

## Capote's 'A Christmas Memory' at Swirl on the Square

Truman Capote's short story, "A Christmas Memory," will be brought to life on December 17. Artists from the Livermore Shakespeare Festival present the holiday classic. Associate Artist, Joseph Salazar, last seen as Laertes in the 2012 production of Hamlet, will play the lead role while Gary Armagnac directs. Armagnac, an Associate Artist, previously directed the company's critically acclaimed production of The Taming of the Shrew in 2013.

The readings will take place at Swirl on the Square in downtown Livermore, to the festive accompaniment of a glass of wine or other beverage and a tapas sampler plate. There will be four performances in total, with showings at 5:30PM and 7:30PM on both December 10th and 17th.

Swirl on the Square is located at 21 S. Livermore Ave., in downtown Livermore, CA. The first reading will begin at 5:30 pm, the second at 7:30pm on December 10th and 17th. Tickets are \$35 and include the performance, a glass of wine or other beverage and a tapas sampler plate. Pre-sale ticket purchases are required as seating is limited. Event sponsors are First Republic Bank of Livermore and Louise and Les Gill. Tickets are available at LivermoreShakes.org or by calling (925) 443-BARD.

## Writers Club to Host to Hands-on Minit-Workshop

Lani Longshore will lead a hands-on mini-workshop at the next monthly meeting of the California Writers Club Tri-Valley Branch on Saturday, December 20, at the Four Points by Sheraton, 5115 Hopyard, Pleasanton.

Creating interesting characters, rich settings and nuanced plots in as few words as possible is the mark of a skilled writer. Short stories present a wonderful opportunity to hone those skills - and lay the groundwork for longer works. The California Writers Club Tri-Valley Branch invites writers of all genres to a hands-on mini-workshop exploring character, setting and story arc. Add another set of tools to your writer's toolbox, using a series of writing prompts to liberate the ideas hiding in your imagination.

Lani Longshore, a writer and fiber artist, is co-author (with Ann Anastasio) of the science fiction novels Death By Chenille and When Chenille Is Not Enough. Her short stories appear in Voices of The Valley: First Press, Voices of The Valley: Encore, Written Across The Genres, Eve's Requiem: Tales of Women, Mystery and Horror, and on Booktrack.com. She blogs about art, quilts, and writing at [www.lanilongshore.wordpress.com](http://www.lanilongshore.wordpress.com).

The CWC Tri-Valley Branch invites writers of all genres and experience levels to learn about their craft at its monthly meetings. The next meeting will be Saturday, December 20, 2:00- 4:00 p.m. (registration at 1:30). The cost for CWC Members is \$12, non-members, \$17. Anyone interested in the program or the organization may attend with no obligation to join. Reservations requested by contacting Linda Todd at [reservations@trivalleywriters.org](mailto:reservations@trivalleywriters.org) no later than Wednesday, December 17,

For more information about California Writers Club Tri-Valley Branch, contact Jordan Bernal at [president@trivalleywriters.org](mailto:president@trivalleywriters.org) or visit [www.trivalleywriters.org](http://www.trivalleywriters.org).

# Mia Nipote: Join the club

by Harry Stoll

"Less than 1%," said Lynn Reedy, showing but a sliver of space between the tips of her thumb and index finger, to indicate the amount of other wines that go into their bottles labeled "Mia Nipote." The more than 99% is from grapes grown on their hillside vineyard behind their home in a residential area of Pleasanton, owned by her and husband Kevin. The vineyards' seven acres are planted in Cabernet Sauvignon plus a small amount of Sauvignon Blanc.

Grapes?" Kevin said his reply when he learned the retirement home they bought included a 7-acre vineyard. "Wine?" he said he also said. "I know nothing about making wine." Kevin said they could have sold the grapes but decided to launch their own brand.

The very capable pair—a sliver short of 60 years—retired from high-level positions in technology. While they didn't know much about grapes and wine, they do know what they don't know and organized a team that does know.

