SONOMA COUNTY WINEGROWERS

Photo: George Rose
Sonoma County Winegrowers (SCW), was established in 2006 as a marketing and educational organization dedicated to the promotion and preservation of Sonoma County as one of the world’s premier grape growing regions. SCW has oversight by the California Department of Food and Agriculture, which supports producer regions. With more than 1,800 grape growers, SCW’s goal is to increase awareness and recognition of the quality and diversity of Sonoma County’s grapes and wines through dynamic marketing and educational programs targeted to wine consumers and wine influencers around the world.

**MISSION**
The mission of Sonoma County Winegrowers is to increase the value of Sonoma County winegrapes while nurturing and protecting sustainable agriculture for future generations.

**VALUES**

Family Farming: Sustaining a farm or a family requires love, commitment and hard work.

High Quality: We are blessed with a diversity of climate, soil and setting. We bring forth the world’s finest abundance of winegrape varietals.

Stewardship: This is the land where we love, live and work. We are committed to sustaining, preserving and protecting it for future generations.

Community: Sustainable agriculture depends on vibrant and healthy people. We treat our neighbors, workforce and our community as an extension of our family

**2019/2020 COMMISSIONERS**

Glenn Proctor (Chairman)
The Ciatti Company

Mark Sanchietti (Vice Chairman)
Sanchietti Farming, Inc.

Tony Bugica
Atlas Vineyard Management

Joe Dutton
Dutton Ranch & Dutton Estate Winery

Ray Johnson (Public Member at Large)
Wine Business Institute, Sonoma State University

George Martinelli
Martinelli Winery

Doug McIlroy
Rodney Strong Vineyards

Bret Munselle (Secretary)
Munselle Vineyards

Brad Petersen
Silver Oak Cellars & Twomey Cellars

Steve Sangiacomo
Sangiacomo Family Vineyards & Sangiacomo Family Wines

Taylor Serres
Serres Corporation

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Vino Farms, Inc.

Kevin Barr
Redwood Empire Vineyard Management

Domenic Carinalli
D&L Carinalli Vineyards

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Darden Vineyard

Kris Hicks
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Alta Vista Vineyards

Mark Pasternack
Devil’s Gulch Ranch

Richard Schaefers
Silverado Investment Management Co

Rhonda Smith (Public Member at Large)
UC Cooperative Extension

Carolyn Wasem
Jackson Family Wines

Robert Weinstock
E&J Gallo Winery

**SONOMA COUNTY WINEGROWERS TEAM**

Karissa Kruse
President

Kate Piontek
Vice President of Operations

Amy Tesconi
Director of Marketing & Public Relations

Dana Cappelloni
Director of Sustainability & Grower Education

Alisha Basich
Business Development & Program Manager

Valerie Pearce
Business Manager

Kaitlyn Silva
Marketing Coordinator

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**STAY CONNECTED:**

- www.sonomawinegrape.org
- www.sonomawine.com
- Instagram.com/sonomacountywinegrowers
- Twitter.com/sonomagrapes
- Facebook.com/sonomavintners
- Facebook.com/sonomawinegrape
- Instagram.com/sonomacountywinegrowers
Sonoma County Vintners is dedicated to raising awareness for Sonoma County as one of the world’s premier wine regions. Sonoma County Vintners represents over 260 wineries throughout the county. Activities include: actively promoting Sonoma County through experiential event marketing and educational programming; advocating for the wine industry at local, state and federal levels; as well as actively addressing issues and challenges impacting our wine community. In addition, we support local communities throughout the region through charitable giving with the Sonoma County Vintners Foundation.

MISSION
Sonoma County Vintners is the leading voice for the Sonoma County wine community, dedicated to growing awareness and demand for our wines amongst trade, media and consumers around the world.

VALUES
We are devoted to marketing the exceptional value of Sonoma County wines.
We are passionate about bringing unique opportunities to the forefront for our members to succeed.
We are driven to increase awareness of Sonoma County wines with substantial public relations outreach.
We are committed to advocate for our winery members through community and government relations.
Through our Sonoma County Vintners Foundation, we are dedicated to supporting the local community.

