

ON WINE

The 100-point wine

Decades ago, soon after the 100-point scoring scheme became a popular way to evaluate wine, a glossy wine magazine awarded a 100-point score to an exalted First Growth Bordeaux.

As a former math major in college and professional skeptic, I was already cynical about rating the quality of a wine by numbers — especially if more

than one evaluation system is used at the same time. The magazine's policy made no sense to me. It was almost paradoxical. (See "The Unexpected Hanging," by Martin Gardner.)

The magazine said its evaluation had been done by five judges, that the evaluation was totally blind (the judges didn't know the identity of the wines), and that the final score represented the cumulative opinion of all judges.

I immediately saw problems. The magazine asking us to accept the premise that three or more of the five judges had independently come to the conclusion that one unknown wine was worth 100 points — and that the other two judges had rated it at least 99 points.

That inconsistency proved that some of the problems associated with wine judging may not always be as evident as they should be.

The late UC Davis Prof. Maynard Amerine, in his 1976 book "Wines, Their Sensory Evaluation," outlined several wine-evaluation fallacies when people are rating several wines.

Most people seem to prefer ranking systems to give them a frame of reference as to what a wine expert, or an expert panel, considers great.

Even UC Davis sees the need for some form of ranking, and for decades has used a 20-point system to evaluate student-produced wines. This system was later adapted to analyze commercial wine. Decades ago, I used a form of this for my own purposes. (I never published the results.) It was merely a shorthand method for determining how to write about a particular wine.

Please see **BERGER**, Page C5

Of all the grape varieties that claim preeminence in this world, disheveled, tattooed, unshaven, sandal-wearing Pinot Noir seems to be the least likely candidate for stardom.



Julie Johnson of Tres Sabores pours for a member of the trade at A Day in the Dust.

GARY OTTONELLO PHOTOS

Dust in the wind (and fog)

The Rutherford Dust Society puts on a 25th anniversary show in San Francisco

TONY POER

A pair of Northern California institutions shared a spotlight in San Francisco last month.

On a cool Thursday afternoon, the St. Francis Yacht Club hosted the Rutherford Dust Society (RDS) for the group's annual "A Day in the Dust" July trade tasting. The 92-year-old sailing club opened its doors to the much younger association of Napa Valley wineries, which was commemorating its 25th anniversary.

As in past years, dozens of Bay Area retailers and restaurateurs attended the event. Consumers and winery club members followed the trade later that day, a first for the Rutherford Dust Society. In another break from tradition, instead of Rutherford enthusiasts trekking up to Napa Valley for the popular event, the RDS brought the Grand Tasting to San Francisco.

They also brought some bottled sunshine in the form of Rutherford Cabernet, Zinfandel, and Sauvignon Blanc. Consistent with San Francisco summer weather, the local temperature



The Rutherford Dust Society Grand Tasting in San Francisco.

was about 40 degrees colder that day than in wine country. St. Francis Yacht Club sits above a rocky seawall at the northern edge of the Marina District, and the normally spectacular view of Alcatraz, Angel Island, and the Golden Gate Bridge was partly hidden by dense July fog.

Long moans from the bridge's foghorn every few minutes added to the gloomy ambiance. But inside the nautically themed

clubhouse it was a coming-out party for the much-anticipated 2016 vintage, as well as an opportunity for wineries to dig through their cellars.

"With this being the 25th anniversary of the Rutherford Dust Society, the retrospective tasting of Rutherford AVA wines was fitting," said Kelly Carter of Alpha Omega Winery, an RDS member since 2006. Carter had the distinction of pouring the

event's most surprising wine, a 2012 Rutherford Sauvignon Blanc.

"Not only was opening up A Day in the Dust to consumers a brilliant idea, but so was taking the show on the road," the communications director said. "These wine lovers would not have been exposed to the wines on display had [the tasting] been held in its previous fashion."

Julie Johnson, an industry veteran from her days at Frog's Leap and the proprietor-wine-maker of Tres Sabores, was pleased with the balance of trade, media, and her own club members who attended.

