this newsletter.

President's Message (continued from page 1)

How you make these decisions, and whether they are good decisions depends upon your ability to ask questions of your fellow home winemakers, your commitment to making good wine, and your own innate sense of what it is you are trying to make. No one can make those decisions but you. If you think otherwise, buy a wine kit and follow the instructions. I suspect, though, that you wish to make fine wine from grapes, and that is why you belong to the Sacramento Home Winemakers. SHW is the repository of all things technical, and spiritual, related to home winemaking. There is not a question that you would ask, that would not be answered by your fellow members. If the person you ask for advice doesn't know, they will tell you who can, only because that is who they asked only last harvest. So, go for it! Make the wine you want to drink and share with the people you love.

Our March SHW monthly meeting will chronicle the journey of several home winemakers who went commercial. They will relate their travails in complying with county laws, procuring equipment for large scale winemaking, and marketing their wines. If you ever dreamed of going commercial, show up on March 16th and learn from those who have successfully transitioned from home winemaking to making commercial wines.

Donna Bettencourt

President

Sacramento Home Winemakers Club

April SHW Executive Board Meeting

April 6, 2011, 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 SHW President Donna Bettencourt for location.

Membership

Current membership forms are available on the SHW website: www.sachomewine.org. Club dues run calendar year and are \$42 per household.

Membership benefits include a one-year 6-issue subscription to WineMaker magazine, evaluation of your wines and competing in the Jubilee. For additional membership information, please contact the membership co-chairs, Fred Millar and Gin Yang; their contact info is on page 2 of this newsletter.

Mentors

Judy Pinegar, Loomis (Coordinator)
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D. D. Smith, Gold River

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Lynn Keay, Gold River

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Wine Legend

F = fruit; **I** = ice; **P** = port; **R** = red;

S = sparkler; **V** = viognier ; **VM** = vineyard management; **W** = white

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:

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Basket Press

Contact:

Lynn Keay, 916 969-4924
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Filter

Contact:

Donna Bettencourt, 916 454-5487
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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.

SHW Logo Wear for Sale

New SHW polo shirts and baseball caps are available for sale. The polo shirts, \$21, are burgundy and caps, \$15, come in beige and burgundy. Shirts come in Women S-XL and Men in M-XL. Larger sizes are available by special order. Please contact Apparel Coordinator Sue Summersett at 916 354-2050 or sbsummer2002@yahoo.com for order information.



Wine and Label Competitions

Sonoma Home Winemakers – this home winemaking club is **accepting wine and label entries through March 28**. Judging will be held on April 4 and announced at their May 12 banquet. **Deb Morreton offers to collect and delivery your entries at our Club's March 16 meeting**. For more info: www.sonomahomewine.org.

Santa Barbara Fair & Expo – the fair is accepting entries for their wine and wine labels competitions. **Entry forms are due by April 5**. The fair runs from April 27- May 1 in Santa Barbara. Check out this website for more information: www.sbfairandexpo.com.

Calaveras County Fair and Frog Jubilee – the fair is **accepting entries through April 9** for their 2011 Amateur Jumping Wine and Label Design contests. Wine entries must be produced from grapes grown or wines must be made in one of the following counties: Amador, Calaveras, El Dorado, Mariposa, Nevada, Placer, Sierra, Tuolumne, or Yuba. Label entrants must reside in one the counties identified above. The fair runs from May 19-22. For more information and entry forms, go to www.frogtown.org.

SHW June Jubilee – competition takes place on Saturday, June 4. Entries are due soon! More info in the next issues of *The Grapevine*.

Winery Review - Wise Villa Winery in Lincoln

Hello, fellow winemakers. I wanted to tell you all about a beautiful new winery in the Sierra foothills of Lincoln, just northeast of Roseville, on Wise Road about 4 miles east of Highway 65. Our fellow club member for the last 6+ years, Dr. Grover Lee, has made the leap to commercial winery in a very big way. His wines are superb and the setting is breathtaking and well worth the short trip. Check out the website, www.wisevillawinery.com. The tasting room is open every Saturday & Sunday from 11am-4pm and will be expanding to Thursday-Sunday in a few weeks. There will be a Grand Opening on March 26th with a big BBQ and other activities. I was very impressed by the whole place and so very pleased with the quality of the wines. Stop by and just say that you are a club member and the tasting fee is waived. Let's support our fellow club member.