2019 EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
President:
Russell Joy
Patz & Hall Winery of Ste. Michelle Wine Estates
Vice President:*
Mark Malpiede
Williams Selyem Winery
Secretary/Treasurer:
Ana Keller
Keller Estate
President, Sonoma County Vintners Foundation:
Clay Mauritson
Mauritson Family Wines
Carmen Castaldi
Rodney Strong Vineyards

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Gallo Family Wines
David Ramey
Ramey Wine Cellars
Bettina Sichel***
Laurel Glen Vineyard
Kim Stare Wallace
Dry Creek Vineyard

SONOMA COUNTY VINTNERS TEAM
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Executive Director
Julia Conover
Winery & Donor Development Manager
Barbara Cox
Director of Marketing & Communications
Madison Garzoli
Membership & Foundation Programs Manager
Karl Grimm
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Jesslyn Jackson
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Leah Malfatti
Director of Sponsorship & Strategic Partnerships
Jenni Meyer
Creative & Social Media Manager
Anna Ming
Business Operations Manager
Vanessa Renée
Events Director

New 2020 Board members will be announced in January.
* Incoming President 2020  /  **Community Seat  /  *** Outgoing 2019
Something magical happens every year in Sonoma County. As a community, we get to witness the winegrape harvest. The culmination of a year of tending to the vines and making thoughtful decisions around cover crops and water use. The sharing of generational knowledge steeped in a sustainability ethic. The budbreak, bloom, set and eventual veraison that are farming signals that the grapes are on course for another Sonoma County vintage. It is the vineyards, which date back to 1812 in Sonoma County, along with their agriculture counterparts – dairies, poultry, cattle and others, that give Sonoma County its rural character, its beauty, its open space. And it is our local farmers, our grape growers, who are the stewards of this irreplaceable resource.

As we start a new year and a new decade, there is a lot to celebrate - over the past ten years, Sonoma County was the first wine region in the world to make a formal commitment to sustainability. In September of 2019, we accomplished that goal with 99% of our vineyards having achieved sustainability certification. We were then the first to announce a Climate Adaptation Certification for Agriculture in partnership with the California Land Stewardship Institute. This climate friendly farming program takes the sustainability foundation built over the five-year commitment to a new level with specific best management practices and certification focused on all greenhouse gasses, their emissions and sequestration (read more about it on page 13). The past decade also brought the creation of the 100-year business plan for agriculture in 2015 that supported the reason for sustainability. We launched the Sonoma County Center for Ag Sustainability in 2017 to bring outside experts in from around the country to help us think bigger, broader and better about our issues and opportunities in grape growing and wine. In 2018 we announced the “sustainably farmed grapes” label that was made available for wineries to support the 2017 vintage and those moving forward. In 2019, was the innovative launch of augmented reality for our sustainable wine partners (page 14). And over the past 5 years, Sonoma County Winegrowers has secured over $1,500,000 in grants to support the growers’ investment in marketing the Sonoma County wine region.

Of all of the changes and accomplishments over the last decade, what I am most proud of is the relaunch (in 2016) and work of the Sonoma County Grape Growers Foundation that shifted the focus and importance to social sustainability and supporting our farmworkers and their families. Over the past two years, the Foundation has provided over $1,000,000 directly to our local farmworkers for wildfire recovery, housing support, workforce development and recognition. This support came from many partners around the county who recognize that a strong workforce creates the long-term preservation of local agriculture.

With those major milestones over the past ten years, culminating with our selection as Wine Region of the Year by Wine Enthusiast, we enter 2020 with renewed energy and focus on promoting Sonoma County and our local grape growers. We know the wine market is changing. We know that the costs and complications of farming are escalating. We know that there are challenges of succession, regulations and labor. There has never been a more important time to engage locally, continue our sustainability leadership and market Sonoma County regionally, nationally and globally on behalf of the wine community. I am excited about our plans for 2020. I am encouraged by our partnership with Sonoma County Vintners. And I am inspired by all of our winegrowers. Let’s start this new decade with a collective vision for prosperity and preservation of Sonoma County agriculture.

Thank you for your support!

Karissa Kruse
President, Sonoma County Winegrowers
Happy New Year!

As we say goodbye to 2019 and look towards an exciting new year, I would like to take a moment to express how inspired I am by our Sonoma County wine community. Last year was full of achievements, including an exceptional Taste of Sonoma and Sonoma County Barrel Auction, events that truly showcased this great county, and the record-setting success of the Sonoma County Wine Auction that raised a record-breaking $6.1M this year for our Sonoma County nonprofit beneficiary partners. Sonoma County was named “Wine Region of the Year” by Wine Enthusiast, an incredible recognition of our wine community that produces amazing wines and provides unparalleled experiences. In addition, we were proud to be awarded the North Bay Business Journal’s 2019 Community Philanthropy Award. We raised awareness for this beautiful wine region and welcomed the world to Sonoma County by hosting a Japanese contingency for Sonoma Summit. We also took Sonoma County on the road to Calgary to engage with trade, media and consumer guests.

In addition to these successes, Sonoma County Vintners was thrilled to produce many programs, including, but not limited to: the Wine Advocate tastings, Wine Enthusiast’s Editorial Conference, our KSRO “Vintners Vibe” radio show and our government relations and community engagement programs. These programs build awareness of the outstanding wines made in Sonoma County and the authentic stories of each of our winery members, furthering our goal of sharing this world-class wine region with existing and new audiences. We continue to strive to increase demand for Sonoma County wine and encourage more visitors.