"This was, I think, just a test to see what was possible," she said of the switch from Rutherford to San Francisco for the grand tasting. "There's nothing like bringing the tasting to people and seeing who comes. I had wine club members here, and they may not have made the trip if it hadn't been right in San Francisco. So that was pretty cool."

Please see **DUST**, Page C2

The Rutherford Chili Ball returns Aug. 4

In celebration of its 25th anniversary, Rutherford Dust Society (RDS), the non-profit member association for growers and vintners in the Rutherford Appellation, will host the Rutherford Chili Ball on Sunday, Aug. 4 from 5 to 8 p.m. at Beckstoffer Farm Center.

Back by popular demand, this festive, family-friendly event will include entertainment for all ages, including a Chili Cook-off competition between vintners, growers, firefighters, chefs, and self-proclaimed chili connoisseurs in Rutherford.

A live vote by attendees and local chefs will decide who gets the ultimate glory and bragging rights for having the best chili in Rutherford.

In years past, the Rutherford Chili Ball has been a sold-out event, where locals, guests and their families gathered to kick back, relax and enjoy each other's company. This year, RDS is bringing it back with fun activities for the entire family — from bouncy houses, to face painting by Buki the Clown, lawn games, and more. This year's event will be a rodeo theme, with live coun-



SUBMITTED PHOTO

The annual Rutherford Chili Ball is Aug. 4.

try music by Brigham Brothers Band.

"The Chili Ball is a great Rutherford tradition," said RDS Board Secretary Regina Weinstein of Honig Vineyards and Winery. "It allows us to reconnect with our friends and neighbors in Rutherford before harvest. The money we raise supports important non-profits in our community, and it's always a lot of fun!"

Wines by RDS members and local beers will be available, complemented by a full barbecue spread featuring slow-roasted brisket, chicken, and all the sides by Black Bean BBQ. A silent auction will feature large format bottles of Rutherford wine, as well as tasting experiences throughout the appellation.

Please see **CHILI**, Page C2

Spirits make inroads despite the government roadblocks

ERIC ALTHOFF

Distilled spirits continue to take a bite out of beer and wine in the American drinking market. In fact, 2018 marked the ninth straight year of record sales and volumes, increasing to \$27.5 billion of supplier sales — or 37.4 percent of the total alcoholic beverage market.

That's good news for business, according to David Ozgo, the senior vice president for economic and strategic analysis at the Distilled Spirits Council of the United States, the national trade association for producers and marketers of distilled spirits.

"Over the last three or four years, in volume terms, we've gotten into a consistent growth pattern of 2 percentage points," Ozgo said in a phone interview. "The 5.1 percent increase in revenue means that we've grown revenues by over a billion dollars."

And yet, even with distilled spirits continuing to make inroads against beer and wine, Ozgo says there remains cause

for concern, as excise and "sin taxes" imposed by various states are not only increasing the per-bottle cost to consumers, but also endangering many jobs.

"Like it or not, whenever a political party thinks they need new revenue, they try to tax distilled spirits," Ozgo said. "When you tax distilled spirits, you're really just taxing the hospitality industry. And, ultimately, these taxes cost jobs."

"Even though the economy is doing fairly well right now, you never want to [levy] a tax and cost somebody their job."

Furthermore, such taxes typically function as a moral judgment on personal behavior: Rather than stopping "problem drinkers" from indulging, the levies slow buying across the board, resulting in less taxes to even collect, officials said.

"You're not doing anything from a public health standpoint to curb abusive drinking," Ozgo said.

Please see **SPIRITS**, Page C5

Dust

From C1

A long-time link

Having an identity so closely intertwined with Napa Valley's, it might come as a surprise that Rutherford was granted American Viticultural Area status only in 1993, or that the RDS is just turning 25. But the entire appellation system isn't much older. Viticulture and winemaking in Rutherford extend a lot further back into California's past.

In fact, by the time a group of San Francisco yachtsmen founded the St. Francis Yacht Club in 1927, Georges de Latour had reached his own quarter-century milestone at his successful Rutherford winery, Beaulieu Vineyard.

