



Country Viniculture in the Heart of the Foothills

Trellis Wire

June 2025

www.SWGGA.com



President's Message

Club Collaboration and SWGGA Member List

PCWGA Collaboration: I was recently contacted by the president of Placer County Wine & Grape Association (PCWGA) about building a connection between our organizations, with cross promotion of events and other collaboration. He shared ideas on ways to promote the Foothill wine region and support each other including links between clubs, sharing event notices and other promotions. The SWGGA board was very positive and interested in pursuing the idea.

As SWGGA members, we will be invited to select PCWGA events, so you may see their announcements in your inbox. We are not sharing our member emails; just forwarding information they provide to us. We invited their Board members to our June BBQ which will be the first opportunity to discuss possible synergies between our clubs. And, if you're interested, here's a link to their upcoming Wine & Food Pairing dinner: <https://pcwga.org/event/food-wine-pairing-dinner/>

SWGGA Membership List: We've had several members ask about access to our fellow club members' contact information. Many of us have valuable grape growing or wine making experience that others may want to contact us about. Therefore, we have decided to publish a membership list with emails and phone numbers to paid SWGGA members only. If you don't want to be included, please contact Treasurer Lisa Whittet by June 30 to opt-out.

See you at the SWGGA picnic!!

Cheers, Diane





2025 SWGGA MEMBERS & GUESTS ANNUAL BARBEQUE & PICNIC

Sierra Starr Vineyards (Private)

11179 Gibson Drive, Grass Valley [No Smoking]

Saturday, June 21 at 5 PM. \$35/person.

Join Us for Good Food,
Good Wine
and Good Friends

Support our Wine Raffle benefitting our College Scholarship Program. Bring a bottle for the raffle and buy tickets!

RSVP Deadline: June 15

Entree Choices:

Meat: Pork Spareribs, Chicken, or Chicken/Ribs Combo
Vegetarian: Impossible (Vege) Burger or Portabella Mushroom
Plus: Baked Beans and Garlic Bread

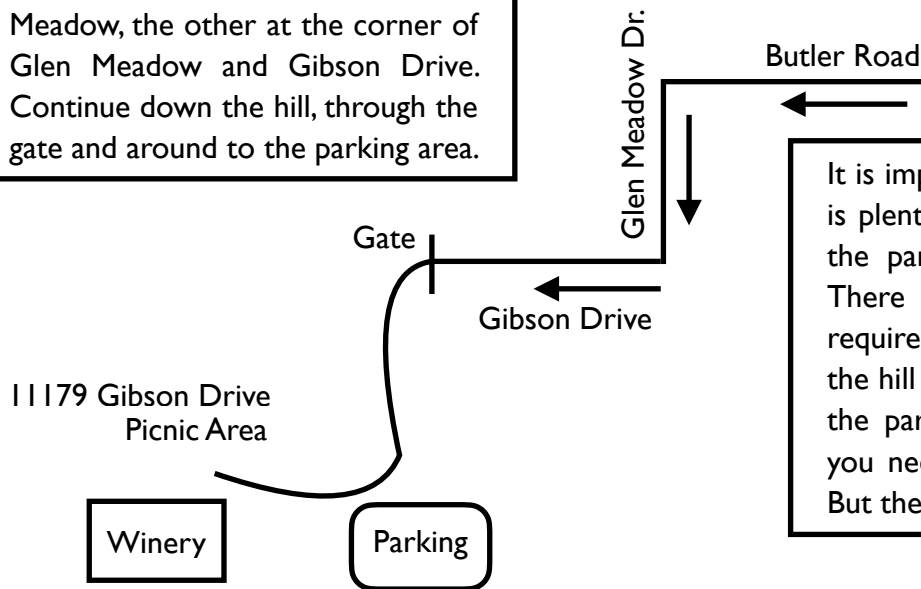
If you'd like to share a dish, we suggest: Names: "A" thru "G" = Salad/Side
"H" thru "P" = Appetizer
"Q" thru "Z" = Dessert

Please send your **Check with Names and Entrée Selections** to:
Lisa Whittet, P.O. Box 303, Colfax, CA. 95713 OR to pay by credit card via
C/C Square (fee) 530-401-7256.

There are two Nevada County Winery signs pointing the way, one on the corner of Butler and Glen Meadow, the other at the corner of Glen Meadow and Gibson Drive. Continue down the hill, through the gate and around to the parking area.

