



### President's Message

## May 15 Field Trip Meeting: Lawn Garden Party

Join us at Tom and Nancy Martella's beautiful property in Chicago Park. Come wander the grounds, complete with orchard, pond, gardens, bocci ball court, and new little vineyard.

**Thursday,  
May 15,  
5:00 PM**

This is intended to be mostly a casual social event, although we will have a few announcements and some Club talk including a discussion about our membership survey.

**Time:** 5:00 – 6:00 Social Hour.      6:00 – short discussion, then more socializing & wandering.

**What to Bring:** Blankets, chairs, wine to share, wine glass & mosquito repellent. It's spring in the foothills and they'll be out.

**Food/Appetizers:** Since this is an earlier event over the dinner hour, feel free to bring a savory or sweet finger food to share.



### Where:

#### General Parking:

15936 Quail Ridge Ct.

Follow the signs through Tom's field for parking. See map page 2.

#### Handicap Parking only:

16225 Orchard Springs Road

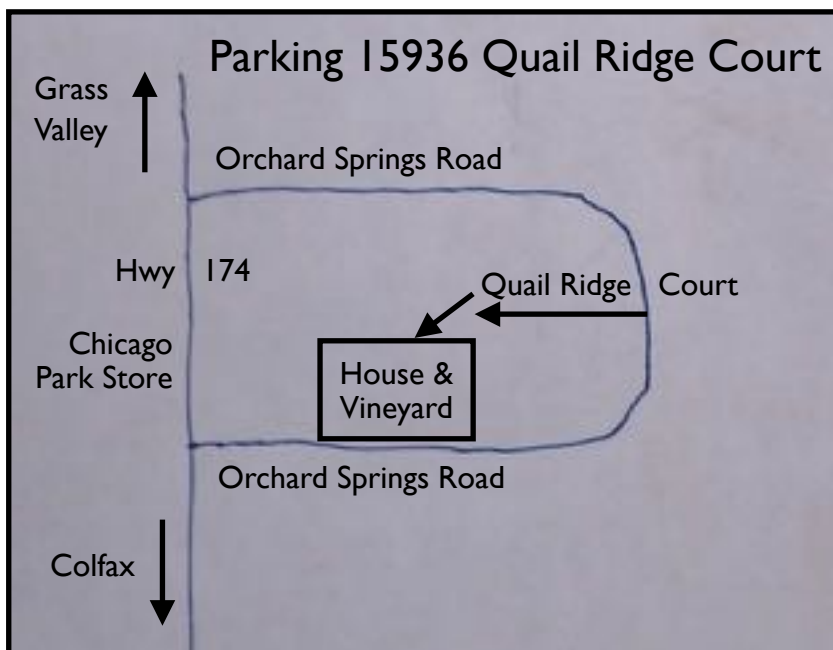
*Tom (red cap) going a tour of his Orchard Springs orchard and vineyard.*

# SWGGA May Meeting Is A Field Trip

**Orchid Springs Cellars, Chicago Park**

Hosted by Tom and Nancy Martella

**Thursday,  
May 15,  
5:00 PM**



We will all meet at Tom and Nancy Martella's vineyard and orchard property at 5:00 p.m. You'll find it tucked into a beautiful little corner of Chicago Park that will be bursting in the bloom of spring.

## In Case You Missed It . . . The April Meeting . . .



This was an entertaining and educational meeting. We had the opportunity to taste eight different wines all made by SWGGA members, ranging from first time winemakers to veterans. Thanks, with much appreciation, to our panel of experts, Mark Foster, Guy Lauterbach and Scott Siver. They provided a wealth of knowledge and expert advice.

**Our expert panel of commercial winemakers**  
**Mark Foster    Guy Lauterbach    Scott Siver**

The best part was that we all got to taste the wines while the panel was giving us their comments. That's important because often we taste a wine but lack the vocabulary to express what we're tasting. In this format the experts put the words in play, teaching us to think, "oh, that is how you describe that flavor".

