

# Our 44th Annual Tasting “Red Wines beyond the Cabernet Family”

The Wine Library Association held its annual tasting at Silverado Country Club for the first time in 1981, and then every year since 1985. Yet every year is, in many ways, the first. Varieties change, the number of wineries and members who attend change, the weather is never the same two Augusts running, and new ways of doing things emerge.

This year, our invitation to the annual

tasting listed 81 wineries when it was mailed to members. 87 actually poured and over 1,000 members came to taste the wines. Nearly one quarter of the wineries poured two of the twelve varieties offered. 37 wineries poured Zinfandel, 28 Syrah, 18 Pinot Noir, 10 Petite Sirah and 5 Sangiovese. Charbono was poured by three wineries and Primitivo by two. Bennesere poured its Aglianico, Louis M. Martini Winery a Barbera (wouldn't Louis M. have been pleased?), Heitz Wine Cellars its Grignolino, Tempranillo by Truchard Vineyards, and Tinto Classico by Casa Nuestra Winery and Vineyard.

Bouchon Bakery was kind enough to donate seven dozen loaves of assorted breads baked just that afternoon in Yountville, and sliced by hand throughout

the tasting. Crystal Geyser again donated cases of both still and sparkling water, and John Raymond Cheeses provided a selection of hard and soft cheeses John had chosen to pair with the red wines to be poured that day.

It was a perfect, breezy summer afternoon, with the fragrance of fresh grass, pine and oak trees and the thwop of pulled corks welcoming everyone to Oak Grove at Silverado. Oak leaves graced the Louis M. Martini table and grapes the table of Madonna Estate; Hill Family celebrated the 60th anniversary of the Fender Stratocaster with a special six-pack of its Bordeaux blend; Freemark Abbey displayed zinnias, El Molino sunflowers and iris, and a pottery mermaid from Mexico luxuriated at La Sirena.

