

The Oregon Wine Brotherhood History and Origins



Portland, Oregon
member organization of
Fédération Internationale des Confréries Baciques

THE BEGINNING OF THE OREGON WINE BROTHERHOOD, 1995

By Pamela De Boni
Founding Master Scribe, Retired

The Oregon Chapter of the Knights of the Vine, part of the Universal Order of the Knights of the Vine (KOV), was established by Dr. John Bauers in 1979 when Norman Gates, Grand Commander of the KOV in Sacramento, presented The Oregon Chapter its charter. Dr. Bauers served as KOV Master Commander and stepped down in 1991, taking the title of Founding Master Commander. Ron Hayes, then Vice Commander, with his wife Judith, worked tirelessly in support of John and Sally Bauers for the Oregon Chapter. He assumed leadership as Master Commander, Oregon Chapter. In 1994 KOV Master Councilor, Paul De Boni was inducted as Master Commander of the Oregon Chapter.

In San Francisco in 1994 a national gathering of the KOV Chancellery Officers and National Commanders and officers was held. After consultation with Dr. Duane Young, Vice President of the Fédération Internationale des Confréries Bachiques (FICB) De Boni felt it was time to form an independent brotherhood. Bauers and Hayes concurred. De Boni announced the withdrawal of the Oregon Chapter at the meeting. Having much more in common with the international brotherhoods than the Sacramento group, Dr. Young advised him that a separate charter could be granted from the FICB in France. Many countries had more than one Brotherhood—France alone had 17.

Upon his return from this meeting, Commander De Boni discussed his decision to withdraw from the KOV and establish an independent wine brotherhood. He explained to the Cadre that it would be a major task to form a new brotherhood completely separate in every facet from the KOV. New insignia, colors, robes, diploma, etc. were part of the task ahead. The Cadre concurred that Oregon, the biggest and most successful KOV group, could pull this off. In 1995 the beginnings of a new, yet to be named, wine group were formed.

Name: We needed a name which reflected our beliefs in the brotherhood of wine as well as beginning international recognition of the emerging Oregon wine industry. The Cadre gathered many times, drank much wine, and discussed and rejected numerous names—including "Wine Emissaries of Oregon" and "The Grape Nuts"! In late 1995, the Cadre, by "semi-secret ballot" arrived at the name: The Oregon Wine Brotherhood.

The Oregon Wine Brotherhood was founded by Commander De Boni and in 1996 incorporated in Oregon by Paul De Boni, Pamela De Boni and Paul Hart. Also in 1996 a charter from the FICB, Paris, was granted by President Claude Josse and presented to De Boni at the Spring 1997 Assemblage, where Josse, wife Monique and Dr. Young were guests.

The Founding Cadre: Grand Commander Paul De Boni, Master Vice Commander Stan Huber, Master of Ceremony Paul Hart, Master Secretary Terry Huber, Master Treasurer Jean Perrotta, Master Scribe Pamela De Boni, Master Sommelier Jan Jacobsen, Master Vintner Joe Campbell, Master of the Vines Leigh Campbell, Dame d'Affaires Joy Schmiegl, Founding Master Commander of Oregon John Bauers, Master Commander Emeritus Ron Hayes.

THE WORK BEGINS

Emblem and Colors: Many parts of the KOV tradition were important and we felt we should honor them. However, none of the designs or insignia could be copied or replicated.

We wished to incorporate symbols unique to Oregon in our new emblem and colors. We felt our signature wine – Pinot Noir (Burgundy in France) guided color choice. Burgundy, black and gold were chosen for the official colors of the new brotherhood. This was a radical departure from the bright green and red of KOV, but much easier to “live with.” The shield as well as the Commander’s Sword was retained in our emblem, and the Pinot Noir glass, grapes and grapevines, and evergreen trees and raindrops of Oregon were incorporated. Master Sommelier and artist, Jan Jacobsen, worked with graphic artist Ann Garrison to create the beautiful OWB emblem design. This design has proven time worthy and adapts wonderfully to everything from letterhead to flags to medallions. Jan worked with the same artist to incorporate the design into the beautiful diploma of induction to the order.



INTERNATIONAL ATTENTION

The Oregon Wine Brotherhood was officially recognized as a member of the FICB in 1996. Grand Commander De Boni wanted the new brotherhood to make its debut at the May 1996 International Wine Congress in Maastricht, Netherlands. De Boni, accompanied by Master Vice Commander Stan Huber, Master Secretary Terry Huber, and Master Scribe Pamela De Boni represented the new organization. Our new burgundy robes trimmed in black velvet and velvet hats were proudly revealed, though most of our accoutrements were not yet completed. We were greeted with resounding approval by the almost 30 international brotherhoods and led the United States contingent in the parades. We knew we had accomplished our goal of establishing the OWB. Though we still had many tasks ahead of us, we were now recognized as a unique and separate United States Brotherhood.



