

# Legacy Business Registry Staff Report

HEARING DATE SEPTEMBER 24, 2018

## CALIFORNIA WINE MERCHANT

*Application No.:* LBR-2017-18-037  
*Business Name:* California Wine Merchant  
*Business Address:* 2113 Chestnut Street  
*District:* District 2  
*Applicant:* Greg O'Flynn, Owner  
*Nomination Date:* March 7, 2018  
*Nominated By:* Supervisor Catherine Stefani  
*Staff Contact:* Richard Kurylo  
legacybusiness@sfgov.org

### BUSINESS DESCRIPTION

California Wine Merchant opened in 1974 at 3247 Pierce Street by Greg O'Flynn. In 2004, the business moved around the corner to 2113 Chestnut Street, where it is still located today. The business was unique at the time it opened for selling exclusively wine and primarily California wines. The shop opened two years prior to a famous wine tasting in Paris in which California wines rated best in both categories. This event marked a change in the way California wines were perceived and boosted the local industry. In 2004, after 30 years in the same location, the original building was slated for demolition. Greg and Deborah moved the business to its current location at 2113 Chestnut Street, around the corner from the original location. Greg and Deborah remodeled and renovated the new location, keeping the same look and feel of the original store, and added a wine bar. The bar was an immediate success and remains so to this day.

The shop's longstanding tradition is to feature California wines with an emphasis on high quality, small production, emerging producers. In addition to pouring 50 wines by the glass, the shop hosts "Meet the Winemaker Tastings" where guest winemakers will come down and pour for customers several of the wines they produce. They also have a Quarterly Wine Club in which members receive 6 different wines every quarter along with detailed notes on the wines and the wineries that make them. California Wine Merchant has also served as a training ground for many of its employees who have since gone on to establish their own successful careers in the wine business.

The business is located at the southwest corner of Chestnut and Steiner streets in the Marina neighborhood.

### **CRITERION 1: Has the applicant operated in San Francisco for 30 or more years, with no break in San Francisco operations exceeding two years?**

Yes, the applicant has operated in San Francisco for 30 or more years, with no break in San Francisco operations exceeding two years:

3237 Pierce Street from 1974 to 2004 (30 years)  
2113 Chestnut Street from 2004 to Present (14 years)





**CRITERION 2: Has the applicant contributed to the neighborhood's history and/or the identity of a particular neighborhood or community?**

Yes, the applicant has contributed to the Marina neighborhood's history and identity.

The Historic Preservation Commission recommended the applicant as qualifying, noting the following ways the applicant contributed to the neighborhood's history and/or the identity of a particular neighborhood or community:

- California Wine Merchant is associated with the California winemaking tradition.
- California Wine Merchant has contributed to the history and identity of San Francisco by serving as a wine retailer specializing in California wines.
- The property has a Planning Department Historic Resource status of "B" (Properties Requiring Further Consultation and Review) as the building was constructed in 1928 and has not been formally evaluated. However, the property was included in the Neighborhood Commercial Buildings Historic Resource Survey conducted by the Planning Department in the summers of 2014 and 2015, and it was found not to be architecturally significant for its storefront.
- In 1976, Greg was featured in a cover story in the San Francisco Bay Guardian about wine in the city. Wine Spectator has selected California Wine Merchant as one of the best wine bars in San Francisco and did an online video interview with owner Greg O'Flynn highlighting the length of time in business and the observed changes in trends over four decades. The very prestigious and influential Decanter Magazine (published in London) conducted an interview and composed a full two-page article on Greg O'Flynn and California Wine Merchant aptly entitled "Ahead of His Time." Decanter has a huge international reputation and reach — it is read in over 90 countries.

**CRITERION 3: Is the applicant committed to maintaining the physical features or traditions that define the business, including craft, culinary, or art forms?**

Yes, California Wine Merchant is committed to maintaining the physical features and traditions that define the business.

**HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION**

The Historic Preservation Commission recommends that California Wine Merchant qualifies for the Legacy Business Registry under Administrative Code Section 2A.242(b)(2) and recommends safeguarding of the below listed physical features and traditions.

Physical Features or Traditions that Define the Business:

- Wine selection process.
- A well-trained and knowledgeable staff.
- A focus on California, Oregon and Washington wines.
- Floor to ceiling redwood wine racks were personally hand built by Greg O'Flynn.
- Reidel Restaurant Series glassware washed in special high-temperature glass washer.
- Cheese plate.
- Large front windows.
- Interior decoration of wooden case ends photographs of grapes.





SAN FRANCISCO

## OFFICE OF SMALL BUSINESS

CITY AND COUNTY OF SAN FRANCISCO  
LONDON N. BREED, MAYOR

OFFICE OF SMALL BUSINESS  
REGINA DICK-ENDRIZZI, DIRECTOR

### **CORE PHYSICAL FEATURE OR TRADITION THAT DEFINES THE BUSINESS**

Following is the core physical feature or tradition that defines the business that would be required for maintenance of the business on the Legacy Business Registry.

- Wine store and wine bar.

### **STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

Staff recommends that the San Francisco Small Business Commission include California Wine Merchant currently located at 2113 Chestnut Street in the Legacy Business Registry as a Legacy Business under Administrative Code Section 2A.242.

Richard Kurylo, Program Manager  
Legacy Business Program



# Small Business Commission Draft Resolution

HEARING DATE SEPTEMBER 24, 2018

CALIFORNIA WINE MERCHANT

LEGACY BUSINESS REGISTRY RESOLUTION NO. \_\_\_\_\_

*Application No.:* LBR-2017-18-037  
*Business Name:* California Wine Merchant  
*Business Address:* 2113 Chestnut Street  
*District:* District 2  
*Applicant:* Greg O'Flynn, Owner  
*Nomination Date:* March 7, 2018  
*Nominated By:* Supervisor Catherine Stefani  
*Staff Contact:* Richard Kurylo  
legacybusiness@sfgov.org

## ADOPTING FINDINGS APPROVING THE LEGACY BUSINESS REGISTRY APPLICATION FOR CALIFORNIA WINE MERCHANT, CURRENTLY LOCATED AT 2113 CHESTNUT STREET.

**WHEREAS**, in accordance with Administrative Code Section 2A.242, the Office of Small Business maintains a registry of Legacy Businesses in San Francisco (the "Registry") to recognize that longstanding, community-serving businesses can be valuable cultural assets of the City and to be a tool for providing educational and promotional assistance to Legacy Businesses to encourage their continued viability and success; and

**WHEREAS**, the subject business has operated in San Francisco for 30 or more years, with no break in San Francisco operations exceeding two years; or

**WHEREAS**, the subject business has operated in San Francisco for more than 20 years but less than 30 years, has had no break in San Francisco operations exceeding two years, has significantly contributed to the history or identity of a particular neighborhood or community and, if not included in the Registry, faces a significant risk of displacement; and

**WHEREAS**, the subject business has contributed to the neighborhood's history and identity; and

**WHEREAS**, the subject business is committed to maintaining the physical features and traditions that define the business; and

**WHEREAS**, at a duly noticed public hearing held on September 24, 2018, the San Francisco Small Business Commission reviewed documents and correspondence, and heard oral testimony on the Legacy Business Registry application; therefore







SAN FRANCISCO

OFFICE OF SMALL BUSINESS

CITY AND COUNTY OF SAN FRANCISCO
LONDON N. BREED, MAYOR

OFFICE OF SMALL BUSINESS
REGINA DICK-ENDRIZZI, DIRECTOR

BE IT RESOLVED that the Small Business Commission hereby includes California Wine Merchant in the Legacy Business Registry as a Legacy Business under Administrative Code Section 2A.242.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Small Business Commission recommends safeguarding the below listed physical features and traditions at California Wine Merchant:

Physical Features or Traditions that Define the Business:

- Wine selection process.
A well-trained and knowledgeable staff.
A focus on California, Oregon and Washington wines.
Floor to ceiling redwood wine racks were personally hand built by Greg O'Flynn.
Reidel Restaurant Series glassware washed in special high-temperature glass washer.
Cheese plate.
Large front windows.
Interior decoration of wooden case ends photographs of grapes.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Small Business Commission requires maintenance of the below listed core physical feature or tradition to maintain California Wine Merchant on the Legacy Business Registry:

- Wine store and wine bar.

I hereby certify that the foregoing Resolution was ADOPTED by the Small Business Commission on September 24, 2018.

Regina Dick-Endrizzi
Director

RESOLUTION NO. \_\_\_\_\_

- Ayes -
Nays -
Abstained -
Absent -





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OFFICE OF SMALL BUSINESS

CITY AND COUNTY OF SAN FRANCISCO  
LONDON N. BREED, MAYOR

OFFICE OF SMALL BUSINESS  
REGINA DICK-ENDRIZZI, DIRECTOR

**Legacy  
Business  
Registry**

# Application Review Sheet

*Application No.:* LBR-2017-18-037  
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**CRITERION 1:** Has the applicant has operated in San Francisco for 30 or more years, with no break in San Francisco operations exceeding two years?  Yes  No

3237 Pierce Street from 1974 to 2004 (30 years)  
2113 Chestnut Street from 2004 to Present (14 years)

**CRITERION 2:** Has the applicant contributed to the neighborhood's history and/or the identity of a particular neighborhood or community?  Yes  No

**CRITERION 3:** Is the applicant committed to maintaining the physical features or traditions that define the business, including craft, culinary, or art forms?  Yes  No

**NOTES:** N/A

**DELIVERY DATE TO HPC:** August 22, 2018

Richard Kurylo  
Manager, Legacy Business Program



Member, Board of Supervisors  
District 2



City and County of San Francisco

## CATHERINE STEFANI

March 7, 2018

San Francisco Office of Small Business  
1 Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett Place, Room 110  
San Francisco, CA 94102-4681

Dear Director Dick-Endrizzi:

I hereby nominate California Wine Merchant to the Legacy Business Registry of San Francisco. Greg O'Flynn opened the business in 1974 on Pierce Street and is celebrating 44 years in the Marina District this year.