But first, about the name: Mia Nipote translates to "my granddaughter." In a bit of an oddity the intent is to honor Lynn's grandfather, Marino Lencioni. Maybe it should be "Mio Nonno," translating to "my grandfather." With characteristic candor, Lynn says a marketer didn't like that name. Well, maybe buyers would interpret "Nonno" as no no don't buy this. Lynn speaks with obvious love and admiration of mio nonno who came from Tuscany in 1921 and lived next door to her family in Waukegan, Illinois. He made wine, cooked, and was the patriarch. At age 92, he rode his bicycle every day to continue his practice of buying fresh produce. Both Kevin and



Kevin and Lynn Reedy with Chad Alexander (the wine maker) trying the 2008 vintage.

Lynn say nobody should play cards at his skill level.

So Mia Nipote it is, a musical name. The grapes from the Livermore Valley appellation become wine at Bin to Bottle, a high-end custom crush facility in Napa. The label carries the term "cellared and bottled by Lencioni Vineyards in Napa." That's the usual practice of a custom crush facility. Of course Lencioni is mio nonna's last name; and it's Lynn Reedy nee Lencioni.

The winemaker is the very experienced Chad Alexander, who worked as the winemaker at Robert Craig Winery on Mt. Veeder. His wines have been praised by Robert Parker, Jr. of Wine Advocate magazine and James Laube of Wine Spectator magazine. For a winemaker, that's akin to a blessing by the Pope or the Dalai Lama. Chad is persnickety and creative. Kevin tells of Chad going to his "spice shelf" during barrel tasting and adding a touch of Cabernet Franc or of Petite Sirah to the Mia Nipote Cabernet Sauvignon and making a huge difference in the flavor. Kevin belongs to the honored "I know what I like" school and could tell there was a profound difference but

couldn't describe it. Not necessarily.

"As we were interviewing him, he was interviewing us," said Lynn, about Chad, pointing out he wanted to be sure our grapes were good. A visit to the vineyards cinched the deal. Chad and viticulturist Bryan Rahn selected a trellising system that sheds speckled light on the grapes. So there's the team, along with Kevin and Lynn, who are learning to market the wine. She says they knew nothing about marketing but this couple thrums with energy, delivering Mia Nipote to restaurants and wine tasting bars. Uncle Yu's in downtown Livermore lists it on the menu. First Street Wine Company and Artistic Table in Livermore, and Cellar Door in Pleasanton serve as Mia Nipote tasting rooms, where you can buy it by the glass or by the bottle.

"Our wine club requires members to purchase two bottles a year," says Kevin. Two bottles. Lynn says they will host private tastings in their home but emphasizes only appreciators who are deeply interested in joining the wine club should ask for an appointment. They hold two tasting parties a year on their property, one in

the summer in the middle of the vineyard, with wine of course, food, and live music. When asked how the neighbors responded to the live music, Kevin replied, "We invite them all." One in the fall, is held at a local wine bar, There's wine, food, and live music. This couple are no doubt gracious hosts. Wine Club members are admitted free. They can bring guests, who are charged \$20 each.

Now, about the wines: the 2009 and 2010 Cabernet Sauvignon sell for \$39 and the Sauvignon Blanc for \$19. Typical of Livermore Valley Cabs, they are not mouth puckering, but are well structured with silky rippling muscles. They are aged in "The best barrels we could get," says Kevin. Mia Nipote Cabs are aged in 100% French oak. Both wines have a rich blackberry aroma and flavors. These rich Cabs take you for a ride with all those flavors that you may be can't identify, but want to close your eyes, want silence, and let your wine appreciating senses take over. It provides a caressing mouth roll around and a lovely finish that sings amore as you sing more. The 2009 has the most toast, vanilla, and spice, perhaps due to the slightly higher percentage of new barrels. Both paired umm umm with a Porterhouse steak on a Saturday night and Chateaubriand for Sunday dinner.

Also characteristic of Sauvignon Blanc from Livermore Valley Mia Nipote's is less grassy than many yet presents a refreshing herbality, and shows why the Livermore Valley rocks. At lunch it was introduced to Kinder's lime and tequila chicken quarters and there was love and laughter and peace ever after.

Mia Nipote, Salute!