Thank you Grover, for a great afternoon tasting your wonderfully crafted wines.

-- Fred Millar



Initial SO₂ Additions

I have recently noticed some confusion among some of our new winemakers (and some others, too), concerning the application of SO₂ and the downstream effects this can have on the wine. Specifically, there seems to be a lack of understanding with respect to the initial dose of SO₂ (in the form of KMBS) when the crush is complete in the field. Some throw a pinch of the white stuff at their bucket of must and hope for the best; others carefully measure a fearsome dose that could jeopardize the success of malolactic fermentation (ML). This is a lengthy subject, so I refer everyone to page 2 of our club’s “Sacramento Home Winemaker’s Chemistry Notes” on our web page at www.sachomewine.org. Some points to bear in mind:

- The amount of KMBS added should be the minimum necessary to do the job. The “job” is to kill wild yeast and to act as an anti-microbial agent.
- The correct dose (.5 molecular in the Table A) increases as pH increases. This is why you must have a pH meter in order to calculate a correct dose.
- If the pH of the juice is too high (above 3.5 or so), the amount of KMBS needed can be excessive (the amount required nearly doubles when going from a pH of 3.4 to a pH of 3.7).
- These elevated amounts of SO₂ (in the range of 50 to 70ppm) can hamper or preclude a successful ML.
- Red wine should not contain more than 120 – 140ppm of total SO₂ or it will affect the nose. If you added 70ppm initially, you’re already halfway there.
- A good technique is to reduce the pH of the juice with tartaric acid to 3.4 – 3.5, where a dose of 30ppm SO₂ will do nicely. The subsequent successful ML will boost the pH back up to 3.6 – 3.7.

The table below summarizes the performance characteristics of four of the more common malolactic bacteria products. The limits listed are literally the edge of the envelope, and are achievable only if all other parameters are nominal. So don’t push it – keep all the numbers down the middle and you’ll have a happier fermentation experience!

ML Bacteria Technical Specifications

	pH	SO ₂	Alcohol	Temperature
Enoferm Alpha	3.2 Min.	20ppm Opt. 50ppm Max.	12 – 13 Opt. 15.5 Max.	64°F Optimum 57°F Minimum
Enoferm Beta	3.2 Min.	60ppm Max.	15% Max.	57°F Minimum
CH 16	3.4 Min.	70ppm Max.	16% Max.	62 - 77°F
CH 35	3.0 Min.	50ppm Max.	14% Max.	62 - 72°F

Donate Your Wine for a Great Cause!

Club President, Donna Bettencourt, has worked for InAlliance, a local non-profit serving adults with developmental disabilities, for over 28 years. This year is the 9th year that InAlliance has presented Sacramento's premier culinary event – the Celebrity Chef Challenge.



This year, SHW has been approached for a special offer for Club members to donate 2 bottles of your home wine to be elegantly packaged and presented to this year's Celebrity Chefs and Judges. If you have ever dreamed of your wine being served at the tables of famous local leaders and chefs (think State Assembly member Roger Dickinson, judge, and Jim Turknnett of Vizcaya Pavilion and Mansion, Chef challenger), now is your opportunity.

For every two bottles of your labeled and signed wines, you will receive a 10% discount on admission to this premier event. Please bring your labeled and signed wines to the March meeting on March 16, 2011.

Guests of the Celebrity Chef Challenge get to enjoy the live culinary battle between local chefs with surprise ingredients, but another key element of this successful event is the list of over 100 restaurants, wineries and breweries in attendance that will be ready to provide samples of their specialties. www.chefevent.com

April Program Preview – Bottle Now

The April 20 meeting is the evaluation of “new” (made in **2010 only**) non-Bordeaux red wines. Bordeaux (Cabernet Sauvignon, Cabernet Franc, Merlot, Malbec, Petit Verdot) red wines will be evaluated at the May 18 meeting. Starting with the April meeting, the evaluation format will change slightly to focus the evaluations on wines with flaws.