Events late in the year once again provided extreme challenges and difficulties for many in our community, but they also demonstrated our community’s resilience, strength, selflessness, commitment, generosity and caring for our neighbors. I would like to once again say “thank you” to our extraordinary First Responders, community and county leaders, our Trio partners at Sonoma County Tourism and Sonoma County Winegrowers, our American Viticulture Area (A.V.A.) partners, and to all of you in our wine community for all you did and continue to do, to “answer the call” and help meet the needs of our county during those challenging days.

While Sonoma County Vintners’ mission is centered on spreading the global message of our phenomenal wines and wineries, we continue to focus on working to make Sonoma County one of the world’s most beautiful locations to live, work and thrive. Together, we will continue to move forward, set a new standard and lead Sonoma County and our wine community to even greater levels of excellence, visibility, and compassion.

Thank you once again. We are grateful for all of your support!

Michael Haney
Executive Director, Sonoma County Vintners/Sonoma County Vintners Foundation
Sonoma County is one of the most diverse and progressive winegrowing regions in the world,” said Adam Strum, Chairman and Publisher of Wine Enthusiast. “From powerhouse varieties like Chardonnay and Pinot Noir that produce famed bottlings of prominence to classic California wines made from Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Zinfandel and more, Sonoma County is renowned for producing high-quality wines of distinction. The region is also a standard-bearer for best practices beyond just wine production, as a champion of true sustainability.”

The accolade recognizes Sonoma County for the many attributes that make it a unique and special wine region. Wine Enthusiast described the wonderful diversity of wine types and varieties in the region as well as the sustainability efforts and exceptional wine quality. The record-breaking announcement that 99% of our local vineyard acreage is certified sustainable was highlighted as a reason for the decision as well as the recent announcement around Sonoma County’s exclusive partnership with the California Land Stewardship Institute's Climate Adaptation Certification Program, the first program of its kind available for agriculture. “Sonoma County is a truly special place with its multi-generational family grape growers and vintners who are committed to sustainability, supporting our local community and preserving agriculture for the next generation,” said Karissa Kruse, President of Sonoma County Winegrowers. “It means so much to our local wine community to receive this incredible honor from Wine Enthusiast recognizing that in Sonoma County world-class quality wines come from local families who care.”

The recognition also pointed to successful events such as the annual Sonoma County Wine Auction and the Taste of Sonoma. The former is one of the nation’s top charitable wine auctions and has raised more than $36 million since its inception to support those in need in Sonoma County. Taste of Sonoma, the annual premier wine and food festival, spotlights Sonoma County’s renowned vintners and chefs and allows locals and visitors to try offerings from a large variety of wineries and restaurants throughout Sonoma County.

“Sonoma County is one of the most diverse and progressive winegrowing regions in the world”

Adam Strum
Chairman and Publisher of Wine Enthusiast

“This is an incredible recognition of the world-class wines and winegrowers that have made Sonoma County exceptional,” said Michael Haney, Executive Director of Sonoma County Vintners. “Generations of families in this wine community have devoted their time, effort and care to making this the best wine region. There is a real sense of pride in everything this community does from winery hospitality to their contributions to those in need. Sonoma County truly is authentic and approachable!”

On behalf of both of our organizations, the multi-generational family grape growers and vintners, and the Sonoma County wine industry at large, thank you, Wine Enthusiast, for this incredible honor.
2019 was another busy year for Sonoma County Winegrowers and Sonoma County Vintners. From planning events and hosting media to traveling nationally and internationally to spread the word about Sonoma County, we hit the streets and showed up ready to talk good times and great wine!

CHECK OUT THE NEXT FEW PAGES TO SEE SOME HIGHLIGHTS FROM EACH ORGANIZATIONS’ EXCITING AND EVENTFUL YEAR!
YEAR IN REVIEW

Highlights from an exciting year of promoting Sonoma County sustainability, quality and diversity!

Grower Events
In 2019, SCW hosted three large grower events: Dollars & Sense, Sustainable Winegrowing Field Day and Grower BBQ. In addition, we co-hosted a series of integrated pest management meetings and collaborative events supporting the sharing of best management practices for our winegrowers.

Pebble Beach Food & Wine
In April, 2019, Sonoma County Winegrowers was the exclusive sponsor for Pebble Beach Food & Wine’s Somm Smack-Down event! This wine and culinary pairing challenge is part education and part warm welcome for the many sommeliers who attend this event annually in order to work and learn about quality wines. The opportunity got this group of influencers buzzing early about the wonderful wines of Sonoma County.

