



2 0 0 6 A N N U A L R E P O R T

OF THE RUSSIAN RIVER VALLEY WINEGROWERS



Photo by Warren H.W. White

*Russian River Valley Winegrowers are dedicated to protecting
and enriching the region's sustainable community.*

2006 OFFICERS & DIRECTORS

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President

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Winery - 2nd Term: 2004-2006

First Vice President

Steve Dutton
Dutton Bros. Farming/Dutton Ranch
Phone: 823-0448 Fax: 829-5942
Grower - 2nd Term: 2006-2008

Second Vice President

Hector Bedolla
La Crema
Phone: 566-6611 Fax: 571-1448
Winery - 1st Term: 2005-2007

Secretary

Carol Kozlowski-Every
Kozlowski Farms
Phone: 887-1587 Fax: 887-9650
Grower - 2nd Term: 2006-2008

Treasurer

Saralee McClelland Kunde
Richard's Grove & Saralee's Vineyard
Phone: 546-3276 Fax: 546-3277
Grower - Board Appointed Treasurer
Past President

Directors

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Silicon Valley Bank
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Bank (Appointed) - 2nd Term: 2005-2007

Armon Azevedo
Wilbur-Ellis Co.
Phone: 473-4410 Fax: 473-4411
Other - 1st Term: 2006-2008

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Phone: 528-1181 Fax: 528-1561
Winery - 1st Term: 2005-2006

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Williams Selyem
Phone: 433-6446 Fax: 433-6546
Winery - 2nd Term: 2004-2006
Past President

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Merry Edwards Wines
Phone: 838-9950 Fax: 838-9951
Winery - 2nd Term: 2005-2007
Past President

Gina Gallo
Gallo Family Vineyards
Phone: 431-5571 Fax: 431-5515
Grower - 3rd Term: 2006-2008

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Nick Leras Vineyards
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Grower - 1st Term: 2005-2006

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Martinelli Farms, Inc.
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Grower - 1st Term: 2005-2007

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Fiesta Market
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Retail/Commercial (Appointed)
1st Term: 2005-2007

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Alegría Vineyards / Acorn Winery
Phone: 433-6440 Fax: 433-7641
At Large - 1st Term: 2004-2006

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Grower - 1st Term: 2006-2008

Project Manager

Judy Groverman Walker
Phone: 523-3728 Fax: 523-3754

Marketing Manager

Mauny Kaseburg
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Past Directors

Don Brown	1996-1997
Kristen Thigpen	1996-1997
Al Rago	1997-1998
Louis Foppiano	1996-1998
Don Stiling	1998-2000
Judy Jordan	1996-2001
Warren Dutton	1996-2001
Paul Novak	1996-2001
Anne Giere	1995-2002
Rod Berglund	1995-2003
Kirk Lokka	1995-2004
Saralee McClelland Kunde	1995-2004
LeeAnn Cameron-Reuter	1996-2005

PRESIDENT'S REPORT *By Ellen Mack*

It has been a good year for the Russian River Valley and I feel privileged to have been President during such a rich period in our growth. Not only is our organization maturing in terms of the business it conducts but our wines are receiving unprecedented attention on a national, and even, international basis.

I am pleased to announce that the RRVW will have its first full time employee, Lindsey Vogler, who as Office Manager will oversee our operations, maintain our books and be your first line of communication with the RRVW. Lindsey grew up in a ranching family in the Tomales area so she has a good grasp of the region and its farming heritage. We welcome her aboard and I hope you all get a chance to meet her at the Annual Meeting.

Our Marketing Manager, Mauny Kaseburg and Project Manager, Judy Groverman Walker, continue to give 110% to their jobs to ensure that the Russian River Valley remains in the forefront in the minds of consumers, trade and press. Without these two remarkable women, we would not have our Marketing Partnerships, Grape to Glass, Crab & Fennel Fest, the Media Tasting and all the other opportunities that promote our region.

Our Board of Directors has continued to work diligently to define and promote our region and we all owe them a great debt in these endeavors. We have three Directors that are ending their terms this year: Bob Cabral of Williams Selyem, Donna Bernheim of Sonoma-Cutrer, and myself. Bob has served a six year term and is a past president of the organization. His

leadership and guidance has been invaluable and he will be greatly missed on the Board. Donna is completing a single term as Director but plans to remain active in the organization and lend her talents in the organization of events. I am ending six years on the Board but plan to remain active on the Marketing Committee. My tenure as a Director has been a rich and rewarding time in which I have developed some wonderful friendships and feel a great sense of accomplishment for the RRVW.

We end the year 2006 fiscally responsible (see Dan Aguilar's report), our grapes and wines are in high demand and highly valued, our organization is growing and we have new incoming Directors who will provide energy and new ideas on how we can continue to achieve our goals.

3RD ANNUAL CRAB & FENNEL FEST *By Judy Groverman Walker*

March 4th was the date of the 3rd Annual Crab & Fennel Fest which was once again a sell out with more than 750 happy guests. This event successfully attracts folks from all over the United States - especially those in town for the annual Wine Road Barrel Tasting weekend.

Dinner was fabulous with plenty of fresh crab and great assorted sides, sauces and desserts including some fennel inspired dishes from local restaurants and caterers. The tasting bar was always busy with guests anxious to sample the wines. RRVW Director's Tasting was another big success with many guests paying extra for a logo Riedel glass and some very special and hard to find wines.



To add to the fun we added the 1st ever Hermit Crab Races. Board members took their place as crab trainers with trusty entries such as "The Crabmeister", "Big Zinfandel

Crab Louie", and "Sparkling Crabarella". Board members cheered, pleaded and sprayed their mighty friend with the thought of winning first place.

A special thank you goes out to all of the restaurants,

caterers and food purveyors that participated by providing foods with and without fennel including Applewood Inn, Duck Club Restaurant, Highfeather Catering, Kozlowski Farms, Sassafra, Santa Rosa Golf & Country Club and zazu. Thank you to Michael Hirschberg of Highfeather Catering, Ned Coon of North Coast Fisheries and to all

off the volunteers that made the night run so smoothly including El Molino High School, Piner High School, Windsor High School and the Rose Valley Chapter #33.

RRVW.ORG WEBSITE *By Bill Nachbaur, Chair*

The Website Committee, (Wendy Fowler Nunes, Valerie Wathen, Carol Kozlowski-Every, and myself, with staff assistance from Rebecca Germolus), implemented several improvements to the RRVW website in 2006. We obtained permission from Ronn Wiegand of Restaurant Wine to reproduce an excellent article on the Russian River Valley which highlights what is special about the wines from our appellation. The article is a very good description of the AVA and a great third party endorsement of the quality of Russian River Valley grapes and wines. (Two quotes that were particularly noteworthy are "The best Russian River wines display two winning characteristics: refined varietal character and remarkable vintage-to-vintage consistency." And "Grapes

from this district are some of the best in the world for fine wine production.") Committee member, Wendy Fowler Nunes reformatted the article and added photos for the website version.

Wendy also updated the AVA map on the site to reflect the expansion of our boundaries approved by the TTB. We added a banner feature to the home page which will allow us to call attention to news and new features. A classified ad feature was added that will allow members to post their own ads. We also did many other things to improve the functioning of the site, such as reorganizing navigation, simplifying the "buttons", and correcting many technical problems. We sourced photos which will let us do a photo

gallery of the Russian River Valley.

We will do a major redesign in 2007 that will give us a lot more flexibility to update the site and display the photos and make other improvements. Our goal is to constantly upgrade content to make the site more attractive to potential visitors and customers. One feature we are considering is to add a series of grower profiles that would give site visitors a sense of the people who grow the grapes that make such great wines. We also need to make the site more useful to people who are planning a trip to the RRV.

Please visit the website at www.rrvw.org. If you have ideas for improving it, I hope you will contact one of the committee members.

EL MOLINO HIGH SCHOOL VINEYARD PROJECT *By Merry Edwards, Chair*

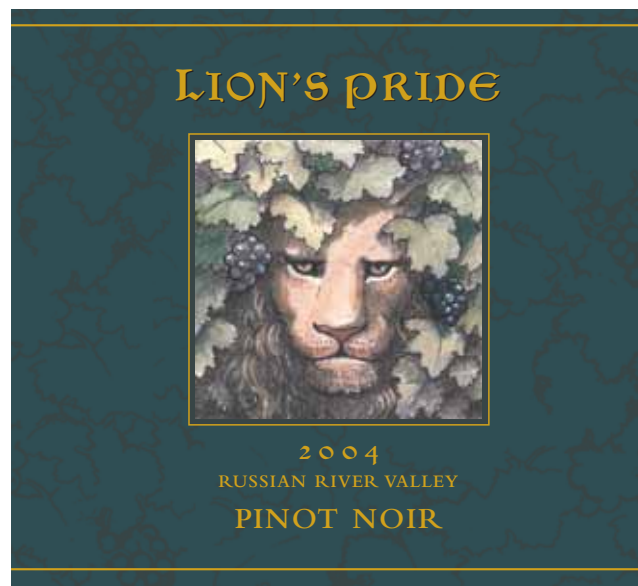
During the 2006 growing season vineyard care was performed by a La Crema crew, headed by Julio Heredia, with guidance from Hector Bedolla. Kirk Lokka of goldridgepinot.com assisted in this effort. The 2006 harvest from El Molino yielded a record 4.8 tons of Pinot Noir. Our winemaker of the year, Patrick Melley, reports that we have 675 gallons in barrel which should net about 250 cases.

The 2005 vintage produced by Bob Cabral at Williams Selyem was bottled in August. One hundred twenty-five cases are aging while awaiting release in 2007. The 2004 vintage, produced by Merry Edwards, has now been released. Reservations for this wine are now being accepted by the newly formed Russian River Valley Winegrowers Foundation. Orders sheets may be found online at www.rrvw.org. Winemaking for 2007 will be provided by Martinelli Winery.

There is a new viticulture/Ag teacher at El Molino High School - Lynne Scholten. We are always looking for volunteers to provide guest teaching. If you would like to get involved with this project, either helping to provide vineyard care, sharing your expertise & knowledge with students or volunteering as a winemaker for an upcoming vintage, contact merry@merryedwards.com for more information.

RUSSIAN RIVER VALLEY APPELLATION BOUNDARY *By Merry Edwards, Chair*

Gallo Family Vineyards representatives met with our Executive Board in October. They introduced a proposal to further expand the Russian River Valley AVA to include their Twin Hill Ranch approximately five miles south of the current boundary. We will keep you updated on the outcome of these ongoing discussions as we evaluate the impact of their proposal.



GRAPE TO GLASS...THE PEOPLE...THE PLACE...THE PASSION *By Judy Groverman Walker*

"My and wife and I would like to congratulate you on a wonderful, gracious, and entertaining weekend. Thanks to your team of caring and professional members we were able to attend the Saturday festivities and engage in cooking and wine tasting with a more personal touch." was a comment received from a couple from Chesterfield, VA that attended Grape to Glass.

2006 was the 11th Annual Grape to Glass which showcased the best of the Russian River Valley appellation. With a few glitches to overcome, in general guests provided overwhelmingly positive comments for the three-day weekend August 18 - 20th. This year we entertained guests from twenty-eight different states, with Florida, Iowa, Georgia, Minnesota, Arizona and Texas providing the largest out-of-state numbers.

The event began on a cool, foggy morning with 65 guests and over a dozen members as tour guides ready to see the RRV terrain by bicycle. The ride began at Dutton Estate with 3 different length rides to accommodate the different skill levels of the group. The route, designed by Lee Martinelli, Jr., Sally Ewald and Stew Lauterbach, provided guests with an up-close view of vineyards throughout the Graton and West County areas of the appellation.

Next stop was MacMurray Ranch for lunch and to board the buses for the Magical Mystery Bus Tour. Three luxury buses departed from MacMurray Ranch with over 150 people who had no idea of their destinations. The bus trip committee (Paul and Vicki Michalczyk, Ted Klopp, Marcy Keefer, Mark and Ginnie Weston, and Rod Berglund) worked hard putting together the itinerary to keep our guests entertained and educated with wine and food sampling along the way. One bus

went to the northern part of the appellation making stops along the way to discuss topics relating to vineyards, influence of the river and more. Stops included Santa Rosa Junior College Shone Farm, Vino Farms, and a few other select locations in which the guests were kept captive on the bus. The southern trip stopped at the Lynmar



2006 Grape to Glass Weekend

Winery caves and Klopp Ranch as well as some "stop and goes" again

keeping the guests on the bus with discussion on topics such as farm-worker housing, terrior, growing conditions and more.

Friday's events culminated with the Seafood Barbecue with over 225 guests enjoying the beauty of MacMurray Ranch coupled with fabulous RRV wines and episodes of Fred MacMurray's "My Three Sons" shown outdoors under the starlit sky. Once again hosted by Kate MacMurray, guests were treated to a Pinot Noir components experience in the horse barn, tours of the homestead and an opportunity to relax and enjoy the beauty of the area. Following dinner the guests moved to the outdoor theater corral where they grabbed a seat on a hay bale to enjoy some wine with popcorn and ice cream sandwiches while watching the pilot episode of "My Three Sons" along with two other episodes under the stars.

Nearly 400 guests attended "Behind the Wines" educational tours hosted by twenty-two grower and winery members on Saturday. Tours featured food and wine pairings, rare wine tastings, clonal discussion and even a cooking class. The "Hog in the Fog" backyard barbecue at Richard's Grove & Saralee's Vineyard was again a great success with over 1,000 guests in attendance. Over 60 wineries participated in the food and wine tasting. The Barbecue menu, designed and coordinated by Carol Kozlowski, Kristi Mohar, Michael Hirschberg Armon Azevedo, and Mauny Kaseburg, featured a dazzling array of local, fresh produce, chicken,

meat and pork with fresh homemade apple pie baked by Pam Martinelli and her crew. The live and silent auction this year raised nearly \$55,000.

Sunday's event, Wings and Wine Lunch on the Croquet Green, was once again hosted by Sonoma-Cutter Vineyards and this year featured TV cooking personality and FoodNetwork rising star Chef Guy Fieri. Guy entertained the crowd recapping his adventures in taping and winning "The Next FoodNetwork Star". He also talked to the guests about food and demystifying wine and food coordination. A lunch followed the discussion created by Michael Hirschberg of Highfeather Catering. The afternoon was complete with the guests soaking up the sun, participating in the "hoop shoot", and enjoying the vintage planes with the annual "Wings over Wine Country" Air Show happening overhead.

The evolution and success of this event has been made possible by the countless hours, energy and dedication of the members of the RRVW. A huge THANK YOU to everyone that helps to make this event happen.

MARKETING COMMITTEE *By Ellen Mack, Chair*

As I near the end of my tenure as a Director of the RRVW, I take great pride in the recent accomplishments of our Marketing Committee. As I think back to my early days on the Board, I realize that the organization's greatest growth and development has been in the marketing arena. Every RRVW member has benefited, either directly or indirectly, from this effort. We have very much to be thankful for as it has been a fabulous year for the Russian River Valley!



Food & Wine Chicago

We should all take great pride in the attention the Russian River Valley has received in the press this year. Matt Kramer in his column in the Wine Spectator named the Russian River Valley as the most reliable source for good Pinot Noir in America. The same publication's coveted Top 100 Wines of the Year included RRV wines from two of our member wineries, Kosta Browne and Merry Edwards. Ronn Weigand wrote an extensive article on the Russian River Valley in his publication, Restaurant Wine, and favorably reviewed many of our members' wines. Additional articles on the Russian River Valley were published in Alaska Airlines magazine, the San Francisco Chronicle and the London Financial Times.



Food & Wine Classic at Aspen

We had a great number of very distinguished visitors this past year as well. The renowned British wine writer, Jancis Robinson, MW requested a tasting of the wines of the Russian River

Valley during a visit to California. The Marketing Committee organized a comprehensive tasting of nearly 80 wines from the RRV, from sparkling wines to Cabernet Sauvignon. Ms Robinson posted her evaluations on her website www.jancisrobinson.com.



A group of twenty distinguished MW's from around the world, also visited the RRV for a day of touring, tasting and panel discussions. Russian Hill Estate Winery hosted a seminar with panelists Steve Dutton of Dutton Ranch/Dutton-Goldfield, Guy Davis of Davis Family Vineyards, Rod Berglund of Joseph Swan and Patrick Melley of Russian Hill Estate. The group visited La Crema Winery for

lunch and concluded the day at MacMurray Ranch who hosted a second seminar, a tasting of RRV Pinot noirs and a finale dinner.

The Marketing Committee held its second annual Pinot Noir Media Tasting on June 7 at the beautiful new hospitality center at Lynmar Winery. Thirty 2004 vintage wines were tasted by Tim Fish of The Wine Spectator, Steve Heimoff of Wine Enthusiast, Chris Sawyer of Wine X Magazine, Steve Pitcher of Wine News, Sara Schneider of Sunset Magazine, Greg Walter of PinotReport and freelance

reporter Dan Berger. Our panelists were Dan Goldfield of Dutton-Goldfield, Bob Cabral of Williams Selyem and Lee Martinelli Jr. The tasting was followed by a memorable luncheon hosted by Hugh Chapelle and Lynmar Winery.