Inspired by this experience, Grand Commander De Boni proposed the Oregon Wine Brotherhood present an International wine gathering. Again, the challenge was echoed by the Cadre and membership as a whole accepted the challenge ahead. We were awarded the May 2001 FICB International gathering date. It would be only the second time the International had been held in the United States. OWB proceeded to not only put the final touches on the fledgling organization, but began to plan the International—five years from then.



2001 FICB Congress, Portland, Oregon

1996 THE FINISHING TOUCHES

Jan Jacobsen located burgundy wool gabardine for the Cadre robes, and Polly Boden from the University of Portland Drama Department adapted a pattern from our “wish list”: front zipper, sleeves and length adjustable, pockets, a hat and robe which could be easily transported, distinctive Grand Commander attire and hat, and distinctive cadre designation. The black velvet and gold braid stoles and robes were sewn by a seamstress found via the Portland Opera costume shop. Pamela De Boni, Master Scribe, contacted (thanks to Master Vice Commander Stan Huber) a Midwestern company (Erffmeyer) who primarily made military awards and ribbons to cast the new OWB emblem into the gold neck medallions for the Cadre and silver medallions for the general membership. The burgundy and black ribbon was procured as a special loom run from Erffmeyer. Pam also designed the “Maltese Cross” neckpiece, patterned after the medal of The Order of St. Michael and George (picture found in an old dictionary)—with the OWB emblem prominent. The lapel pin (a tiny green rosette in the KOV) she fashioned as an openwork representation of the central OWB circle in the emblem. The hat plume holder was essentially the same as the neckpiece cross and was the last piece to be completed in 1999. Banners for flanking the stage and a “traveling banner” (to take to international meetings) were consigned by her to Elmer’s Flag and Banner to create.

Jan and Pam collected ribbons and braid and set to designing the Cadre neckpieces, and general member and Ambassador ribbons, inspired by other brotherhoods and organization neckpieces. It was decided that all Cadre items would be gold metal and braid, and general membership silver. Master Knights were given a special ribbon and Ambassadors also had a separate neckpiece. The two of them fashioned the final prototype in Jan’s craft room and they were sent to the seamstress.

The final products were revealed at the Grand Assemblage at The Benson Hotel in March 1997. FICB President Claude and Monique Josse from France and Dr. Duane Young, Vice President FICB from California were special guests. Our beautiful emblem was outstanding in every presentation from the menu covers to the medallions to banners that flanked the stage. New members received, for the first time, the new diplomas and Grand Commander De Boni inducted the Josses into the OWB. De Boni and Dr. Young were, in turn, inducted into the FICB. Grand Commander De Boni performed a group induction of all 120 members into the OWB, awarding the new diplomas to all.

Many of the Knights of the Vine components were retained: The Scholarship Program, unique to most brotherhoods, was expanded; we participated with other philanthropic organizations to support the wine industry; we retained and embraced the titles and ceremonial aspects of the KOV; the small and indispensable address book continued and now included by-laws; the Grand Assemblage, Commanders Coffee and Annual Harvest Celebration with blessing of the vines were still held; the annual Vintner’s Tasting, organized by Master Vintner Dr. Joe Campbell of Elk Cove Winery, continued.

OREGON WINE BROTHERHOOD (OWB) MILESTONES

1995: An “Instant Wine Cellar” of Oregon wines, organized by Master Commander Emeritus Ron Hayes, was contributed to the OMSI auction. **MAY:** Traditionally in Europe wine brotherhoods preside over landmark events at wineries. Grand Commander Paul De Boni, Master of Ceremony Paul Hart, Master Scribe Pamela De Boni and Master Magistrate Jack Hoffman in full regalia, presided over the christening of the Willamette Valley Vineyards Visitor Center. **FALL:** New compressors were purchased for the State Wine Cellar at Mahonia Hall, the governor’s mansion, in Salem. This wine cellar was originally established in 1985 through state law to hold and showcase Oregon wines. John Bauers was instrumental in its formation. **OCTOBER:** Annual Business Meeting attendees voted for formation of committees for transition to OWB as well as by-law restructuring. **DECEMBER:** Master Sommelier Jan Jacobsen began formation of the popular tasting groups.

