

Wine-1-1: Alpha Omega's Livestream Wine Tastings Educate the Mind and the Palate in the Comfort of Your Own Home

By Carolyn Zinko | April 11, 2020 | [Food & Drink](#) [Wine and Spirits](#) [Wine Country](#)



Ready for wine tasting at Alpha Omega Winery

The coronavirus and our current shelter-in-place practices are requiring all kinds of changes in society, down to the simple pleasure of wine-tasting. In the Bay Area, winemaking is a crucial industry that affects the livelihoods of many—and produces a beverage that gives people some much-needed distraction at a time of anxiety. We can't go to the wineries right now, but thanks to Zoom technology, the wineries can come to us.

Alpha Omega winery (aowinery.com) in St. Helena launched its inaugural Interactive Live Stream Tasting on April 11, the first in a recurring series on Saturdays. The feat brought more than 80 people from 22 states, including Florida, Pennsylvania, South Dakota, Arizona and Oregon, along with a contingent from the Bay Area together for a bit of community amid social

isolation—and a rare chance to sip along with master sommelier Bob Bath and Alpha Omega winemaker Henrik Poulsen for nearly two hours. (Other virtual experiences are offered on the winery's Instagram, @aowinery, on Wednesdays and Fridays).



From left: Master sommelier Bob Bath and Alpha Omega winemaker Henrik Poulsen

On April 25th, the 2020 Signature Release tasting featured the winery's Sauvignon Blanc 1155 Napa Valley 2018, Chardonnay Napa Valley 2016, Proprietary Red Napa Valley 2017 and Cabernet Sauvignon Napa Valley 2017.

As the session starts, winery owners Robin and Michelle Baggett appear on screen and greet guests from the Fleur de Lac Estates in Lake Tahoe, where their vacation home is located, the lake's waters and the snow-capped peaks of the Sierra Nevada visible behind them. "I never would have imagined when we started this winery in '06," Robin Baggett says, "that we'd be doing tastings this way." The session unfolds as a lively chat between Bath and Poulsen—seated six feet apart in a private room at the winery—about grapes, seasons, climates, soils, east-west slopes and other winemaking factors.

The sauvignon blanc, pale straw with a hint of green, is "a more Bordeaux style sauvignon blanc" with "just a little bit of toastiness," Poulsen says. Bath's palate pairs it with grilled shrimp with paprika and cayenne or goat cheese salad. The chardonnay, says Bath, has "corn, apple crisp and rich pear" flavors, and will pair nicely with scallops with lemon caper sauce, chicken shawarma or even tzatziki sauce. The proprietary red, with an opaque ruby color, has a "cranberry, red fruit, tar, earthy character" that would pair with grilled portobello mushrooms,

Bath opines. Of the cabernet sauvignon, Poulsen declares that “the amount of layers in this wine is fantastic; this is a young wine. These layers will not go away.”



Alpha Omega cabernet sauvignon

Meanwhile, the winery’s virtual ambassador, Barrett Spiegel, is monitoring the live stream chat messages. Participants are largely lounging in their living rooms and feeling free to make playful comments. One person declares Velveeta a delicious pairing, while another prefer Lay’s potato chips and brie. One man asks for wine pairings for Taco Tuesdays, while a woman asks, ““Are there any single men here?””

Aside from the frivolity, there were serious questions asked. “(Out) of curiosity, why the name ‘proprietary?’ Is this the equivalent of a blend or cuvee?” one person asks. Another types this query: “According to the tasting notes, the cab has been aged 22 months. Were all the grapes aged together blended, or separately and blended after aging? (I’m a beginner with wine, so learning).” One participant displays a large format of the 2013 vintage of ERA, Alpha Omega’s flagship wine, and asks when he should open it.

In the end, a virtual tasting may be just what we need. Usually you go to a winery to taste what to bring home; here you’re buying wine to figure out if you like what you’re tasting. You can’t jump in the car to get to the winery, but you won’t drink and drive, either. “The beauty of at home tastings is that you can pour as much as you like to enjoy in the comfort of your own home,” Baggett says. “There is no judgment here.”



Alpha Omega winery in Napa Valley

Advance registration and wine purchase is required for participants to receive a video link to the experience (Alpha Omega wine club members receive a 20% discount). Visit their [website](#) to find out when the next tasting is!

<https://mlsiliconvalley.com/wine-1-1-alpha-omegas-livestream-wine-tastings-educate-the-mind-and-the-palate-in-the-comfort-of-your-own-home>