2024 Rosé  
2024 Syrah Rosé  
2024 Barbera  
2024 Cabernet Franc  
2023 Tempranillo  
2024 Cabernet Sauvignon  
2024 Petite Sirah  
2024 Petite Sirah

## Ask The Expert . . . *Is There A Reason To Water Back?*

During the course of last month's meeting Scott Siver, one of our expert panelists, strongly recommended that anyone bringing in grapes with a high sugar content should routinely water back to a level of 24 or 25 total brix. Basically because yeast die in the presence of too much alcohol, Scott was suggesting that a high brix content of 27 or 28 could affect the yeast's ability to get all the way to dry.

One audience member commented they water back while others scoffed at the thought of adding water to their musts. Too much dilution.

Presumably those winemakers are not having problems with stuck fermentations otherwise they would try it. So I asked Scott, if they are successfully fermenting to dry, are there other reasons to consider watering back? Is it a good winemaking practice?

*In response, Scott said*

**"It is not just about the yeast,** and stuck or sluggish fermentations, but those are the primary considerations. Stylistically, a high alcohol wine will be more extracted, and not just the good, but the bad as well. It is harder to balance, as the tannins (usually too much and too bitter) and acid (too low and out of ratio) will need to be adjusted. Another way to look at it is, how many wines would be improved by adding a shot of vodka and a bittering agent?

Fermentation and stability is really why it is important.

Yeasts capable of producing high alcohol wines, such as UVA 43, are *bayanus*, not *cerevisiae*, and produce little to no desirable effects. The longer a fermentation lasts, and the more it struggles, the more likely it is for the pitched yeast to produce off characteristics. Also, as it struggles, spoilage organisms have more time, nutrients, etc. to cause problems.

Without a clear end to fermentation, wines sit too long unprotected, and without SO<sub>2</sub>, oxidize and spoil. At high alcohol, the ML bacteria either struggle, or die, and the wines are out of balance with malic acid, and again, oxidation and spoilage.

Adding water requires a little math, and accurate weights, and if there is a reason to ensure the final wine is as concentrated as possible, you can saignée equal portions of juice to the water addition."

### **Just In Case You're Asking.**

The saignée method, meaning "to bleed" in French, is a winemaking technique used to concentrate red wines, giving them richer color and more robust flavors. It involves drawing off a portion of red wine juice during fermentation, which is then most commonly used to make rosé. The remaining juice is left to produce a more concentrated red wine.

Winemakers start by making red wine. As the juice in the tank starts to develop color from the grape skins, a portion of the juice is "bled off" or drained off, typically around 10-20%.

The siphoned-off juice is then used to produce a rosé wine.

The remaining juice in the original tank, with a higher ratio of skins to juice, is then fermented into a more concentrated and flavorful red wine exhibiting richer color and more robust flavors.



## 2025 SWGGA Member's Annual Summer Barbecue Picnic



**Saturday, June 21st, at 5 PM.**

**Sierra Starr Vineyard & Winery**

**11179 Gibson Drive, Grass Valley**

We haven't quite sorted all the details about the picnic yet, but here is what we do know.

The picnic will be at Sierra Starr Vineyard and Winery; a great location. Thrilled to be there.

We know it will be Saturday, June 21 at 5:00 p.m.

We know the cost will be \$35 per person.

We're just not totally clear on the menu except we know it will be a BBQ thing.

Other than that, it will be very similar to last year's picnic. If you were there, you know. If not, come find out.

**Please bring a dish to share. We suggest:**

**Names: A-G salad/side dish. H-M appetizer. M-Z dessert.**

**Oh, and also please bring wine to share,  
and to donate to the scholarship raffle.**

**We do encourage members to bring guests.  
It's a great way to introduce new people to SWGGA.**

**As soon as we have the final menu sorted we will send out  
an email with your choices and payment options.**

We are still  
looking for  
volunteers  
for the  
picnic if you  
would like to  
join in.



## Club News

### **Nevada Joint Union High School District held its scholarship night and we're now free to announce our SWGGA scholarship winner.**

Let's cut right to the chase. Our scholarship recipient this year is Wyatt Thompson, a Bear River graduate.