Greg opened this unique shop between his junior and senior years of college at St. Mary's in Moraga. A San Francisco native, Greg committed to specializing in selling California wines and also educating community members and visitors about our state's unique industry. He has invested in building strong relationships with partners, producers and customers. He particularly has committed to showcasing wines produced by small family-owned wineries. Greg and his wife Deborah have expanded their operations from Pierce Street to a new location on Chestnut Street. This includes a new wine bar where many community members continue to gather and learn from Greg, Deborah and guest winemakers they bring into their business to host tastings. We are proud to see Greg continue as an active owner and mentor to many employees who have since gone on to establish their own successful careers in the wine business.

The California Wine Merchant is committed to continuing to offer full services as a place for all residents and visitors to gather on Chestnut Street.

I look forward to California Wine Merchant's ongoing success as a Legacy Business.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Catherine Stefani".

Catherine Stefani  
San Francisco Supervisor, District 2

## Section One:

**Business / Applicant Information.** Provide the following information:

- The name, mailing address, and other contact information of the business;
- The name of the person who owns the business. For businesses with multiple owners, identify the person(s) with the highest ownership stake in the business;
- The name, title, and contact information of the applicant;
- The business's San Francisco Business Account Number and entity number with the Secretary of State, if applicable.

<b>NAME OF BUSINESS:</b>		
CALIFORNIA WINE MERCHANT		
<b>BUSINESS OWNER(S) (Identify the person(s) with the highest ownership stake in the business)</b>		
GREG O'FLYNN DEBORAH O'FLYNN		
<b>CURRENT BUSINESS ADDRESS:</b>		<b>TELEPHONE:</b>
2113 Chestnut Street San Francisco CA 94123		(415) 567-0646
		<b>EMAIL:</b>
		greg@californiawinemerchant.com
<b>WEBSITE:</b>	<b>FACEBOOK PAGE:</b>	<b>YELP PAGE</b>
www.californiawine merchant.com	California Wine Merchant	California Wine Merchant

<b>APPLICANT'S NAME</b>	
Greg O'Flynn	<input type="checkbox"/> Same as Business
<b>APPLICANT'S TITLE</b>	
Owner	
<b>APPLICANT'S ADDRESS:</b>	<b>TELEPHONE:</b>
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]
	<b>EMAIL:</b>
	greg@californiawine merchant.com

<b>SAN FRANCISCO BUSINESS ACCOUNT NUMBER:</b>	<b>SECRETARY OF STATE ENTITY NUMBER (if applicable):</b>
0425846	2948994

<b>OFFICIAL USE: Completed by OSB Staff</b>	
<b>NAME OF NOMINATOR:</b>	<b>DATE OF NOMINATION:</b>

## Section Two:

### Business Location(s).

List the business address of the original San Francisco location, the start date of business, and the dates of operation at the original location. Check the box indicating whether the original location of the business in San Francisco is the founding location of the business. If the business moved from its original location and has had additional addresses in San Francisco, identify all other addresses and the dates of operation at each address. For businesses with more than one location, list the additional locations in section three of the narrative.

ORIGINAL SAN FRANCISCO ADDRESS:	ZIP CODE:	START DATE OF BUSINESS
3237 Pierce Street	94123	July 1974
IS THIS LOCATION THE FOUNDING LOCATION OF THE BUSINESS?	DATES OF OPERATION AT THIS LOCATON	
<input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	July 1974 - May 2004	

OTHER ADDRESSES (if applicable):	ZIP CODE:	DATES OF OPERATION
2113 Chestnut Street	94123	Start: May 2004 End: Present

OTHER ADDRESSES (if applicable):	ZIP CODE:	DATES OF OPERATION
		Start: End:

OTHER ADDRESSES (if applicable):	ZIP CODE:	DATES OF OPERATION
		Start: End:

OTHER ADDRESSES (if applicable):	ZIP CODE:	DATES OF OPERATION
		Start: End:

OTHER ADDRESSES (if applicable):	ZIP CODE:	DATES OF OPERATION
		Start: End:

OTHER ADDRESSES (if applicable):	ZIP CODE:	DATES OF OPERATION
		Start: End:

## Section Three:

### Disclosure Statement.

#### San Francisco Taxes, Business Registration, Licenses, Labor Laws and Public Information Release.

This section is verification that all San Francisco taxes, business registration, and licenses are current and complete, and there are no current violations of San Francisco labor laws. This information will be verified and a business deemed not current in with all San Francisco taxes, business registration, and licenses, or has current violations of San Francisco labor laws, will not be eligible to apply for the Business Assistance Grant.

In addition, we are required to inform you that all information provided in the application will become subject to disclosure under the California Public Records Act.

Please read the following statements and check each to indicate that you agree with the statement. Then sign below in the space provided.

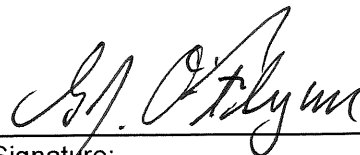
- I am authorized to submit this application on behalf of the business.
- I attest that the business is current on all of its San Francisco tax obligations.
- I attest that the business's business registration and any applicable regulatory license(s) are current.
- I attest that the Office of Labor Standards and Enforcement (OLSE) has not determined that the business is currently in violation of any of the City's labor laws, and that the business does not owe any outstanding penalties or payments ordered by the OLSE.
- I understand that documents submitted with this application may be made available to the public for inspection and copying pursuant to the California Public Records Act and San Francisco Sunshine Ordinance.
- I hereby acknowledge and authorize that all photographs and images submitted as part of the application may be used by the City without compensation.
- I understand that the Small Business Commission may revoke the placement of the business on the Registry if it finds that the business no longer qualifies, and that placement on the Registry does not entitle the business to a grant of City funds.

Greg O'Flynn

Name (Print):

8/2/18

Date:



Signature:

## **CALIFORNIA WINE MERCHANT**

### **Section 4: Written Historical Narrative**

#### **CRITERION 1**

**a. Provide a short history of the business from the date the business opened in San Francisco to the present day, including the ownership history. For businesses with multiple locations, include the history of the original location in San Francisco (including whether it was the business's founding and or headquartered location) and the opening dates and locations of all other locations.**

California Wine Merchant opened in 1974 at 3247 Pierce Street by Greg O'Flynn. In 2004, the business moved around the corner to 2113 Chestnut Street, where it is still located today.

Greg O'Flynn is a San Francisco native who grew up in the Marina District. He attended St. Vincent de Paul grammar school and Saint Ignatius College Preparatory. He played baseball and basketball down the street at what was then known as Funston Playground. During high school, he had several part-time jobs at businesses on Chestnut Street, including the beloved Marina Super, which is still there today.

After high school, Greg attended Saint Mary's College in Moraga, majoring in business administration and economics. It was there that he was also exposed to a wide variety of wines from many different countries through an extracurricular wine tasting club moderated by two of the Christian brothers who taught at the school. (Both had previously worked at the Christian Brothers winery in St. Helena.) Over the course of a couple of years of these tastings, Greg developed a passion for wine.

Greg opened California Wine Merchant in 1974 during the summer between his junior and senior year of college. Located on Pierce Street in the Marina, it was a unique shop at the time as it was just selling wine (no beer or hard alcohol) and was specializing in primarily California wines. Back then, wine was not part of the mainstream culture as it is today. Quite the contrary, those like Greg who were really into wine were outliers.

Greg became convinced that California was producing delicious wines equal to those produced elsewhere and that the state had an amazing future ahead of it. This varied from the general consensus at the time; most believed France had the best wines and California wines lacked distinction.

Interestingly, it was only two years after the California Wine Merchant opened its doors that the famous wine tasting in Paris took place. The Paris Wine Tasting of 1976—known informally as the Judgment of Paris—was a wine competition organized in Paris on May 24, 1976, by Steven Spurrier, a British wine merchant, in which French judges carried out two blind tasting comparisons: one of top-quality Chardonnays and another of red wines (Bordeaux wines from France and Cabernet Sauvignon wines from California). A Californian wine rated best in each



category, which caused surprise as France was generally regarded as being the foremost producer of the world's best wines. Spurrier sold only French wine and believed that the California wines would not win.<sup>1</sup>

The mid-1970's was an exciting time in the California wine industry. There were a lot of new wineries being opened by people who saw the great future of California and who were dedicated to high quality. Wines from the likes of Caymus, Stag's Leap, Diamond Creek, Chateau Montelena, Dehlinger, Joseph Swan, Duckhorn and many others were brand new at that time and it was these, and more, that made up the selection at the store.

Over the years, Greg developed deep and long lasting relationships with wine producers and customers alike in his quest to bring some of the best wines in the state to his store. Greg says that part of the fun of his business is pioneering these great wines from small family owned wineries. Another relationship that has contributed greatly to the success and longevity of the California Wine Merchant is the one he has with his wife, Deborah, whom he married in 1990 and who has been an integral part of the business ever since.

