



January 2026 Newsletter

✨ 🍷 Happy New Year! Welcome to 2026! 🍷 ✨

I can't believe another year has passed, but I'm ready to turn the page. 2025 was a challenging year on many levels. With continued shifts in the wine industry, I felt it in my work: events slowed, writing opportunities disappeared, and the landscape changed in real time. But I didn't let that stop me, and won't.

I continued to write non-stop, filling my blog with new stories. I continued building the event I created, **The Festival of Undiscovered Grapes**. I picked up new consulting projects and, somewhat unexpectedly, spent a lot of time on the road.

In fact, I traveled **121 days in 2025**, with **50 of those days abroad**. I took six press trips to Italy - two to Sicily, two to Tuscany, and two to Piemonte - and also traveled to London for the **London Wine Fair**. Closer to home, I crisscrossed California, visiting Palm Springs, San Diego, Cienega Valley, Napa, Lodi, the Sierra Foothills, Livermore (twice), Sonoma (twice), Paso Robles (three times), and Santa Barbara County (seven times). I also traveled to Oregon and New York.

While I didn't anticipate quite this much travel at the start of the year, I ultimately found myself on the road for nearly a third of it. Let's see what travel 2026 brings!

2025 also brought meaningful recognition for my work. **The Festival of Undiscovered Grapes** (formerly *The Festival of Forgotten Grapes*) was named the **#2 Best Wine Festival** by *USA Today 10BEST* - an incredible honor, especially in just our second year.

I was also the recipient of the **2024–2025 Wine Travel Awards “The Brightest Journey”** award, which I received at the London Wine Fair.

Wine Travel Awards coverage included:

[Wine Travel Awards 2024-2025: Where Wine, Travel and Culture Converged at London Wine Fair](#)

[Fourth Edition – Wine Travel Awards 2024-2025 – Announces the Winners!](#)

I was profiled in several publications:

[Voyage LA: Life, Values & Legacy: Our Chat with Allison Levine of Los Angeles](#)

[Hopskip: Planner Perspectives: Calm, Curated, and Intentional: How Allison Levine Elevates Wine Events Nationwide](#)

And I contributed to a few collaborative pieces as well:

Liquid Icons - Fine Wine & Rare Spirit Research: [The 2025 Golden Vines Report – Finger on the Pulse \(Liquid Icons\)](#)

Winefullness Magazine: [15 Questions Introduced](#)

As I look ahead to 2026, I'm feeling energized and optimistic. The past year was a reminder that this industry, and this work, is always evolving, and so am I. There are new projects taking shape, new destinations on the calendar, and exciting momentum building around the work I care about most.

Up next is an update on **The Festival of Undiscovered Grapes**, the event I created to celebrate California's under-the-radar grape varieties and the producers championing them. After that, you will find links to all of the podcast interviews and articles I have published since my last newsletter. Thank you, as always, for reading, for following along, and for being part of this journey with me. I am looking forward to another year of discovery in the glass and beyond.



THE FESTIVAL OF **UNDiSCoVERED GRaPES**

Join Us at

The Festival of Undiscovered Grapes

Be Bold. Drink Different. Taste Original.

Discover California's underdog grapes.

The Festival of Undiscovered Grapes celebrates the state's **110+ wine grape varieties** and the producers who champion the lesser-known ones. With **60+ wineries** pouring rare and unconventional wines, this is a tasting experience designed for curious drinkers who want to go beyond the "big nine."

Come taste the adventure. Don't settle for the ordinary.

California grows far more than the "big nine." The **Festival of Undiscovered Grapes** celebrates the state's **110+ varieties** and the winemakers who champion them.

What to Expect

- Explore dozens of uncommon, lesser-known wines from **60+ wineries**
- Meet the producers and winemakers behind these under-the-radar varieties
- Mix bottles from multiple wineries in **one simple checkout**
 - Have your favorites delivered straight to your door in about **three weeks**
 - **GA:** one low, flat delivery fee (no per-winery charges)
 - **VIP:** early entry + **free delivery on all purchases** (no bottle limit)
 - Plus: more perks to be announced soon

Save the Dates

San Jose: Saturday, January 31, 2026

Los Angeles: Saturday, March 28, 2026

Tickets are on sale now!

Use The Code PTP10 To Save \$10.

Code is valid on all tickets except Early Bird or other special offers.



Get to know the winemakers and winery owners behind the brands in 30 questions. Listen to the Wine Soundtrack podcast and get to know them through serious, thoughtful, personal, funny, and sometimes challenging questions.

Recent Podcasts:

[Jeff & John Perlegos – Perlegos](#)

[Rodney and Faryn Schatz - Peltier Winery & Vineyards](#)

[Jill Russel - Cambria Estate Winery](#)

[Courtney M. Benham - CMB Family of Wines](#)

[Samra Morris - Alma Rosa Winery](#)

Wine Soundtrack is available on [WineSoundtrack.com](#), [Soundcloud](#), [Spreaker](#), [iTunes](#), [YouTube](#), [Spotify](#), [iHeart](#) and on the Wine Soundtrack App. More podcast interviews are coming!

RECENT ARTICLES

PLEASE THE PALATE WINES OF THE WEEK

[Please The Palate Wine of the Week: Laurent-Perrier Héritage Brut](#)

[Please The Palate Wine of the Week: Doctor's Orders 2022 Grenache/Syrah](#)

[Please The Palate Wine of the Week: Cascina Val Liberata 2021 Cenerina Slarina, Monferrato](#)

[Please The Palate Wine of the Week: Forteto della Luja Pasucrà 2024 Piemonte Moscato Secco DOC](#)

[Please The Palate Wine of the Week: Covenant 2023 Landsman Cabernet Franc, Dry Creek Valley, Sonoma](#)

[Please The Palate Wine of the Week: Dunites Wine Co 2024 Albariño, San Luis Obispo Coast](#)

[Please The Palate Wine of the Week: BoaVentura de Caires Winery 2020 Venture Red Wine - Iberian Blend](#)

[Please The Palate Wine of the Week: Barton & Guestier Cotes de Provence 2024 Limited Edition "Tourmaline" in Collaboration with Isaure Atelier](#)

[Please The Palate Wine of the Week: Peltier Schatz Family 2017 Teroldego, Estate Reserve, Lodi](#)

[Please The Palate Wine of the Week: Monte Rio Cellars 2023 French Colombard, Lodi](#)

[Please The Palate Wine of the Week: San Rucci 2022 Ruche, San Benito County, Central Coast](#)

[Please The Palate Wine of the Week: Cantine Virgili 2024 Inciostar Lambrusco Provincia di Shared Notes: From Wine to Coffee I.G.T.](#)

[Please The Palate Wine of the Week: Villa Simone 2023 Frascati Superiore D.O.C.G Riverva](#)

WINE & TRAVEL STORIES

[When Nebbiolo Speaks: What Blind Tasting Revealed About Place](#)

[Listening to Nebbiolo: Learning to Taste Without the Label](#)

[Vinomio: Where I Always Come Back in Vercelli, Italy](#)

[Bellenda: Prosecco, Reimagined](#)

[Moscato d'Asti: Think You Know It? Think Again.](#)

[Beneath the Forest Floor: White Truffle Hunting in Piemonte and Umbria](#)

[Brughelli Wines: Precision and Patience in Santa Maria Valley](#)

[Three Expressions of Ribolla Gialla from Tenuta Stella](#)

[Exploring Wine on the North Side of Etna: Eleven Wineries to Check Out!](#)

[Shared Notes: From Wine to Coffee](#)

[Milo: Finding Focus on Etna's Eastern Slope](#)