But first, a word for our sponsor. SWGGA. That's you guys. First of all acknowledgment to the Scholarship Committee. Susan Clarabut is our leader. Grace Suarez, Janet Wheeling, Bob Hudelson, Al Schafer, Dave Elliott and Rod Byers make up the crew. It's not a totally easy job. It takes effort, so thanks you guys as well.

This year we had 10 applicants. The entire document, with all the essays, grades, letters and personal history was 100 pages long. It's a lot to digest. And all the kids are great. They are all achievers. One of our early questions was what criteria should we put emphasis on: grades, financial need, personal story, extra-circular activities? As a committee we elected to have no rules. Each member decide for themselves.

This is my third year of doing this. Previously I went to the selection meeting with one strong first choice and a few possible runners-up. This year I went to the meeting with five strong choices, happy with any one of them. I didn't know how to vote.

I wasn't the only one. Instead of going round the table with each committee member offering their top choice, this time we offered our top three choices but not necessarily in preferential order. Just the top three. There was a surprising amount of unanimity. A lot of us shared the same choices. That cut the field by more than half. Then we talked about each remaining candidate. What was appealing. Why we liked them. And when we were done we had one person who was in everybody's top three, if not their top one.

Meet Wyatt Thompson.

I haven't had a chance to talk to Wyatt so I don't know how much I am allowed to reveal right now. I will say this. His application was impressive. We look forward to sharing some of it with you. In the meantime, Susan Clarabut did meet Wyatt at the award ceremony. Here is what Susan said.

*"Wyatt is clearly a rock star. He's been accepted at MIT, yes MIT!, where he will be majoring in mechanical engineering. He was practically walking on air when he shared that MIT was his first choice and that Nevada County had been very generous with multiple scholarships that will help him be able to go there. Out of many, many things that Wyatt has done, one that stood out is the fact that he was a semifinalist in the National Merit Program which represents the top 1% of outstanding scores on standardized tests for graduating students nationwide. Wow!"*

And finally, another word for our sponsor. SWGGA. Remember. That is you guys. The only reason SWGGA can offer this scholarship is because of your support and generosity. When you meet these kids you quickly realize that it is such a worthy goal. To all of you, thank-you.

And now, one final thought from Susan.

*"Additionally, we SWGGA members need to pat ourselves on the back for being a part of Nevada County's unbelievable scholarships - our county raised over One MILLION dollars for scholarships this year!"*

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## **Group Buy: Chardonnay.      You Interested?**

Dave Elliott wants to make Chardonnay this upcoming harvest. He wants to know if any of you winemakers out there would be interested in going in on a group buy? All the details would need to be sorted but before that, is anyone interested? If you are, then contact Dave at [djelliott@skydancesranch.com](mailto:djelliott@skydancesranch.com)

# Hunting The Bear

**The results from this year's California State Fair Non-Commercial Wine Competition** were released recently. In total, California home winemakers responded with almost 700 entries. The judges awarded 3 Best of Show Awards and 21 Best of Class Awards. The total medal count resulted in 68 Double Gold Medals, 93 Gold Medals, 303 Silver Medals, and 181 Bronze Medals.

## Congratulations to the Best of Show Winners

Demi Nylk	2024 Sauvignon/Viognier/Muscat	Best of Show White
Paul Conrado	2022 Pinot Noir	Best of Show Red
Thad & Heather Rodgers	2017 Petite Sirah Port	Best of Show Other

**And especially to our SWGGA members who entered and rocked the show.**

**Dave Elliott** "Entering the State Fair is the highlight of my wine making year. It is a chance to hone my skills, and test my metal. I entered eight wines into the competition, hoping for a Gold in order to be invited to be on the pourers side of the table at the award ceremony. It felt really great when not only did I get an invitation to pour, but also got THREE gold medals to boot! Kinda blows me away!!"

### Dave Elliott

2022 Syrah	Double Gold
2022 Syrah/ Petite Sirah	Gold
2024 Albarino	Gold
2022 Petite Sirah	Silver
2024 Viognier	Silver
2024 Syrah Rosé/Viognier	Silver
2024 Syrah Rosé	Silver
2023 Petite Sirah	Bronze

### Gary Glaze

2020 Graciano	Silver
2020 Red Blend	Silver
Cab Franc, Malbec, Cab Sauvignon	

### Bill Betts

2023 Barbera A	Gold
2023 Barbera B	Gold
2023 Petite Sirah	Silver
2021 Cabernet Sauvignon	Silver

### Gary Mondolfo

2024 Syrah	Gold
2024 Syrah Lot 2	Silver
2024 Syrah Lot 3	Silver
2023 Petit Sirah Lot A	Bronze
2023 Petit Sirah Lot B	Bronze
2023 Petit Sirah Lot C	Bronze
2023 Petit Sirah Lot D	Bronze

Click here for [2025 Home Wine Competition Winners](#)

**Bill Betts** "The goal is always to win the grand prize, the Golden Bear Award but the real privilege is to be invited to pour at the award ceremony. It is an honor to be recognized amongst your peers as one of the best non-commercial winemakers in the state."

**The Non-Commercial CA State Fair Award Tasting** will be Sunday, May 18 at Cal Expo in Sacramento from 12:30 to 4:00 p.m. In order to be invited to pour at this event the winemaker must win a Gold Medal or better. That means that only the best wines from the best winemakers are invited. It is a fabulous tasting and an excellent way to discover just how good the best of the best non-commercial wines in California really are. The tasting costs \$10.





## Here's the scoop on the Nevada County Fair.

### Time to get your wines ready. Time to get them entered.

## WINE

### WINE

**Entry Forms Due By:** Monday, July 14 by 4 pm

Drop off: Tuesday, July 22 from 8 am - 3 pm

Drop off entries: **ADMINISTRATION OFFICE**

Closed judging

Pick up: Tuesday, August 12 from 12 pm - 6 pm

Pick up entries: **NORTHERN MINES BUILDING**

**RULES:** Open to all counties.

Two entries per class per exhibitor.

- Exhibitor must bring two 750 ml. cork or screw cap finished bottles. One to be filled with the competition wine and one empty for display purposes only. All bottles must be labeled.
- Wine must be personally produced by the exhibitor. Grapes do not have to be grown by exhibitor.
- No display of business cards, signs or advertising is allowed.
- Professional winemakers may not enter. Other vineyard/ winery staff are allowed to participate provided the wine entered was not produced in a professional winery.

### Division 200 - Red Wine

#### Classes

1. Cabernet Sauvignon
2. Syrah
3. Zinfandel
4. Any other Varietal Red - Please specify
5. Non-varietal red (less than 75% any one grape varietal)  
please specify percentages of all the grape varieties

### Division 201 - White Wine

#### Classes

1. Chardonnay
2. Sauvignon Blanc
3. Any other Varietal White - Please Specify
4. Non-varietal white (less than 75% of any one grape varietal)  
Specify the percentages of all the grape varieties

### Division 202 - Blush, Dessert & Sparkling Wine

#### Classes

1. Blush wine, specify
2. Dessert wine, specify approximate residual sugar
3. Sparkling Wine, specify
4. Non-grape fruit wine, specify

### ADULT WINE AWARDS

**Proud Tradition**

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**Best of Division**

**Red Wine - Division 200**

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**White Wine - Division 201**

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**Blush, Dessert & Sparkling Wine - Division 202**

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# SWGGA SWAG

Check the website, [www.swgga.org](http://www.swgga.org) for product descriptions. Contact Susan Clarabut at [sclarabut@gmail.com](mailto:sclarabut@gmail.com) if you have questions, wish to check pricing, or, best of all, would like to make an order.

Vineyard Sign	\$57
Woman's Long Sleeve Shirt	\$35
Men's Short Sleeve Shirt	\$35
Cap	\$18
Corkscrew	\$13
Wine Glass	\$3



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