In 2004, after 30 years in the same location, the original building was slated for demolition. Greg and Deborah moved the business to its current location at 2113 Chestnut Street in San Francisco (literally just around the corner from the original location). The new location was formerly a dilapidated dive-type bar called Danny's that had been closed for a couple of years. Greg and Deborah remodeled and renovated the new location, keeping the same look and feel of the original store, and added a wine bar where people could come in and enjoy a wide variety of the delicious wines he was bringing in. It was something that the neighborhood was thirsty for, and the bar was an immediate success and remains so to this day.

In addition to pouring 50 wines by the glass, Greg also has a very active series of "Meet the Winemaker Tastings" where guest winemakers will come down and pour for customers several of the wines they produce. Greg also launched a Quarterly Wine Club in which members receive 6 different wines every quarter along with detailed notes on the wines and the wineries that make them. The members also receive invitations to all of the winemaker tastings. California Wine Merchant has also served as a training ground for many of its employees who have since gone on to establish their own successful careers in the wine business.

California Wine Merchant is now 44 years old and is among few businesses of that age that are still owned and operated on a day-to-day basis by the original founder. When asked about retirement, Greg says that he is too healthy and too young to retire. "I like what I do and besides, I think it would be cool to at least hit 50 years in business!"

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<sup>1</sup> Wikipedia, [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Judgment\\_of\\_Paris\\_\(wine\)\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Judgment_of_Paris_(wine)))

**b. Describe any circumstances that required the business to cease operations in San Francisco for more than six months?**

N/A

**c. Is the business a family-owned business? If so, give the generational history of the business.**

California Wine Merchant is a family-owned business. Founder Greg O'Flynn is still actively involved in all aspects of the company. His wife Deborah has been involved for the past 30 years, and their daughter Chelsea, 25 years old, is now also working at the business.

**d. Describe the ownership history when the business ownership is not the original owner or a family-owned business.**

Greg O'Flynn was the sole owner of California Wine Merchant from 1974 to 1990, and Deborah O'Flynn has been a co-owner since 1990.

1974 to 1990	Greg O'Flynn
1990 to Present	Greg O'Flynn and Deborah O'Flynn

**e. When the current ownership is not the original owner and has owned the business for less than 30 years, the applicant will need to provide documentation of the existence of the business prior to current ownership to verify it has been in operation for 30+ years. Please use the list of supplemental documents and/or materials as a guide to help demonstrate the existence of the business prior to current ownership.**

N/A

**f. Note any other special features of the business location, such as, if the property associated with the business is listed on a local, state, or federal historic resources registry.**

The building that houses California Wine Merchant is classified by the Planning Department as Category B ("Unknown / Age Eligible") with regard to the California Environmental Quality Act.

## **CRITERION 2**

**a. Describe the business's contribution to the history and/or identity of the neighborhood, community or San Francisco.**

California Wine Merchant is a wine store and wine bar located in the Marina District. Specializing in small California producers, the business has access to wines that are rare to retailers. California Wine Merchant is also the liveliest wine bar in the neighborhood, open late seven nights a week.

California Wine Merchant has contributed to wine becoming embedded into the fabric of San Francisco's culture. People are interested in the quality of wine and in what makes these wines so good. California Wine Merchant contributed to this developing interest in wine. Greg was also at the forefront of California wines' increasing popularity. Rather than just focus on imported wines, Greg pioneered small, high caliber wineries in California and brought these brands to the influential San Francisco market. At California Wine Merchant, he educated the consumers with monthly newsletters and he organized "Meet the Winemaker" tastings. He continues to be an indispensable resource to this day.

**b. Is the business (or has been) associated with significant events in the neighborhood, the city, or the business industry?**

California Wine Merchant hosts regular wine tastings. The store also has an active series, about 35 per year, of "Meet the Winemaker Tastings."

Every Halloween, the front windows and a group of customers in full costume hand out big candy bars to all the kids on Chestnut Street. This has become a tradition that kids, parents and customers look forward to.

During the America's Cup in 2013, California Wine Merchant was a meeting spot for several of the competing countries' teams to meet and enjoy a glass of wine together after a tough day of competition on the bay.

**c. Has the business ever been referenced in an historical context? Such as in a business trade publication, media, or historical documents?**

As far back as 1976, Greg was featured in a cover story in the San Francisco Bay Guardian about wine in the city.

Wine Spectator has selected California Wine Merchant as one of the best wine bars in San Francisco and did an online video interview with owner Greg O'Flynn highlighting the length of time in business and the observed changes in trends over four decades.

The very prestigious and influential Decanter Magazine (published in London) conducted an interview and composed a full two-page article on Greg O'Flynn and California Wine Merchant aptly entitled "Ahead of His Time." Decanter has a huge international reputation and reach — it is read in over 90 countries.

**d. Is the business associated with a significant or historical person?**

San Francisco mayors such as Frank Jordan, Willie Brown and Mark Farrell have all been customers at California Wine Merchant. Actor Sean Penn has also been a customer.

**e. How does the business demonstrate its commitment to the community?**

California Wine Merchant is a frequent donor to school fundraising events throughout the city and beyond: San Francisco Public Montessori, Marin School of the Arts, San Francisco School of the Arts, Sherman Elementary School, to name a few. We also donate to Leukemia Society. California Wine Merchant also maintains a very active schedule of “Meet the Winemaker” events in which about 35 times per year we bring a guest winemaker down to conduct a tasting of their wines for our customers. This is a unique opportunity for people to meet the winemakers in person, taste their wines, and learn about their winery. California Wine Merchant also provides opportunities for young people to begin their careers in wine. Greg has mentored many employees who have gone on to open their own businesses and become restaurateurs, winemakers, wine reps, wholesalers and those that have become involved in other aspects of the wine industry.

**f. Provide a description of the community the business serves.**

First and foremost, we serve the residents of the Marina. The business also serves people from other parts of San Francisco and the greater Bay Area, as well as visitors from outside the state and country. Since it has become a wine bar, it has become a very social gathering place for members of the immediate community and beyond. Longtime wine lovers and those fairly new to wine all appreciate the comfortable and educational environment, without any of the “snobby sommelier syndrome,” which can make for a very uncomfortable experience. It is a place for people to go with friends and to meet friends, and a place of first time meetings that have developed into marriages and subsequent families. This venue as a meeting place has become a significant part of those families’ narratives.

California Wine Merchant also serves 500 members of the store’s wine club, consisting of connoisseurs and novices alike. Approximately one-third of the members live outside of the Bay Area, many in other states throughout the country. They benefit from Greg's connections and experience, receiving some of California's most exciting and hard to find wines from an array of regions. Club members receive quarterly shipments of six hand-selected wines – five bottles of red and one bottle of white.

**g. Is the business associated with a culturally significant building/structure/site/object/interior?**

The unique floor to ceiling redwood wine racks were personally hand built by Greg O’Flynn.

**h. How would the community be diminished if the business were to be sold, relocated, shut down, etc.?**

The community would be diminished if California Wine Merchant were to shut down. It would lose one of the area’s most treasured resources for tasting, buying and learning about wine as well as a meeting/gathering place that is very social and frequented by many people every day. It would also take away an opportunity for young people to begin their career in wine, as many employees have gone on to open their own businesses in the wine industry.

## **CRITERION 3**

### **a. Describe the business and the essential features that define its character.**

California Wine Merchant is comfortable and authentic — owned by a wine merchant in the true sense of the word. Greg sources all of the wine that he sells independently and does not rely on wine press or critic's scores. Greg works hard to know the intimate details behind the wines that he offers and the stories of the people behind them.

Every wine that is sold at California Wine Merchant first goes through a unique selection process. We pour off a 5 ounce sample bottle of every wine that is brought to us by winery representatives, wine brokers and wine distributors. The wines are then tasted later by our dedicated staff tasters. These tasters are extremely knowledgeable and passionate about wine and have razor sharp palates. It is a blind tasting in a sense that the wine is evaluated away from the label and the sales representative. And since more than one person tastes the wines, we are able to bring in wines that receive a unanimous "thumbs up" and are truly the best. We focus on high quality wines at a good value. We take care to make sure customers have a vast, unmatched selection to meet their needs.

The team at California Wine Merchant is committed to making sure customers have an amazing wine experience; whether it's sitting at the bar or selecting a wine from the store. The entire staff is friendly and knowledgeable and well versed in the wine selection at the store. California Wine Merchant has literally hundreds of different wines to choose from. The majority of the wines come from various regions of California, Oregon and Washington, but there is a tasty selection of hand-picked imports as well. California Wine Merchant carries old favorites as well as new, undiscovered gems, and many small production wines that are hard to find just anywhere.

The wine at California Wine Merchant is served in some of the finest glassware: the Riedel Restaurant Series. These large, delicate glasses maximize the bouquet of the wine and create a more pleasant drinking experience. The glasses are washed in a special high-temperature glass washer that sterilizes them without the use of any soap or chemicals which can leave an unpleasant odor in the glasses and interfere with the enjoyment of the wine. At the end of each night, every opened bottle behind the bar is preserved with Argon gas. Argon is the most effective gas used for preserving wine. Argon is an inert gas that is heavier than air so it creates a blanket on top of the wine, thus shielding the wine from the oxidative effects of being exposed to air.

