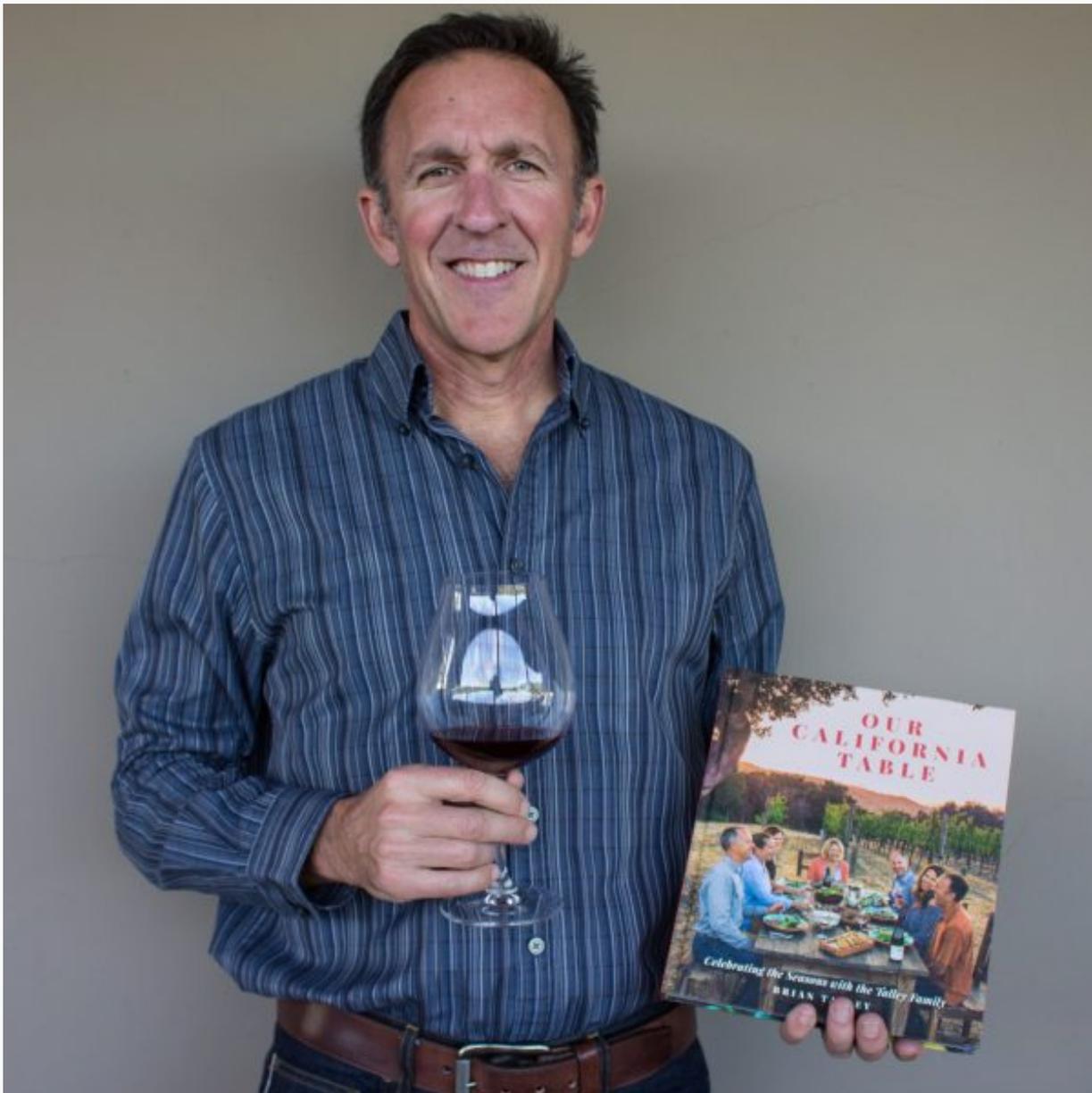


'World of Pinot Noir' comes to Bacara Resort and Spa

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Columnist Mira Honeycutt

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Brian Talley, co-founder World of Pinot Noir, will sign his new cook book at the weekend festival

Weekend event features Central Coast and international pinot noir tasting

—Pinot noir lovers have long marked their calendars for the upcoming World of Pinot Noir (WOPN) scheduled for March 3 and 4 at the Bacara Resort and Spa in Santa Barbara. Some 20 wineries from San Luis Obispo County will be pouring their top notch pinots. The lineup includes Windward, Adelaida, J. Lohr, Laetitia, Asuncion Ridge, Hug Cellars, Niner Wine Estate, Tooth & Nail, RN Estate, Hunt Cellar, Wild Horse, Deovlet, Claiborne & Churchill, Baileyana, Center of Effort and TH Estate's Decroux.

The two-day event is a total indulgence and immersive experience in tasting world class pinot noir wines from nearly

200 wineries along with seminars and gourmet dinners prepared by local chefs.