Congressional Wine Caucus
For the third year, we hosted the Congressional Wine Caucus in Washington, D.C. Along with several local winegrowers, SCW President Karissa Kruse and Congressman Mike Thompson, U.S. Representative for California’s 5th Congressional District presented our key messages to the bipartisan Wine Caucus Congressional Members, Agricultural Legislators, other representatives and staff.

Ag Center for Sustainability
2019 marked the third meeting of this think tank, established in 2017 to identify and focus on the most challenging problems facing the local wine community to ensure its continued success and the preservation of Sonoma County’s agricultural heritage. Our expert members represent a wealth of expertise and experience from within and outside wine and agriculture. The 2019 Ag Center session focused on the changing industry economics for Sonoma County’s winegrowing families.

Millennial Focus Groups & Ambassadors
As part of a new initiative to understand how the millennial consumer is interacting with wine, SCW hosted a variety of “Happy Hour” events. In each market we visited this year, we asked a local social media influencer to invite friends and followers within the Millennial age range to join us for a glass of wine and a discussion about how they interact (or do not interact) with wine in their own lives. The results will be analyzed and presented to our winegrower and winery partners this year. Of course, we are keeping in touch with this group and creating a great team of Sonoma County ambassadors nationwide!
Sustainability Press Conference
In September, we proudly announced that 99% of Sonoma County’s vineyards had been certified sustainable by a third-party auditor. This news came five years after we made the commitment to be the most sustainable wine region in the world. The collaborative efforts of the winegrowing community here in Sonoma County were unprecedented and we couldn’t have been prouder. What’s next? We are tackling Climate Adaptation through a new certification program, the first of its kind for agriculture. Read more about this exciting new collaboration with the California Land Stewardship Institute on page 13.

Wine Enthusiast Hosting
In July, in collaboration with our partners at Sonoma County Vintners and Sonoma County Tourism, SCW hosted 60 members of the editorial and administrative teams for Wine Enthusiast Magazine in Sonoma County for their annual editorial meetings. On our day to host, writers were picked up in vineyard trucks to participate in “Tailgate Talks” with 20 of our local winegrowers from all over the county. This included being taken in groups of 2-3 to vineyards in different AVAs where they learned the story of the land and family and sipped wine in the place where it is grown. After, we threw a good old-fashioned wine country barbecue in Russian River Valley - complete with a mechanical bull!

Sustainability Camp
During a beautiful break in our Spring rains, we hosted 11 food, beverage business and lifestyle media from across the U.S. at our first annual Sustainable Winegrowing Camp. This first-of-its-kind immersive experience exposed our guests to the multi-faceted world of sustainable winegrowing and the effects that sustainable practices have on the vineyard, business, community, wine and employees. After three days, our guests left as valued friends and have written multiple stories about these experiences.

Mini Sonoma in the City
This year, Sonoma County Winegrowers hit the road (and the air) again to educate trade influencers and media about Sonoma County’s commitment to sustainability, the diverse offerings from our 18 American Viticultural Areas and our quality wines. Throughout the year we visited New York, D.C., Minneapolis, Chicago, Milwaukee, San Diego, Los Angeles and Seattle. Hosting media events and meetings, we met influential writers in each market and through a partnership with the Guild of Sommeliers, we hosted Sonoma County Master courses with trade influencers in these key cities.

SCGGF Breakfast in the Vineyard
In August, Sonoma County Grape Growers Foundation invited guests from the community to our first annual Harvest Breakfast in the Vineyard to educate our local leaders about our programs and help identify and build partnerships with community organizations that help support farmworkers and their families in Sonoma County.
Sonoma County Barrel Auction
National and international trade buyers convened on Friday, May 3 in the heart of Sonoma County’s Russian River Valley at the spectacular MacMurray Estate Vineyards for the Fifth Annual Sonoma County Barrel Auction. Eighty-five “Never Before, Never Again” wine lots handcrafted for this year’s auction raised a total of $645,000. The Sonoma County Barrel Auction has generated over $3.4 million since its inception in 2015. This year’s auction was attended by over 450 guests and featured rare small lot wines ranging from 5 to 20 cases.

Taste of Sonoma
Taste of Sonoma, presented by Visa Signature®, showcased Sonoma County’s most renowned wineries and chefs and offered wine and culinary enthusiasts access to taste and experience Sonoma County on August 31, 2019. The one-day immersive lineup at the picturesque Green Music Center at Sonoma State University included a walk-around wine grand tasting area, a chefs pavilion, guided wine seminars and exclusive themed lounges.

