



President’s Message Don’t Give Up.

Wine making is complicated; don’t let anyone tell you it isn’t. I made my first batch of wine (Sauvignon Blanc) six years ago and was completely unprepared. It was either let the birds get it or give it a go. I scrambled, leaned on SWGGA friends, followed trusted winemaking books and it was drinkable (the goal). Maybe even pretty good!

Perhaps it was beginner’s luck; over the years, I’ve had varying degrees of success, or not. I’ve made a yummy rose’ and this year had to dump my biggest batch. In fact, I’ve dumped more wine than I’d care to admit. I never made a red that I thought was bottle

worthy until this year and got a silver medal at the NC Fair for my first Zinfandel, a 2021. My Sauvignon Blancs have ranged from mediocre to a couple of silver medals.

After having to dump not just my 2024 Rose’ but the other half of the 2021 Zinfandel, I was feeling dejected and wondering if should give winemaking a break. Then there was this breaking news - not just a gold medal but Best of Division & Best of Show for one of my 2024 Sauvignon Blancs at the NC Fair. I was thrilled!

So, keep trying, ask questions, figure out what went wrong, how you can do better. And if it’s not great, make Sangria. But, **Don’t Give Up!** Cheers, Diane



Calendar of Upcoming Meetings
6:15 Social Start Time. Meetings at 7:00.

August: Thursday August 21st, Ponderosa Hall
 How Good Is Gold? A Glittering Tasting. Page 2.

September: Thursday, September 18th, Ponderosa Hall
 Are You Sure? I’m So Confused.

October: **Field Trip.** All details to follow.

Social Hour begins at 6:15 p.m.

Meetings at 7:00 p.m.

Next Meeting, Thursday, August 21st

How Good Is Gold?

On July 24th Mark Foster, Jackson Starr and myself judged the wines entered in the 2025 Nevada County Fair. As many of you know by now, the results were released with the opening of the fair. Congratulations to all the winners.

Just in case you think there is a lot of glamor attached to judging wines, we were alone in the cavernous hall opposite the Admin Building at Gate I. At 10:00 a.m. But everyone knows, if you are going to judge wines, that is the proper time to do it. So, there we were.

I like judging with Mark and Jack. First of all they are both expert winemakers so they know all the flaws and faults and what to do about them. Plus they both have different styles so that is fun too.



I was pleased by the overall quality of the wines, I think we all were, especially the whites. We always start with whites, first of all

because that's what you do, and also to get them over with. No longer. The most impressive part of the day was how good the whites were.

Wish I could say the same for the rosés but uh-uh. Previous years have been better. But the reds, there's always treasures to find. Different judges look for different things in a wine. It's easy to have disagreements. No matter which angle we may have taken, the three of us all pretty much agreed, independently, on which wines we thought were the best. Not much arguing. Deciding the best of the best, well, that was more tricky.

At The Next Meeting

There were a total of eight gold medals awarded at the Nevada County Fair. Three whites, five reds. The winners have agreed to pour their wines for us at the August meeting. We'll introduce each winemaker, pouring their wine for all of us to taste while they give us the inside scoop on what they did, or maybe what they didn't do. I know I am looking forward to trying these wines again, to see if they are just as good as I thought they were the first time. All you will need is one glass, unless you want to stack a couple for comparison sake.

Congratulations to the Gold Medal Winners

- | | |
|----------------------|---|
| Pam Bothello | 2024 Pinot Grigio |
| Dave Elliott | 2024 Albariño |
| Diane Houston | 2024 Sauvignon Blanc |
| | <i>Special Selection</i> |
| Bill Betts | Red Blend, |
| | <i>50% Petite Sirah, 35% Zinfandel, 15% Primitivo</i> |
| Dave Elliott | Red Blend |
| | <i>50% Syrah, 50% Petite Sirah</i> |
| Doug Olson | Petite Sirah |
| Scott Ellis | Carmenere |
| Dave Elliott | 2023 Syrah |

In Case You Missed It . . . *The Last Meeting at Ponderosa*

At the July meeting Dave Elliott gave us a tutorial in making white wines. Thank-you Dave.

As you know, Dave has also been putting together a group buy of Chardonnay grapes from Gold Hill Vineyard over by Coloma in El Dorado County. In fact, as I am writing this, Dave is meeting with Jackson at Sierra Starr Winery to discuss winemaking styles. Here is the really unique thing about that. The Chardonnay that Sierra Starr is pouring in their tasting room right now is from this same Gold Hill Vineyard, just produced one year earlier. It's as close as you are going to get to tasting the wine you are going to make before you make it.

Here's a big shout out to the folks that are getting in on this including Louis Quaintance, Diane Houston, Ray Frescas, Gary Mandolfo, Jason Blank and Victor Estrada. I think Dave may have already reached his quota of pounds that he is able to get. Not totally sure. Check with him.

