



Fall 2026 Newsletter

Summer was hot. And my travels made it even hotter.

August was an especially busy month, with travels that took me from California to Texas to Washington, D.C., all in the heat of summer. Of course, Los Angeles wasn't exactly much cooler!

The month started with a trip to Napa for some winery visits before I headed to Houston, where I squeezed in some eating and drinking with a friend before getting to work on events for **Wines of South Australia** in Houston and Dallas. From Texas, I continued to Washington, D.C., for a small reunion with longtime friends.

I came home, unpacked, and almost immediately packed again, this time for Santa Ynez and one of my favorite annual events, **Sta. Rita Hills Wine & Fire**. This year marked the 25th anniversary of Wine & Fire, which made me realize that I am also "celebrating" 25 years in the wine industry. My career in wine began in 2001, after the dot-com bubble burst. It is remarkable to think about how much has changed since then, and how much I have learned, tasted, traveled, and experienced.

From Santa Ynez, I headed north to Lodi for its first annual wine showcase and then continued to Lake County for an overnight visit with Brassfield Estate Winery and an interview for the *Wine Soundtrack USA* podcast. Add it all together, and August was quite a busy month!

September, thankfully, was quieter. I stayed close to home, attended local events, wrote, and focused on the many projects happening behind the scenes, including planning for the **2027 Festival of Undiscovered Grapes**.

But amid all of the activity, this summer also brought a tremendous loss. At the end of August, I lost a dear friend from the wine industry. It was a painful reminder that the relationships we build through this work ultimately mean far more than the wines we taste, the places we travel, or the events we attend. After 25 years in this industry, I am especially grateful for the friendships it has given me.

As summer comes to an end and fall begins, there are new things ahead. Thank you, as always, for reading and following along. Now, let's see what fall brings.



✈️ Where Are You Going Next? ✈️

If you've followed me for any length of time, you know how much I love to travel. I also love planning my own trips—researching hotels, restaurants, tours, and experiences, and finding those special places that are a little off the beaten path. But I also know just how much time that can take.

So, I have some news: **I am now a Fora Travel Advisor!**

It feels like a natural extension of what I already do. I can help plan and book travel anywhere, from a weekend getaway or cruise to an international vacation, but I am especially excited to help people **plan wine- and food-focused trips.**

For me, wine travel is about more than visiting the most famous wineries. I love discovering the small, family-owned producers, exploring regions that may not be on everyone's radar, eating where the locals eat, and experiencing a destination through its wine, food, culture, and people.

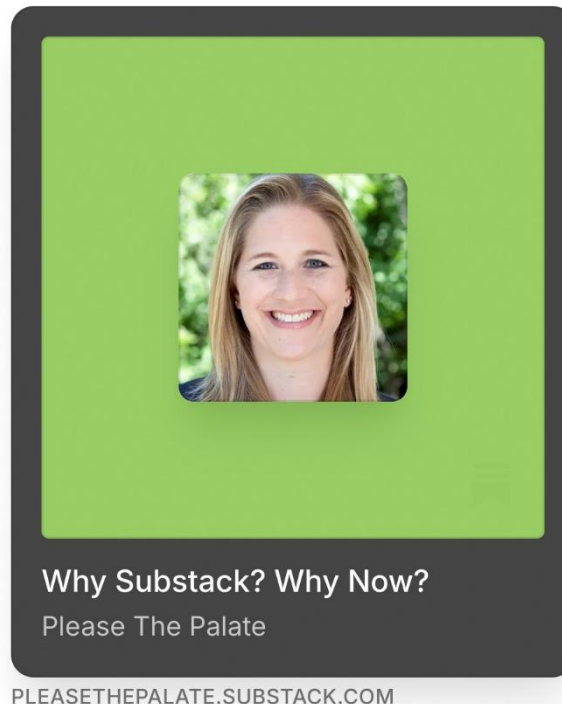
Whether you want to spend a few days in Napa or Sonoma, explore an emerging California wine region, or plan a wine adventure through Italy, France, Portugal, Croatia, or beyond, I can help you put the pieces together and take some of the hours of research off your plate.

And your trip doesn't have to be about wine! I can help with hotels, cruises, weekend getaways, international vacations, and more. Booking through me may also include benefits at qualifying hotels, such as complimentary breakfast, property credits, upgrades, and early check-in and late checkout, often at the same rate you would book yourself. And the biggest draw - **it's FREE to work with me**, as my commission comes from the vendor.

You can also be as involved as you want. Already know exactly where you want to stay? Send it to me. Have a destination in mind but don't know where to begin? I can help with that too.

Have a trip in mind? Where are you going next? 🌍 Tell me where you want to go.

