



Summer 2026 Newsletter

Summer has always felt like the season when we take a short breath. The first half of the year is behind us, harvest is on the horizon, and there is just enough time to reflect before the pace picks up again. Each summer also marks another year for **Please The Palate**. But this summer is especially meaningful because **June 7 marked the 15th anniversary of Please The Palate**.

When I started this business in 2011, I wanted to combine my passions for wine, travel, marketing, event planning, and storytelling to create memorable experiences. Fifteen years later, I still wake up excited to discover something new, explore new wineries and regions, meet the people behind the wines, and share their stories. The industry has certainly changed over those fifteen years, and so has my business, but my curiosity and love of wine remain exactly the same.

The anniversary also came with some exciting recognition. At the **Wine Travel Awards**, I was honored to receive the **Judges' Choice Award for Wine & Food Influencer** in the **Expert Opinion** category. Even more exciting, **The Festival of Undiscovered Grapes** was named the **Voting Winner for Enogastronomic Event of the Year**, a wonderful acknowledgment of the wineries, sponsors, partners, volunteers, and attendees who have embraced the festival's mission to celebrate California's lesser-known grape varieties.

I was also thrilled to learn that I was selected for the **longlist of the [67 Pall Mall Global Communicator Awards 2026](#)**. Out of a record **677 entries**, only **213 communicators** advanced to the longlist, and I was recognized in **three categories**:

- Best Global Wine Communicator in Audio** (Tenuta Bocca di Lupo Award)
- Best Global Wine Communicator in Long-Form Writing** (Laurent-Perrier Award)
- Best Global Wine Communicator in Short-Form Writing** (TEXSOM Award)

Finalists and winners will be announced in early July, and I am honored simply to be included among so many talented wine communicators from around the world.



The past few months have also been filled with opportunities to continue learning. I had the privilege of judging **four wine competitions** over the last two months, beginning with two new experiences for me: the **Pacific Rim Wine Competition** in San Bernardino and the **California State Fair Commercial Wine Competition** in Sacramento. I also returned to two competitions I always enjoy - the **Central Coast Wine Competition** in Paso Robles and the **Critics Challenge International Wine & Spirits Competition** in San Diego.

Judging wine is a great way to sharpen my palate (as well as stain my teeth - see above!).

Spending long days tasting alongside talented sommeliers, retailers, educators, fellow journalists, and sometimes winemakers is both humbling and inspiring. Beyond evaluating wines, it challenges my palate, exposes me to emerging regions and producers, and allows me to exchange ideas with some of the most respected professionals in the industry. Every competition makes me a better taster.

Wine competitions are also beneficial for wineries and, ultimately, consumers. Wine competitions provide wineries with objective feedback from experienced judges and offer valuable recognition in an increasingly competitive marketplace. A medal can introduce consumers to producers they may never have discovered otherwise and can provide an important marketing tool, particularly for smaller wineries that don't have large advertising budgets. And for consumers, these medals can serve as a helpful starting point when faced with hundreds of bottles on a shelf.



California also kept me on the road this quarter. Between winery visits, podcast interviews, and wine deliveries, I found myself traveling throughout the state, from Santa Barbara and Paso Robles to Napa, Sonoma, Livermore Valley, and, for the very first time, California's beautiful Sierra Foothills. The Sierra Foothills quickly became one of the highlights of the season, where I recorded several interviews for the **Wine Soundtrack USA** podcast while exploring a region rich in history and exciting wines.

One of my favorite events this spring was returning to **Cab Franc-a-Palooza** in Livermore Valley. In addition to enjoying the wines, I helped manage the retail component of the event, which was offered for the first time, making it easy for attendees to purchase the wines they discovered. I love helping connect people with wines they love and knowing those bottles will be enjoyed around their own dinner tables long after the event ends.



That same philosophy continues with **The Festival of Undiscovered Grapes**. We wrapped up fulfillment of all 2026 wine orders in April, delivering nearly 1,900 bottles from the San Jose and Los Angeles festivals. While those deliveries are complete, planning for 2027 is already well

underway. I'm excited to share that the Festival will return to **San Jose on Saturday, January 30, 2027**, and **Los Angeles on Saturday, April 3, 2027**. There is plenty of work ahead, but I can't wait to continue introducing even more people to California's remarkable under-the-radar grape varieties.

As always, the coming months promise more travel, more stories, and plenty of discoveries in the glass. Thank you for following along over these past fifteen years. Whether you've been with me since the beginning or have only recently joined this journey, I truly appreciate your support. Here's to continuing the adventure.



🍷 **Discover Something New** 🍷

If you've followed me for a while, you know I love discovering wines that fly under the radar. That's the inspiration behind The Festival of Undiscovered Grapes, and it is also why I'm proud to be a Sommsation Ambassador. Sommsation connects wine lovers with exceptional curated wines from small, independent wineries, many of which you'll never find in your local wine shop. The collection is hand-selected by world-class sommeliers, and if you are looking to explore beyond the familiar, I highly recommend taking a look.

[Check out the wine offerings on Sommsation](#)



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:

[Booker Vineyards - Hilary Graves](#)

[Saint Enzo - Myisha Moore](#)

[Woo Girl! Cellars - Vivian Valenzuela](#)

Wine Soundtrack is available on [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: Marbeso 2023 Williams Ranch Pinot Noir, Santa Cruz Mountains](#)

[Please The Palate Wine of the Week: Armay Vineyard 2025 Cabernet Franc Blanc](#)

[Please The Palate Wine of the Week: Cairjn Wine Cellars 2024 Assyrtiko, Paso Robles Geneseo District](#)

[Please The Palate Wine of the Week: Taboadella Villae White 2023, Dão, Portugal](#)

[Please The Palate Wine of the Week: Post & Vine 2019 Carignane, Sandy Lane Vineyard, Contra Costa County](#)

[Please The Palate Wine of the Week: Langhart & Hill 2023 Ka-Le Malvasia Bianca, Dry Creek Valley](#)

[Please The Palate Wine of the Week: Steven Kent 2024 Rock Cabernet Franc, Morgensen Family Vineyard, Livermore Valley](#)

[Please The Palate Wine of the Week: Ulloa Cellars 2024 Semillon, Vogelzang Vineyard, Happy Canyon](#)

[Please The Palate Wine of the Week: Alois Lageder 2025 Riff Pinot Grigio Delle Venezie DOC](#)

[Please The Palate Wine of the Week: Domaine du Gringet 2020 Eponyme, Savoie, France](#)

[Please The Palate Wine of the Week: Domaine Bousquet 2021 Gaia Malbec, Gualtallary, Uco Valley, Argentina](#)

[Please The Palate Wine of the Week: Ancient Oak 2024 Pinot Meunier, Van der Kamp Vineyard, Sonoma Mountain](#)

[Please The Palate Wine of the Week: Bellenda Fratelli Cosmo Prosecco DOC Rosé](#)

WINE STORIES

[Andreola: Valdobbiadene DOCG Wines That Speak of Place
A Rare Tasting with Sea Smoke Winery and the Return of Botella](#)

[Nizza in a Glass: The Story of Frasca La Guaragna](#)

[Wine for Sushi: The Vision Behind Xander Soren Wines](#)

LIFESTYLE STORIES

[The Art of Quiet Luxury: Three Women-Led Vineyard Retreats in Italy](#)
[Finally, a Solution for My Spotty Wine Glasses: the Clear360 Glassware Polisher](#)

[The Future of Wine Is Changing. The Community Around It Is Not.](#)

