



The Grapevine

Newsletter for the Sacramento Home Winemakers

SHW Monthly meetings are held on the third Wednesday of the month starting at 7pm, 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

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Thanks for helping set-up before the meeting, cleaning up afterwards, and consuming responsibly.

Feb 18 Meeting: Evaluations of 2014 White and Rose' Wines

We are calling all winemakers with 2014 white and rose' wines that have not yet been finished and bottled. We have two expert wine evaluators coming to the meeting that will provide educational suggestions of what to look for in your wines and the changes that you can make to improve wines as you finish them and prepare for bottling. Please bring at least two bottles of each wine to be evaluated along with some information about the source(s) of the grapes, the yeast(s) used and other information about the processing of the grapes, the fermentations, and other information that you would like to share. Please deliver your wines to Cellar Master Henry Wilkinson before the meeting starts at 7:00 PM at the Turn Verein. Each bottle should be labeled with the winemakers name and the varietal or blend. We are very pleased to have **Craig Haarmeyer and Peter Marks** as our evaluators for this program.

Craig is the winemaker at Revolution Wines in downtown Sacramento. Craig has been with Revolution Wines since 2007 and likes to showcase what he calls "Sacramento terroir". Craig was educated at the Art Institute in San Francisco to be a painter and later learned to make wine with Charlie Meyers of Harbor Winery in Sacramento. He dreams of owning his own vineyard and winery with wine caves.

Peter is the winemaker at Six Hands Winery, a boutique winery in the Sacramento River Delta in the Clarksburg AVA. His wife, Richele, is the enologist, and the other pair of hands belong to his father, Norman, the vineyard manager. Their approach is to focus on small lots with as little intervention as possible to produce high quality wines. Peter's education is from UC Davis and began his winemaking career under his maternal grandfather at the age of 12.



Presidents Message

Ah, February... as home winemakers, February is often a month of, well... waiting. Our wines are aging gracefully with little need for our attention aside from the periodic racking, SO₂ addition, and most importantly, sampling. As such, we may use this time to plan out the upcoming harvest, make improvements to our home wineries, or maybe invest in that next piece of much desired equipment in anticipation of the harvest to come. This is a great opportunity to decide what varietals you might want to make next year. It is never too early to find other eager club members to partner with or to organize a group buy to better your odds at getting the best quality fruit possible, not to mention help during the crush. If you are like me and have gotten the “bug”, you may find the number of varietals you desire to make far exceeds your winemaking and storage capacity. One option to consider might be making a few varietals that blend well together. This can significantly increase the number of wines you bottle while still having a workable number of fermentations and wines you need to age. Of course the obvious choices of Grenache, Syrah, and Mourvedre can be used to make four or five types of wine quite easily. Bordeaux varietals such as Cabernet, Petite Verdot, and Malbec can also be used to make numerous wines in addition to their great single varietal character. Toss in a Sangiovese and you now have the makings for an award winning Super Tuscan! I’m already drooling. As the vineyards are pruned and we pray for more rain, use this time to carefully plan out the harvest to come. Reach out to your fellow home winemakers, visit the many wine grape growers association websites for our local counties such as Placer, El Dorado, Amador, and others. Talk to the winemakers of your favorite wineries and inquire about grape or juice availability around harvest time. You’ll be amazed how quickly grapes can be spoken for – most notably if this drought continues. Most importantly, have fun and enjoy this amazingly rewarding hobby we all share.

Wine Geek’s Corner

Not only am I excited to taste fellow club members white wines at this month’s meeting, I’m also very much looking forward to our March topic on Reduction with Bob Peak. A topic I am unfortunately all too familiar with. Every home winemaker will inevitably experience Reduction (the formation of H₂S) in their winemaking at some point and some of us may even allow the problem to go untreated and develop into the dreaded “Mercaptan”. This can be especially true if you are making your wine in the ever popular glass carboy. Why you ask? Reduction is the opposite of oxidation. While we do not want to over expose our

wine to oxygen, we equally do not want to prevent it from breathing. While Mr. Peak will be covering the causes and how to correct reduction issues in great detail in our March meeting; I wanted to share with you some of the Wine Geek's tips for avoiding reduction issues in the first place. What follows is particular the case for red wines and may not entirely apply in all cases for making white wines:

1. Know your grape, know your yeast – some grape varieties are more prone to reduction and may need to be treated somewhat differently with more punching down during fermentation, more racking or stirring during aging, etc. Yeast strains are similar, various strains can be more or less susceptible to reduction. Read up on your variety and the yeast(s) you are considering using. You may have clear warning signs before you even starting making the wine that you will likely be battling with reduction issues.
2. Manage fermentation temps – as with most other things involving winemaking, you choose your path from the beginning during fermentation. Allowing your fermentation to get too hot and move to quickly can often lead to reduction right from the start. Yes, you will extract some degree more aromatic phenol compounds with a warmer fermentation (not hot). However, too warm can create reduction which leads to rotten egg smell – which sort of defeats the purpose of the phenol compound extraction. A slower, cooler fermentation 65 – 75F is a significant hindrance to reduction. Your aromatic phenols will still be present in your wine, they'll just take longer to develop (i.e. one of the reasons we age wine), or can be extracted via other methods such as specialized enzymes before bottling (if you can't wait for the wine to age).
3. Never, ever, ever – allow your wife to promise to, “stir the lees” every day as you experiment with a sur-lees approach. Okay, while in jest to my own misfortune with a first attempt at Chardonnay; racking quickly off of gross lees post fermentation for both whites and reds is critical. Within a short time you can quickly develop a pretty rotten sulfur smell in your wine.
4. Let'er breathe – One of the main reasons the wood barrel has not been improved upon after centuries of winemaking and all the other leaps forward in science of enology is that it literally allows for the perfect amount of oxygen into the wine as it ages. This plays a huge part in keep reduction at bay during aging. You quickly see the problem with carboys then; they don't breathe. To replicate this effect in a carboy the simplest thing you can do is to remove your airlock and stir your wine once a month. You should also follow a regular racking schedule of at least every 3 months.
5. Smell your wine – frequently. If you can pick up off, rotten egg / sulfur aromas in your wine when you smell it, you are likely experiencing reduction to some degree. Your best bet at this point is to simply refer to #4 above and rack your wine as soon as possible, feel free to splash it around a bit too.

Following these very basic steps should help you to avoid bottling a wine that is not all it can be due to reduction issues. For a detailed description of reduction, additional prevention methods, and how to correct real H₂S problems, please join us in March with our speaker Bob Peak.

Please Enjoy Responsibly

Far better than any Gold Medal, the best reward for making a great wine is simply enjoying and sharing a bottle with friends and fellow wine makers. SHW wants to remind you to please do so responsibly and be aware of your capacity to drive and get home safely. Our number one priority is making sure all SHW members make it home from club meetings and events without injury to themselves or others. If you find yourself or a friend a glass or two beyond being able to do so, please notify a club officer immediately so we can assist in arranging safe transportation home.

Upcoming Programs in March and Beyond

The program on March 18 will be by Bob Peak of The Beverage People in Santa Rosa. As a complement to the February evaluations of white and rose' wines, Bob will be speaking on "Reduction Issues and Treatments & Cures". You will probably remember that Bob presented a very interesting program last year on "Oxygen and Oxidation". So get your notebooks ready and be thinking about questions for Bob.

Also on March 21, there will be a special educational program from reWine of Salem, Oregon. They will demonstrate how to repair oak barrels and to downsize a 60 gallon oak barrel to a 30 gallon and toast it with an electric heater. This program will be at the home of Carol and Sonia. Look for further details to come.

Also in April will be evaluations of new and unfinished 2014 Bordeaux red wines.

Barrel Demonstration – March 21, 2015



reWine of Salem, Oregon is setting up shop locally on Saturday, March 21 for a barrel toasting and maintenance demonstration for home winemakers. Learn about barrel toasting, barrel maintenance, and fixing those pesky barrel head leaks. reWine will demonstrate a technique for removing and replacing barrel heads and bands without damaging the barrel staves, heads and bands.

The event is planned from 10 AM – 1 PM at Sonia and Carol's winery in Elverta. After the demonstration, the hosts invite you to stay for lunch – they'll be grilling brauts. Please bring a dish, bottle of wine to share (doesn't have to be homemade), and a wine glass for your use.

Thanks for your R.S.V.P. via text/call to Sonia's cell at 916 825-4952 by March 18. Sonia will also share the location then. The event is free for SHW members; \$15 for non-members.

Check out reWine's website: <http://www.rewinebarrels.com/>.

SHW Wine Analysis Service Starting at the Feb 18 Meeting

Look for the sample submission form on the SHW website and bring the completed form with your samples and payment to the regular SHW meeting on Feb 18 at the Turn Verein. Samples can be tested for pH, TA, pH+TA, free SO₂, malic acid to show completion of MLF, and residual sugar, RS. Samples should be at least 50 mL and labeled with your name and the name of the sample. A small water bottle or other polyethylene (PET) bottle can be used for the samples. Please don't forget to bring your payment with samples in cash or check made out to SHW. The costs for the tests are to reimburse SHW for the costs of the equipment and the reagents used. The samples will be analyzed by Bruce Currie, 2015 SHW Vice President, who has considerable experience as a wine chemist.

2015 SHW Membership Dues and WineMaker Magazine Subscription

If you joined or renewed your SHW dues last year by March 1, you should be receiving delivery of WineMaker magazine to your home. To continue the subscription, please renew your 2015 before March 1.

The 2015 membership form can be found on-line at

<http://www.sachomewine.com/membership/>. Thanks for sending your check and form to SHW Treasurer Steve Barrett, PO Box 623, Roseville CA 95678. Membership forms will also be available at the February 18 meeting.

If you have membership questions, please contact membership co-chairs Fred Millar at (916) 576-9596 and fredmillar1@gmail.com or Gin Yang at (916) 217-0294 and ginyangstaehlin@yahoo.com.

Events Committee – Looking for You!