Besides the wine list, California Wine Merchant offers a substantial cheese plate consisting of a cow's milk gouda from Holland, Acme Ciabatta bread, Kalamata olives and pistachios. There are Seattle Chocolate Truffles for those with a sweet tooth. And there are four beers available by the bottle: Anchor Steam, Heineken, Pilsner Urquell and Pyramid Hefeweizen.

**b. How does the business demonstrate a commitment to maintaining the historical traditions that define the business, and which of these traditions should not be changed in order to retain the businesses historical character? (e.g., business model, goods and services, craft, culinary, or art forms)**

The longstanding tradition is to feature California wines with an emphasis on high quality, small production, emerging producers. This is what Greg started off doing 44 years ago and he continues this tradition in the present day as is evidenced by the wines he sells that may not yet be on people's radar, but should be because of their exceptional quality and distinctiveness from small producers.

**c. How has the business demonstrated a commitment to maintaining the special physical features that define the business? Describe any special exterior and interior physical characteristics of the space occupied by the business (e.g. signage, murals, architectural details, neon signs, etc.).**

To this day, the wine racks that were hand built by owner Greg O'Flynn 44 years ago, hand selecting each piece of lumber, making every cut and pounding every nail out of old growth Redwood are still rock solid and are an integral part of the interior function and aesthetic. The large windows at the front, where customers can sit, open up to Chestnut Street. The wooden case ends that are on the walls and the photographs of grapes complete the honest "wine cellar" feel of the store.

**d. When the current ownership is not the original owner and has owned the business for less than 30years; the applicant will need to provide documentation that demonstrates the current owner has maintained the physical features or traditions that define the business, including craft, culinary, or art forms. Please use the list of supplemental documents and/or materials as a guide to help demonstrate the existence of the business prior to current ownership.**

N/A



CALIFORNIA WINE MERCHANT

THE G





California Wine Merchant

ALL FROM MENU BY OWNER



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2113

CALIFORNIA WINE MERCHANT



STRAH  
WINEYARDS  
TASTING  
This Hour  
5-8pm



# CALIFORNIA WINE MERCHANT

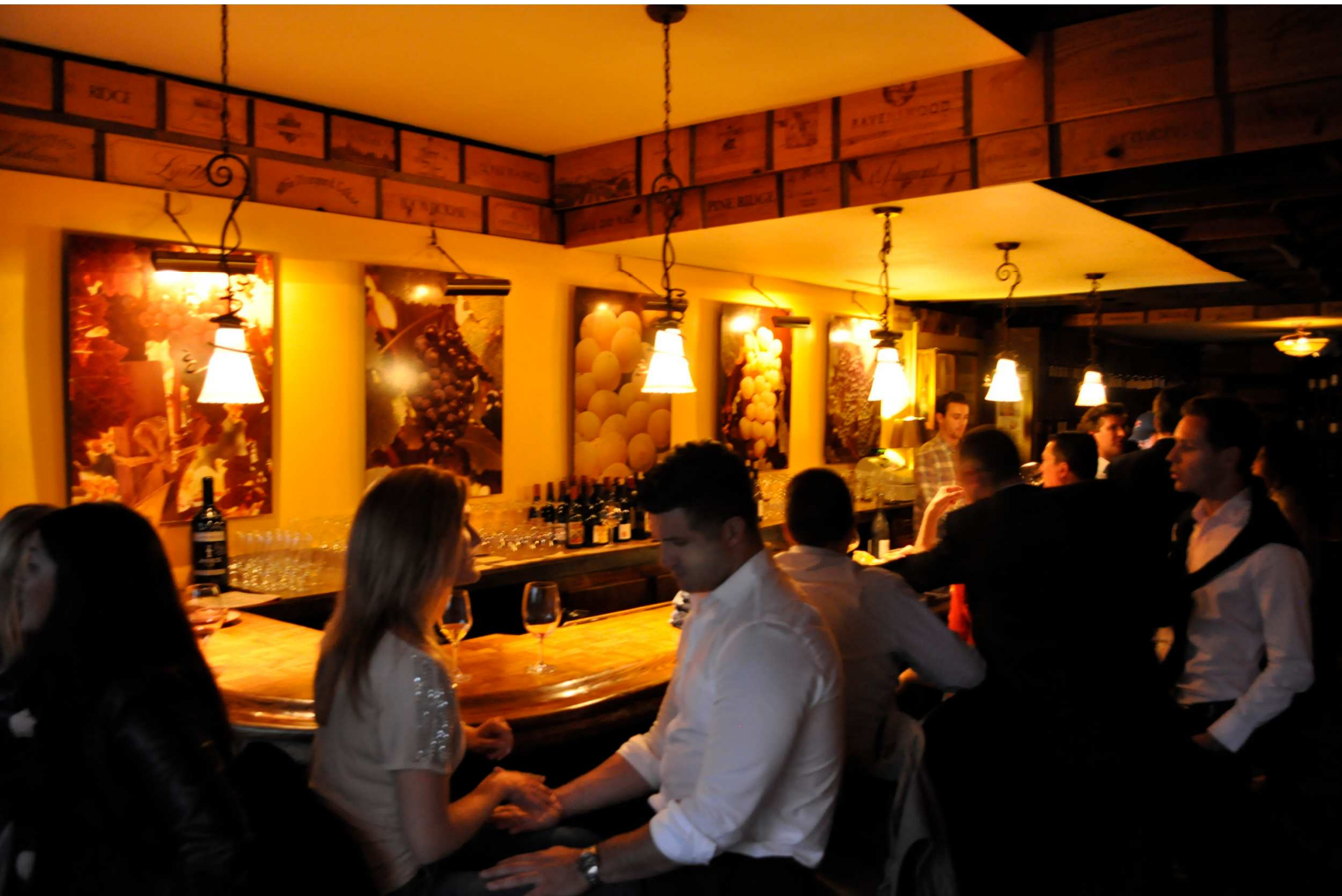
OUR CUSTOMERS  
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BLUE GRAY CAB BLEND  
TRY OUR OTHERS -  
15 under \$15 - WINES BY  
THE GLASS - FROM CAL.  
ITALY, FRANCE, PORTUGAL  
SPAIN, NEW ZEALAND















 CALIFORNIA WINE MERCHANT  
"WINITAK" WINE CLUB & WINE BAR

**CWM Wine Club  
First Quarter 2016**

As of 12/31/2015, we are looking forward to sharing our wine club with you in 2016. We are excited to have you as a member of our club and we are looking forward to making this a great year for you and your family.

For the 2016 Wine Club members, we have a special offer. We will provide you with a complimentary 2016 First Quarter wine club membership. This offer is available to all members who have been with us for at least 12 months as of 12/31/2015.









Join the  
*California Wine Merchant*  
**Wine Club**

...6 bottles every quarter  
(5 red, 1 white)

...hand picked – our favorites

...discounts on the wines

...tasting notes

...winery history

...FREE Monday night special  
event tasting for two people

...Ask for brochure!

# California Wine Merchant

Join the CWM Wine Club! Club Members + your Guest attend for FREE at our  
Monday Night Winemaker Events

## Sparkling Wines

Glass / Bot

Valdo Prosecco – Veneto, Italy	14	56
- crisp, light, pear and mineral flavors		
Roederer NV Brut – Anderson Valley, California	15	60
- refreshing cherry and vanilla		
Allimant Laugner NV Cremant D'Alsace Brut Rose – France	16	56
- berry fruit intense, elegant		
Domaine Carneros Brut Rose – Napa	22	88
- full bodied, lush fruit with spice		

## White Wines

1/2 Gl / Glass / Bot

Chateau de Brigue 2016 Rose – Provence, France	5.5	11	44
- unoaked, crisp, red berry, spice			
Centorri 2014 Moscato di Pavia – Italy	7.25	14	58
- juicy with just the right touch of sweetness			
Aveleda 2016 Vinho Verde – Portugal	5.5	11	44
- fruity, refreshing with a slight effervescence			
Hendry 2015 Albarino – Napa Valley	7.5	15	60
- dry, crisp, stone fruit, with a touch of minerality			
Enkidu 2016 Grenache Blanc – Sonoma County	7.5	15	60
- nectarine, meyer lemon, textured			
Gustave Lorentz 2016 Reserve Pinot Blanc – France	7.25	14.5	58
- peach nectar, dry and pure			
The Seeker 2016 Sauvignon Blanc – New Zealand	5.5	11	44
- classic grassy passionfruit, supple			
Chateau St.-Nabor 2015 Cotes du Rhone – France <small>*Q2 2018 CWM Wine Club Selection*</small>	6.75	13.5	54
- juicy apricot, fresh pear, floral, distinct acidity, minerality, clean finish			
Auchere 2016 Sancerre – France	7.25	14.5	58
- lemon pulp, guava, medium bodied and bright			
Lost Angel 2016 Chardonnay – California	5.75	11.5	46
- no heavy oak, fresh, clean, ripe fruit			
Egret 2015 Chardonnay – Sonoma	6.5	13	52
- pear, vanilla, creamy texture			
Ernest 2014 Chardonnay – Sonoma Coast... <small>*Q2 2018 CWM Wine Club Selection*</small>	9.25	18.5	74
- generous fruit, well-balanced toasty oak, not heavy or ponderous			
L'Angevin 2014 Chardonnay – Russian River Valley	10	20	80
- oaky, buttery and richly textured			

Perrier Sparkling Water

\$5

Anchor Steam, Pilsner, Heineken, Pyramid Hefeweizen

\$5

Gourmet Cheese Plate - Vincent Cheese, Acme ciabatta bread, kalamata olives, pistachios

\$8.5

A Bowl of Pistachios or Olives

\$5

Seattle Chocolate Truffles...milk or dark chocolate

.50 or 3/31



# GUARDIAN

WHICH TITLE THE WEEKLY NEWSPAPER OF SAN FRANCISCO AND THE BAY AREA, AUGUST 20 THROUGH AUGUST 27, 1976, VOL. 11, NO. 16

## WINE IN THE CITY

35 wine discoveries by Charles Krug's winemaker, the Blue Fox's wine steward, Robert Finigan and 7 other wine experts. Plus: 50 bargains at 16 wine shops and a guide to harvest-time, wine-country festivals. Page 14.



