

The Grapevine

Newsletter of the Sacramento Home Winemakers, Inc.

July 2012

July 25, 2012 SHW Meeting

Yeast and Malo-lactic Bacteria Differences

Please note date change: the July 18 meeting has been changed to Wednesday, July 25 starting at 7 PM.

Come join us for an interesting evening with Mr. Shea A.J. Comfort as we continue discussions on fermentation. Shea is a long time contributor to WineMaker magazine and a founding partner in MoreWine! Shea's focus areas are the flavor impacts in different yeast and malo-lactic bacteria fermentations.

Shea is a contract winemaker for Lallemand Yeasts creating yeast and malo-lactic bacteria trials. He helped start Sterling Albert Winery (5,000 cases) as head winemaker and is a consultant to both Olin Wines and Reliez Vineyards.

He started his own consulting business and is known as the "yeast whisperer". Check it out: www.yeastwhisperer.com

Please bring a bottle of wine to share and a wine glass for your use. Thanks to all for helping set up before the meeting. We are to vacate the meeting room by 9:30 PM and your help in facilitating the clean-up is appreciated.

-- *Bill Staehlin, Vice President*

In This Issue

July 25 Program	1
President's Message	1
Leadership	2
Volunteers	2
Club Calendar	3
Mentors	3
Club Announcements	4
From the Chief Judge Champagne & Sparklers	5
Wine Competitions	6
Jubilee Volunteers	5
Varietal Focus Groups	7
Club Equipment	7
Club Resources	8

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

President's Message

Dear SHW Members:

The harvest season is upon us! If you have not already secured a source for your wine grapes, it is not too late. Conventional wisdom is that you should make a commitment to your wine grape grower by the end of July at the latest, so that they can make a commitment to you just about sourcing the grapes and sharing equipment, but more about learning about the varietal, sharing



(continued on next page)

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

Club Competition Coordinator

Mentors Coordinator

Web Manager

Judy Pinegar
jpinegar@calwisp.com

Hospitality Coordinator-Sonia Baron
soniabaron@hotmail.com

Community Relations
Debbie Moreton
dem1019@sbcglobal.net

John Avila
mail@john-avila.com

Historian - Gary Young
gycats@earthlink.net

The Grapevine Editor - vacant

Board of Directors

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

experiences and knowledge, and most important, honoring the wine grape grower whose passion is reflected in the quality of the grapes you purchase.

There are several web sites to look at if you prefer to source your own grapes. For El Dorado County wine grapes, check out this website: www.eldoradograpes.com. For Amador County grape growers, there is www.amadorwinegrapes.com, and of course, there is our own SHW web site: www.sachomewine.org.

Many factors play into your commitment to purchasing wine grapes this year. Among these considerations are: 1.) time (how much time do you have for. While the Sacramento Home Winemakers will be offering several varietal focus groups to choose from this year, space is limited. These varietal focus groups are meant to be small, so that they can be an intentional "community" that is not winemaking this year? Will you even be around in August (for whites), and September/October (for reds)? 2.) Money (what is your budget for this winemaking season? Do you other monetary priorities?), and 3.) Capacity (how many carboys, or barrels, do you have available? How many fermenting vessels will you have available at any one time? We all remember last year, when everything came in at once and we had to resort to fermenting in our bathtubs! (only kidding about last year, but I did once!))

Finally, the ethics of committing to purchasing wine grapes from a grower, or from a Varietal Focus Group leader: once you make a commitment to purchase the grapes, honor that commitment. The grape grower is depending upon you, and has set those grapes aside for you, and, he will never sell to you again if you "stiff" him or her. Likewise, the Varietal Focus Group leaders make their personal financial commitment to the wine grape grower for a certain tonnage of grapes, and they will be left (do I quote you correctly Sonia??) "holding the bag" for the price of your grapes if you pull out.

Happy Winemaking!

-- **Donna Bettencourt**

Thanks for Stepping Up!

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

- Jed McLaughlin for coordinating and bringing the hospitality cheese and bread for June's meeting;
- Linda Clevenger and Seth Brunner for hosting July's executive board retreat; and
- J.D. Phelps for coordinating the neutral barrel buy.