De Latour got his start in Napa Valley in 1900, when, according to wine historian Charles Sullivan in Napa Wine, A History, the French-born entrepreneur sold a separate business in Healdsburg and purchased four acres in Rutherford. The move, Sullivan writes, "put him in position to become the baron of Napa Valley premium winegrowing 30 years later."

In 2019, Beaulieu Vineyard is a pre-eminent member of the Society. With her back to the fog-shrouded bay, a Beaulieu brand manager, Gina-Rose Oliva, found herself pouring the iconic Georges de Latour Private Reserve Cabernet next to John and Stacy Reinert, proprietors of the six-year-old (and cleverly named) Brilliant Mistake Wines. The arrangement was symbolic of Rutherford's place in the California wine industry: a Napa Valley district

with a foot each in the past and quickly evolving present.

The current RDS board president, Steve Tonella, was on hand to pour his S.R. Tonella Cellars Cabernet and Sauvignon Blanc for the attendees. He has been a Society member since 2014.

Taking breaks to work his way through the crowded clubhouse and greet attendees, Tonella observed that, while the event showcased the uniqueness of Rutherford's terroir in the present Napa Valley context, "We have wineries that have been in continuous operation since 1900 and one winery, Inglenook, where their first harvest was in 1882. So there's a tremendous history of the Rutherford viticultural region."

Few wineries in California, let alone Napa Valley, can boast Inglenook's or Beaulieu Vineyard's longevity. But event participants like Heitz Cellar, Freemark Abbey, and Gr-gich Hills have done their fair share to help set the quality bar very high for Rutherford Cabernet Sauvignon. All three properties own track records that date to the 1960s and '70s, a highly formative period for the California industry.

Longtime Freemark Abbey winemaker Ted Edwards explained that his late boss, Laurie Wood, was on the Rutherford Dust Society's original board of directors, along with Andy Beckstoffer, Davey Piña of Piña Napa Valley, and Frog's Leap co-founder John Williams. "I'm probably leaving someone out," Edwards confessed. "Laurie, who was one of Freemark's general partners, got me on the board at one point in time."



GARY OTTONELLO

"Rutherford 'dust,' bottled and transported down to San Francisco for A Day in the Dust".

A tribute to Rutherford's winemaking history

About 12 wineries made up the first RDS membership when it was founded in 1994, on the heels of the Rutherford AVA recognition. On the homepage of the Society's website, it states that the original members launched it "in

tribute to the legacy of our grape-growing and winemaking forebears."

Today, that dozen wineries has increased to more than 40 members, joined by two dozen growers. Many of these members grow and make wine in relatively small quantities. Even as she expressed concern for the future of such artisan producers in Napa Valley, Tres Sabores' Johnson was upbeat about the turnout for A Day in the Dust.

"How do we how do we get our voices out there?" she asked. "And who can be our partners to help build that? I mean we are — small wineries, in particular — we're in danger of not being able to welcome people and have people get to know us and sustain our businesses. So I think that the Rutherford Society is an avenue for one of those affiliations. It's a tool that a small winery can utilize to continue to be out there."

Once trade and media attendees filtered out of the yacht club in the late afternoon, the Rutherford vintners took a short break before consumer started to show up. Stretched out into the evening, the turnout was decent, but hardly overwhelming. RDS Executive Director Sara Soergel reiterated that "this was the first year that the Grand Tasting for consumers was offered. We had about 220 trade attend, and there were 100 consumers, which

we hope to grow."

One such consumer was Laurie Hanna, who took a tasting break for some decidedly fresh air on the club's seaside patio. Coming from a grape-growing family in Alexander Valley, it wasn't her first wine tasting. "This was a great event," she said, expressing some surprise. "Why it wasn't packed to the gills is beyond me. But I'm sure it will be next year."

A companion of Hanna's, Kristin Hagan Sprincin, runs global partnerships for a software company in San Francisco but spends a fair amount of time at her and her husband's second home in Pope Valley. She appeared familiar with Rutherford.

