

Sonoma Odyssey of Food & Wine

Generally speaking, a wine library is a place to store hundreds, if not thousands, of fine wine bottles. With first-quality Douglas fir shelving, climate control systems, halogen lighting and other amenities, they are must-haves for upscale restaurants and hotels or well-heeled wine buffs. While these custom varieties might make you the envy of wine aficionados the world over, they won't make you any wiser. Enter the Sonoma County Wine Library (www.sonoma.lib.ca.us/wine.html) in Healdsburg, California.

Instead of collectible wine, the Sonoma County Wine Library lines its shelves with 5,000 books and subscriptions to some 80 periodicals as well as maps, photographs, labels, news clippings and extensive current and historic wine information files. Furthermore, its one-of-a-kind online database is available at www.winefiles.org.

Behind this facility stand the Wine Library Associates of Sonoma County, a devoted group of volunteers who support the Wine Library with fundraising and manpower. Their annual extravaganza, the *Sonoma Odyssey of Food & Wine*, is the culmination of a yearlong effort from dozens of worker bees. In recognition of the need to help educate local vineyard workers, the Wine Library Associates now direct a portion of Odyssey proceeds to the *Employee Development Program* of the co-producer, the Sonoma County Grape Growers Foundation.

There is a book tent for those in search of bargains, but Odyssey is more about enjoying the trappings of the good life — like the designer wine libraries mentioned at the outset.

First, there is wine from 30 Sonoma County producers: silky Russian River Pinot Noir, bold Dry Creek Valley Zinfandel, elegant Sonoma Valley Merlot, noble Alexander Valley Cabernet Sauvignon, and crisp Los Carneros Chardonnay to name a few.

Next, there is food — and lots of it — as only the pastoral splendor of Sonoma County can offer. A dozen great chefs from the Sonoma County Culinary Guild (www.sonomacountyculinaryguild.org) will be on hand, preparing locally grown foods “Sonoma style”. Picture mini quesadillas with Gruyere and smoked ham, grilled pork skewers with leeks and eggplant cubes, vegetable wraps with fresh Sonoma greens, creamed mango gazpacho and many more small-plate delectables.

At the business end of the event come silent and live auctions and roaming raffles. Bidders traditionally compete for collectable wine lots, original artifacts and wine-country lifestyle activities such as wine tasting and touring packages with respites at local inns and spas, all in support of worthy causes.

If you aren't hooked yet, the visual perks of this spectacular setting will surely win you over. Situated in the heart of the Russian River Valley, Richard's Grove and Saralee's Vineyard boasts majestic live oak trees, long stretches of soft green grass, meandering bunkers of native flowers, and endless rows of well manicured vineyard. You may not want to leave.

Be sure to make your way to the Sonoma Odyssey of Food & Wine on Saturday, September 15, 2007 from 2 to 5:30 PM. Your eyes and taste buds will thank you!

Reservations for the Sonoma Odyssey of Food & Wine may be made by phone (707.431.2898) or mail (with check to “Sonoma Odyssey/WLASC,” P. O. Box 43, Healdsburg, CA 95448). Tickets are \$45 for members of the Wine Library Associates and the Sonoma County Culinary Guild, and \$50 for non-members.

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