Sonoma County Wine Month
Celebrating its Fourth Anniversary, Sonoma County Vintners shared exceptional programming for Sonoma County Wine Month in October. With more than 60 varietals of wines, unique special offers and extraordinary regional events there were more reasons than ever to honor Sonoma County Wine Month in 2019. Wine lovers were encouraged to mark their calendars to celebrate at home with stunning wines and start planning their next Sonoma County wine country visit in October.

Spotlights from 2019 - activities that continued to showcase Sonoma County as a world-class wine region!
INTERNATIONAL PROGRAMS 2019

ProWein / Germany
Sonoma County Vintners attended ProWein in Dusseldorf, Germany from March 17-19, 2019. Member wineries participated in seminar programming and made appointments with importers and distributors from key export markets through the Sonoma County Vintners booth at the California Wines exhibit. More than 60,000 trade visitors attended this event!

Sonoma Summit / Japan
Sonoma County Vintners hosted a group of 10 trade (including two importers) and media from Japan on April 29 - May 3, 2019. The five-day program included in-depth master classes across Sonoma County and interactive multi-vintner events. This group also attended the Sonoma County Barrel Auction events.

Sonoma in the City / Calgary
Sonoma County Vintners brought 25 principals and export managers of our member wineries to Calgary for trade, media and consumer activations in June. The three-day program included a consumer event hosted at Willow Park an Alberta retailer with over 100 in attendance, a trade tasting and master class at Fort Calgary and a media day with our partners at Sonoma County Tourism.

Sonoma County Wine Auction
A record-breaking $6.1 million was raised at the 2019 Sonoma County Wine Auction, presented by Visa Signature®. Overall, more than $36 million has been raised to date to support charitable organizations focused on literacy, education, health and human services, the environment, and arts and culture in Sonoma County. Gina Gallo of E. & J. Gallo Winery and Christopher Jackson of Jackson Family Wines served as Honorary Co-Chairs at this year’s auction, which was held at La Crema Estate at Saralee’s Vineyard.

Wine Enthusiast Conference
Sonoma County Vintners partnered with Sonoma County Tourism and Sonoma County Winegrowers to host the Wine Enthusiast for their 2019 conference. Staff members flew in from across the country (and a few out of the country) to explore and fall in love with the Sonoma County wine region. They enjoyed outstanding wines, adventures in the vineyards, Sonoma County hospitality at its best and basked in the shade of the beautiful redwoods.
“I have long felt that sustainability is the best approach to ensure we protect our land for future generations, improve the quality of life for our employees and enhance the community where we live and work.”

Duff Bevill
Bevill Vineyard Management
Past Chair, SCW Board of Directors

As our farmers here in Sonoma County well-know, five years ago SCW made a bold declaration to the wine world that our more than 1,800 winegrowers were committed to becoming the nation’s first 100% certified sustainable wine region in 2019. In September, we were so happy to announce that since 2014, Sonoma County has achieved a record-breaking 99% sustainability certification in our local vineyards.

Congratulations to all the winegrowers who believed in this commitment and worked together to make this unprecedented milestone possible. This initiative has put Sonoma County on the global map as leaders in sustainability. We are exceedingly proud to represent such a hard-working, passionate group of people and we can’t thank you enough for all you have done to make this commitment a reality.

A grower recently said that “follow” is not part of our vocabulary here in Sonoma County. That is why Sonoma County Winegrowers also announced, with the support of our Board of Directors, a new program that will continue to build on our sustainability leadership. Sonoma County Winegrowers will be an exclusive partner with the California Land Stewardship Institute – the same organization behind Fish Friendly Farming – in a Climate Adaptation Certification Program. This is the first program of its kind available in the world for agriculture. The program is completely voluntary for growers, offering an additional step in our sustainability evolution for those who wish to pursue it. Our partnership will include a year-long pilot with approximately 20 grape growers around the county who will help refine the program models to better understand best practices for lowering gas emissions and sequestering carbon. This will result in gathering measurable data for climate-friendly farming practices.

The Climate Adaptation Certification program is a customized farm plan that will track the impact of climate friendly farming practices. The program will focus on proven scientific concepts that growers can implement without compromising their farming practices. It will limit nitrous oxide emissions and focus on carbon sequestration to improve the health of the soil and the farm. The program meets both the State of California’s climate goals and the United States Department of Agriculture’s Healthy Soil goals.

“Through the Climate Adaptation Certification program, both the grower and the public will be able to better understand the role of vineyards in climate change and the immediate benefits of agricultural practices that reduce greenhouse gas emissions and sequester carbon,” said Laurel Marcus, Executive Director of the California Land Stewardship Institute, and our partner on the program. She added, "We are excited to collaborate on this pilot project with the Sonoma County Winegrowers who have demonstrated great leadership in land stewardship and environmental responsibility."

