

# YEAR IN REVIEW 2023



Enhancing public understanding of wine, brewing, and food sciences



# LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR

2023 was a time of transition, with Professor Emeritus Andrew Waterhouse retiring after his five-year tenure as RMI director. Dr. Waterhouse helped clarify the Institute's mission to focus on sharing the innovation and advancements in food and beverage at UC Davis with the public and developing educational programs that are approachable and engaging. I am honored to continue and expand on his hard work over the coming years.

After more than a decade of service, Amina Harris retired as director of the Honey and Pollination Center. Her accomplishments are impressive, but her collaborations and the community she built around honey, bees, and mead are remarkable. The Robert Mondavi Institute sincerely thanks Amina for her years of dedicated work.

The Olive Center launched the Oleo Learn Apprenticeship Program, which trains students in orchard management, milling, bottling, and product development. The apprentices helped with a record-breaking harvest and produced award-winning, campus-grown UC Davis olive oils. Learn more about both Centers of Excellence on the last page of this report.

This year's events focused on a range of exciting and engaging topics: the fascinating world of fungi, chocolate and wine pairing, food safety, grain breeding, Mexican American vineyard workers, the UC Davis Student Farm, and sake brewing. It was apparent our audience loves tasting food and wine, with TASTE selling out in less than two days and high demand for our Sips and Bites programs. A highlight was sharing the Food Product Development class with members of the public, who tasted innovative new foods designed by students. As a reminder, many of this year's events were recorded and posted with captions. Visit our YouTube channel to watch programs you may have missed.

I have enjoyed connecting with partners and collaborators since I was appointed director, meeting many supporters at TASTE and the Savor program focusing on sake brewing in the United States. Sake has become an ongoing topic of conversation at UC Davis, and I was honored to travel to Niigata, Japan, to present at the Sakeology conference. Expanding partnerships and exploring new opportunities are two of my priorities for the Institute, as well as highlighting topics around food waste and food insecurity.

The Friends of the Robert Mondavi Institute are pivotal to our mission of enhancing the public's understanding of wine, brewing, and food science. I want to thank them for their ongoing and generous support. Join our circle of friends at [rmi.ucdavis.edu/friends](https://rmi.ucdavis.edu/friends).

Be the first to hear about our upcoming events by signing up for our newsletter and following us on social media at [rmi.ucdavis.edu/connect](https://rmi.ucdavis.edu/connect).

Thank you for supporting the Robert Mondavi Institute and, I hope you can join us for more programs in the coming year.

## Ned Spang

Director, Robert Mondavi Institute

Associate Professor, Department of Food Science and Technology, UC Davis

## Land Acknowledgement

We should take a moment to acknowledge the land on which we are gathered. For thousands of years, this land has been the home of Patwin people. Today, there are three federally recognized Patwin tribes: Cachil DeHe Band of Wintun Indians of the Colusa Indian Community, Kletsel Dehe Wintun Nation, and Yocha Dehe Wintun Nation.

The Patwin people have remained committed to the stewardship of this land over many centuries. It has been cherished and protected, as elders have instructed the young through generations.

We are honored and grateful to be here today on their traditional lands.





# TASTE

Our October food and wine-tasting fundraiser sold out in less than two days! Over 300 people gathered in the Good Life Garden, at the center of the Robert Mondavi Institute complex, to enjoy local and regional breweries, restaurants, wineries, and food producers.

We were proud to highlight UC Davis student organizations such as Davis Enology and Viticulture Organization (DEVO) and Women in Wine, who poured their wines for attendees, and the Davis

Alt Protein Project, which served plant-based ice cream.

UC Davis was represented with tastes provided by the Olive Center, Global Tea Institute, Continuing and Professional Education, and the Delarue Lab, which engaged attendees in a sensory study of hop water and sandwich bread.

You can view a highlight video on our website.

[rmi.ucdavis.edu/taste](http://rmi.ucdavis.edu/taste)





# SIPS AND BITES

## Stories Behind Foods and Drinks

In January, Dr. Gordon Walker hosted **Fascinated by Fungi**, sharing the biology and ecology of fungi, and mushroom morphology, and discussing edibility and toxicity. From delicious delicacies to fermenting grapes into wine, fungi are dynamic and beautiful. Guests were treated to savory bites created by UC Davis Dining Services catering department, Olive and Vine.