Want to organize a wine tasting or food and wine pairing? The Events Committee is looking for a couple members who have the right stuff to help coordinate these specific SHW activities and events. We're looking for your ideas and energy! Contact Shannon Shackelford at shan_shackelford@yahoo.com.



SHW Calendar of Events

- Executive Board Meetings – 6:30 PM; contact President J.D. Phelps for location; jd.phelps@gmail.com
- General Meetings – 7:00 PM; upstairs at 3349 J Street, Sacramento
- Meeting and event details - www.sachomewine.com; see Events Calendar and latest Newsletter.

General Meeting	February 18, 7PM Wednesday	Evaluation of 2014 White and Red Wines Evaluators: Craig Haarmeyer, Revolution Wines; Peter Marks, Six Hands Winery
Board Meeting	March 4, 6:30PM Wednesday	All members are welcome.
General Meeting	March 18, 7PM Wednesday	Reduction Issues and Treatment & Cures Speaker: Bob Peak, The Beverage People
Barrel Demonstration	March 21 10AM – 1 PM Saturday	reWine Barrels from Salem, Oregon demonstrates barrel toasting, maintenance and fixes . See article in this newsletter for details.
Board Meeting	April 1, 6:30PM Wednesday	All members are welcome.
General Meeting	April 15, 7PM Wednesday	Evaluation of 2014 Bordeaux Varietals Red Wines Evaluator: TBD
Board Meeting	May 6, 6:30PM Wednesday	All members are welcome.
General Meeting	May 20, 7PM Wednesday	Evaluation of 2014 non-Bordeaux Varietals Red Wines Evaluator: Allen Kreutzer, Drytown Cellars
Board Meeting	Jun 3, 6:30PM Wednesday	All members are welcome.
Jubilee Wine Competition	June 13 Saturday	Annual SHW wine completion . Entries due May 20. More info to follow.
Jubilee Picnic - Awards Ceremony	June 14 Sunday	A day of food, wine and friends and find out whose wines excelled in the previous day's competition.

Upcoming Home Wine Competitions

Time to bottle up and get some skin into the game. Home wine competition season is just around the corner!

SHW Jubilee - Wine Competition and Picnic-Awards Ceremony: save the date for the Club's annual wine competition on June 13. Last day to enter is at the May general meeting. In 2014, Over 170 wines were judged so polish off your best to compete. The picnic and awards ceremony will be on the following day, Sunday, June 14. This competition is required to compete for the Club's *Winemaker of the Year* contest.



We'll need volunteers for both the wine competition and picnic. Details forthcoming.

Winemaker International Amateur Wine Competition - sponsored by WineMaker magazine, competition entries are due March 6. For more information and to obtain an entry form: <http://winemakermag.com/1419-competition>.

Missouri Winemaking Society – wine and wine label entries are due March 20. More info can be found at mowinemakers.org.

California State Fair - This wine competition is also required to qualify to compete for SHW's *Winemaker of the Year*. Online entries will be accepted thru April 21. Details to be posted on the fair's website at www.bigfun.org.

SHW is also helping the State Fair with part of the competition and home wine booth at the fair and is looking for volunteers who are available to help. Text/call Cellar Master Henry Wilkinson at 916 997-3056.

Dixon-May Fair - wine and label competition entries are due by April 10. Fair is in Dixon. Website: <http://www.dixonmayfair.com>.

Calaveras County Fair & Jumping Frog Jubilee - wine competition entries are due by April 11. Fair is in Angels Camp. Website: <http://www.frogtown.org/#!amateur-wine/c1jox>.

El Dorado County Fair - the El Dorado Home Winemakers Association is presenting the fair's homemade wine and wine label competitions. Wine entries are due by April 24 and label entries will be accepted through May 21. Details found here.

Colusa County Fair - wine entries are due June 4. Website: <http://colusacountyfair.com/county-fair/how-to-enter/2015-entry-guide>

CLUB EQUIPMENT:

Destemmer/Crusher: Andy Walter,
(916) 955-6373
andrew.walter@sbcglobal.net

Basket Press and Corker: Jacque
and Craig Brown
jbrown6766@gmail.com

Filter: Donna Bettencourt, (916)
454-5487
Bettencourt1045@softcom.net

Each item is subject to a nominal
upkeep fee per use:
Destemmer/Crusher: 10\$
Basket Press: 10\$
Corker: 5\$
Filter: 5\$

SHW

Elected Officers

President: JD Phelps

**Vice President:
Bruce Currie**

**Treasurers:
Steve Barrett/Mary Breedlove**

**Secretaries:
Joe and Lynne
McGillivray**

**Membership Chairs:
Gin Yang
Fred Milar**

SHW

**BOARD OF
DIRECTORS;**

Donna Bettencourt—Past President

Mikc Touchette—Past President

Fred Milar—Past President

Lynn Keay—Past President

Gary Young—Past President

**Needed!
Volunteers for
Hospitality.**

Choose a month
to help the club!

Duties are to purchase cheese and
cracker and/or bread for the
monthly meeting. The club will
reimburse you for your expenses.
Please cut the cheese and slice the
bread. Most important when the
meeting has ended, stay to remove
the left over, package them and
wash the tables. See Jacque or Craig
Brown to sign up.