Please sulfite and bottle now so that your wine will be ready to be evaluated. You'll need 2 bottles (750ml each) of the same wine. No capsules, please. More details in next month's *The Grapevine*.

2011 Home Winery Tour

SHW continues to look for home wineries to showcase on Club's home winery tour. We're thinking about smaller urban home wineries. We're also thinking about adjusting the tour format to match the venue and appreciate your continuing ideas for improving the tour. Keep your thoughts coming! Contact: ginyangstaehlin@yahoo.com.

Do New Out of the Box Wine Bottles Need to be Sanitized?



The quick and painful answer to your question is, Yes. Just like any other homemade wine equipment and supplies, you need to treat new wine bottles with a sodium metabisulfite (SO₂) and water solution before filling them with wine--1 teaspoon per gallon of water is the dosage.

1. Pour an inch worth of the solution in each wine bottle. Let the wine bottles stand up-right for 20 minutes and then drain; or
2. Use the Sulphatizer and Bottle Tree combination (pictured).

The Sulphatizer shoots a stream of the sanitizing solution into the wine bottle, releasing the sulfite gases to linger inside. The bottle is then placed on the Bottle Tree and allowed time to drain. Either one of these methods should be employed within an hour or so of filling, not the day before or anything like that.

While we're on the subject of wine making cleanliness ...

Corks, vinyl hoses, and other wine making materials should be sanitized as well when bottling wine. Countertops and other surfaces around the general bottling area should be treated with the same water/sulfite solution.

All of these careful steps are done in the name of keeping your wine from becoming the victim of spoilage, a needless outcome for any wine. Sodium metabisulfite is cheap and easy to use, so why not do it?

(adapted from E C Kraus' Newsletter Number 111)

Dear SHW:

Q. I have 60 gallons of zinfandel with a low pH of 3.1 and .9 TA. I'm thinking about blending it with a high (3.9 pH) wine.

A. Those numbers are pretty astounding for a zinfandel ... are you sure they didn't sell you a barbera? Those are classic barbera numbers. Blending is the first choice in bringing your acidity down, if you are successful in finding a 3.9 pH red. Actually, there might be some project zin around with a high pH, since it came in at around pH = 4.1 this year. I think you must realize that it will take about 30 gallons of this wine to bring your zin up to 3.5.

You might consider adding some potassium carbonate to get that acid under control. An application rate of 3.5g per gallon will bring the TA down by .1. This would be 210g for your 60-gal barrel and would get the TA down to around .8 – maybe at that level your zin might be quite drinkable. If not, you might be able to blend it with a small amount of high-pH red wine. Use careful bench tests for this to bring the taste where you like it. A good slug of American oak can also be helpful in masking some of that acid ...

One more thought: If your pH is really 3.1, it is very unlikely that you had a successful ML. Most ML bacteria can't survive in that concentration of acid.

-- *D.D. Smith, Chief Judge*

Upcoming Changes - Club Projects

We've received invaluable feedback from members on what they wanted from the club. Several comments came from new and novice winemakers wanting a stronger support link between Winemaking 101 and the Club Project. Additionally, the volume of zinfandel grapes purchased during the 2010 Club Project gave firm indication that the Club was interested in combining tonnage to improve its buying power. Thus, the SHW board is revamping Winemaking 101, Varietal Focus (formerly Club Project) and Club Buy. "First Blush" changes include:

- Winemaking 101:
This workshop, for new and novice winemakers, covers basic winemaking and closely follows the SHW Winemaking Manual. It also provides Club equipment training on the safety, use, and cleaning of the destemmer-crusher, press and filter.
- Varietal Focus (formerly Club Project)
This activity is designed for new or novice winemakers and for experienced winemakers making a new wine type for the first time. Encouraging small groups of new winemakers to research and discuss making wine from a chosen varietal, the Group Coordinator provides mentoring. Participants are strongly encouraged to
- Club Buy
Suitable for novice and experienced winemakers, this effort combines buying power for better pricing and provides increased access to grapes due to larger tonnage.