May 1996: The Oregon Wine Brotherhood was officially recognized as a member of *Fédération Internationale des Confréries Bachiques (F.I.C.B.)*.

1998: **MAY:** Paul & Pamela De Boni, Paul Hart & Jan Jacobsen, Dave & Sandy Shultheis, and Don Olson & his daughter attended the International Worldwide Congress of Wine Brotherhoods in Oporto, Portugal. Many ideas for the 2001 Oregon International event were formed here. **JUNE:** KOV Founding Master Commander and owner of renowned Dundee Hills Vineyard John Bauers passed away at age 73. He was a gentleman of wine and brotherhood.

It was announced that Portland would be the host site for the 2001 FICB International gathering, and the formation of committees and planning began. The new OWB medallions, ribbons, and pins were at last available for general membership. Transition to the new accoutrements was strongly encouraged.

1999: **MAY:** Several members attended the International Worldwide Congress in Austria—gathering more ideas for our International event in 2001. “Traveling capes” were introduced to allow non-cadre members to participate in the ceremonial events. Atwater’s Restaurant Annual Pinot Noir Vintage Dinner: A tasting panel composed of OWB members, local sommeliers, collectors and Pinot Noir enthusiasts tasted 42 1997 Oregon Pinot Noirs to narrow the field to nine to be served at the dinner. Five of the nine wines selected were from OWB winery members! **JUNE:** Oregon Wine Brotherhood Museum Dedication: Robes, medallions and other articles from wine brotherhoods all over the world were showcased in a museum at Rex Hill Winery. The collection was donated to Grand Commander Paul De Boni for the OWB by Norman Gates, retired Grand Commander of the Knights of the Vine. Paul Hart, Jan Jacobsen and Pamela De Boni spent many hours assembling the collection for public viewing. Master of Ceremony Paul Hart began a five-part “Great Wines of the World” tasting series for local sommeliers and other wine professionals.

May 2000: Thirty OWB members and spouses attended the 37th Annual Congrès des Confréries Bachiques in La Rochelle, France. Grand Commander Paul De Boni invited the international wine groups to Portland, Oregon, for the 2001 38th Annual Congrès des Confréries Bachiques May 16-19, 2001.

May 16-19, 2001: Eighteen wine brotherhoods from around the world (over 100 participants) gathered for the FICB International in Portland, Oregon. The organizing committee led by Grand Commander Paul De Boni included Master Vice Commander Stan Huber (Logistics); Master Sommelier Jan Jacobsen (Events); Master of Ceremony Paul Hart (Educational Program); Master Treasurer Diane Diamond (Finance and Church Ceremony); Knight Nick Hackenberger (Administrative Details); Knight Bill Huyette (Extension Event). Virtually every member volunteered their expertise, time and homes to make the event memorable.

Spring 2002: The OWB donated money for the “Pinot Gris-Oregon Wine Brotherhood “ room in the new Eola Hills Viticulture Program building at Chemeketa Community College.

Founding Grand Commander Paul De Boni retired after eight years leading the KOV/Oregon Wine Brotherhood. Master Vice Commander Paul Hart was inducted as Grand Commander. Twenty-seven OWB members/spouses attended the FICB International Congress in Avignon, France, hosted by the Brotherhood of The Luberon.

2003: Four OWB members attended the International in Slovenia.

2004: Several Cadre members in OWB robes and accoutrements journeyed to the Napa Valley to officially open a 2-month long promotion of Oregon wines and foods (sponsored, in part, by the OWB) at the Copia Center. The Cellar Committee was created with Tom Hageman named Cellar Master. 20+ OWB members/spouses attended the International Congress in Barcelona, Spain.

2006: A special pin was designed to recognize those who chair or serve on an OWB committee. OWB is an all-volunteer organization. Four couples attended the International Congress in the Bergerac region, France.

2007: Diane Diamond was inducted as Grand Commander. OWB Rules and Procedures were published in the annual directory for the first time. Four couples attended the International Congress in Switzerland.

2008: The International Congress in England was attended by four couples.

2010: The Oregon Wine Brotherhood's new website: <http://www.oregonwinebrotherhood.org/> was created. Fourteen OWB members/spouses attended the International in Hungary. In June, 240 currently available Oregon Pinot Noirs were blind-tasted by OWB members and others to select the wines for a restaurant opened by OWB member Bill King.

2011: Tom Hageman was inducted as Grand Commander.

2013: Hallie Hackenberger was inducted as Grand Commander. OWB newsletters from the late 1990s to the present were loaded on the OWB website. Seven OWB members/spouses attended the International in Slovenia.