Important Picnic Details

Correct Address: 11179 Gibson Drive, Grass Valley.



It is important to note that while there is plenty of parking available, it is all in the parking area. Not at the winery. There is a hill to walk up. If need requires, get dropped off at the top of the hill but then the car must return to the parking area at the bottom. So if you need to drop something off, okay. But the car still goes back.



Barrel Room At Sierra Starr Winery

First of all, a huge shout out to fellow SWGGA member Doug Olson who is a master with the grill. He's bringing his cooker. So thanks for that.

Second, Jackson Starr has volunteered to give a winery tour. It's always fun to be with the winemaker, in the cellar. Bring your questions.

Finally, if you have been out to Sierra Starr then you know it's a great place, and especially a great place to have a party on the patio. Bring some food. Share some wine. Select Sierra Starr wines will be available as well.

Enjoy a lovely evening with friends on the patio. RSVP deadline, Sunday, June 15th.



The Wine Raffle supports the Scholarship Fund. Please consider bringing a wine to raffle and buy tickets to win one to take home.



Sierra Starr is a non-smoking zone. No sneaking to the outhouse or behind the barn. No smoking. No butts.

Struttin' My Stuff, Y'all

If You're Not Golden, You're Not Invited.

**CA State Fair
Award Ceremony
May 18, 2025**



Gary Mondolfo
2024 Syrah Gold



Dave Elliott
2024 Albarino Gold
2022 Syrah Double Gold
2022 Syrah/Petite Sirah Gold



Bill Betts
2023 Barbera B Gold
2023 Barbera A. Gold



And Congratulations To These Guys Too

Gray Pine Winery Rocks CA State Fair

“Owner and winemaker Guy Lauterbach says he was “pretty excited” to get the news. His 2021 Cabernet Franc and 2021 Petit Verdot each scored a remarkable 99 points, placing Gray Pine in rare company. Of the few Double Gold awards given to “micro” wineries, Gray Pine claimed two!”

2021 Cabernet Franc	Double Gold	99 Points
2021 Petit Verdot	DoubleGold	99 Points
2021 Pennridge	Silver	91 Points

Sierra Starr Winery Grabs The Show

Double Gold, **2022 Barbera, Walker Ranch**
Best of Class,
Best Red Wine of Show
Women's International Wine Comp

Pride and Prejudice

Anyone who reads The Trellis Wire will already know that Dave Elliott is trying to put together a group buy to purchase chardonnay grapes. The vast majority of SWGGA winemakers make red wine. Rosé? Maybe. White wines, not so much. Are there reasons to consider making white wines?

Maybe the better question is, what are the reasons for not making white wines? Let's look at those.

White wine is more difficult to make. I asked Peter Willcox, who won Best Chardonnay in California at the State Fair Non Commercial Competition. He should know. See the side bar for what Peter has to say.

Never drink white wine. I get that people like what they like but discovering new things is also a lot of what wine is about. White wines offer a more diverse menu of flavors. Red wines operate in a fairly narrow band of acidity, pH, and sweetness level. There is not much diversity. Then add in a continuing reluctance for winemakers too include much tannin in their wines. They are all chasing the middle.

Reds are better. Consider white wines. Aromatics vary dramatically. Acidity can range from searingly tart to opulently soft. Subtle variations in sweetness offer a disco ball of reflections given the special interplay of sweet and tart. Body can range from wispy light to remarkably full-bodied and yet all still be dry. Red wines are hard pressed to match the range of styles and flavors that white wines can deliver.

No one is suggesting you give up reds, only that you consider white wines. So, if you are a winemaker, why not take this chance to snag some juice and make a white?

The source of the group buy is still unknown. That will probably depend on how big the order is. But the details are solid. After picking, the grapes will be delivered to Sierra Moonshine where they will be crushed and pressed. You would leave there with your amount of already-pressed juice in whatever container you take it home in. Then, get as much mentoring as you need.

Seems pretty easy, maybe even worth a try. Think about it. Contact Dave Elliott at djelliott@skydancesranch.com.

Peter Willcox, a California State Fair Chardonnay Champion offers his thoughts on making white wines.

“White wine is easier to make than red wine,” champion winemaker Peter Willcox said. “There are less steps and it is faster.”

“If you are getting it already crushed and pressed then take those steps away as well. There are no punch downs. The trick is being able to keep it chilled to create a cooler, longer ferment.