Greg O'Flynn of the Monterey Wine Company, SF. Photo by Janet Fries.

### Shoemaking and Sanskrit

The annual Guardian guide to fall classes. Page 10.

### Ireland tries Britain on torture charges

William Ristow reports from London on the European Court of Human Rights. Page 5.

### Dan O'Neill is back!

Page 3.

### Stalking the cultural front

Belmondo as Clark Kent, Belmondo as Superman. Page 20. Mays Angelou stages the black experience. Page 20. Can a Frisco kid play the dobro? Page 22.

### Reading up on est

The first wave of books on Werner Erhard's cultural phenomenon. Page 6.

### Special report from the Russell Means trial

Behind the "not guilty" verdict for the American Indian Movement leader. Page 3.





DECEMBER 8, 2013

**SUNDAY**

FOUNDED IN 1861

\$1.50

# Marin Independent Journal

An edition of the San Jose Mercury News 570



**WINE  
EXPERT**

PLUS LIFE B1



**BRANSON GIRLS  
STATE TITLE WIN  
STREAK HALTED**

SPORTS C1



# MARIN SNAPSHOT

For Kentfield's O'Flynn, a college diversion became 40-year career with grapes



*Joseph Kangle/Special to the Marin Independent Journal*

'The best wine I ever had was the Conn Creek 1974 cabernet,' says Greg O'Flynn of Kentfield. It's from a particular vineyard called the Elsiele Vineyard. It's just a phenomenal cabernet vineyard.'

## WINE ENTHUSIAST

By Gary Klein | Marin Independent Journal

**K**ENTFIELD RESIDENT Greg O'Flynn credits the Christian Brothers for turning him on to wine. O'Flynn, 60, said he was a business student at St. Mary's College in Moraga when he participated in a Christian Brothers wine program and was exposed to wines from around the world. After college, the San Francisco native opened the California Wine Merchant in the city in 1974 and has been running it ever since. His wife, Deborah, joined the enterprise in 1989, and they have lived in Kentfield for nearly two decades.



Greg O'Flynn swirls a glass of red wine before sampling its bouquet at his shop, California Wine Merchant, in San Francisco. He has been operating the specialty wine store since 1974.

**Q: What's the most important quality for a wine expert to have?**

**A:** Passion. Anything and everything that anybody does in life ... you've got to like. You've got to have a passion for it.

**Q: Do you consider yourself a wine snob?**

**A:** No, I would say absolutely not. I don't think there's many wine snobs out there who'd want to be categorized that way anyway.

**Q: What separates a great wine from a very good one?**

**A:** I think it really comes down to the layers of complexity. ... It's not very good movie and a great movie, or going to a very good restaurant and a great restaurant.

**Q: If you were on a cruise ship that**

**sank and you got washed up on an island with one bottle of wine, what would you want it to be?**

**A:** The best wine I ever had was the Conn Creek 1974 cabernet. It's from a particular vineyard called the Elsiele Vineyard. It's just a phenomenal cabernet vineyard. ... The vineyard is now owned by a vineyard called Araujo.

**Q: What makes it so special?**

**A:** It's the location of the vineyard. It's just a phenomenal little vineyard. It goes back to the depth and the concentration and the layering and the way it all comes together.

**Q: What's the most overrated wine?**

**A:** I would have to say probably one of the more famous Champagnes, like Dom Perignon. The times we've had it in tasting, it never seems to show that well, and it's got this huge reputation.

**Q: Have politics and global warming had a noticeable effect on the quality of wine?**

**A:** Not that I know about. Wines have been getting better and better all the time, and a lot of it has to do with people learning more about the site they're growing grapes on and how to farm it better.

**Q: Ever drink a cheap can of beer, just for something different?**

**A:** Not really. I don't know what a cheap beer would be.

**Q: Do you drink anything besides wine?**

**A:** I'm a tea aficionado. I like teas. There's a lot of different flavor nuances in tea.

Contact Gary Klein via email at [garyk@marinij.com](mailto:garyk@marinij.com) or <https://twitter.com/GaryKlein>



<http://www.marinij.com/article/zz/20131207/NEWS/131208799>

# Marin Independent Journal

marinij.com

## Marin Snapshot: For Kentfield's Greg O'Flynn, college diversion became wine career

By Gary Klien, Marin Independent Journal  
Posted: 12/07/13, 12:01 AM PST



Greg O'Flynn airiates a glass of red wine by swirling it around in a broad mouthed glass before testing the bouquet, at the California Wine Merchant, his specialty wine shop of 40 years, on Chestnut street in San Francisco, on Monday, December 3, 2013. (Jocelyn Knight/ Special to the Marin Independent Journal)  
Jocelyn Knight



KENTFIELD RESIDENT Greg O'Flynn credits the Christian Brothers for turning him on to wine.

O'Flynn, 60, said he was a business student at St. Mary's College in Moraga when he participated in a Christian Brothers wine program and was exposed to wines from around the world.

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Greg O'Flynn at the California Wine Merchant, in front of the wine cabinets he made himself, on Chestnut street in San Francisco, on Monday, December 3, 2013. (Jocelyn Knight/ Special to the Marin Independent Journal) Jocelyn Knight



Proprietors Greg and Deborah O'Flynn at the California Wine Merchant, their specialty wine shop of 40 years, on Chestnut street in San Francisco, on Monday, December 3, 2013. (Jocelyn Knight/ Special to the Marin Independent Journal) Jocelyn Knight

Contact Gary Klien via email at [gklien@marinij.com](mailto:gklien@marinij.com) or <https://twitter.com/GaryKlien>

## Decanter Magazine

Decanter is a highly respected monthly wine magazine published in London. It specializes in wine industry news, reviews, opinions and editorial. Established in 1975, it has broad global distribution and is currently read in more than 90 countries.

I am honored to have been featured in their California Focus Edition in late 2014 and am proud to share with you the article they wrote.

Best Regards,

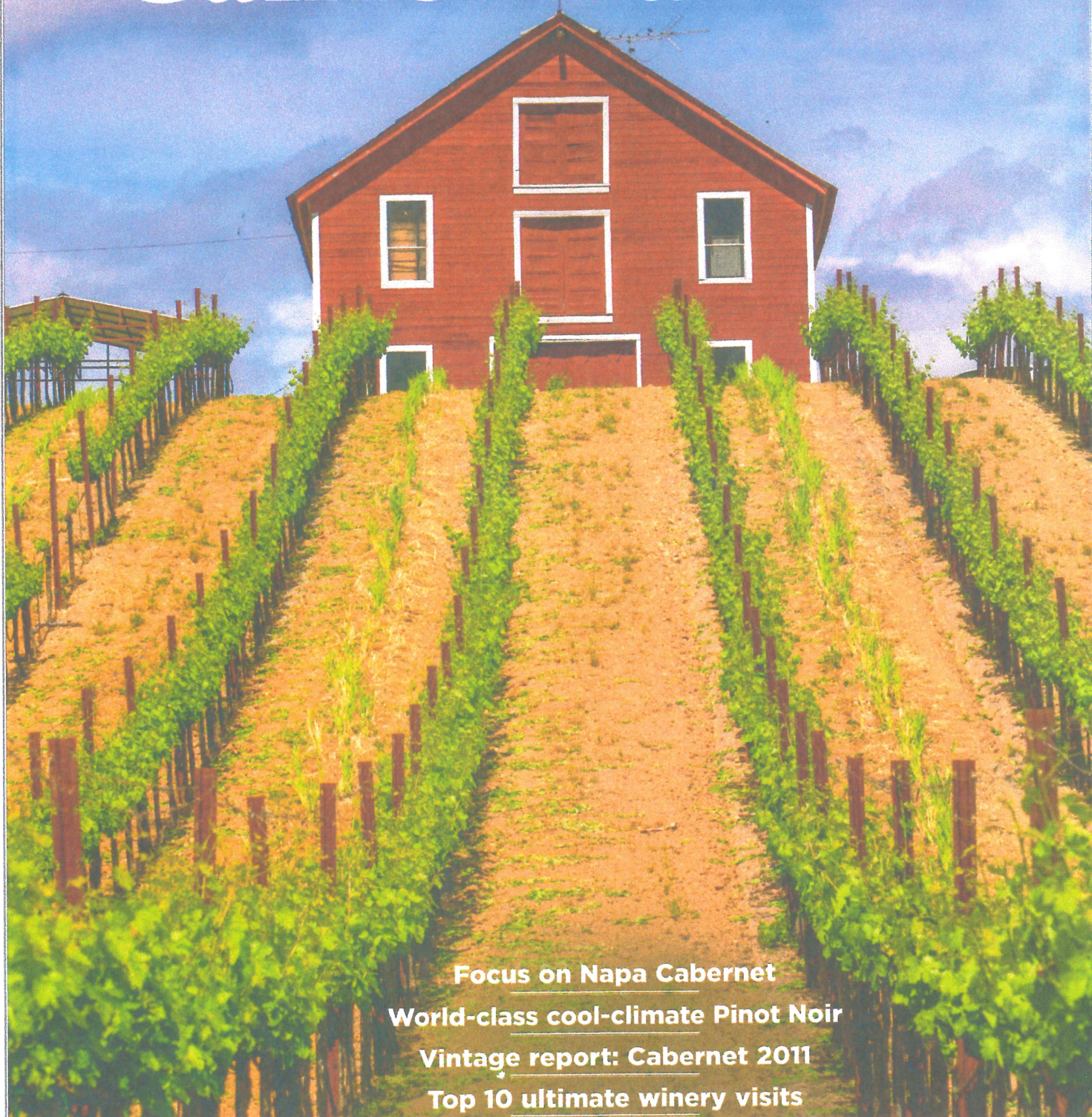
Greg O'Flynn



*The world's best wine magazine*

# Decanter

## California 2014



**Focus on Napa Cabernet**

**World-class cool-climate Pinot Noir**

**Vintage report: Cabernet 2011**

**Top 10 ultimate winery visits**



## Interview

# Ahead of his time

Greg O'Flynn spotted California's vinous potential even before the Judgement of Paris in the mid-1970s. Where better to find out where the Golden State's wines are heading than his wine bar and shop in San Francisco? Jordan Mackay drops by