Duff Bevill, owner of Bevill Vineyard Management and past chair of the SCW Board of Directors, is often referred to as the Godfather of Sustainability (at least by us) and is credited with playing a key role in bringing the idea of committing to 100% sustainability to the SCW board and local growers. He is excited about participating in the first Climate Adaptation Certification program for vineyards.

“I have long felt that sustainability is the best approach to ensure we protect our land for future generations, improve the quality of life for our employees and enhance the community where we live and work,” said Bevill. He added, “That foundation is critical as we now look to reduce and document greenhouse gas emissions and further our carbon sequestration efforts. Though the issue is big, there is little understanding as to what solutions can make a difference. This program excites me because it has a lot of depth to it and it will enable us to actually monitor and determine how best to lower our impact through a combination of best management practices.”

As we have come so very close to the goal of 100% sustainability and are participating in the first Climate Adaptation Certification for vineyards, consumers can always purchase Sonoma County wines with confidence knowing that we are the global leader in growing and making great wine while minimizing the impact on the environment.
The journey to certify 99% of vineyards came with many lessons and innovative ideas. One of the most exciting of those came in 2018, when we launched our “Sustainably Farmed Grapes” logo for wineries to use on their wines. To use the label, wines must be using at least 85% certified sustainable Sonoma County winegrapes. It was great to see the support of the wineries in using the label. It is also a wonderful tool for communicating the sustainability commitment to Sonoma County wine lovers and potential new consumers.

Look for the “Sonoma County Sustainably Farmed Grapes” logo on bottles of Sonoma County wine. With 99% of the vineyard acreage in Sonoma County certified sustainable, you can be sure your Sonoma County wines have been farmed responsibly. Now, wineries are using the logo on wine labels to spread the word!

For a fun experience, download the “Sonoma County Sustainable Wine” app, available on the Apple app and Google Play stores. Open the app and aim your camera at a participating bottle of wine to experience the story of Sonoma County wines through Augmented Reality technology. The app currently works on select bottles of wine from Ferrari Carano Vineyards and Winery, Dutton Estate Winery, Francis Ford Coppola Director’s Cut, Dutton-Goldfield Winery and Lynmar Estate!

Available on the Apple Store & Google Play
The mission of the Sonoma County Vintners Foundation is to support Sonoma County’s nonprofit organizations focused on literacy, education, health & human services, the environment, and arts & culture.

Sonoma County Wine Auction
The Sonoma County Wine Auction, presented by Visa Signature® and produced by the Sonoma County Vintners Foundation, brings the region’s most renowned winemakers and winegrowers together alongside distinguished collectors and generous bidders for an opportunity to acquire some of Sonoma County’s top wines and bid on incredible, once-in-a-lifetime travel experiences. Named one of the nation’s top charitable auctions by Wine Spectator, the event has raised over $36 million since its inception. Proceeds from the Sonoma County Wine Auction have supported more nonprofits than any other fundraising event in Sonoma County.

Working together with the Community Foundation Sonoma County and utilizing their more than 35 years of expertise in philanthropic giving and depth of knowledge on nonprofit organizations in Sonoma County, Sonoma County Vintners Foundation is able to address key areas of need and provide support to our diverse community.

Sonoma County Vintners Foundation, through the generosity of the wine community, donors and guests of the Sonoma County Wine Auction, donated $1.5 million in grants to more than 65 local nonprofit organizations to address the community’s critical needs in 2019. Since its inception, funds have been distributed to 156 Sonoma County non-profits. The following pages highlight a few examples of beneficiary partners and the milestones achieved as a result of this funding. To learn more about Sonoma County Vintners Foundation, visit sonomawine.com/foundation.

Sonoma County Vintners Foundation Emergency Relief Fund
In addition to Community Grants, the Sonoma County Vintners Foundation Emergency Relief Fund was established in 2017 to address the immediate needs of our local community impacted by a natural disaster or other emergencies in a timely manner, like the floods of 2019 and the Kincade fire. In partnership with county officials and the Community Foundation, we have utilized the Sonoma County Vintners Emergency Relief Fund to benefit the Sonoma County community. We are thankful to so many community partners for their generosity and support.

On May 22, 2019 Sonoma County Vintners Foundation presented Mark West Community Preschool with a $25,000 grant at a check presentation ceremony to support rebuilding efforts for the school, after it was lost in the Tubbs Fire in 2017.
On September 12, 2019 the Sonoma County Vintners Foundation presented The Society of St. Vincent de Paul with a $250,000 grant at a check presentation ceremony to support the Gold Coin Motel housing conversion project. The funding given is enabling the Society of St. Vincent de Paul to convert all 56-units into permanent supportive housing for people experiencing homelessness, including people who have become homeless as a result of the 2017 fires, complete with services to support residents’ needs, including financial needs, permanent housing and preventative healthcare.

