

## 38th Annual Columbia Wine Tasting

The Columbia Wine Tasting, an annual fundraising event sponsored by the Columbia College Foundation, has a history of selling out. It's not surprising – who wouldn't want to spend a spring afternoon strolling through Columbia State Historic Park, visiting quaint buildings filled with exquisite food and wine?

This year's wine tasting, the 38th Annual, will be held on April 13, Sunday, 1 to 4pm. Admittance is \$50 per person for reservations purchased before April 7th. A limited number of reservations will be offered the day of the event for \$60 per person, as available. Organizers expect more than 60 wineries will be represented at the tasting, as well as regional food vendors like the Calaveras Olive Oil Company and the Fiscalini Cheese Company.

In addition, gourmet hors d'oeuvres are prepared and served by Columbia College Culinary Arts students. For easy online reservations, [columbiawinetasting.events.gocolumbia.edu](http://columbiawinetasting.events.gocolumbia.edu) or call (209) 588-5089. The event attracts award-winning winemakers from throughout the state. This year's roster so far includes Andis Winery, Black Sheep Winery, Cambria Winery, Cline Cellars, Chatom Vineyards, Columbia Culinary, Chamisal Winery, David Girard Wines, Dancing Coyote Winery, Duckhorn Winery, Frank Family Vineyards, Hahn Winery, Hovey Wines, Gianelli Vineyards, Ironstone Vineyards, Justin Winery, Kendall Jackson Estate, Landmark Cellars, Mason Cellars, Milliaire Winery, Mettler Vineyards, Mt. Brow Winery, Murphy Goode, Mutt Lynch Winery, Pina Napa Wines, Pine Ridge Winery, Quady Winery, Rombauer Vineyards, Rosenblum Winery, Renner Vineyards, Silkwood Wines, Silver Oak Cellars, Smith and Hook, Sobon Estate, Shenandoah Vineyards, Schramsberg Vineyards, St. Amant Winery, Terra d Oro Winery, Twisted Oak Winery, Twomey Cellars, Vina Robles Winery and Vino Noceto Winery.

A silent auction offers unique and exciting goods and services for attendees to peruse, including food and wine-themed gift baskets, private wine tastings, dinner party certificates and, of course, numerous specialty wines. Proceeds from this event benefit Columbia College's Culinary Arts program by providing student scholarships, instructional equipment and supplies.

## Join Us For Spring Swing!

It's time to don your dance duds and step out for a swingin' good time at the Spring Swing on Saturday, April 5, at Ironstone Vineyards in Murphys. The event will feature dinner and dancing to the Big Band sounds of Rod Harris and the Columbia Kicks in a fun-filled evening with a live auction, a treasure chest, a live 'jukebox' and a contemporary twist on "dime-a-dance" girls.

Spring Swing sponsorships are available at levels ranging from \$250 to \$5,000, and we already have a great group to thank! Jane and Tad Bottomley-Winans are leading the way as our Spring Swing Sponsors. Other sponsors include the Calaveras County Office of Education, Mark Twain Medical Center, Donna Shannon, Angels Food Market / Sierra Hills Market & Natural Foods, Art on Main, Calaveras Telephone Company, California Waste Recovery Systems, Foothill-Sierra Pest Control, Wayne & Sandy Fuller, Hstar, Inc., Richard & Margaret Mills, Timothy O'Connor, D.D.S. Please consider joining us as a sponsor — we need as many as we can get, especially at the \$500-\$2500 levels.

Reservations for the event are \$75 per person for a delicious multi-station buffet dinner, dancing, and an evening packed with entertaining and fun activities. The excitement will include demonstration dances by accomplished local, and visiting professional, dancers who will be 'for hire' to teach or just dance with guests who want to look really good on the dance floor.

Patrons can 'command the band' to play their favorite songs to impress that special someone. The live auction has already attracted highly desirable adventures including a Sea Ranch get-away and Yosemite Wine Dinner, and the lucky key-holder who unlocks the treasure chest will be off to Hawaii on a two-week dance-themed cruise for two! (Key-holders need not be present at the event to win.)

Spring Swing reservations and 100 keys to the treasure chest are available through [calaverasmentoring.org/springswing](http://calaverasmentoring.org/springswing) or by contacting the Calaveras Mentoring Foundation at 209-736-7706, or [calaverasmentoringfoundation@gmail.com](mailto:calaverasmentoringfoundation@gmail.com). Interested sponsors, e-mail Donna Shannon, sponsorship coordinator, or 209-754-4997.