ON A WARM May evening in San Francisco's Marina District, the California Wine Merchant is absolutely humming. A tight space as it is, with small tables and stools clustered around a central bar snugly contained by a perimeter of well-stocked wine shelves, the room is especially hard to navigate when thronged with twenty-somethings. The volume of the chatter is high, as is the consumption of rosé, which appears gently luminous in every fourth glass. The oldest person in the room is behind the bar, tending to the throng.

At 60, Greg O'Flynn, who founded the California Wine Merchant 40 years ago, is hale and tanned, with a handsome, weathered California glow. Sustaining any establishment in San Francisco for 40 years is an achievement, much less a wine shop and bar, which tends to lead short lives in this hyper-competitive city. Even on a busy Friday, O'Flynn is happy to take a break to chat about his area of expertise.

'California wine has always been its own world and created its own identity,' says O'Flynn. 'When I got into it, it was right out of college. I hadn't really been jaded by years of indoctrination into French wines.' Fuelled by an enthusiasm developed in wine tasting classes led by the De La Salle Christian Brothers, a winemaking order that administered St Mary's College which O'Flynn was attending, he started the Wine Merchant. 'My naïve palate knew what I liked,' he says. 'And some of these California wines I liked better than the French.'

### Talking 'bout a revolution

Perhaps naïveté is the reverse side of the open-mindedness for which California is so famous. O'Flynn's wine preferences were sanctioned two years after he opened his shop when Steven

Spurrier's famous Judgement of Paris tasting of 1976 essentially endorsed California wine and ordained a new global power on the West Coast of the US. 'To my point,' O'Flynn says, 'the wines were there before the Paris tasting. And ever since, it's been as much of a revolution as an evolution.'

Much of the recent talk in American wine circles has been about the so-called New California wine, a movement chronicled in a recent book of the same title by wine writer and *Decanter* columnist Jon Bonné. With a generational shift, wines are turning away from heavier, richer styles accompanied by a newfound openness to non-canonical grape varieties and regions. But when you've been selling California for 40 years, you're allowed to be a bit jaded about the word 'new'.

O'Flynn has seen plenty of trends come and go in his time and has no trouble putting the current movement – attendant hype included – into perspective. 'The New California movement really started in the 1970s,' he asserts. 'Mondavi was the first significant post-Prohibition winery to open in the Napa Valley. Before that it was the old guard – Christian Brothers, Louis M Martini, Beaulieu, Charles Krug. They'd been around forever. In the 1970s – coincidentally about the time I opened – new wineries arrived. Caymus, Stag's Leap Wine Cellars, Diamond Creek, Clos du Val, and even in Sonoma County, where Tom Dehlinger's first vintage was 1975. The experimentation taking place now isn't brand new. This has been going on for a long time.'

The move away from jammy, blockbuster wines, O'Flynn dismisses more as trend than watershed. 'We've gone through periods like this before. In the late 1970s everyone wanted more and more tannin because they thought it made wines age better.



With its wide array of bottles, the California Wine Merchant mirrors the desire of its owner, Greg O'Flynn's, to break boundaries and champion the pioneers

*'People used to have a wine that they drank all the time. Nowadays young drinkers want to try something completely different with every glass'*

Greg O'Flynn





*'For O'Flynn, biodynamics are not an endpoint in the evolution of viticulture. He sees the potential for even more spiritual connection between winegrower and vine than currently exists'*

became the world's top wine consumer, surpassing even France, has been dramatic and something O'Flynn has witnessed from the front line. 'Look around you,' he says, gesturing towards his customers. 'How many people are now drinking dry rosé, something everyone was afraid to touch just a few years ago?'

He also notes the decline in power of wine critics in America, who, he says, don't hold the sway that they once did. Young drinkers today, 'seem to come with a confidence that they can make their own decisions. It's almost like I had when I was young and didn't know better. But there were several decades where people really seemed to worry whether they were buying something that was approved by critics or sommeliers.'

Open to new varieties, regions and blends, the young drinkers of today also don't have the allegiances of old. 'People used to have a wine that they drank all the time, just like they'd have one brand of Scotch. They identified with it. Nowadays, young drinkers are the opposite. They want to try something completely different with every glass.'

O'Flynn likes that, in California, wine drinkers are no longer bound by tradition. And he's glad the winemakers aren't either. While he just wants them to make good wine and not worry about trends, he is enthused that a new consciousness is likewise extending to the vineyards. 'The surge in organic and biodynamic farming has been one of the biggest changes I've seen,' he says, 'And one of the most meaningful.'

For O'Flynn, biodynamics are not an endpoint in the evolution of viticulture. He sees the potential for even more spiritual connection between winegrower and vine than currently exists. With a glow in his eyes, he refers to experiments in playing music for vines and for expanding the way farmers relate to their vineyards.

'That's the next frontier,' he says. 'Learning about all the other kinds of energies that affect the way plants grow. And I wouldn't be surprised to see that happen in California. Innovation and spirituality have always been strong in this place.'

*Jordan Mackay is a James Beard Foundation award winning writer specialising in wine and food, and co-author of Secrets of the Sommeliers*

The reaction was a shift away from the quest for tannins to make wines that weren't as big – "food wines", they called them. To my mind it pushed the pendulum too far in that direction. And the wines were lean and more green; the Chardonnay didn't have as much weight and flavour.'

### New demographic

Such characteristics have reappeared in some of the New California wines, according to Flynn, who has tasted the vanguard wines at such events as In Pursuit of Balance, the annual tastings organised by sommelier Rajat Parr and wine producer Jasmine Hirsch ([www.inpursuitofbalance.com](http://www.inpursuitofbalance.com)) to highlight the new paradigm. The tastings feature a small, curated cadre of wineries whose wines are lower in ripeness and alcohol than mainline California fare. 'Again, I found myself looking for personality and flavour in many of these new wines,' O'Flynn says.

The greatest change, according to Flynn, has come in the people drinking the wine. Indeed, the evolution of the wine drinker in the US, a country that has just

*'The New California movement really started in the 1970s. Mondavi was the first significant post-Prohibition winery to open in the Napa Valley'*

**Greg O'Flynn**



<https://www.kqed.org/bayareabites/111075/bay-area-bites-guide-to-wine-bars-in-san-francisco-and-the-east-bay>

**AUTHOR**

**Kelly O'Mara**

Published on Aug 9, 2016

**BAY AREA BITES**

## **Bay Area Bites Guide to Wine Bars in San Francisco and the East Bay**



A wine tasting flight (**Doniree Walker/Flickr**)

Sure, plenty of people think summer is all about **beer**. But when the fog rolls in, it starts to feel like time for a glass of wine. (And, really, when is it not time for a glass of wine?)

Wine bars have been popping up everywhere in the last few years, to the point that the trend has almost become passé. That doesn't mean wine isn't still delicious, but it does mean it can make it hard to find the good spots. Are you looking for local wines? International wines? Sustainable wines? Wines by the bottle or by the glass?

You can find it all in the Bay Area. We are, after all, a wine region. But if you're not sure where to start, here are some of our favorites in San Francisco and the East Bay. This is, of course, not a comprehensive list of Bay Area wine bars. If we forgot your favorite, add it in the comments below.

## **San Francisco:**

- [California Wine Merchant](#) (Marina): Maybe the name gives it away, but California Wine Merchant is the place to go if you're looking for small-batch California wines. Since it opened in 1974, the shop has offered hand-picked Golden State wines for sale in its retail shop. When it moved locations in the 2000s, that was the perfect time to add a casual wine bar to the set-up. The bar is primarily a bar, with just a small selection of food offered. Glasses range from \$7-\$25, and you can join the wine club to have California wines shipped to your house regularly.

<https://sf.eater.com/maps/best-restaurants-bars-marina-san-francisco>



## Where to Eat and Drink in the Marina

A vetted guide to the neighborhood

by Stefanie Tuder @stefanietuder  
Updated Sep 21, 2016, 10:14am PDT



Chestnut Street | Photo by Google Maps



Ah, the Marina. The subject of much scorn from anyone who doesn't live there. The subject of much love for anyone who does. Chances are, however you feel about it, you're bound to find yourself "on campus" at one point or another — and when that happens, you might as well make the most of it.

