

# SANTA BARBARA NEWS-PRESS

## The garage is open for pouring: Garagiste Festival brings together renegade winemakers

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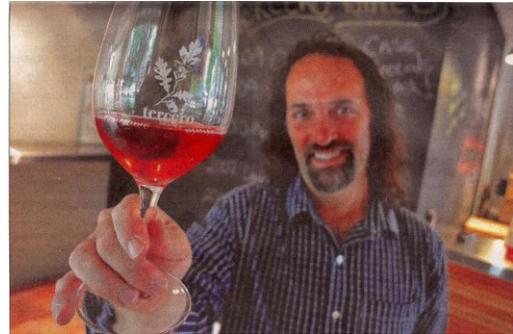
The popular wine show from Paso Robles, The Garagiste Festival, is rolling its way down south to Solvang, in what will hopefully be an annual event.

Garagiste is all about celebrating the little guy and Garagiste Festival: Southern Exposure will feature more than 30 high-quality, small-production winemakers primarily from Santa Barbara County Feb. 16 at Solvang Veterans Memorial Hall, 1745 Mission Drive.

The new nonprofit festival follows on the heels of 2012's sold-out Paso Robles Garagiste Festival, which hosted more than 40 wineries and 1,000 attendees, and will incorporate the festival's signature boutique wines, personal winemaker interaction and renegade spirit.

The garagiste festivals are dedicated to discovering and promoting artisan garagiste winemakers and showcasing cutting-edge commercial wineries that produce fewer than 1,200 cases a year. The term "garagiste" refers to the nickname originally used in the Bordeaux region in the mid-1990s given to those who made "vin de garage" or "garage wine." They were a group of rebellious winemakers who were tired of the strict oenology and viticulture laws that govern the region and often made wines in their garage. As they never had their own estate vineyard, the garagistes would have to buy their grapes — in some cases, very-sought-after expensive grapes — and the resulting wine was of a modern style, unlike anything at the time. The term was at one point a backhanded compliment, but it has evolved to define the movement and wine that is made in small quantities or micro-cuvées.

"In response to overwhelming demand, we have expanded the festival a hundred miles south to Santa Ynez Valley, one of the most exciting garagiste regions in the country," said Garagiste Festival co-founder Doug Minnick. "The Santa Ynez Valley is the perfect next location as we continue to expand the Garagiste Festival to expose more garagistes to even more wine consumers."



Larry Schaffer of Tercero Wines will be pouring some of his wares at the upcoming Garagiste Festival: Southern Exposure in Solvang. Here, he is in his tasting room in 2011.

MIKE ELIASON/NEWS-PRESS

South African winemaker Ernst Storm, who makes wine under his own label, Storm, and is also head winemaker at Curtis Winery in Los Olivos, is looking forward to the event.

"It is a great way for consumers to taste and also talk to smaller producers that they would not have gotten in touch with otherwise," he said. "It gives us winemakers the chance to showcase personality-driven wines from small batches made with a lot of care and attention to detail in an intimate environment." Mr. Storm will be pouring his 2011 Sauvignon Blanc Santa Ynez Valley, 2009 Pinot Noir Santa Maria Valley and 2010 Pinot Noir John Sebastiano Vineyard.

Larry Schaffer of Tercero Wines in Los Olivos, who is known for decanting his wine into laboratory beakers, has a different take.

"When you only make 400 to 500 cases, you don't have much to get out there, and shows like this are the perfect opportunity to showcase your wine to wine-savvy consumers who don't necessarily know about our names."

Mr. Schaffer is planning to pour a variety of his wines, which will include his 2011 Viognier and Grenache Blanc.

Melissa Sorongon, co-owner of Piedrasassi in Lompoc, is looking forward to tasting some of her peers' wines.

"Because a lot of these winemakers don't have their own vineyards, it would be interesting to try wines made from the same vineyards but by different winemakers."

Piedrasassi will have its 2010 Central Coast White, a blend of sauvignon blanc and roussanne, as well as its 2009 Central Coast Syrah.

The Garagiste Festival: Southern Exposure begins at 11 a.m. with the seminar "The Ultimate Barrel Tasting — Oak Flavors Tasted and Explained." Winemaker and vineyard owner Michael Larner of Larner Vineyard in Ballard Canyon and winemaker Ryan Render of Rendarrio Vineyards in Paso Robles and cooperage Tonnellerie Saint Martin bring their knowledge of viticulture, winemaking and barrels to the table in this comparison barrel tasting of wines made by McPrice Myers from the Larner Vineyard. Attendees will learn about and taste through a selection of wines made from the same vineyards, but put through different oak treatments, essentially showing how the wood can affect the finished product and change the profile.

Other wineries in attendance will include: Altman Winery, Autonom Wines, Baehner Fournier Vineyards, Blair Fox Cellars, Casa Dumetz, Center of Effort, Deovlet Wines, El Rey Wines, Frequency Wines, Ground Effect Wines, J. Wilkes, Kaena Wine Co., Kessler-Haak Vineyard and Wines, La Fenetre Wines, Luminesce, Nagy Wines, Native9, PENCH RANCE, Refugio Ranch, Roark Wine Co., Ryan Cochrane Wines, Shai Cellars and Transcendence Wines. And there are more to come.

For tickets, \$50 to \$80, and more information, call 888-795-4972 or go to <http://californiagaragistes.com>.

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