I think everyone in the group buy has pretty much agreed to participate in a tasting at one of our meetings next year. Now that, that would be especially cool.



Winemaking Classes at Gray Pine Winery

We are delighted to announce that once again Guy Lauterbach will be offering his **free, three-session introduction to winemaking classes** at his **Gray Pine Winery** later this summer. Spread over a six to eight-week span of time depending on the weather conditions and harvest, Guy takes you on a deep dive into preparing for crush, fermentation, and post fermentation. Each session is about two hours and takes place on Sunday mornings starting at 8:30. Contact Guy directly to sign up for the classes. rgl@graypinewinery.com



Session #1 (mid to late August)

General equipment, tools and procedures.

Winery sanitation.

Grape samples and some lab tests.

Evaluation of timing for harvest.

Winemaking aids including

a few books, tables & spreadsheets.

Session #2 (early September)

Harvest/crush procedures.

Measurements and adjustments.

Crush & fermentation, additives, and yeast nutrients.

Re-hydration of yeast and MLF.

Inoculation of fermentations.

Management and measurement of fermentations.

Session #3 (late September)

Pressing, racking, aging, oaking. Dealing with "bad things". Blending and bottling.

Contact Guy Lauterbach at rgl@graypinewinery.com

or call 530-432-7045 for more details and signing up for the classes

Lots of Activity Going On Here. See if any of this fits you.

Grapes ← → For Sale

These grapes are from John Geraghty's, Vista del Oro Vineyard located near Auburn. John planted the vineyard in 1999 and has produced numerous award winning wines over the years including winning at the Nevada County Fair.

Grenache 1.5-2 tons.

Syrah 1/2 ton.

Sangiovese brunello 1/2 ton.

\$1200/ton you pick. Crushing and stemming available for extra charge.

John Geraghty. 916 532-0142. Auburn



Winery equipment for sale by long-time SWGGA member Diane Tosse



Table top Corker – \$45.00

Basket press – make me an offer

200 liter stainless tank \$200.00 retails at over \$400

150 liter stainless tank \$200.00

Box of miscellaneous lab items – make me an offer

5 gallon carboys – \$12 each ; 6 gallon carboys – \$15 each

email Diane@ diane@tosse.com. 530-263-0346



Gary Glaze still has 2 empty three liter wine bottles (the equivalent of four 750ml bottles) that he is wondering if anyone wants? Contact Gary directly for the bottles: gglaze001@gmail.com

Or maybe, if four of you winemakers donated a bottle of your wine we could make a unique blend. That might have been fun but it doesn't appear like anyone is really interested.

If you are, shoot me a line. rodbyers@pinehillwineworks.com

Winemaking Equipment

Adriaan Boer has a few items some winemaking members may be interested in.

Old style 15 gallon stainless steel kegs for \$15 each.

Size 60 basket grape press in very good condition for \$600.

Silicone bungs \$5 each.

Contact Adriaan directly at 530-272-5148.

Winery equipment for sale by long-time SWGGA members Jim and Kate Garrett.

“We are cutting back on our winemaking and therefore selling a variety of our equipment. Everything listed is in excellent condition and usable immediately. Just in time for this year’s crush.”

Zambelli crusher/destemmer with stand painted – model with stainless steel chute and custom-made stand on rollers. Currently retails at \$1100.00
Asking \$650.00



Speidel 40 liter Vertical bladder press works with water or air. Retails at \$1600.00
Asking \$750.00

48 inch stainless steel cap punchdown tool \$50.00

Many **carboys**: all very clean.
3 gallon carboys - \$12.00 each
5 gallon carboys - \$12 each
6 gallon carboys – \$15 each



Heavy duty plastic shovel retail is \$99.99
Heavy duty plastic pitchfork retail is \$149.99
Heavy duty plastic rake
All three for \$85.00

23 large gray picking lugs \$10.00 each. \$200.00 for all 23



6 white 32 gallon Brute food-grade fermenters with lids \$30.00 each set



If interested, email Kate at kategarrett44@gmail.com Include your phone number. We will get back to you with details.

I have just returned from a trip to Michigan. “Why you going there?” was the most common response from friends. “Seems like it could be a cool place,” I would answer.

I first became aware of Michigan as a wine center a few years back when I attended a Wine Appreciation Guild tasting in San Francisco featuring the wines of America. Sure, California, Washington, Oregon, but also Florida, Texas, Pennsylvania, Virginia, Massachusetts, really, you name it. The state that stood out for me was Michigan. I thought they were doing a great job, especially with some sparklers while using vinifera grapes.

Wine is not the reason I went to Michigan, but, while there, why not try a little? I was especially interested in the Leelanau Peninsula in northern Michigan, in what I learned to call ‘the mitt’. Maybe you have been there. They call it Up North.



The greeter at Shady Lane

The Leelanua Peninsula seems pretty far north, way up in northern Michigan. So I looked it up. It is on the 45th parallel, and if it makes you feel cold, remember, that’s the same parallel as Minneapolis. Seems cold. On the other hand, Walla Walla Washington, Bordeaux France, and Piedmont in Italy are also on the 45th parallel so why not grow grapes in Leelanua as well?

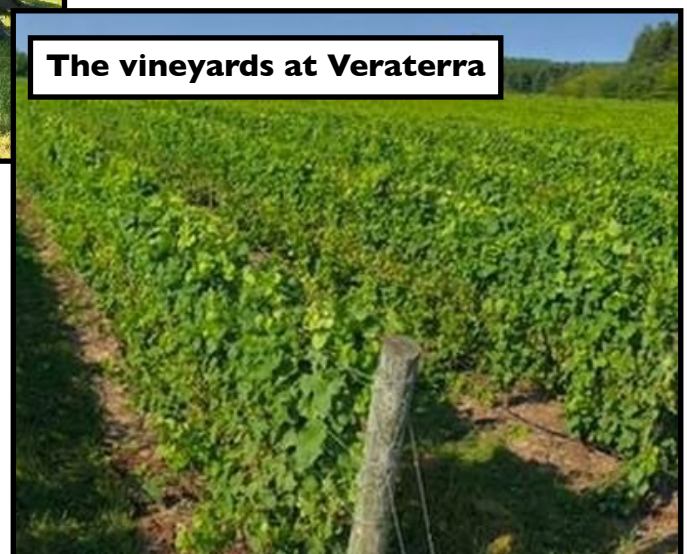


The patio at Good Harbor

The peninsula, in general is a lovely wine region, gorgeous, but sometimes it seems like wine regions are pretty inter-changeable. Barns holding small wineries, grapes folding over the hill, the tasting room, the patio, the outdoor landscaping. Charming, but its easy to forget as you gaze over the vineyard hills just exactly where you are. Is this Texas Hill County? No wait, I think it’s Anderson Valley. Could be the Finger Lakes, right? No, no, no, I know, its Michigan.

While it can be hot and humid during the summer, make no mistake, it gets cold there in the winter. In Quebec, Canada they bury the grapevines to prevent killing freezing temperatures. I wondered, did they have to do that here? No, is the short answer but they do grow the grapevines in a very particular way.

From a distance, and even close up, the vines appear extra-ordinarily bushy. They have shoots sprouting from ground level. It’s like the vines are wearing a skirt.



The vineyards at Veraterra

In reality, it turns out that is where the new growth will emerge from should the upper vine get frosted. “Does that happen often,” I asked. “Ya, but less and less. The last really killing frost was 2014.”

The vines are grafted but unlike California where the graft might be 12 inches above the ground in Leelanau the grafts are planted at ground level so the new shoots coming out of the ground are vinifera, not rootstock.

It is cool climate grape growing, pHs of 2.9 to 3.3 are normal. TAs are often in the range of .7 or .8. Clearly that suits white varietals better so mostly I focused on those. Crisp, tart, lean body styles. We didn't quite realize how good the good ones were until we tasted a few of the less good ones. One sav blanc you would have bet was from New Zealand. Pinot Grigio, Riesling, stainless Chard, dry Gewurz, stylistically similar but like good wine, all different. The prices were about the same as buying wine at a winery in Nevada County.

The sparklers were as good as I remembered. I am partial to fizz with Pinot Noir as the main ingredient and found several in which to indulge. Only tasted a handful of reds. Too many wines. Too little time.

In speaking to the growers, they credit the 'lake effect' with the success of their region. The 'lake effect' in grape growing refers to the moderating influence large bodies of water have on the climate of the surrounding areas, creating a more favorable environment for grapevines. Lakes absorb heat during the day, releasing it at night, stabilizing daily high-low temperatures. That helps to delay the onset of frost in the spring and postpones the first frosts in the fall, extending the growing season at both ends.

The warming effect of the lake can protect tender buds and shoots from late spring frosts, which can be devastating to vineyards. The slower, more even ripening process facilitated by the lake effect allows the grapes to develop a better sugar-acid balance, resulting in riper tasting wines. The overall combination of temperature moderation, frost protection, and extended growing season creates a microclimate around the lake that is well-suited for cool climate varieties. Otherwise they would just be Minneapolis.

Oh, and that question about whether Michigan is cool? Trust me. Super cool.

Snowshoeing at 45th Parallel Vineyard and Winery



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SWGGA SWAG

Check the website, www.swgga.org for product descriptions. Contact Susan Clarabut at 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



Please Consider Getting Involved.
SWGGA is looking for new Board Members
and Committee members for events
We Need You.