“The initial impetus was to bring attention to Central Coast as a world-class pinot noir region,” said vintner Brian Talley, president of Edna Valley’s Talley Vineyards and Talley Farms. In a phone conversation, Talley, who co-founded the popular event in 2001, recalled that he was encouraged by Archie McLaren, producer of the Central Coast Wine Classic.

The models for Talley were two popular events he had attended, Oregon’s International Pinot Noir celebration and Carmel’s Masters of Food and Wine.

“My wife Johnine came up with the name World of Pinot Noir,” Talley said. The name has a double meaning as “we’re trying to bring the world here yet also promote the Central Coast as a world-class pinot noir region.”

The first year was certainly impressive with wines from Burgundy’s famed Domaine Leroy followed two years later by the attendance of the legendary Aubert de Villaine, proprietor of Burgundy’s storied Domaine de la Romanee-Conti, pouring his exalted wines.

“Aubert led the tasting at my winery,” Talley said with obvious delight. Even with attendance of such impressive French producers, it was hard to draw people to WOPN, Talley admitted. “It was sommelier Fred Dame, who was the first to champion the event.”



Gray Hartley and Frank Ostini, co-owners of the Hitching Post will present a retrospective dinner paired with their wines.

From 50 to 60 wineries pouring in the initial years, participation has grown to nearly 200 wineries. I commented that the attendance is heavy on American wine producers and low on French.

“It’s definitely more west coast-focused,” Talley said. “Burgundy producers are not motivated because they are small and they sell out.”

Talley served as the chairman of WOPN the first couple of years, then stayed on the board for several years before stepping off.

“Now I’m busy writing cookbooks,” said the first-time author of the book “Our California Table: Celebrating the Seasons with the Talley Family.”

The coffee table book with more than 50 family recipes will be launched during the WOPN weekend with Talley on hand for book signings. Proceeds from the books’ sales will benefit the Fund for Vineyard and Farm workers.

What was the inspiration for the book?

“I love to cook,” was Talley’s simple answer. Plus it was a good way to tell a story about a farming family that traces its roots back to the 1940s on the Central Coast.



Malibu-based Dolin Estate will present its line-up of Pinot Noirs

The Talley family is as noted for its prized vineyards as for its produce farm. The farm was established in the 1940s,

with vineyard planting added in 1982. In fact, upon entering the winery's Edna Valley tasting room, visitors are welcomed by Talley's seasonal produce stand.

Distribution of harvest boxes complete with recipes and wine pairing tips is now available direct to consumers. Weekly drop-offs are scheduled at various locations including the Kennedy Fitness Center in Paso Robles.

This year the WOPN weekend highlights include Kosta Browne's 20th anniversary dinner, Sonoma's Hirsch Vineyards' vertical and horizontal tasting and Merry Edwards Rock Star dinner honoring Sonoma's legendary winemaker. This dinner will be paired with Merry's wines alongside wines from Brewer Clifton, Fiddlehead and Hartford Court.

French experiences include a Burgundy dinner with Maison Louis Latour wines paired with a six-course meal prepared by Bacara's executive chef Vincent Lessage, a Burgundy seminar on the Cote D'Or region paired with a three-course lunch and the ultimate Vintage Burgundy dinner with the Guild of Sommeliers. This exclusive six-course dinner paired with vintage wines from the guild's extensive cellar is limited to 45 guests only.

In addition to the two-day grand tasting, the daytime events include the Rosé Lunch hosted by KRUSH radio host Adam Monteil, a Sparkling Brunch at Bacara's Angel Oak restaurant and the Pinot and Paté tasting offered by San Luis Obispo's Fromagerie Sophie.

For fans of the popular Hitching Post restaurant in Buellton, a retrospective dinner and wine tasting with Frank Ostini promises to be a special treat. The Edna Valley Collective dinner will be prepared by chef Brian Collins of Edna Valley's acclaimed Embers restaurant. And a five-course Focus dinner crafted by Lesage will pair the gourmet treats with Pinots from Anderson Valley.

Throughout the weekend, Pinot lovers will have an abundance of wines to savor offered by international wineries ranging from France's prized Burgundy region, New Zealand, Italy, Spain, Austria and Chile to US producers from Oregon and California.

For detailed list of events, visit www.worldofpinotnoir.com/event/



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Honeycutt has more than 20 years of experience as a wine consultant and wine journalist. Currently, she is the California contributor to Sommelier India Wine Magazine. Her wine and food coverage has been published in the Harper's Bazar India, the Asian Wall Street Journal, Hong Kong Tatler, The Hollywood Reporter, USA Today, Los Angeles Magazine, Los Angeles Times and www.zesterdaily.com. She was a contributing wine blogger on the highly popular Los Angeles radio station KCRW's Good Food blog. Honeycutt is also the author of "California's Central Coast, The Ultimate Winery Guide: From Santa Barbara to Paso Robles," as well as the curator of the soon to be published book, The Winemakers of Paso Robles.



