

B.C. Guild of Wine Judges



Annual General Meeting 04 June 2023

Guild Master's Report

Well, COVID certainly knocked us around, as it did to most volunteer organizations. I am very proud that we were able to maintain a Provincial competition through the COVID years to support the winemaking chapters and provide them an opportunity to receive impartial advice to advance their craft. It also provided all three chapters an opportunity to exercise their skills and to come together socially.

Note that the only BCAWA clubs to hold competitions since March of 2020 are clubs that also have an active Guild chapter: Vinovan, Saanich and Nanaimo. And, of course, the 2021 and 2022 Provincials hosted by the Guild.

Now that we are out of the pandemic, we are facing an almost existential challenge: recruiting, educating and retaining new members.

Our fate is intimately tied to the fate of BCAWA and its member clubs. Most of our judges are or were active winemakers and the local BCAWA club a major source of Guild members. The BCAWA clubs struggled during COVID and are only now starting to revive and hold regular meetings and competitions. With a new BCAWA executive in place as of last week, I hope we will see increased interest in competitions and home winemaking.

At the BCAWA AGM last week, a special motion was passed to change the name of the organization to BC Artisan Winemakers Association. The Artisan name was introduced to attract new younger members to the craft of winemaking. In the past, the major motivator of home winemaking was to make wine as cheaply as possible. Now, most home winemaking is motivated by skill for the craft and to produce wines that rival most commercial. And we are successful at it.

The BC Guild of Wine Judges was created for and is dedicated to judging competitions of BCAWA member clubs. Is this enough? What more can we do more to foster the Artisan winemaking culture in BC? We have some tremendous educational materials. Should we focus more on education? With a reset after COVID, now is the time to refresh our goals and create our future.

The New Business section of the agenda is dedicated to discussing new members and addressing these questions. Please make this a wide-ranging discussion full of ideas.