A major focus of our marketing has been our very successful partnership with Food & Wine. Food & Wine

Magazine has a circulation of more than six million people nationally and has been found to be the number one source for both printed and online information about wine in an extensive marketing survey sponsored by MKF Research and the Wine Institute. Our 2006 program with Food & Wine included two page spreads in four different issues of the magazine. The advertisements included a beautiful vineyard vista, bottle shots and or web listings of participating members, and our byline "you can't imagine a more beautiful place to grow great wine".

About 85% of the cost of the advertising was born by participating members with the remainder paid by the RRVW. The national exposure was

impressive, making the remaining cost of the program an outstanding investment for our entire membership.

The partnership also included participation in the Food & Wine Classic in Aspen, a three day extravaganza of wine tasting, chef demonstrations, classes and seminars in the beautiful setting of Aspen, Colorado. In 2006, eight winery members (Russian Hill Estate, Williams Selyem, Gallo Family, MacMurray Ranch, Inman Family, DeLoach, Sonoma Cutrer, Hartford) attended the Classic as a part of the partnership. The RRVW hosted a welcome party for trade and press, poured wines in a specially designated area for the RRV during five different Grand Tastings and was a dominating presence at the Food & Wine Magnum party. The Classic is well attended by consumers with a strong interest in fine wine and dining, as well as trade from throughout the US and approximately 100 members of the press.

Another key component of the Marketing Partnership with Food & Wine is the Chicago Entertaining Showcase at the Contemporary Museum of Art. Four winery members (Lynmar, Davis Family, Hook & Ladder, J Vineyard & Winery) attended and poured their wines for an audience of 1000 consumers and held a panel on pairing food with RRV wines. The panel was moderated by Brian Duncan of Bin 36.

A new edition of our promotional print piece, *A River Runs Through Us: A Guide to the Russian River Valley*, was produced in 2006. This beautiful, full color brochure was expanded to 32 pages in 2006 to include additional educational information on American Viticultural Areas. The Guide contains extensive information on our appellation, listings of all RRVW members, a fold out winery map and individual sponsorships from more than 40 RRVW members. Participating members received Guides to use in their tasting rooms, wine clubs and other venues. Approximately 25,000 copies were distributed in 2006 to attendees of the Aspen Food & Wine Classic, the Chicago Showcase, the Pinot Noir Forum, and over 4,000 were mailed to consumers who sent requests via the RRVW website.

Of course, there are also our own RRVW events where the Marketing Committee worked closely with the Events Committee in 2006 to help package Grape to Glass and the Crab & Fennel Fest in a manner that disseminates our message of “the people, the passion, the place”.

All in all, 2006 was a fabulous year for the Russian River Valley and we all have reason to celebrate. I am very proud to have served as the Chair of the Marketing Committee for the past four years and hope that our efforts have played a small role in this success.

VALUE OF MEMBER SEMINARS *By Steve Dutton, Chair*

Member Seminar proved to be a valuable tool to Russian River Valley Winegrower members in 2006. Seminars showed an increase in attendance as the format moved to the evening to include a Dutton Ranch tri tip barbecue dinner and opportunity to socialize. Thank you goes out to Chris Maloney Crop Insurance who came on board as a corporate sponsor of this year's seminars.

The first seminar planned around the Annual Membership meeting was extremely well attended with a very timely topic, it focused on the different Alcoholic Beverage Control licenses available along with different limiting factors and restrictions. Our speaker, Kathy Chavez, spoke on behalf of the Alcohol Beverage Control.

The second seminar was “Spring Into Action” with an update on pesticides regulations by Stephan Parnay, Chief Deputy Ag Commissioner followed by Rhonda Smith of the UC Cooperative Extension, who discussed how the

spring rains will affect the vines and crops. Bill Francis of Wilbur-Ellis completed the seminar with information on viticulture fertility.

The final seminar “Looking Back and Looking Forward” included a crop insurance update for 2007 by Chris Maloney of Chris Maloney Crop Insurance, an indepth discussion on botrytis in 2006 by Jason Saling of Sonoma-Cutrer and Armon Azevedo of Wilbur-Ellis followed by an informal discussion on this year's harvest.

Thank you to Chris Maloney for her continued support of the Russian River Valley Winegrowers and the member seminars. I would also like to thank the Dutton Ranch crew - Joe Dutton, Joe Rocco, Bobby Rossini and Elaine Schneemann for stepping in when needed to provide the famous Dutton-style barbecue to complete each member seminar - the seminars just wouldn't be the same without the barbecue and some Russian River Valley wine.