On Friday, February 15, 2019 the Sonoma County Vintners Foundation presented the Larkfield Resilience Fund, a Tubbs fire relief program for the Larkfield community, with a $25,000 grant at a check presentation ceremony to support their Neighborhood Greening Program. The loss of trees was an unexpected source of grief for many families following the fires. The replanting program gives residents back a piece of what was lost and helps restore a bit of home.

**ARTS & CULTURE**

**Beneficiary Milestones:**
- 2,400 children at six partner elementary schools were provided with a free standards-based music education and inspirational performances by professional musicians from Santa Rosa Symphony
- 840 children were supported through Museum of Sonoma County’s Art4Kids, a 5th and 6th grade visual art program
- 285 children have been able to enjoy the year-round ensemble from Luther Burbank Memorial Foundation’s Mariachi Program

**EDUCATION**

**Beneficiary Milestones:**
- 110 low-income, high-need youth were given support in career exploration from the Sonoma Valley Mentoring Alliance
- 280 children, who were victims of abuse, trauma and neglect, were supported through animal-assisted and horticultural therapeutic interventions through Forget Me Not Children’s Services
- 1,200 Sonoma County youth were empowered by Northern California Center for Well-Being to make healthy decisions about drugs, tobacco and alcohol use
FUND THE FUTURE:
Fund the Future ensures that underserved children throughout Sonoma County have the literacy and educational skills they need to succeed in school and life. Fund the Future addresses the opportunity to support Sonoma County students with a focus on improving third-grade literacy.

“On behalf of Stewards of the Coast and Redwoods, I would like to thank the Sonoma County Vintners Foundation for their very generous grant of $10,000. This grant will be used to continue support for wildfire prevention work with the Sonoma County Ecology Corp. This combined effort will not only cover staff time and supplies needed for this project, but also help to defeat fire threat in areas we may not have been able to reach. Our goal in keeping Sonoma County great and getting us back on our feet after fire and flood is a continued goal I think we all share.”

- Michele Luna, Executive Director

ENVIRONMENT
Beneficiary Milestones:
• 177,000+ people benefitted from Conservation Corps North Bay’s post-fire erosion control, creek protection and wildfire prevention in and/or near Santa Rosa
• 40 volunteers were educated/sponsored by Stewards of the Coast and Redwoods to clear and remove hazardous vegetation and downed trees along fire roads throughout the county

HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
Beneficiary Milestones:
• 15 million meals served by Redwood Empire Food Bank in a year
• 275 chronically unhoused patients in Guerneville were served by West County Health Centers with services including behavioral health, substance abuse counseling, primary care, dental care and more
• 276 youth were provided stable housing, 1,819 children and family members were assisted with mental health counseling and 148 youth were trained to be workforce ready by Social Advocates for Youth.

On behalf of Stewards of the Coast and Redwoods, I would like to thank the Sonoma County Vintners Foundation for their very generous grant of $10,000. This grant will be used to continue support for wildfire prevention work with the Sonoma County Ecology Corp. This combined effort will not only cover staff time and supplies needed for this project, but also help to defeat fire threat in areas we may not have been able to reach. Our goal in keeping Sonoma County great and getting us back on our feet after fire and flood is a continued goal I think we all share.”

- Michele Luna, Executive Director

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- Michele Luna, Executive Director
Each year, 44 total employees receive the award, which includes a $500 Visa gift card and a Sonoma County Sustainable jacket and hat. In addition, local advertisements recognizing the winners appear bi-monthly in both English and Spanish.

One of the most exciting parts of this program is an annual luncheon, which took place this past year in January. All recipients of the award throughout the year are invited to bring their families and employers for a special afternoon recognizing their accomplishments. There, we also name an Employee of the Year. Congratulations to Gabino Ramirez of Serres Ranch for earning this important title for the 2018 award year. This year’s luncheon will take place on February 8th.

**ESL Programs**
SCGGF funds an English as a Second Language (ESL) program for adults. This program provides childcare / homework time for the children and education for the parents.
Farmworker Resiliency Fund

In the midst of late fall’s Kincade Fire, the Sonoma County Grape Growers Foundation (SCGGF) responded immediately to the needs of the agricultural community by providing financial assistance to farmworkers impacted by the fire and evacuations. The rural nature of the fire left many farmworkers evacuated for an extended period of time and with less work than normal during the height of harvest.