Whether you want to dive right into the bro-filled bevy of bars or prefer to stay above the fray, the Marina does have a lot of respectable eating and drinking options to take care of your needs, whatever they may be. Here now, we've got you covered with the **19 best restaurants and bars in the neighborhood**, listed alphabetically.

## 4. California Wine Merchant

2113 Chestnut St  
San Francisco, CA 94123  
(415) 567-0646  
[www.californiawinemerchant.com](http://www.californiawinemerchant.com)

Serious date spot alert. First date, second date, 800th date — this is the place. Cozy ambience, friendly service, well-priced glasses of California wines and a cheese and charcuterie plate are the key ingredients to date domination.





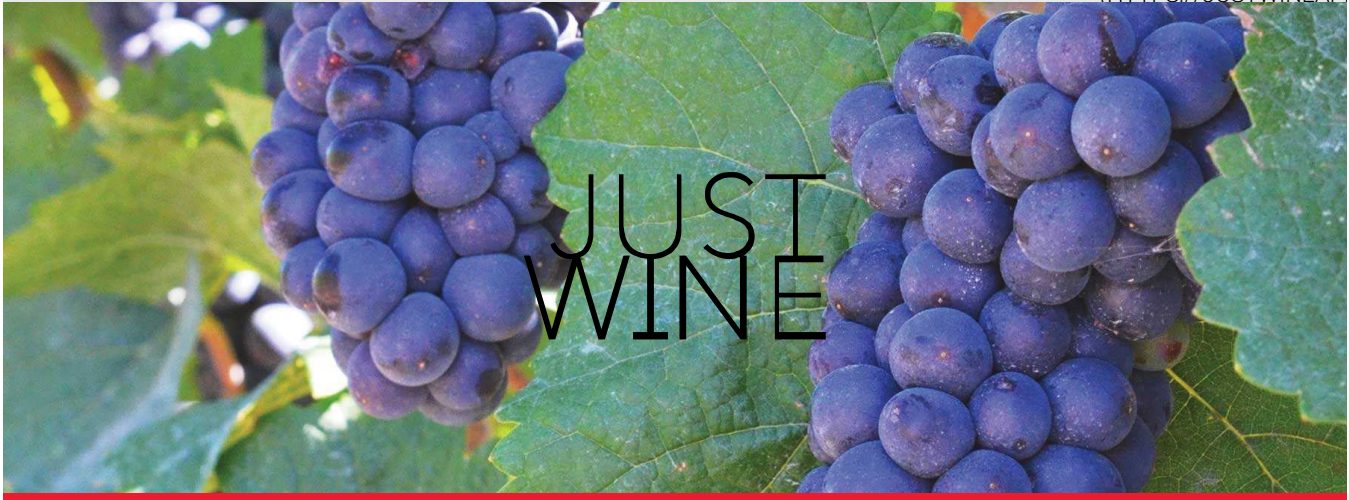
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## California Wine Merchant

 San Francisco, California, United States

### About

The CWM was established in 1974 by Greg O'Flynn. It was a unique store, well ahead of its time. It was a wine merchant in the truest sense with the owner personally tasting and selecting the wines that were to be carried as well as personally interacting with the customers and making recommendations. It did not carry any beer or hard alcohol.

California wines have always been the primary focus. After tasting wines from all over the world Greg thought that wines from California were outstanding and could rival the best wines from Europe. (Interestingly, it was only two years after the California Wine Merchant opened its doors that the famous Tasting in Paris took place in 1976. It was a blind tasting in which French wine judges ranked wines from California better than some of the best French wines.)

The mid-'70's was an exciting time in the California wine industry. There were a lot of new wineries being opened by people who saw the great future of California and who were dedicated to high quality. Wines from the likes of Caymus, Stag's Leap, Diamond Creek, Chateau Montelena, Dehlinger, Joseph Swan, Duckhorn and many others were brand new at

### Location

2113 Chestnut Street  
San Francisco, California, United States  
94123



GET DIRECTIONS

(<https://maps.google.ca/maps?q=2113%20Chestnut%20Street%20San%20Francisco%20California%202094123%20United%20States>)



+1 (415) 567-0646

(tel:+1(415)567-0646)



VISIT WEBSITE

(<http://www.californiawinmerchant.com>)



SEND A MESSAGE

(<mailto:greg@californiawinmerchant.com>)

that time and it was these, and more, that made up the selection at our store. Pioneering new wines is one of the aspects of being a wine merchant that we enjoy the most. We love finding that next great wine before anyone else knows about it.

The original location of the CWM was at 3237 Pierce Street in the San Francisco Marina District. The unique floor to ceiling redwood wine racks were personally hand built by Greg. The business operated continuously at that original location for 30 years.

After 30 years in the same location the original building was slated for demolition. Greg and Deborah moved the business to its current location at 2113 Chestnut Street in San Francisco (literally just around the corner from the original location). The new location was formerly a dilapidated dive-type bar called Danny's that had been closed for a couple of years. Greg and Deborah remodeled and renovated the new location keeping the same look and feel of the original store and added a wine bar to their wine store operation. The new combination wine store & wine bar was an immediate success and has become the liveliest wine bar in San Francisco.

*Just Wine partners with the finest bars, restaurants, wineries and retailers from around the world!*

## Events

### Upcoming Events

There are currently no upcoming events to show.

### You can make a difference

If you know of an event that should be shown here and would like to update the information on this page, visit our

#### Just Wine Event Listings

(<https://justwineapp.com/events/listing>) page and fill out the form. Our staff will follow up with you on the next steps.

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# 6 FANTASTIC WINE BARS IN SAN FRANCISCO

BY CORRESPONDENT KATIE SWEENEY  
JULY 18, 2018

Wine bars are somewhat ubiquitous in major cities like [San Francisco](#). But great spots serving spectacular vino can be few and far between — we're talking about the kinds of places you'll frequent that have a knowledgeable staff, a pretension-free air and a list of exciting varietals on the menu. A small roster of deliciously shareable snacks to soak up all of that wine never hurts, and bonus points go to lounges where you can purchase a bottle to bring home and enjoy later.

These six wine bars manage to check these criteria with relative ease.

## California Wine Merchant

In the Marina district, you'll find this beloved destination that has been holding court on Chestnut Street for the past 44 years. A wine bar that's packed from noon until night, it specializes in small-production wine from the Golden State.

Stay for a tasting or drop by to buy a bottle from the store — either way, this is an excellent place for people-watching and can be quite the energetic scene on weekends. Note that California Wine Merchant does not have any food, but there are plenty of nearby restaurants.





From: **Greg O'Flynn** greg@californiawinemerchant.com  
Subject: Wine Spectator plaque  
Date: August 6, 2018 at 12:32 PM  
To: California Wine Merchant greg@californiawinemerchant.com

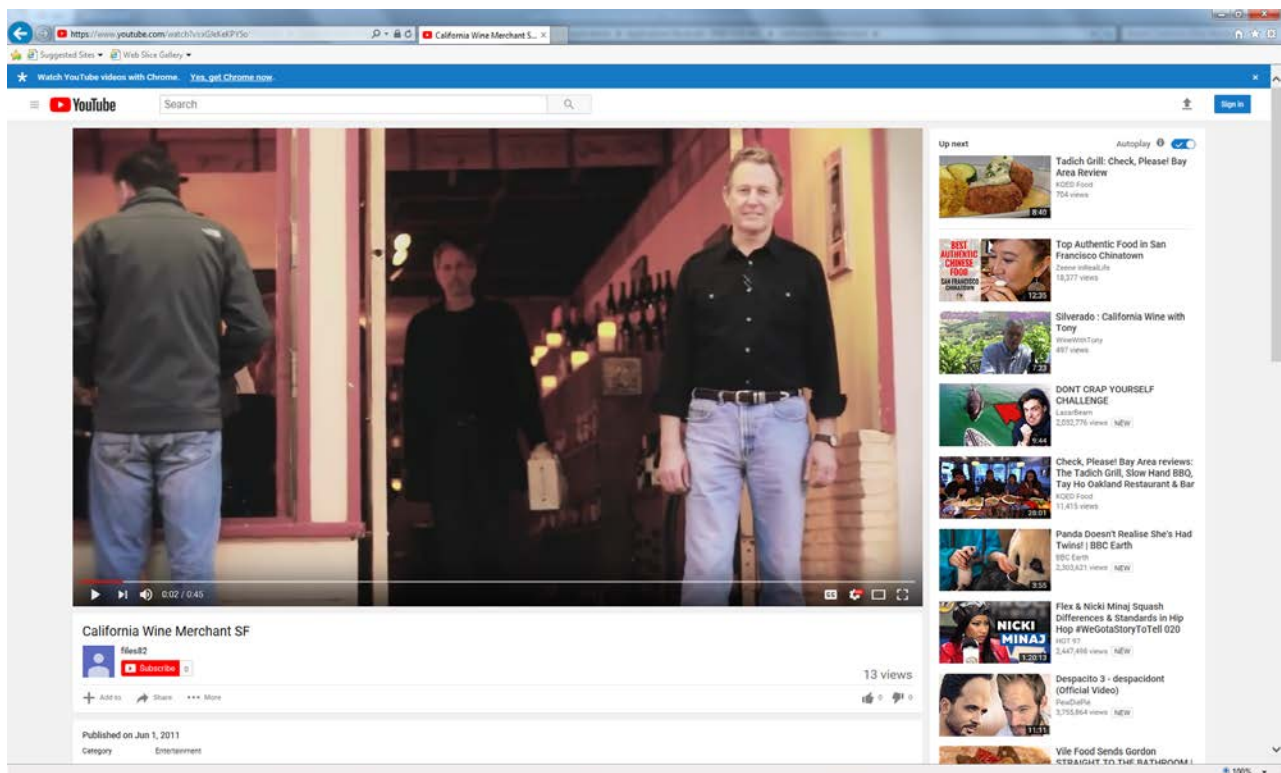


Greg O'Flynn  
California Wine Merchant  
2113 Chestnut Street  
San Francisco CA 94123  
415-567-0646