"This is really one of the top Napa Valley wine events I've been to," she said. "I looked around thinking I'm not going to know a lot of these wineries, but then I knew, I would say, all but maybe one or two." "I think that there's something about the wines in Rutherford that's very special," Sprincin added. "This event is also really special because you get to meet a lot of the proprietors of the wineries that you drive past when you're going up Valley. You don't necessarily stop at all of them, but here you get to see them in one place."

Stephan Howsepian was another consumer attendee who offered some thoughts

on the Grand Tasting. Like Laurie Hanna, his family is attached to the wine business. And, like Sprincin, he works in software.

"I thought it was a great event," said Howsepian. "It was really cool to see so many different winemakers from a single AVA showcasing different wines. And it was also nice to see just how many different profiles of wine can come from the same area."

Taking a moment to consult his tasting booklet, he was impressed, in particular, by the range of wineries at the event, "from those that have been around for generations to some that are just getting off their feet — that are just starting to kind of showcase their wines."

Museum quality

A socked-in afternoon and evening aside, the St. Francis Yacht Club proved to be an ideal venue for both the trade, who needed some elbow room to take notes, and for consumers and winery club members to converse with wine professionals in a relaxed atmosphere.

It also afforded any yacht enthusiasts among attendees the chance to observe an exquisite — and enormous — collection of scale model boats arranged throughout the event space. In a follow-up email, the club's spokesman, Commodore Paul Heineken, explained that all of the models are on loan or have been donated over the years, some by the owners of the original yachts.

"The models situated around the club tell our club's story through a museum-quality collection," Heineken wrote. "They represent many of the significant yachts that have sailed and raced under our burgee over the years, across oceans and around the world."

The wines of Rutherford are, in a way, like the St. Francis model yacht collection. They might be thought of "museum-quality" themselves, owing to the Rutherford District's and Napa Valley's long, parallel histories. They certainly have an international reputation because of that history. But the Rutherford Dust Society now has its eyes on the future.

Steve Tonella shared a final thought on this.

"You know, if you go back to France and you look at regions of Champagne or different areas within Bordeaux, they've had hundreds and hundreds of years to promote their wines, to showcase and make them distinct," said the RDS board president. "And so we're very young. We're 25 years old, right? So we just have a more of an opportunity to showcase our wines and make the history come alive, and then take that forward."

Para más detalles llame al 1-800-660-6789 • 詳情請致電 1-800-893-9555

NOTICE OF EVIDENTIARY HEARING FOR PACIFIC GAS AND ELECTRIC COMPANY'S REQUEST TO INCREASE RATES IN ITS ENERGY RESOURCE RECOVERY ACCOUNT COMPLIANCE APPLICATION (A.19-02-018)

DATE AND TIME	LOCATION
August 19–23, 2019, at 9:30 a.m. (Daily)	Commission Courtroom State Office Building 505 Van Ness Avenue San Francisco, CA 94102

SUMMARY

These Evidentiary Hearings have been scheduled by the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) to review PG&E's compliance application and request to increase rates for seismic (earthquake) studies performed at Diablo Canyon Power Plant.

Please note: The CPUC's Courtroom is wheelchair accessible. If you wish to attend and need specialized accommodations, please contact the Public Advisor's Office (PAO) at least five business days prior to the hearing date. Any changes to the dates, times and locations of the hearings will be posted to the CPUC's Daily Calendar.

ABOUT THE APPLICATION

The Energy Resource Recovery Account (ERRA) Compliance application was originally filed on February 28, 2019, and the purpose is to review costs recorded to the ERRA balancing account from the prior year. The application also includes a request to increase rates to recover \$4.69 million related to seismic studies performed at Diablo Canyon Power Plant.

The ERRA balancing account is used to record fuel and purchased power costs which can be recovered in rates. PG&E recovers these costs with no markup for return or profit. The purpose of this ERRA Compliance proceeding is to review PG&E's costs associated with obtaining energy for customers and approve rate increases for other program costs noted above. The CPUC will review PG&E's costs to ensure compliance with the previously approved forecast and energy purchasing plans.