Just before Valentine's Day, Thalia Hohenthal and Rebecca Kuehn from Guittard Chocolate Company joined Gus Zhu, the first Chinese national Master of Wine, for a **Wine and Chocolate Pairing**. The presenters guided attendees on how to taste a variety of quality chocolates while tasting different wines. People found their preferred pairings in a lively discussion with no wrong answers!

In April, Sips and Bites were **All About Grains**. Allison Krill-Brown and Charlie Brummer discussed the UC Davis SCOPE Small Grains project, a student-led collaborative that strives to breed improved grains. Claudia Carter from the California Wheat Commission joined to walk guests through a tasting of crackers and cookies made from three different UC breeding program grains: wheat, triticale (a wheat-rye hybrid), and naked barley.



*Mushroom appetizer by Olive and Vine*



*From left: Charlie Brummer, Claudia Carter, Allison Krill-Brown, Andrew Waterhouse*





Andrea Wasko, Meaghan Gilbert, Linda Harris, Selina Wang, Erin DiCaprio

# FORUM

## Talks on Food and Wine Sciences

In May, UC Davis Student Farm Director Colin Dixon shared the importance of the farm, and students Wendy Martinez Castaneda, Jesus Trujillo, and Marcy Cathcart talked about their program experiences. Founded in 1977, the 23-acre Student Farm on campus is a community where students create, maintain, and explore sustainable food systems. It's a small farm with a significant impact, hosting programs in market-scale farm production, food accessibility and security, restoration, and much more.

In October, **Farm to Kitchen: Making Foods Safe** focused on UC Davis food science professors of Cooperative Extension. Professors Linda Harris, Selina Wang, and Erin DiCaprio shared their work in food safety and the classes, research, and resources they provide for food business entrepreneurs. Andrea Wasko and Meaghan Gilbert spoke about how a Cooperative Extension class contributed to starting their successful business.

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Joe Mackender/UC Davis

From left: Erin O'Donnell, Yoshihiro Sako, Yoko Kumano, Glen Fox



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# SAVOR

## Presented in partnership with the UC Davis Library

In March, **Viticultores: Mexican American Perspectives on Grapes, Community and Resilience** highlighted viticulture experts who have helped build the reputation of Napa Valley wine and discussed how Mexican and Chicanx communities have contributed their in-depth knowledge and highly-skilled grape cultivation techniques. L. Steve Velasquez of the Smithsonian Institute moderated the conversation between Mario Bazán, founder of Bazán Vineyard Management, Dolores Torres, vineyard supervisor at Harlan Estate, and Gustavo Aviña, viticulture director at Pine Ridge Vineyards, as they shared their stories about working in the vineyards of Napa Valley.

In November, **Brewing Change: Craft Sake in the United States** focused on a new take on an ancient beverage with four simple ingredients—rice, water, yeast, and koji mold—and how US brewers are building on traditional methods while experimenting with variations in rice varieties, milling, flavor profiles, and more. Speakers Yoko Kumano from Umami Mart, Erin O'Donnell from Sun Valley Rice, and Yoshihiro Sako from Den Sake Brewing came together with UC Davis Professor of Malting and Brewing Sciences Glen Fox.

[rmi.ucdavis.edu/savor](http://rmi.ucdavis.edu/savor)

# CENTERS OF EXCELLENCE



**UC DAVIS**

**Honey and Pollination Center**

## **Courses and Events**

The annual Introduction to Making Mead and Mead Making Bootcamp short courses made a return in February. At Picnic Day in April, the center's honey-tasting booth welcomed hundreds of guests. A three-part Honey Exploration Series debuted this year, featuring honey from California, North America, and the world with sensory components, mead, food pairings, and more. In June, with support from the Department of Viticulture and Enology, the center presented a four-day intensive Mead Excellence and Quality Assurance course for mead makers at all levels to ensure the best mead, from initial testing to bottling.

## **Honey Education and Research**

Fulfilling a long-time goal, the center worked with the Department of Food Science and Technology to begin research into varietal honey through quantitative analysis. Funding for this project came from the Ishaï Zeldner Memorial Varietal Honey Research Fund and Nature Nate's Honey Company.