# California Wine Merchant SF

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xGJeKeKPYS0>

Published on Jun 1, 2011



The screenshot shows a YouTube video player interface. The video title is "California Wine Merchant SF" by user "flee82". The video has 13 views and was published on Jun 1, 2011. The video content shows a man in a black shirt and light blue jeans standing in a wine store, with another man in a dark jacket and jeans standing in the background. The video player includes a search bar, a play button, and a progress bar showing 0:02 / 0:46. To the right of the video player is a "Up next" section with several video recommendations, including "Tadich Grill: Check, Please! Bay Area Review", "Top Authentic Food in San Francisco Chinatown", "Silverado: California Wine with Tony", "DONT CRAP YOURSELF CHALLENGE", "Check, Please! Bay Area reviews: The Tadich Grill, Slow Hand BBQ, Tay Ho Oakland Restaurant & Bar", "Panda Doesn't Realize She's Had Twins! | BBC Earth", "Flex & Nicki Minaj Squash Differences & Standards in Hip Hop #WeGottaStoryToTell 020", and "Despacito 3 - despacident (Official Video)".

*Filing Date:* August 22, 2018  
*Case No.:* 2018-011973LBR  
*Business Name:* California Wine Merchant  
*Business Address:* 2113 Chestnut Street  
*Zoning:* NC-2 (Neighborhood Commercial, Small Scale)  
40-X Height and Bulk District  
*Block/Lot:* 0490/047  
*Applicant:* Greg and Deborah O’Flynn, Owners  
2113 Chestnut Street  
San Francisco, CA 94123  
*Nominated By:* Supervisor Catherine Stefani, District 2  
*Staff Contact:* Shelley Caltagirone - (415) 558-6625  
shelley.caltagirone@sfgov.org  
*Reviewed By:* Tim Frye – (415) 575-6822  
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## **BUSINESS DESCRIPTION**

California Wine Merchant opened in 1974 at 3247 Pierce Street by Greg O’Flynn. In 2004, the business moved around the corner to 2113 Chestnut Street, where it is still located today. The business was unique at the time it opened for selling exclusively wine and primarily California wines. The shop opened two years prior to a famous wine tasting in Paris in which California wines rated best in both categories. This event marked a change in the way California wines were perceived and boosted the local industry.

In 2004, after 30 years in the same location, the original building was slated for demolition. Greg and Deborah moved the business to its current location at 2113 Chestnut Street, around the corner from the original location. Greg and Deborah remodeled and renovated the new location, keeping the same look and feel of the original store, and added a wine bar. The bar was an immediate success and remains so to this day.

The shop’s longstanding tradition is to feature California wines with an emphasis on high quality, small production, emerging producers. In addition to pouring 50 wines by the glass, the shop hosts “Meet the Winemaker Tastings” where guest winemakers will come down and pour for customers several of the wines they produce. They also have a Quarterly Wine Club in which members receive 6 different wines every quarter along with detailed notes on the wines and the wineries that make them. California Wine Merchant has also served as a training ground for many of its employees who have since gone on to establish their own successful careers in the wine business.

The business is located at the southwest corner of Chestnut and Steiner streets in the Marina neighborhood. It is within a NC-2 (Neighborhood Commercial, Small Scale) Zoning District and a 40-X Height and Bulk District.

## **STAFF ANALYSIS**

### *Review Criteria*

1. *When was business founded?*



The business was founded in 1974.

2. *Does the business qualify for listing on the Legacy Business Registry? If so, how?*

Yes. California Wine Merchant qualifies for listing on the Legacy Business Registry because it meets all of the eligibility Criteria:

- i. California Wine Merchant has operated continuously in San Francisco for 44 years.
- ii. California Wine Merchant has contributed to the history and identity of San Francisco by serving as a wine retailer specializing in California wines.
- iii. California Wine Merchant is committed to maintaining the physical features and traditions that define the organization.

3. *Is the business associated with a culturally significant art/craft/cuisine/tradition?*

Yes. The business is associated with the California winemaking tradition.

4. *Is the business or its building associated with significant events, persons, and/or architecture?*

No.

5. *Is the property associated with the business listed on a local, state, or federal historic resource registry?*

No. The property has a Planning Department Historic Resource status of "B" (Properties Requiring Further Consultation and Review) as the building was constructed in 1928 and has not been formally evaluated.

6. *Is the business mentioned in a local historic context statement?*

No. However, the property was included in the Neighborhood Commercial Buildings Historic Resource Survey conducted by the Planning Department in the summers of 2014 and 2015, and it was found not to be architecturally significant for its storefront.

7. *Has the business been cited in published literature, newspapers, journals, etc.?*

Yes. In 1976, Greg was featured in a cover story in the San Francisco Bay Guardian about wine in the city. Wine Spectator has selected California Wine Merchant as one of the best wine bars in San Francisco and did an online video interview with owner Greg O'Flynn highlighting the length of time in business and the observed changes in trends over four decades. The very prestigious and influential Decanter Magazine (published in London) conducted an interview and composed a full two-page article on Greg O'Flynn and California Wine Merchant aptly entitled "Ahead of His Time." Decanter has a huge international reputation and reach — it is read in over 90 countries.

### ***Physical Features or Traditions that Define the Business***

#### **Location(s) associated with the business:**

- 2113 Chestnut Street

#### **Recommended by Applicant**

- Wine selection process
- A well-trained and knowledgeable staff

- A focus on California, Oregon and Washington wines
- Floor to ceiling redwood wine racks were personally hand built by Greg O'Flynn
- Reidel Restaurant Series glassware washed in special high-temperature glass washer
- Cheese plate
- Large front windows
- Interior decoration of wooden case ends photographs of grapes

**Additional Recommended by Staff**

- None



# SAN FRANCISCO PLANNING DEPARTMENT

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## Historic Preservation Commission Draft Resolution No. ###

HEARING DATE: SEPTEMBER 19, 2018

*Case No.:* 2018-011973LBR  
*Business Name:* California Wine Merchant  
*Business Address:* 2113 Chestnut Street  
*Zoning:* NC-2 (Neighborhood Commercial, Small Scale)  
40-X Height and Bulk District  
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**ADOPTING FINDINGS RECOMMENDING TO THE SMALL BUSINESS COMMISSION APPROVAL OF THE LEGACY BUSINESS REGISTRY NOMINATION FOR CALIFORNIA WINE MERCHANT CURRENTLY LOCATED AT 2113 CHESTNUT STREET, (BLOCK/LOT 0490/047).**

**WHEREAS**, in accordance with Administrative Code Section 2A.242, the Office of Small Business maintains a registry of Legacy Businesses in San Francisco (the "Registry") to recognize that longstanding, community-serving businesses can be valuable cultural assets of the City and to be a tool for providing educational and promotional assistance to Legacy Businesses to encourage their continued viability and success; and

**WHEREAS**, the subject business has operated in San Francisco for 30 or more years, with no break in San Francisco operations exceeding two years; and

**WHEREAS**, the subject business has contributed to the City's history and identity; and

**WHEREAS**, the subject business is committed to maintaining the traditions that define the business; and

**WHEREAS**, at a duly noticed public hearing held on September 19, 2018, the Historic Preservation Commission reviewed documents, correspondence and heard oral testimony on the Legacy Business Registry nomination.



**THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** that the **Historic Preservation Commission hereby recommends** that California Wine Merchant qualifies for the Legacy Business Registry under Administrative Code Section 2A.242(b)(2) as it has operated for 30 or more years and has continued to contribute to the community.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the **Historic Preservation Commission hereby recommends** safeguarding of the below listed physical features and traditions for California Wine Merchant.

**Location(s):**

- *2113 Chestnut Street*

**Physical Features or Traditions that Define the Business:**

- *Wine selection process*
- *A well-trained and knowledgeable staff*
- *A focus on California, Oregon and Washington wines*
- *Floor to ceiling redwood wine racks were personally hand built by Greg O'Flynn*
- *Reidel Restaurant Series glassware washed in special high-temperature glass washer*
- *Cheese plate*
- *Large front windows*
- *Interior decoration of wooden case ends photographs of grapes*

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the **Historic Preservation Commission's findings and recommendations** are made solely for the purpose of evaluating the subject business's eligibility for the Legacy Business Registry, and the Historic Preservation Commission makes no finding that the subject property or any of its features constitutes a historical resource pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.5(a).

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the **Historic Preservation Commission hereby directs** its Commission Secretary to transmit this Resolution and other pertinent materials in the case file 2018-011973LBR to the Office of Small Business.

I hereby certify that the foregoing Resolution was ADOPTED by the Historic Preservation Commission on September 19, 2018.

Jonas P. Ionin  
Commission Secretary

AYES:

NOES:

ABSENT:

ADOPTED: