



April 2026 Newsletter

✦ ✨ Spring is in Full Swing — and So Is 2026 ✨ ✦

If January felt like turning the page, the first few months of 2026 have felt like hitting the ground running. It has been a busy, energizing (and exhausting) start to the year, filled with milestones, recognition, and meaningful work that continues to remind me why I do what I do.

I am honored to share that Please The Palate was once again named one of the [Top 100 Wine Blogs in 2026 by Feedspot](#), a recognition that reflects the consistency and curiosity that drive everything I publish. I was also recently quoted by travel writer Danny Jensen in a feature, "[The 6 Best Wine Regions in the U.S.](#)," for Yahoo! Travel, highlighting the best wine regions in the United

States. This was an exciting opportunity to contribute my perspective to a broader travel audience. Lastly, I was nominated again for the [Wine Travel Awards](#), this year in two categories - "Brightest Journey," which I was fortunate to win last year, and "Expert Opinion." I am thrilled to be named a **Top 5 finalist for "Expert Opinion,"** with final judging by an esteemed panel now underway. Winners will be announced in May.

And the momentum does not stop there. **The Festival of Undiscovered Grapes**, the event I created to celebrate California's lesser-known grape varieties and the producers championing them, has also been nominated for **Event of the Year (2025-2026)** and is now a **finalist**. It is incredibly rewarding to see this event, built from an idea and a passion for discovery, continue to gain recognition within the industry.

The year began at full speed as we planned and executed two Festival of Undiscovered Grapes events back-to-back. In January, we brought the festival to San Jose for the first time, welcoming 66 wineries and approximately 350 attendees - a strong and encouraging debut in a new market.

We then returned to Los Angeles for the third consecutive year, where we once again set records with 61 wineries and 417 attendees. Thank you to everyone who joined us!



Between the two events, we showcased 113 unique grape varieties, not including the nine more widely planted in California. Even more exciting was the response from attendees, who embraced the opportunity to discover something new. Through the festival's retail program, which allows guests to mix and match wines with no minimums, we sold 1,888 bottles of wine to the attendees, bringing varieties like Valdiguié, Trousseau, Gamay, Dornfelder, Terret Noir, Cunoise, Bourboulenc, Picpoul Blanc, Vermentino, and more into homes across the state. Seeing people welcome these lesser-known varieties into their lives is exactly what the festival was created to do.



Another moment that meant a great deal to me personally was being recognized, alongside Creative Director Eva Crawford, by the **Mayor of Los Angeles**, who honored us with **Certificates of Recognition** for the work we are doing through the festival. This acknowledgement was especially meaningful because of the tremendous effort behind the scenes, including a full rebrand this year, and the collaboration with winery and sponsor partners to deliver even more value to attendees. Together we continue to advocate for the innovators in the wine industry who are diversifying vineyards and producing the exciting wines that make this event possible. And we were proud to support Chrysalis, our charitable partner in the event.

While we have barely come up for air after these event, we are already talking about 2027 and will announce dates soon!

Looking ahead the next few months, the calendar is slowly filling up. This spring, I will be serving as a judge for several prestigious wine competitions. In addition to the Central Coast Wine Competition in Paso Robles, which I look forward to each year, I will also be judging at the Pacific Rim Wine Competition and the California State Fair Commercial Wine Competition.

I am also looking forward to returning to Paso Robles for a Regenerative Organic Certified (ROC) Media Workshop, an immersive three-day experience with six pioneering ROB wineries. It will be an opportunity to deepen my understanding of the practices shaping the next era of sustainable, high-quality wine and to spend time with the leaders advancing regenerative viticulture.

Up next, you will find updates since the last newsletter. Thank you, as always, for reading, for following along, for supporting, and for being part of this journey.



The Festival of Undiscovered Grapes - In The News

The response from attendees, partners, and the media has been incredibly encouraging, with coverage appearing across multiple outlets following both events.

"You walk into the Festival of Undiscovered Grapes and the first thing that hits you isn't prestige — it's range. Producers from everywhere. Bakersfield. Sierra Foothills. Lodi. Central Coast. Not the usual suspects. Not the usual script." thesommpour.substack.com: [The Other 7%](#) (March 30, 2026) by Anna Belani-Ellis

SoCal Restaurant Show 671: ["Festival of Undiscovered Grapes" with Participating Winery, Hitching Post Wines, Buellton. Weston Hartley, Winemaker](#) (March 21, 2026)

SoCal Restaurant Show Show 671: ["Festival of Undiscovered Grapes", Los Angeles, with Founder Allison Levine](#) (March 21, 2026)

JamesBrock.com: [It's Back, And Better Than Ever! Festival of Undiscovered Grapes Los Angeles Returns](#) (March 18, 2026) by James Brock

Piedmont Post: [Festival of Undiscovered Grapes: Featuring California's rare wines Part 2](#) (March 11, 2026) by Pierre DuMont, The Wine Corner

Piedmont Post: [Festival of Undiscovered Grapes: Featuring California's rare wines Part 1](#) (March 4, 2026) by Pierre DuMont, The Wine Corner

National Law Review: [Shale Oak Winemaker Curtis Hascall to Pour at Festival of Undiscovered Grapes](#) (February 27, 2026)