[Start planning your trip with me.](#)



📌 A New Place to Follow Please The Palate

After more than 15 years of writing on PleaseThePalate.com, I have added another place to share my stories: [Substack](#).

Don't worry! The Please The Palate blog isn't going anywhere. Substack gives me another way to connect with readers and share my writing directly. I'll be publishing wine and travel stories there,

including some of the deeper dives into regions, producers, people, and experiences that inspire me.

I am also using Substack for something a little different. I recently started sharing my **Communication Series**, short reflections about how we communicate, listen, disagree, question what we think we know, and understand perspectives different from our own. It is a subject that has always interested me. I even have a Master's degree in International Communication, which gives me space to explore ideas beyond wine.

So whether you come for the wine, the travel, the stories, or the conversations, I hope you'll follow along.

[Subscribe to Please The Palate on Substack →](#)



🍷 SAVE THE DATE(S) 🍷

Planning is well underway for the [2027 Festival of Undiscovered Grapes](#), and I am excited to announce that we will return to [San Jose on Saturday, January 30, 2027](#), and [Los Angeles on Saturday, April 3, 2027](#). We are almost full with wineries, and I cannot wait to share more about what we have planned.

Mark your calendars!
Tickets are on sale NOW!
(click on the city/date above)



🍷 **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:

[Starfield Vineyards - Robert Sinton](#)

[Four Ponds Winery - Steve Leveque](#)

[Lava Cap - Nolan Jones](#)

[Tablas Creek - Erin Mason](#)

[Absolution Cellars - Dirk Neumann](#)

[Cairjn Wine Cellars - Andy Neja](#)

[Alta Collina - Maggie Tillman](#)

[Ulloa - Nancy Ulloa](#)

[Vinyl Vineyards - Jeffrey and Dina Hervet](#)

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: Domaine Carneros 2022 Cuvée de la Pompadour Brut Rosé](#)

[Please The Palate Wine of the Week: Vinyl Vineyards 2023 “Jota” Iberian Blend, Geneseo Sub District, Paso Robles AVA](#)

[Please The Palate Wine of the Week: Pali Wine Co. 2025 Wild Series Skin-Contact White Wine, Central Coast](#)

[Please The Palate Wine of the Week: Thumbprint Cellars 2024 NuVo of Cabernet Franc, Dry Creek Valley, Sonoma](#)

[Please The Palate Wine of the Week: Alamati Wines 2025 North Canyon Vineyard Albariño, Santa Maria Valley](#)

[Please The Palate Wine of the Week: Brassfield Estate 2023 Viognier, High Valley AVA, Lake County](#)

[Please The Palate Wine of the Week: Donum 2022 Single Vineyard Chardonnay, Russian River Valley](#)

[Please The Palate Wine of the Week: Unico Zelo 2024 Fresh A.F. Riverland, South Australia](#)

[Please The Palate Wine of the Week: Charles Krug 2025 Limited Release Napa Valley Chenin Blanc](#)

[Please The Palate Wine of the Week: Post & Vine 2022 Carignane, Testa Vineyard, Mendocino](#)

[Please The Palate Wine of the Week: Kanpai Wines Hi No Tori 2023 Rosé of Cabernet Sauvignon, Meadowbrook Farm Estate, Napa Valley](#)

[Please The Palate Wine of the Week: Right Turn Wine Co 2022 Santa Barbara Pinot Noir](#)

[Please The Palate Wine of the Week: Lyons Vineyard 2023 Syrah, Los Olivos District, Santa Barbara County](#)

WINE STORIES

[Frerejean Frères: A New Champagne House Arrives in California](#)

[The Magic and the Math: How a Tech Engineer Is Building a Winery for the Long Game in Paso Robles](#)

[Lodi: The Wine Region Hiding in Plain Sight](#)

[Le Vigne Winery: An Unexpected Wine and Cheese Destination in Los Angeles](#)

[A Taste of Time: A Sta. Rita Hills Retrospective](#)

[“Farm Like The World Depends on It” – Why Paso Robles Growers Are Choosing Regenerative Organic Farming](#)

LIFESTYLE STORIES

[Do You Really Need a Different Wine Glass for Every Wine? One Gabriel-Glas Does It All.](#)

FOOD STORIES

[Bar Xuntos: A Taste of Spain in the Heart of Santa Monica](#)

[The Habit Burger & Grill Launches Habit & Co. with Chef Jet Tila's Korean Street Food Menu](#)

[Grab a Burger, Support Children's Hospital Los Angeles: Habit Burger's One-Night Fundraiser on July 16](#)

ON COMMUNICATIONS: CONVERSATIONS WORTH HAVING

[Facts are the Foundation](#)

[Power of Owning Our Mistakes](#)