2012 SHW Calendar

July 25 Wednesday	General Meeting: The Yeast Whisperer <i>Speaker: Shea A.J. Comfort</i>
August 1 Wednesday	Board Meeting: All Members Are Welcome <i>Contact President Donna Bettencourt – 916 454-5487; bettencourt1045@softcom.net</i>
August 15 Wednesday	General Meeting: From Home Winemaking to Commercial Winery <i>Speakers: Phil Maddux, Lone Buffalo Vineyards and John Troiano, Wreckless Blenders</i>
September 19 Wednesday	General Meeting: Oak Impacts on Wine <i>Speaker: Jeff McCord, Stavin</i>
Date TBA	Winemakers Harvest Dinner Looking for coordinator and location <i>Contact President Donna Bettencourt – 916 454-5487; bettencourt1045@softcom.net</i>
October 17 Wednesday	General Meeting: Sparklers, Desserts, Fruits and Ports Evaluation <i>Evaluator: Gerald Cresci</i>
November 14 Wednesday	General Meeting: Annual Elections, Gold and Silver Winners Tasting, and Travelogue <i>Members Invited to Present: 2012 Gold and Silver Awardees, and Travelers</i>
December 16 Sunday	Holiday Party <i>No General Meeting</i>

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.

August Executive Board Meeting – August 1 6:30PM –8PM in Elverta

All SHW members are encouraged to attend the Club's Executive Board Meeting at least one time, so why not make August's Board meeting the one to attend? The August meeting will be held at a member's home in Elverta, under a full moon I might add.

This is a great way to get involved and to learn more about your Club. At the August meeting, we will be finishing up or planning for the August and

(continued on next page)

Mentors

Looking for a winemaking mentor? Judy Pinegar can help you find one.

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

Carl & Lili Brust, Loomis
916 652-9001
lcb Brust@garlic.com **S,W**

Debra Moreton, Auburn
916 296-1115
dem1019@sbcglobal.net **V**

Mike Touchette, Diamond Springs
530 748-9677
pinotsyrah@yahoo.com **R,W**

Gerald Cresci, Herald
209 748-2122 **F,P,VM**

Paul & Nancy Baldwin, Elk Grove
916 684-2086
pbaldwin@frontiernet.net **R,VM,W**

Henry Wilkinson, Sacramento
916 446-6276
hbwilkinson@jps.net **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**

Mentor Wine Specialties:

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

September programs, map out the different varietal focus groups that will be offered for this coming harvest season, and plan for the upcoming Harvest Dinner. Stay for the board meeting, help out with our activities, and later join us for a potluck and sharing of wines.

All Executive Board meetings are open to SHW members, so me at bettencourt1045@softcom.net, or (916) 454-5487, if you plan to come, and she'll give you the specifics.

-- President Donna Bettencourt

Show Us Your Wine Travels

The October and November meetings are getting finalized and we'd like to feature your wine travel adventures to distant lands! Share your trip's winery finds with slides or Power Point presentations. SHW has can assist in purchasing wines of the region for tasting by our members.



Please contact VP Bill Staehlin at (916)216-1753 or Bill.Staehlin@sbcglobal.net if you are interested.

June Jubilee Ribbons Available at July 25 Meeting

Competition coordinator Judy Pinegar plans to bring the wine competition ribbons earned at the June Jubilee to the July 25 meeting. If your entry won a gold, silver or bronze, don't leave the meeting without your ribbons. See the June 2012 *The Grapevine* for the list of awards: <http://www.sachomewine.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/03/June-2012-The-Grapevine.pdf>.

Harvest Dinner



The annual Winemakers Harvest Dinner is a relaxing time when members take time from the rush of the crush and share their harvest adventures and home wines.

The Club is looking for a Harvest Dinner Coordinator(s) to bring this social event together: secure an Sunday date (restaurants are usually a little less busy after the Sunday brunch crunch) at a restaurant for 50-70 people; negotiate the dinner menu and pricing that is inclusive of corkage fees, sales tax and gratuity (some restaurants waive corkage fees); and apply the details to make this event outstanding.

This is a fun way to get more involved with SHW! If you're interested in coordinating, please contact Gin at ginyangstaehlin@yahoo.com or 916 217-0294.

2013 SHW Executive Board Nominations

The SHW Board of Directors (BOD) is responsible for seeking candidates interested in serving on the Club's executive board. The executive board is comprised of 6 positions: president, vice president, secretary, treasurer, membership chair and immediate past president. Descriptions of these positions are detailed in the Club's Bylaws Article V available on the Club's website at www.sachomewine.org.