2014: Ken Hick and Cheri' Cooley-Hick were approved as members of the Council of the Fédération Internationale des Confréries Bachiques (F.I.C.B.). A record 33 OWB members/spouses attended the 48th FICB Congress in Reims, France.

2015: Wine Appreciation Coordinator, a new Cadre position, was created and filled by Kim Kress who held two wine education events this year.

2016: Sam Kress became Grand Commander and 18 new members were inducted. Thirty-one OWB members/spouses attended the FICB Congress in Napa/Sonoma. The organization moved to taking RSVPs and payments for most events via the Internet.

2018: Eighteen OWB members/spouses attended the FICB Congress in Macedonia.

2019: Craig Heath became Grand Commander and 10 new members were inducted, including Susan Sokol-Blosser as a Supreme Lady. Susan was given a Diploma of Honor by F.I.C.B. In fall 2019, a new subgroup of OWB was formed called "Central Oregon Chapter" (COC), which is headed up by acting Chapter Commander Joe Huseonica. Ten new members were inducted to COC in Sunriver, Oregon, on November 8, 2019.

2020: After a successful Commander's Coffee, both the Assemblage and Barrel Tasting events were cancelled due to restrictions on public gatherings implemented as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Fourteen couples who had registered for the F.I.C.B. international in Alba, Italy, were disappointed when it, too, was cancelled. One highlight was Denis Burger's selection by F.I.C.B. to receive the prestigious Diploma of Honor. The annual meeting was held virtually on Zoom for the first time in our history.

2021: We were able to hold the Commander's Coffee (re-scheduled from January to July) plus the Barrel Tasting and Annual Meeting in person thanks to COVID-19 vaccinations being available. Denis Burger was elevated to Supreme Knight.

2022: Ken Wightman became Grand Commander and candidates from 2020, 2021 and 2022 were inducted at the Assemblage held at Salishan Coastal Lodge. The Central Oregon Chapter Commander position was added to the Cadre and several Central Oregon Chapter members were inducted in May.

The Brotherhoods of Wine

By Paul A. De Boni

Founding Grand Commander Emeritus of The Oregon Wine Brotherhood

Wine brotherhoods are unique organizations devoted to preserving the traditions, pageantry and culture of wine throughout the world by celebrating both the common bonds of wine lovers and the unique wine products produced by each of the regions. Wine is the one beverage that is common to all cultures and has historically held a mystical significance throughout the ages as the “blood of the earth.”

The brotherhoods are noted for their costumes and ceremonies that are reminiscent of the ancient pageantry of 15th century medieval knighthood. The mission of the brotherhoods is to promote the wines of their region, preserve the nobility and pageantry of the past, and celebrate the values of brotherhood throughout the world.

Wine brotherhoods date back to earliest times in history and are linked to the reverence of the wine cultures of the world and the establishment of stewards of wine. In 1043 AD the position of “Grand Bottler” was the first formal recognition of what later became the role of the sommelier. That role became an important part of the royal households as the first taster of wines whose task was to assure the nobility that the wine had not been laced with poison. To this day the tradition of a host first tasting wine before it is served to guests has continued as a part of modern wine culture.

Early wine brotherhoods date back to the 13th century in France when the members were organized to purchase wine and collect taxes for the royal households. They became known as “cup bearers” and were entrusted with stewardship of the king’s table. By the end of the 15th century, the position of “Grand Cup-Bearer” (Grand Echanson) evolved as position of high rank and knight of the kings court.

With the French Revolution in 1793, all things related to the trappings of royalty were discarded and the position was abandoned. Louis XVII reinstated it during his reign temporarily, but it was again abandoned by 1830.

Early in the 19th century the people of France felt they had lost a great part of their history and culture with the demise of the royal traditions. While there was no interest in reestablishing a kingdom, there was great interest in preserving the pageantry and nobility of these past traditions. In 1901 they passed the “Kings Law” that granted the right to resume the titles of nobility. These new titles were intended to support the emerging agricultural enterprises of the country. The first post-revolution brotherhood was established in the Loire Valley in 1904. It wasn’t, however, until the Confrérie des Chevaliers du Tastevin was started in Dijon in 1934 that brotherhoods began to flourish throughout France.

In 1964 the Fédération Internationale des Confréries Bachiques was established in Paris. It was comprised of 33 different brotherhood organizations throughout France.

To this day wine brotherhoods throughout the world gather to celebrate the virtues of wine and the joy of the companionship of others who agree.