SCGGF’s unique model of working directly with the employers allowed the Foundation to assess the needs of the community quickly and pinpoint the distribution of the funds to those most heavily impacted. One week after the fire started, SCGGF began providing local farmworkers and their families with gift cards ranging from $250 - $1,000. The cards were given to help support lost wages, food or evacuation costs. It is the hope of the Foundation that the immediate financial relief would help farmworkers and their families recover more quickly, reduce their financial burden and assist the entire winegrowing community.

“I cannot thank the Grape Growers Foundation enough for supporting my employees during such a difficult time. Not only did they appreciate the financial help, but it really demonstrated that the community cared about them and their families,” commented Bret Munselle of Munselle Vineyards who farms in Northern Sonoma County and had employees impacted by the Kincade Fire.

As of the date of this writing, SCGGF has assisted over 1,000 farmworkers and distributed more than $650,000 in gift cards and other financial support. We continue to review applications from employers who had employees impacted by the Kincade Fire and evacuations.

As was the case in 2017, our local community members have humbled and impressed us with their generosity, kindness and respect for our local agriculture families. A special thank you to American AgCredit, Engel & Voelkers Gestalt Group, Exchange Bank, Farm Credit Services of America, John Jordan Foundation, Kaiser Permanente, Peter Michael Winery, Silicon Valley Bank, Ron Rubin Winery, Sonoma County Community Foundation, United Way of Wine Country, Wilbur Ellis, the Wonderful Company Foundation, the Sonoma County Vintners Foundation and many individual farmers and ag lovers for their generous investment in our farmworkers. We would not have been able to support our winegrowing community in this way without the support. Thank you all!

Since 2017, Sonoma County Grape Growers Foundation has given over one million dollars directly to local farmworkers and their families in the areas of recovery and resilience, housing, workforce development, and employee recognition. For more information, please visit www.scgf.org
Every Tuesday the wine community takes over KRSO’s “The Drive” with Steve Jaxon! Tune into 103.5FM, 94.5FM or 1350AM to hear Sonoma County’s new talk and meet some of the fascinating people in the world of winemaking and winegrowing.

On alternating Tuesdays, Sonoma County Winegrowers President, Karissa Kruse and Sonoma County Vintners Executive Director, Michael Haney, take to the air waves (at 4:20 p.m. and 5:20 p.m. respectively) with a special guest from a local winery, vineyard or community organization. These casual, fun chats focus on the stories of growing and making wine in Sonoma County, upcoming events and the local issues facing the wine community today. Join us in your office, car or online to hear more!

In addition, Sonoma County Vintners and Sonoma County Winegrowers continually participate in a variety of local, national and international media interviews throughout the year.
As the leading voice for Sonoma County wineries, Sonoma County Vintners is serious about its commitment to our wine community and our county. Sonoma County’s economic development, jobs, revenues, housing, social services and its beauty and rural character all depend on active engagement, communication and planning. Sonoma County Vintners is proud of its continued expansion of our Government Relations and Community Engagement initiatives.

GOVERNMENT RELATIONS COMMITTEE MAKES POWERFUL IMPACT

A committee comprised of vintners from across Sonoma County gathers monthly to review political issues and challenges in the wine community. Working with this committee, Sonoma County Vintners determines best practices for addressing these concerns on behalf of the entire wine community. Formed just three years ago, this committee has already shown the powerful impact they have made through educational outreach, increasing awareness of the state of affairs and serving as advocates for the industry. This committee launched the first ever Government Day program in 2019.
Sonoma County Vintners hosted a three-part workshop series called Government Day on October 21. The program started at Duff Bevill’s Farmworker Housing in Geyserville. Bevill shared his experience building housing on agricultural land and the process of working with the various government agencies for approval. He concluded with a tour of the two-story development.

In addition to Government Day, government officials were invited to various Sonoma County Vintners events throughout the year that showcased the Sonoma County wine industry and its impact on the community. Congressman Thompson attended the Sonoma County Wine Auction where he was able to play a game with a child from the Boys and Girls Clubs of Sonoma – Marin, a 2019 beneficiary. Sonoma County Vintners also holds regular meetings with Sonoma County’s congressional representatives, US senators, and other federal, state and local officials along with California Wine Institute lobbyists to keep them informed on initiatives, policy positions and issues that affect our wine community.

Government Day continued in a second workshop that took place at MacRostie Winery off Westside Road. There, a panel spoke about the importance of direct-to-consumer sales vs. the three-tier system for wholesale distribution. The panel emphasized the importance of hospitality activities for both sales channels.

Mike Martini of Taft Street Winery, Sonoma County Vintners Executive Director Michael Haney and Oversight & Compliance Manager Ben Neuman spoke about the ways they assist winery members with effective permit counseling, business activity/events management and other permitting and program related issues.

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Thank you to our sponsors: Sonoma County Winegrowers and Sonoma County Vintners humbly thank our generous sponsors for their support!
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