The annual election is held at the November board meeting. If you are interested in serving in an elected capacity or any of the appointed positions (see "2012 Board and Appointees" on page 2), please contact BOD Chair Judy Pinegar or President Donna Bettencourt.



Champagne & Sparkling Wine

In presentations I have made on this subject, it has taken *three pages of notes* to adequately struggle through the history and complexities of this unique and delicious wine. But never mind – here’s a thumbnail ...

The Champagne region is located in northeastern France around the cities of Troyes, Reims, and Épernay. Sparkling wine seems to have first surfaced during the High Middle Ages and was made by a process known as *methode rurale*, in which the wine was bottled before the first (and only) fermentation was ended. Bottles often burst, with great loss of wine (up to 90% of the cellared bottles sometimes) and at considerable hazard to cellar workers, who protected dear life by wearing iron masks. The monk Dom Perignon, far from inventing sparkling wine, undertook the task to control or eliminate those pesky and dangerous bubbles.

Christopher Merret presented a paper to the Royal Society detailing *methode champenoise* in 1662. Sparkling Champagne, as we know it today, was born.

Champagne was successfully marketed as the preferred drink of royals and aristocrats in the late 1800’s. At the turn of the century, it was portrayed as a luxury affordable by anyone; by the 1920’s, a concerted effort was made to market it to women. Through advertising and packaging, modern Champagne has placed itself squarely as the wine of high luxury, festivities and rites of passage.

Today, there are three methods to produce Champagne:

1. Methode Champenoise

- an acidic base wine is fermented and bottled
- a blend (cuvee’) is assembled from various vineyards & vintages
- blend is put in bottles along with a small amount of yeast & sugar
- wine is bottle-aged on the lees for a minimum of 15-months
- bottles are rotated and nudged for 6 – 8 weeks (“riddling”)
- neck is frozen and a plug (containing sediment) is “disgorged”
- bottle is topped off (“dosage”) with base wine and sugar

2. Charmat Process (Bulk Process)

- wine undergoes secondary fermentation in stainless tanks (instead of bottles)
- bottled under pressure in a continuous process

3. Gas Injection

Cheap sparkling wine is made by simple injection of CO₂ by a *Carbonater* (similar to soda pop).

The sugar content of Champagne is expressed as:

- Doux (sweet)
- Demi-sec (half-dry)
- Sec (dry)
- Extra sec (extra dry)
- Brut (almost completely dry)
- Extra brut or brut nature or brut zero (*ferociously* dry)

There are more than 100 champagne houses and 15,000 small producers in Champagne. Sales exceed 300 million bottles annually.

An EU court decision in 1994 forbid any use of the term “Champagne” or even “*methode champenoise*” unless the fruit originated in Champagne. Instead, watch for the terms, “*Methode Traditionnelle*,” or “*Bottle*”

Fermented.” Most reputable vintners will not call their sparkling wines “Champagne” regardless of the law. U.S. grandfathered the term for labels approved prior to March 10, 1996.

Sparkling wines are called “Cava” in Spain, “Spumante” in Italy, “Sekt” in Germany, and “Cremant” in Burgundy and Alsace.

Grapes for Champagne must be the white Chardonnay or the black Pinot Noir. Most Champagnes are a blend of both. Blanc de blanc (white of white) is 100% Chardonnay. Blanc de noirs (white of black) is 100% Pinot Noir. Most Champagne is non-vintage.

In a good Champagne, bubbles - after the initial burst – should be small and long-lasting. This can be enhanced by etching in the bottom of the glass, called “nucleation.”

Champagne is usually served in a champagne flute, preferably with an etched bottom – filled to two-thirds. One should hold the flute by the stem as opposed to the bowl and refrain from overzealous clinking. Champagne should be served at 43 to 48-deg F.

For tasting, champagne may be poured into a large red wine glass, filled to one -third.

Once champagne is removed from the ice bucket, it should never be returned to the bucket; it should be allowed to slowly warm so as to enhance its flavor.

In Australia, sparkling wine is sometimes served with a whole or cut strawberry. In France, *Crème de Cassis* is sometimes added.