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## A Whale Tale

By Patrick Witz  
Staff Writer

Maui, one fabulous island in Hawaii... has it all, miles of beautiful beaches; hiking trails amid dripping rainforests and waterfalls; bicycling everywhere, even down a 10,000 foot volcano; fishing, sailing, surfing, snorkeling and diving in pristine clear waters; pineapple and sugar plantations; endless shopping, exquisite dining, tropical drinks, local micro-brews; and awe-inspiring whales singing and frolicking in warm ocean waters.

Maui is an island vacation paradise that requires multiple visits to fully appreciate all of its adventurous, gorgeous, and romantic splendor. This was my second Maui visit with family (nine of us), and I feel we have only begun to enjoy Maui's alluring tropical call.

Trust me, this article would be novel-long in an attempt to describe all the activities and experiences from just this visit, not to mention the need of an accompanying huge coffee table book to include the over 1600 digital photos I took in ten days (32 gigabits).

Now I have to admit, being a new grandfather of a beautiful 16 month-old granddaughter only added to the island's photographic splendor. Envision a seething combination of grandparent, tourist, and professional photographer that garnered many an eye-rolling comment, "Really?" to longer, not so mild jabs, "OH Lord, blessedly bestow a whale tail slap upside this man's head if he doesn't put that (\*expletive\*) camera away!"

OH...speaking of whales... we did go whale watching (thankfully I didn't get wacked), and what an overwhelming adventure it was... but first, I have to enlighten everyone on my naive understanding of Maui (which only supports the notation above regarding multiple visits).

In my vast wisdom, I thought that President's week in February would be an off-time to visit Maui compared to the out of school summer, spring break, Thanksgiving, or Christmas time frames...right? Wrong! I found out that President's week is the ultimate peak time for whale



Whale watching in Maui, the grandeur of wondrous peaceful giants. Photo by Patrick Witz courtesy to the Gold Country Times

watching in Maui, and it's the busiest season of the entire year... we almost couldn't find lodging five months before our flight. What I thought I saved in airfare (booking over six months in advance) was twice over lost to the peak-season, no-discount top-dollar lodging prices. Who'd have thunk!!

Anyway... back to whale watching... WHAT AN EXPERIENCE! We booked, as did twenty-five other brave souls, with a company to take all of us whale watching on a 35-foot, rigid bottom, rubber raft. We were privileged to have an intimate opportunity of enjoying, within arm's reach of the boat, a month-old, few-thousand-pound baby Humpback whale playfully frolic around his/her mother. The boatload of cameras, videos, and as well under-water videos, clicked, buzzed, and captured not only the grandeur of these wondrous peaceful giants, but as well, the excited "WOW!" and "Oh My God!" gasps of the passenger's delight watching.

The liberal mother (who was the size of our boat) allowed her inquisitive baby to experience the giddy humans up close. Luckily the passive male escort (at twice our boat size) that protects the mother and child, just slowly meandered along directly below our boat. Hawaiian Law mandates a "100 yard minimum rule", where a boat, kayak, swimming or by any other means, may not approach a Humpback whale. However, being massively huge wild animals, whales can do as they please... if the whale(s) wish to approach and investigate a bright yellow rubber boat filled with odd little squealing creatures, who's gonna stop them? The baby accidentally wacked our boat with his/her tail when it decided to swim away and we all felt it... sure glad the immense male escort hadn't seen the movie *Pinocchio* or read *Moby Dick*!

We lodged in a townhome located in Napili on the west end of the island, about an hour's drive from the airport. Our stay last time was in a condo in Ka'anapali (lots of big hotels there). Both had kitchens (which I highly recommend) and were less than a five to ten minute walk from the beach. We all agreed that Napili was better... less crowded, less formal (too informal at times, the six roosters next door that had no idea what time it was confirmed that), coves with better beaches, better snorkeling, lush scenery that added to spectacular sunsets. We did all the touristy things last time... bus tours; Lu'ua; meander the big resorts; etc. This time we made a point to slow down a little and enjoy the scenery and relax; BBQ'd most nights, investigated the towns (particularly Lahaina where we enjoyed the huge art community), and partook of many local brews and exotic drinks (this visit we were all adults). Both times we visited, our first stop on the island after renting a car(s) was Costco, Big-K, and Safeway for ten days of food, drinks, and other toiletries not supplied or brought with us (all are just a few miles from the airport). There are several places to reasonable rent baby/toddler gear (highchair, crib, large sun umbrellas, etc.) if need on the island, so don't bring anything except the car seat...

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