



# CAPTURED IN WINE

What if you could literally lock the character of a favorite wine within a photograph?

With groundbreaking technicality and an insouciant edge, these images of Sonoma winemakers reshape the boundaries of traditional film portraiture.

INTERVIEWS AND PHOTOGRAPHY BY JAMES JOINER



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**HOTOGRAPHERS HAVE LONG EXPERIMENTED** with developing black-and-white film in solutions of instant coffee, beer, and other liquids—a time-honored and nontoxic alternative to traditional chemical processes.

Sonoma photographer James Joiner has now done the same with wine. He turned to longtime collaborator Ian Sullivan to help refine the method, and together they honed in on a process with red wine that worked not just well, but extremely well. Joiner now has an ongoing partnership with Kodak to photograph the people he has come to know and admire in the wine world and develop the portraits in wines that hold meaning for the subjects, with the ultimate aim of releasing a book. Each portrait bears the mark of the winemaker via the subtle rosy glow from the wine in which it was developed.

Joiner's interest in wine was ignited in 2008 after meeting Sonoma winemaker Tony Coturri through a friend. Coturri offered him a bottle and, when Joiner declined, saying he didn't really like to drink, Coturri poured him a glass anyway. "Wine isn't drinking, it's stories in a bottle," Coturri told him.

Something clicked, launching Joiner into an obsession with the stories of wine and the people who work with it. "There's a poetry in wine, and a poetry in analog photography," Joiner explains. "So to be able to capture someone on film and have the actual light and energy from that split-second of exposure bond with the wine—it's incredibly magical. The moment gets fused together forever inside the silver halide crystals that make up the black-and-white image. Plus, the process is completely nontoxic, which is important to me."

"Sonoma is just... it's an incredible spot," says Joiner. "It's been one of those rare places where you always seem to be in the right place at the right time, full of chance encounters and small-world moments."

## **ROSALIND MANOOGIAN FOG CREST VINEYARD**

"Shooting a proper portrait isn't about just capturing someone's likeness. That's for driver's licenses and passports. Portraits should speak to who the subject is and give insight into their character. To do this properly, most photographers have to learn to get out of the way and adapt to the situation. Meeting Rosalind at her Fog Crest Vineyard estate tasting room, it immediately became clear that her elegance and confidence should take center stage. After shooting and talking with her for almost an hour, it was obvious she was as lyrical and complex as the Pinot Noir she produces. This shot—developed in a stunning 2018 Fog Crest Estate Pinot Noir—is more serious than some of the others, and for that reason, it's also one of my favorites. What's that saying? 'Fashion is fleeting, style is forever.' Rosalind, and her wines, have style for miles."







**HARDY WALLACE**  
**EXTRADIMENSIONAL**  
**WINE CO. YEAH!**

"This was taken the very first time I met Hardy, at his production facility in Kenwood. While his expressiveness and stoke is well documented, nothing prepares you for the ball of positivity that is Hardy in real life. I shot this with a fisheye lens because I love how the distortion makes him feel larger than life. Fun fact, this was taken moments after discovering we were born in the same hospital in Salem, Massachusetts. Developed in Hardy's 2022 Extradimensional Wine Co Yeah! Marvelous Mourvèdre, a beautiful, playful wine that defies the varietal's brooding stereotype."

**KATIE ROUSE AND**  
**CORINNE RICH**  
**BIRDHORSE WINES**

"One of my favorite things about these wine film portraits is forcing myself to make an expressive image in a place I've often never been with someone I don't really know. To be fair, I'd worked with Katie a bit in her role as assistant winemaker at Bedrock Wine Co., where this was shot, but never Corinne. The newlywed couple were a photographer's dream, more than willing to go the extra mile, as evidenced by the frames of Katie hosing Corinne down—something she certainly didn't mind on a 104-degree July day. Processed in their 2021 Birdhorse Barbera, a delicate wine whose high acid content paired perfectly with the duo's playfulness and the frenetic energy of the images."





**PATRICK CAPIELLO** MONTE RIO CELLARS

"I met Patrick before he was a winemaker, at his restaurant Pearl & Ash in New York City. He taught me how to saber Champagne with an iPhone for a story I was doing, and we stayed in touch. The way Patrick has willed himself into being a pivotal part of a new generation of winemakers always impresses me, as does his adherence to a DIY, punk-rock ethos. The framing, film, and super-wide lens make me think of classic early 90s skate and hip-hop images, a vibe that works well for him. This was shot on Kodak Tri-X film and developed in Cappiello's ebullient 2021 Monte Rio Cellars Zinfandel, which I think lent itself to the boldness of the images."



**BIBIANA GONZÁLES RAVE**  
*CATTLEYA WINES, ALMA DE CATTLEYA, SHARED NOTES*

“Bibiana met me at her winery for the shoot but was so excited to hear that I loved coffee she rushed me to another part of the building to show off her single origin, female-farmed coffee company, all roasted in-house and sourced in her native Colombia. Her excitement is as palpable as her sophistication, whether discussing the nuance of coffee imports or the clones that go into her breathtaking farming-forward wines at Cattleya. Quick to laugh and naturally gregarious, Bibiana made photographing her, much like enjoying her wines, almost too easy. Developed in her mind-blowing 2021 Cattleya ‘The Reward’ Syrah, a wine so special they only make a handful of cases, fitting for a portrait of a winemaker of the same caliber.”



**CHRIS CHRISTENSEN BODKIN WINES**

“When Chris rolled up to his Sebastopol winery and got out of his car with a vintage saber as big as his smile, I knew this was gonna be a fun one. Equal parts insightful, eccentric, and hilarious, Chris is as effervescent as his sparkling wines, several of which he happily beheaded for our shoot (see also p. 94). We only went through one roll of film—12 frames—and after developing them in his wonderfully autobiographically emoji-labeled 2022 Bodkin Light Skinned Zinfandel, I can say almost all of them rank among the favorites I’ve ever taken. 🍷

*Digital bonus:*  
We’ve teamed up with photographer James Joiner and his friends at The Wine Makers podcast for a series of winemaker interviews in September. For links to podcast episodes and a video of Joiner’s developing process, visit [sonomamag.com](https://sonomamag.com).