## **Director Retirement**

After more than a decade of service, Amina Harris retired as director of the Honey and Pollination Center. Among many of her wide-reaching accomplishments, she built strong relationships and partnerships throughout the honey and mead industry during her tenure. She helped develop the UC Davis Honey Aroma and Flavor Wheel, was deeply involved in creating the Bee Symposium, California Honey Festival, and California Master Beekeeper Program, and started mead classes at UC Davis.

## **Products**

The UC Davis Bookstore has a line of single varietal honeys, the honey-tasting wheel, and note cards for sale. Proceeds support the continued success of the Honey and Pollination Center.

[honey.ucdavis.edu](https://honey.ucdavis.edu)



**UC DAVIS**

**Olive Center**

## **Classes**

The Olive Center continued its education series for more than 150 attendees by hosting three main courses this year: Advanced Class for Sensory Evaluation, Olive Growing, and Olive Milling. They also hosted multiple workshops for California growers and producers, and for the first time, some workshops were exclusively in Spanish.

## **Olea Learn Apprenticeship Program**

The Olive Center officially launched the Olea Learn Apprenticeship Program with the support of the California olive and olive oil industry, designed to train student apprentices in all aspects of olive production. The students began their training in field management at the historic Wolfskill Experimental Orchards and participated in milling, bottling, and product development of campus-grown UC Davis olive oils.

## **Research**

The center continued to partner with specialists, farm advisors, and industry collaborators in various projects, including cultivar evaluation for super-high-density systems, compost and nitrogen fertility management, pruning, and EVOO quality.

## **Harvest**

This year's olive harvest at the research orchards was record-breaking, thanks to agronomic management improvements and the help of student apprentices. The Olive Center harvested more than 50,000 pounds of olives for the first time!

## **Products**

In November, the center released its new Olivo Novello. The students helped create the olive oil, from tree to bottle, and the Premium Reserve (a Mission-Picual blend) won gold in its category and Best of California at the California State Fair competition! All Olive Center products are available at the UC Davis bookstore.

[olivecenter.ucdavis.edu](https://olivecenter.ucdavis.edu)







Joel Mackendorf/UC Davis

## Honorary Board

**August A. Busch III**

**Francis Ford Coppola**

**Darrell Corti**

**Ann and Gordon Getty**

**Agustin Huneeus**

**Fritz Maytag**

**Michael Mondavi**

**Tim Mondavi**

**Paul Montrone**

**Wolfgang Puck**

**Martin Yan**

## Executive Committee

**Andrew Waterhouse**

Director, Robert Mondavi Institute; Professor Emeritus, Department of Viticulture and Enology

**Barbara Blanco-Ulate**

Assistant Professor, Department of Plant Sciences

**David Block**

Professor, Department of Viticulture and Enology; Ernest Gallo Endowed Chair in Viticulture and Enology

**Darrell Corti**

President, Corti Brothers

**Erin DiCaprio**

Associate Specialist in Cooperative Extension, Department of Food Science and Technology

**Amina Harris**

Director, Honey and Pollination Center

**Ermias Kebreab**

Director, World Food Center; Associate Dean for Global Engagement; Professor, Department of Animal Science

**Harold McGee**

Curious Cook

**Anita Oberholster**

Cooperative Extension Specialist, Department of Viticulture and Enology

**Patsy Owens**

Associate Dean for Human and Social Sciences; Professor, Department of Human Ecology

**Madeline Puckette**

Co-founder of Wine Folly

**Michael Rios**

Vice Provost of Public Scholarship, Office of Public Scholarship and Engagement

**Christopher Simmons**

Professor and Chair, Department of Food Science and Technology

**Francene Steinberg**

Professor and Chair, Department of Nutrition

**Ned Spang**

Director, Robert Mondavi Institute; Associate Professor, Department of Food Science and Technology

## Friends

**Gourmand**

Wayne and Jacque Bartholomew; Anonymous

**Reserve**

Jacqueline Beckley; Darrell Corti; Leslie Herzog; Mary Horton; Fritz and Beverly Maytag; Harold McGee; James and Penelope Shackelford

**Vintage**

Bob and Barbara Leidigh; John E. Ruden

**Culinary**

Rosemary and William Chamberlain; William and Linda Schmidt

## Staff

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## Never miss an event!

Subscribe to our monthly newsletter, follow us on Facebook, Instagram and LinkedIn, and subscribe to our YouTube channel.



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