We welcome your guidance - how do these changes sound to you? Please check out the attached matrix as an appendix to this newsletter and share your thoughts and ideas. Direct your comments to Donna Bettencourt, D.D. Smith, Bill Staehlin, Henry Wilkinson, or Gin Yang. Their contact information is on page 2 of this newsletter.

New Resource

SHW Member Danyal Kasapligal shares a new source of information called *Enology Access*. Still in its infancy, the website continues to be developed by faculty at UC Davis Department of Viticulture and Enology. Entire UC Davis course presentations are posted and the website even has a separate home and commercial winemaking forums. Check it out: <http://enologyaccess.org>.

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Submissions to **The Grapevine** and comments to the editor are welcome.

Tasting Notes

6 Hands Winery ■ Walnut Grove

Early spring is a scenic time to meander down the delta. Visit February's white wine co-evaluator Peter Marks at his family's Walnut Grove winery. 6 Hands makes whites including chardonnay and viognier, and reds such as syrah and petite sirah – all made in small lots. 13783 Isleton Road, Walnut Grove, 916 776-2053. sixhandswinery.com

Alebrijes Mexican Bistro ■ Lodi

Wine tasting in Lodi? Complete your day at this tiny Mexican restaurant in Lodi. Start with the made-at-your-table guacamole made with rotating seasonal ingredients including pomegranate seeds, green apples and watermelon. Savor the duck in smoky Mole Negro Oaxaqueño or the lamb chops tart-sweet tamarind chipotle glaze. Executive Chef/Owner Ruben Larrazolo, specializes in Oaxacan cuisine making more than 25 sauces for his menu. 1301 W. Lockeford St, Lodi, 209 368-1831. alebrijesbistro.com

Wreckless Blenders ■ Carmichael

Five partners blend reds that are big and bold. Wreckless' wines can be found at Bella Bru in Carmichael or on-line at wrecklessblenders.com.

Perry Creek Winery ■ Fair Play

If you haven't ventured north of Amador, amble into El Dorado County and taste Fair Play's wines. Jonathan Marks, February's white wine co-evaluator is the winemaker at Perry Creek Winery, home of the Zinman. On weekends, there's almost always something fun going on at the winery. 400 Perry Creek Road, Fair Play, 530 620-5175. perry.creek.com

Lone Buffalo Vineyards ■ Auburn

Take the short drive into Placer County and spend a leisurely day wine tasting in the rolling hills. Winemaker Phil Maddux along with his wife Jill and daughter Jocelyn welcome you to Lone Buffalo Vineyards located south of Auburn off Auburn Folsom Road. Walk into their buffalo-themed tasting room and taste their handcrafted wines including a luscious viognier, award winning red Rhone-blend *Where the Buffalo Roam*, and tawny port. They're releasing their popular 2009 Zinfandel and Cabernet Sauvignon in late March. 2682 Burgard Lane, Auburn, 916 663-4486. lonebuffalovineyards.com

Good Eats! ■ Nuts in the Bar

Spring is around the corner and it's almost time to bring enjoy your favorite beverages while basking in the sun. Union Square Cafe in NYC is infamous for their bar nuts. Aromatic, salty and a little sweet, these are addictive!

Union Square Café's Bar Nuts
 2 ¼ cups (18 oz.) unsalted mixed nuts (almonds, walnuts, cashews, pecans, or peanuts) ▪ 2 Tbls. coarsely chopped fresh rosemary leaves ▪ ½ tsp. cayenne pepper ▪ 2 tsp. dark brown sugar ▪ 2 tsp. sea salt ▪ 1 Tbls. unsalted butter, melted. ▪ Preheat oven to 300°F. Spread nuts on a baking sheet with sides. Toast nuts in oven for about 10 minutes until golden. Watch carefully and stir frequently. Remove from oven and cool nuts until warm. Mix remaining ingredients in a bowl. Toss in nuts and mix well. Best served warm.

El Dorado Winery Association – Passport Weekends, El Dorado County Wineries, March 26-27 & April 2-3, 2011. For ticket info, visit: www.eldoradowines.org