Some people like to settle and rack the juice before fermenting. I don't worry about it. Just ferment the juice. I do add sulfites at crush. I add yeast and yeast nutrients just like reds. The ferment can last up to six weeks, getting down to negative one. It stops generating bubbles. I have a chill room. Other people use old fridges, even an ice chest with a block of ice will work.

I like to rack it off the lees right after fermentation. I don't like to let it sit on the lees. Maybe middle of October, sometimes sooner. Then I rack it again in December.

Then its time to take a serious look at the wine. Will oak help? Bentonite for clarity? What, if anything, will make the wine better?

Once you are done with those concerns and have nothing left to do, bottle it. I used to believe in bulk aging. Aging a wine in barrels or carboys. Now I believe in bottling the wine as soon as possible. Let it age and develop in the bottle. It will anyway. I like to get it bottled by the following spring. Done.

So, all in all, less steps and easier to ferment, a much quicker development path, and ready to drink sooner. Even if you don't drink white wine, you probably know people who do.”

As everyone starts to think about the 2025 harvest lets take a minute to look back at 2024. Were sales off as much as everyone thought? How much were prices down? Were they down? Will it mean anything in 2025?

Here's a look at 2024 with all the information coming from the California Grape Crush Report.

The 2024 crush totaled 2,961,433 tons, down 24.1% from the 2023 crush of 3,899,631 tons.

Red wine varieties accounted for the largest share of all grapes crushed, at 1,466,346 tons, down 25.7% from 2023.

White wine varieties totaled 1,417,993 tons, down 17.2% from 2023.

In 2024, Chardonnay continued to account for the largest percentage of the total tonnage crushed at 17.8%. Cabernet Sauvignon accounted for the second largest percentage of the total crush at 15.4%.

2024 Chardonnay price of \$1,056.63 was down 1.4% from 2023.

Cabernet Sauvignon average price of \$2,181.93 was up 2.7% from 2023.

District 4 (Napa County) received the highest average price at \$6,938.96 per ton, down 1.3% from 2023.

District 3 (Sonoma) received the second highest average price at \$2,927.18 per ton, down 1.8% from 2023.

District 13 (Madera, Fresno, Alpine, Mono, Inyo Counties; and Kings and Tulare Counties), had the largest share of the State's crush at 907,220 tons. The average price per ton in District 13 was \$338.64.

It's A Crushing Story	
<i>What Got Squished in 2024</i>	
Chardonnay	17.8%
Cabernet Sauvignon	15.4%
Other Varieties	18.6%
French Colombard	9.0%
Pinot Noir	7.4%
Zinfandel	6.8%
Pinot Grigio	6.4%
Rubired	5.0%
Sauvignon Blanc	4.7%
Muscat of Alexandria	4.5%
Merlot	4.4%

Average price paid per ton, per region, in 2024 with percentage change over 2023

	Chard	Sauv Bl	Barbera	Cab. Sauv	C. Franc	Syrah	Zin
District 1 Mendocino Co.	1064. -24.1%	1441. -6.0%	2306. -0.2%	1989. -7.0%	3188. +10.8%	1728. -18.7%	1899. -0.3%
District 2 Lake County	1241. +28.6%	1314. -7.7%	1999. +9.2%	1644. -29.1%	2440. +3.7%	1636. +14.0%	1649. +6.9%
District 3 Sonoma Co.	2590. +1.1%	2025. -1.4%	3276. -7.2%	2921. -4.5%	4582. +0.5%	3234. +1.2%	3309. -5.5%
District 4 Napa County	3790. +2.7%	3265. +3.2%	3829. +1.9%	9146. -0.9%	11,332. +6.5%	4741. +2.9%	4584. +2.0%
District 10 Sierra Foothills	1790. -3.8%	1676. +49.9%	1882. +3.2%	1576. +3.4%	1895. +1.3%	2086. +2.0%	1828. +5.2%
District 11 S. Joaquin/Lodi	554. -5.4%	525. -7.5%	840. +21.2%	670. -1.3%	872. +0.9%	552. -10.9%	637. -4.0%

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

Sponsored by

White Wine - Division 201

Sponsored by

Blush, Dessert & Sparkling Wine - Division 202

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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 Support Our Commercial Members

Gray Pine Vineyard & Winery

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Sierra Moonshine Winemaking Supplies