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California Wine Expert to Speak in Lafayette

By A. K. Carroll

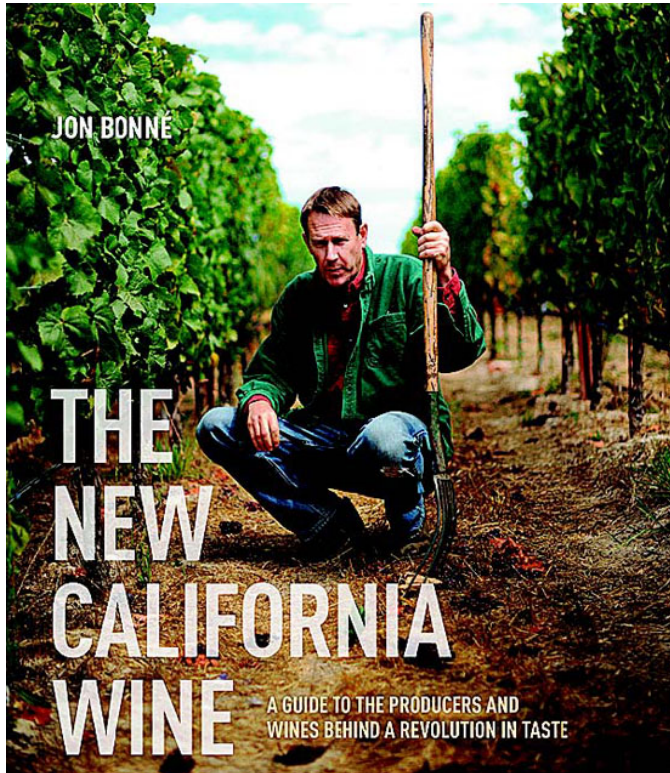


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"It's been a thing all my life," said Jon Bonné, sipping the last of his Sight Glass coffee on a Monday afternoon in San Francisco. "I kind of grew up with wine."

The wine editor for The San Francisco Chronicle and author of "The New California Wine" (released in 2013), Bonné will be speaking at The Commonwealth Club of California's "Tasting the New California Wines with Jon Bonné." An informational talk followed by a wine tasting, the event will be held at the Lafayette Library on Tuesday, Dec. 9, bringing one of the nation's top wine experts to the Lamorinda area.

"It's an industry that covers so many different pieces of the world," said Bonné, whose early ventures in journalism included politics, business and environmental science among other fields. By the time Bonné turned to covering wine, he realized that not only was it a good beat, but that much of his previous work had prepared him for success in the field. "You have to be able to do a little bit of all of those other skills," he remarked. Or you do if you want to do well.

Bonné's work with the Chronicle has earned him two James Beard Foundation Awards. His

writing, which has also appeared in Decanter, Saveur, Food & Wine and the Art of Eating, has additionally won numerous awards from the Association of Food Journalists. Bonné's upcoming Commonwealth Club presentation will focus on his book, which explores young, innovative wine producers who are "rewriting the rules of contemporary winemaking" in a "quest to express the uniqueness of California terroir" and to "move the state away from the overly technocratic reactionary practices of its recent past," according to Bonné's website.

"The revelation for me is that these aren't necessarily new discoveries," Bonné remarked on his research for the book. "They (the wine producers) are simply looking to a time before wine became so snobby and so elitist; when wine was simply a part of people's lives. There was a much greater diversity and all of these really interesting grapes and wines had enormous appeal."

As the nation's oldest and largest public affairs forum, The Commonwealth Club looks forward to offering this presentation in the Lamorinda area. The hour-long program (which will likely include a time of Q&A), will be followed by a wine tasting and book signing. "We'll talk about the change in California wine, the style and layers," Bonné remarked. "Also, what that means culturally and how it fits into these larger changes in food culture and farming culture, the way that people eat and drink."

It's sure to be an evening of new and unexpected information and experience.

The formal program begins at 6:30 p.m., with check-in starting at 6 p.m. Wine tasting follows at 7:30 p.m. at the Lafayette Library. Tickets are \$25 for general admission (participants must be over 21) and \$15 if you are a member of the Commonwealth Club. Register online at <http://www.commonwealthclub.org/events/2014-12-09/tasting-new-california-wines-jon-bonne>.

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