HOW WILL PG&E'S APPLICATION AFFECT ME?

Many customers receive bundled electric service from PG&E, meaning they receive electric generation, transmission and distribution services. Based on rates currently in effect at the time the application was filed, the bill for a typical residential NonCARE customer using 500 kWh per month would increase from \$112.08 to \$112.13, or 0.04 percent. Actual bill impacts will vary depending on usage.

Direct Access (DA) and Community Choice Aggregation (CCA) customers only receive electric transmission and distribution services from PG&E. These customers will not be impacted by this application.

Departing Load customers do not receive electric generation, transmission or distribution services from PG&E. However, they are required to pay certain charges by law or CPUC decision. These customers will not be impacted by this application.

TO OBTAIN COPIES

If you would like a copy of PG&E's filing and exhibits, please write to: **PG&E, 2018 ERRA Compliance Application A.19-02-018, P.O. Box 7442, San Francisco, CA 94120.** Copies of PG&E's filing and exhibits are also available for review by appointment at the CPUC's Central Files Office in San Francisco. For more information, please contact them at alcentralfilesid@cpuc.ca.gov or 1-415-703-2045. PG&E's filing (without exhibits) is available on the CPUC's website at www.cpuc.ca.gov/puc.

CPUC PROCESS

At these Evidentiary Hearings, the assigned Judge will receive testimonies from PG&E, consumer advocacy groups and other parties to this proceeding. These hearings are open to the public, but only those who are parties to the proceeding may present evidence or testimony and be subject to cross-examination. The hearings and documents submitted during this proceeding will become part of the formal record the Judge will rely upon in writing a proposed decision to present to the Commissioners for their consideration.

After considering all proposals and evidence presented during the formal hearing process, the assigned Judge will issue a proposed decision which may adopt, modify or deny PG&E's proposal. Any of the five CPUC Commissioners may also sponsor an alternate decision. The proposed decision and any alternate decisions will be discussed and voted upon by the Commissioners at a scheduled public CPUC Voting Meeting.

The California Public Advocates Office (CalPA) has reviewed this proposal. CalPA is the independent consumer advocate within the CPUC with a legislative mandate to represent investor-owned utility customers to obtain the lowest possible rate for service consistent with reliable and safe service levels. CalPA has a multidisciplinary staff with expertise in economics, finance, accounting and engineering. For more information about CalPA, please call 1-415-703-1584, email PublicAdvocatesOffice@cpuc.ca.gov or visit <http://www.publicadvocates.cpuc.ca.gov>.

STAY INFORMED

If you would like to follow this proceeding, or any other issue before the CPUC, you may use the CPUC's free subscription service. Sign up at: <http://subscribe.cpuc.ca.gov/>.

If you would like to learn how you can participate in the proceeding, have informal comments, or if you have questions about the CPUC processes, you may access the CPUC's PAO webpage at www.cpuc.ca.gov/pao/. You may also contact the PAO as follows:

Write:

CPUC
Public Advisor's Office
505 Van Ness Avenue
San Francisco, CA 94102

Email:

public.advisor@cpuc.ca.gov
Phone: 1-866-849-8390 (toll-free) or 1-415-703-2074
TTY: 1-866-836-7825 (toll-free) or 1-415-703-5282

Please reference **2018 ERRA Compliance Application (A.19-02-018)** in any communications you have with the CPUC regarding this matter. All public comments will become part of the public correspondence file for this proceeding and made available for review by the assigned Judge, the Commissioners and appropriate CPUC staff.

Chili

From C1

A portion of proceeds of the event will go directly to local non-profits including Rutherford Dust Society, Rutherford Volunteer Fire

Department, Rutherford 4-H, St. Helena Co-op Nursery School, and the area's historic community building, the Rutherford Hall.

Tickets are \$50 for adults 21 and older, \$25 for ages 13-20, \$15 for ages 6-12, and

kids under 5 are free. Group rates are also available for parties of 10 or more. For tickets and more information, visit rutherforddust.org, Rutherford Dust Society's Facebook page, or email info@rutherforddust.org.



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