A recent study showed that moderate consumption of sparkling wines may help the brain to cope with the trauma of stroke, Alzheimer’s, and Parkinson’s disease.

It is a common perception that people become drunk more quickly on champagne. The fact that alcohol is more quickly absorbed into the system when carbonated, lends credence to this perception.

Champagne is far more versatile than most people think; its acidity allows it to compete with a variety of foods. **It’s not just for toasting anymore!**



Amateur Wine and Label Competitions

Monterey County Fair – entries for the fair’s home wine and label competitions are due **July 20**. Go to the fair’s website for more information: www.montereycountyfair.com.

Nevada County Fair – entering in the wine competition automatically enters you in the wine label competition. Entries are due **July 20**. More info at the fair’s website: www.nevadacountyfair.com.

Yolo County Fair – amateur wine entries are accepted through **August 13**. No fruit wines accepted. See the fair’s website at: www.yolocountyfair.net.

San Joaquin County Fair – Lodi Amateur Vintners Association in conjunction with the fair offers amateur wine and wine label competitions. Entry forms are due by August 11. See www.sanjoaquinfair.com or www.lavawine.org for more information.

Corkage Fee Free Restaurants

You love your wine and want to take it to dinner with you but sometimes the corkage fees charged by restaurants are, well, a little pricey. There are a few area restaurants who have special “corkage free or reduced-corkage fee” offers. If you know of a restaurant that’s corkage free friendly, let Web Manager Judy Pinegar know and she’ll add it to the newest feature on the SHW website. Judy: jpinegar@calwisp.com and 916 652-5198.

2012 Varietal Focus Groups

Hey, the harvest is just a little less than 2 months away! Time to bottle, buy equipment and supplies, and source grapes!

Beginners and Novice Zinfandel Varietal Focus Group – Henry Wilkinson and Gin Yang are volunteering to mentor a group of beginning and novice winemakers. To get things in motion, the grape varietal, zinfandel and source has been secured, Amador Cellars. This effort is for newer winemakers to learn the basics of winemaking by making small quantities. If you're interested, please contact Henry at 916 446-6276 and hbwilkinson@jps.net, or Gin at 916 217-0294 and ginyangstaehlin@yahoo.com.

Chardonnay Varietal Focus Group – Sonia Baron is interesting in coordinating a chardonnay group and has contracted grapes from Bogle Vineyards in Clarksburg. Sonia is new to white wine making and if you're interested in making white wine where you'll all learn together, this may be the varietal focus group for you. Sonia's contact info: soniabaron@hotmail.com and 916 825-4952.

Touriga Nacional Varietal Focus Group - J.D. Phelps is coordinating a red wine varietal focus group with the Iberian touriga nacional as the varietal focus. Stuart Spencer, winemaker at Lodi's St. Amant has agreed to provide the fruit and looks forward to sharing more about this Portuguese varietal. If you're interested in participating in this group, please contact J.D. at jd.phelps@gmail.com and 916 317-9478 ASAP so that he can lock down the grape order from St. Amant and schedule a vineyard visit and tasting.

If you have a grape source and would like to enjoy the power of group purchase, consider leading a varietal focus group by sourcing the grapes, and organizing the crushing/destemming process. Please contact Prez Donna Bettencourt at 916 454-5487 and bettencourt1045@softcom.net to coordinate.

Looking for Grapes? www.sachomewine.org

Check out grapes or winemaking equipment for sale by clicking on the "Classified Ads" words on the right side of the page. Varietal focus groups are located by clicking on the "Winemaking Help" words also on the right side of the page. Club equipment information is found at the "Member Services" tab across the top of the page.

Technical Meetings in Real Time



We're thinking about video recording meetings or Skyping them or something similar to capture the Clubs's monthly programs so that they can be viewed remotely and/or at a later time. If you have ideas or resources to help bring this together, please contact Prez Donna Bettencourt: (916) 454-5487 and bettencourt1045@softcom.net.

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.

Club Resources

Logo Glassware Large clear wine glasses deep-etched with the SHW logo are available for purchase.

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).

For details on both SHW glassware and logowear go to www.sachomewine.org and click on "Member Services." Contact Sue Summersett with inquiries: sbsummer2002@yahoo.com and 916 354-2050.



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.

Beginners Group Zinfandel is the varietal focus for this beginners/novice winemaking group. See p. 7 for details.



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