

A Shared Table: Rewriting the Wine Narrative Together

By *Susan R. Lin MW*



*Susan R. Lin is a Master of Wine and holds a Master of Fine Arts in Classical Piano and Musicology. She creates memorable experiences through music and wine. Her research on the interaction of music and wine has been featured in *Decanter*, *Food & Wine*, and other publications. Susan is also the Head of Wine for Belmont Wine Exchange, a San Francisco-based boutique fine wine retailer. Her passion for championing diversity in wine led her to found the [Asian Wine Association of America](#), where she serves as President. She judges international wine competitions and performs music for audiences worldwide on the piano.*

As I reflect on the journey of the [Asian Wine Association of America \(AWAA\)](#), I am filled with a profound sense of pride in our community, tempered by the humility of knowing how much work remains to be done. For too long, Asian Americans have been a crucial, yet often overlooked, pillar of the wine world. Today, we are not just asking for a seat at the table; we are building our own, and the guest list is more diverse and vibrant than ever.

Diverse voices matter in wine because they represent the "true terroir" of our culture. Every bottle crafted by an Asian winemaker, every pairing suggested by an AAPI sommelier, is a story that adds depth, complexity, and joy to our collective experience. At AWAA, we are honored to highlight this heritage through powerful collaborations with cultural cornerstones like the Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco and the San Francisco Symphony, as well as vital AAPI institutions like the Asia Society, the Japan Society, and the Chinatown Community Development Center. These partnerships are the bridges that connect our history with our future.

Our mission is rooted in the simple, transformative power of connection. We want to invite everyone to discover the magic of wine through the lens of Asian excellence. Whether it's through our [Pairing Heritage](#) campaign on Instagram—where we celebrate the intersection of culinary artistry and winemaking—or our deep-dive webinars on Asian cuisine pairings, we strive to make wine more accessible and relatable.

I have always believed that education is the most powerful catalyst for change. Education is more than just learning: it's advocacy. By building knowledge, skills, and connections, we help individuals find the confidence to step into an industry that they might not be sure has a place

for them. When you invest in your own education, you become the engine for the systemic change our industry needs.

But education doesn't have to be clinical or dry. It should be about bringing people together to nurture a sense of belonging. In an age where isolation can feel like an epidemic, the act of gathering over a glass of wine is a beautiful act of community. This is why we are proud to partner with **Come Together** for **Share & Pair Sundays**, encouraging us all to savor time in person.

I am particularly excited to invite you to join us for our inaugural [AWAA Wine Passport](#). This is more than a tasting tour; it is an invitation to explore over 15 wineries across Northern California that represent the height of Asian-owned and affiliated excellence. It is an opportunity to make discoveries in wine and cuisine, but more importantly, to discover one another.

My hope for our future is bright. By strengthening our communal ties and empowering all people through the magic of wine, we break the mold and build a more inclusive industry. We are rewriting the narrative, one bottle, one pairing, and one conversation at a time.

With hope and gratitude,

Susan R. Lin MW

President and Co-founder, Asian Wine Association of America