Wine Industry Advisor: [Festival of Undiscovered Grapes Celebrates Successful San Jose Debut, Returns to Los Angeles for Third Year This March](#) (February 18, 2026)

BevNet: [Festival of Undiscovered Grapes Celebrates Successful San Jose Debut, Returns to Los Angeles for Third Year This March](#) (February 18, 2026)

"It's still very early in the year, but I'll go out on a limb and say that this will be one of my favorite wine tasting events of 2026." - Grape-Nutz (February 7, 2026) [The Festival of Undiscovered Grapes – January 31, 2026](#) by Ken Zinns

"With 66 wineries and hundreds of wines to try, the inaugural Festival of Undiscovered Grapes, held at the Rotary Center in downtown San Jose, was abuzz with energy and variety." Edible Monterey (February 4, 2026) [10 + 10 Favorites and Takeaways from the Festival of Undiscovered Grapes](#) by Laura Ness

"This was their inaugural event in Northern California, and it was a smashing success..." California Wines & Wineries (February 1, 2026) [Festival of Undiscovered Grapes – Truly a Magnificent Event](#) by Michael Kelly

The Mercury News, East Bay Times (January 28, 2026) [Festival of Undiscovered Grapes comes to Silicon Valley](#)

The Mercury News (January 19, 2026) [California wines sweep 26th annual SF Chronicle Wine Competition and Festival of Undiscovered Grapes coming to San Jose Jan 31](#) by Laura Ness

Organic Wines Uncorked on Substack (January 16, 2026) [Who's Organic at the Jan. 31 San Jose Festival of Undiscovered Grapes? 14 Wineries to Try](#) by Pam Stayer

Vinography (January 15, 2026) [Drink Adventurously At the Festival Of Undiscovered Grapes: January 31, San Jose, CA](#) by Alder Yarrow

The Gormez (January 14, 2026) [Festival of the Undiscovered Grape](#) by Rebecca Gomez Farrell

California Wines and Wineries (January 14, 2026) [Forget Dry January, Discover New Wines in January!](#) by Michael Kelly

Edible Monterey Bay (January 13, 2026) [Spotlight on Undiscovered Grapes](#) by Laura Ness

Grape Experience (January 12, 2026) [Sip the Unexpected at the Festival of Undiscovered Grapes](#) by Cindy Rynning

Tri Valley Explorer (January 13, 2026) [Popular Local Supermarket Closes](#)

Tri Valley Explorer (January 8, 2026) [40 Things To Do this Weekend](#)

Tri Valley Explorer (December 23, 2025) [Ice Cream For Christmas + New Wine Festival You Can't Miss](#)

Daily Ovation (August 6, 2025) [“Festival of Undiscovered Grapes” Redefines California Wine Culture with Bold](#)

Flavr Report San Francisco (August 6, 2025) [The Festival of Undiscovered Grapes, coming January 31, 2026, Is the Bay Area’s Next Can’t-Miss Wine Event](#) by Beth Lange

Wine Business Monthly (August 6, 2025) [“Festival of Forgotten Grapes” Named One of the Nation’s Best Wine Festivals – Announces New Name, New City, and 2026 Dates](#)

Wine Industry Advisor (August 5, 2025) [“Festival of Forgotten Grapes” Named One of the Nation’s Best Wine Festivals – Announces New Name, New City, and 2026 Dates](#)



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More podcasts coming soon! But there are more than 200 interviews to check out in the meantime!

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: \(Well...Not Quite\): Unified Ferments Non-Alcoholic Fermented Tea](#)

[Please The Palate Wine of the Week: Crocker & Starr 2024 Estate Sauvignon Blanc, St. Helena, Napa Valley](#)

[Please The Palate Wine of the Week: Martha Stoumen 2024 Post Flirtation White, California](#)

[Please The Palate Wine of the Week: Giornata 2025 Orangotango, Paso Robles AVA](#)

[Please The Palate Wine of the Week: Velenosi 2024 Villa Angela Pecorino Offida DOCG, Marche](#)

[Please The Palate Wine of the Week: Dry Creek Vineyard 2023 Sparkling Chenin Blanc, Clarksburg](#)

[Please The Palate Wine of the Week: Saint Enzo 2024 Lambrusco Grasparossa di Castelvetro](#)

[Please The Palate Wine of the Week: Unsanctioned 2024 Pinot Gris, Oregon](#)

[Please The Palate Wine of the Week: Copain 2024 Daybreak Red Wine, North Coast, Sonoma County](#)

[Please The Palate Wine of the Week: Ettore 2021 Petit Verdot, Mendocino County](#)

[Please The Palate Wine of the Week: Josetta Saffirio Alta Langa 2021 DOCG Brut Metodo Classico](#)

[Please The Palate Wine of the Week: Ex Post Facto 2024 Pinot Noir, Sta. Rita Hills](#)

[Please The Palate Wine of the Week: Cascina Val Liberata 2022 Anarkoide Grignolino, Monferrato, Piemonte, Italy](#)

WINE STORIES

[Nebbiolo Beyond Expectations: Dinner with Luca Bosio at The Hideaway](#)

[Red Hills Lake County: Mountain Cabernet with a Sense of Place](#)

FOOD STORIES

[A Dodgers-Inspired Night at Habit Burger in Echo Park](#)

[Emporium Thai Market Makes a Thai-Fecta on Sawtelle](#)

