

Great ‘Made in America’ Wine

The Wine Society of Heritage Oaks

Tuesday, November 17, 2026 · 6:00 to 7:30 PM · Heritage Oaks Clubhouse

Traditional (with a twist) Thanksgiving pairings · $20 per person

Great ‘Made in America’ Wine

- Tuesday, November 17, 2026. Heritage Oaks Clubhouse, 6:00 to 7:30 PM.
- Six American wines, each poured with a traditional Thanksgiving dish given a twist.
- Tonight, in order: Decoy Brut Cuvée, Emmolo Sauvignon Blanc, Underwood Pinot Gris, J. Lohr South Ridge Syrah, Elouan Pinot Noir, and Fairbanks White Port.
- Two states on the table - California and Oregon - and two of the wines are made by a brother and sister, Joe and Jenny Wagner of the Caymus family.
- Thanksgiving is the hardest meal of the year to pair: sweet, savory, tart and rich, all on one plate. That is why we start with bubbles and finish with port.

How we will taste

- Look: clarity, color, legs.
- Aroma comes in three layers.
  - First the grape: fruit, citrus, vegetables, herbs, leaves, floral.
  - Second the winemaking: bread, yeast, butter, cream, cheese.
  - Third the aging: oak, wood, nuts, spice, smoke, coffee, toast.
- Taste: sweetness, acidity, tannin, alcohol, body, intensity, length.
- Finish: how long the flavor stays with you after you swallow.
- Rating: your score. We compare notes at the end and crown a favorite.



DECOY BY DUCKHORN

Brut Cuvée

California Sparkling Wine, 12.5% ABV, $16.69

- Baked apple, white peach and orange zest, with hints of honeysuckle and vanilla. A soft sweetness held in check by brisk acidity.
- Made méthode champenoise - the second fermentation happens inside this bottle, exactly the way Champagne is made.
- Blended from the three classic Champagne grapes: Pinot Noir, Chardonnay and Pinot Meunier.
- Fun fact: Wine Enthusiast scored this 93 points. Sparkling wine is the one bottle that handles the whole Thanksgiving table - the bubbles and acidity reset your palate between bites.
- Pairing: Spinach and apple salad with bacon vinaigrette

EMMOLO

2025 Sauvignon Blanc

Napa Valley, California, 12.7% ABV, $15.56

- Grapefruit, lemon zest and white peach with a touch of wet stone. Crisp and light on its feet, more mineral than fruity.
- Winemaker Jenny Wagner aims for restraint - she describes the style as minerality-driven rather than fruit-driven - and keeps the alcohol low.
- Fun fact: Jenny is Chuck Wagner’s daughter, of the Caymus family. Emmolo is her mother’s family name. Her brother Joe made wine number five tonight.
- Pairing: Green bean casserole





UNDERWOOD

2023 Pinot Gris

Oregon, 13% ABV, $13.97

- Pear, lemon zest and white peach with a floral lift. Only the lightest pressings, fermented cool in stainless steel, with a thread of minerality.
- James Suckling gave the 2023 vintage 90 points.
- Fun fact: Pinot Gris and Pinot Grigio are the same grape - the name tells you the style the winemaker is after. Oregon is where American Pinot Gris began: David Lett of The Eyrie Vineyards planted the country's first vines in the 1960s.
- Underwood is made by Union Wine Co., the Oregon producer that put good wine in cans under the motto Pinkies Down.
- Pairing: Ruth's Chris sweet potatoes

J. LOHR

2023 South Ridge Syrah

Paso Robles, California, 14.5% ABV, $12.99

- Fresh-baked cherry pie on the nose, with violet, white pepper and holiday spice. Juicy and generous on the palate.
- Not pure Syrah: 88% Syrah, 9% Viognier and 3% Mourvèdre.
- Fun fact: fermenting a little white Viognier along with Syrah is a northern Rhône tradition from Côte-Rôtie. The white grape lifts the aroma and, oddly, fixes the color deeper rather than lightening it.
- J. Lohr has been family owned since 1974, and the South Ridge Syrah was named Wine Enthusiast's number one Best Buy of 2023 for the 2021 vintage.
- Pairing: John Besh crawfish cornbread stuffing





ELOUAN

2023 Pinot Noir

Oregon, 13.4% ABV, $14.99

- Dark chocolate and dried plum on the nose. Ripe plum and tart cherry on the palate, finishing with pepper and cocoa nib. Richer and rounder than most Oregon Pinot Noir.
- The Tasting Panel scored the 2023 at 93 points.
- The fruit is blended from three Oregon valleys - Willamette, Umpqua and Rogue - which is why the label simply says Oregon rather than naming one appellation.
- Fun fact: this is Joe Wagner, brother of Jenny from wine number two. He also created Meiomi, which he sold to Constellation for $315 million.
- Pairing: Cranberry compote and fried turkey

FAIRBANKS CELLARS

White Port

California, 18% ABV, $13.57

- Wood spice, nutmeg and citrus on the nose. Dried cranberry, raisin, chocolate and honey on the palate, sweet but kept bright by its acidity. Serve it chilled.
- Fortified: grape spirit is added partway through fermentation, which stops the yeast and leaves the natural sweetness behind - and takes it to 18% alcohol.
- Fun fact: in Portugal white port is an aperitif, not a dessert wine. The national way to drink it is over ice with tonic.
- True Port comes only from the Douro Valley in Portugal, made from grapes most of us have never heard of - Malvasia Fina, Gouveio, Viosinho and Rabigato. This is California's take on the style.
- Pairing: Layered pumpkin dessert

