



Raise Your Glass to Pink—the Pop Star Who Rocks California’s Organic Wine Scene

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Alecia Moore, the singer, dancer, and all-around force of nature, has nurtured a vineyard for the last decade on the path to becoming a respected winemaker. The magic happens on 25 misty acres in California’s Santa Ynez Valley, home to her estate wine label, Two Wolves.

“This was one of the first recipes I brought home from France,” Alecia Moore says, offering me a pour of rosé. “In 2015, I went to Scamandre, in the south. It’s fully sustainable, regeneratively farmed. It’s beautiful. It’s wild.”

While she was at the vineyard, a grower named Franck Renouard gave her a glass of delicately colored, aromatic grenache rosé. “I did not want to put out a pink wine,” Moore quips. “Though Costco would’ve really liked that!” She asked Renouard about his process. “‘Well, you’re American, you’re a woman, and you’re a pop star,’” he said, skeptical of her ability to master it. “‘Absolutely!’”

“So he gave me the recipe,” Moore says. “I’m like, ‘OK, fucker, watch this.’”

We take a moment to go through the steps of tasting the wine: tilting the glass in the sunlight to assess color (not pink, but more like white with a blush of peach); swirling to release aromatics from the liquid (basil, citrus peel, and piecrust); and then taking a small sip while inhaling, to experience the acidity, body, and flavor passing over our tongues. One sip and I’m stunned. Alecia the winemaker is not messing around.

Moore and I are sitting under an outdoor pergola, next to a small reservoir on her 25-acre vineyard, which is situated on rolling land just outside Santa Ynez, California, in Santa Barbara County. She's on a two-week break from her world tour, [Summer Carnival](#), and she's come home to throw herself into the September wine harvest. "Winemaking is not as physically grueling as performing, but it's still laborious enough to be fun," she says.

If you're one of the millions of people who attended a [Pink](#) concert in 2023, you know that she's physical onstage, and that she makes singing upside down—while being hurled through the air, attached to a harness, over a stadium full of fans—look easy. The appearance of effortless grace requires an enormous amount of conditioning and grit. Being home at the vineyard means decompressing from that intensity, even if doing so involves waking up before dawn to pick grapes with the crew. "I don't remember to breathe until I get to the end of the driveway," she says. "This place reminds you to just stop."

"We'll start picking Block 2 tomorrow," Moore continues, pointing to a defined, hilly section of neatly organized sauvignon blanc vines that are always the first to ripen. Moore bought this place in 2013. She's kept most of the 17 acres of certified organic grapes—including cabernet sauvignon, grenache, graciano, syrah, petit verdot, grenache blanc, and cabernet franc—that were planted here before she arrived. She's since added eight acres and introduced sémillon and merlot to the mix; in all, her crew will harvest over 55 tons of grapes, yielding about 2,500 cases of red wine and 500 cases of white.

Moore's wines are all single varietals. "Why blend?" she says. "I don't care what the French say. Grapes have their own personalities. They don't necessarily play well with others."

Moore opens a 2022 Graciano, made from an inky Spanish grape that typically produces a rich, tannic, almost savory wine. As an experiment, she fermented the grapes in whole clusters, using a process called carbonic maceration. The result is fresh and bright, with notes of crunchy tart cherries.

"I got demo-itis on this vineyard," she says, borrowing a term from her musical life. "As a musician, when you make a demo, if you listen to it more than five times, you're never going to record the actual song, because you're now in love with the demo." She takes a sip. "If you listen to some of the acoustic deep cuts on my records, sometimes I'm not saying the right words. The person doing the harmonies is drunk. I think it's perfect, because it's a vibe."

She tries to bring a vibe to her wines, which are all single varietals. "Why blend?" she says. "I don't care what the French say. Grapes have their own personalities. They don't necessarily play well with others."

"This is my home, this is my place," she laughs. "This is how I express myself in plants."

The Graciano goes perfectly with a *panzanella* salad Moore made. She came to this interview from her home garden on a Polaris UTV, with two kids along for the ride and a large ceramic bowl cradled in her lap. Her husband—professional motocross racer Carey Hart, who helps with winemaking tasks but mostly leaves it to her—is also on hand. Their son, six-year-old Jameson, harvested the salad's heirloom tomatoes; their daughter, 12-year-old Willow, picked the sweet basil. Moore made sourdough bread using freshly milled flour from the famed baker Josey Baker, of the [Mill](#) in San Francisco. (They became sourdough pen pals during the pandemic.) She used a starter named Quarantina, which is kept going by wild local yeast.

Over time, Moore has gotten intimate with the land and its microclimate. “We wake up in a cloud every morning,” she says. The vineyard is next to the western slope of the San Rafael Mountains, whose 6,800-foot peaks trap moisture from the Pacific, and the fog hovers until the sun burns it off.

Makes sense. If I were a mist, I’d want to stick around here, too.

Moore and her family moved to these jagged little hills from Los Angeles ten years ago. Since making the big shift to what she calls “the country,” she’s built a four-person, all-women winemaking team, in conjunction with her primary collaborator, Alison Thomson. California-born Thomson trained in the Barolo region of Italy and has her own label, [L.A. Lepiane Wines](#). Her kind spirit and relatively chill attitude toward juggling the daily duties of two operations complements Moore’s unbridled energy and desire for experimentation. Together, Moore and Thomson have learned a great deal about the local terroir—a term that refers to the way soil, climate, and other factors affect the flavor of wine. Moore’s label, [Two Wolves](#), takes its name from a traditional Cherokee tale with themes of internal struggle. Do the wolves symbolize how Moore’s two professions seem to be at odds? Sorta. Maybe. “I don’t have an alter ego,” she says. “I *do* have a nickname, but there’s no separation between the two. It’s just a different pace, different mindset.”

As Pink, she’s a platinum-selling musician with a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame, a performer who’s broken barriers for women through the sheer power of her authenticity. She’s been on stage for 25 years, starting as a teenager, and she released her first big hit (“There You Go”) at age 20.

As Alecia Moore, she is a serious organic winemaker who started from scratch in her early thirties, with a baby on her hip, dirt under her fingernails, and a few barrels in the garage. To get good at this, you have to seriously nerd out, amassing an encyclopedic knowledge of a truly demanding and interdisciplinary craft.

That’s because, with wine, there’s just too much to know. Even for someone like Moore, who has an excellent palate and a talent for teasing out nuance, there’s a seemingly infinite amount of information that has to be internalized as a foundation for success. It is impossible to completely master winemaking—one can simply learn enough to have a sense of what each vintage needs. Hands-on production involves difficult agrarian labor; annual rituals in the vineyard become an alchemy of knowledge and experience.

Moore, noting that her 44th birthday is tomorrow, hands me her glass, climbs on top of a single barrel wearing three-inch-platform combat boots, and does a handstand.

While the basics seem simple enough—sugar plus yeast creates alcohol through the process of fermentation—winemaking is a complex blend of agriculture, botany, chemistry, meteorology, geology, physics, biology, and even astronomy. It’s the playground of naturalists and, simultaneously, a big business that pumps millions of gallons of juice into the marketplace annually. Beyond the codified science, there are historical, geographic, and cultural practices that vary from region to region and grape to grape. And that’s before all the other stuff comes into play: bottling, labeling, shipping, and getting the wine to consumers.

In this department, Moore turned to the sommelier Mikayla Avedisian-Cohen, who helped identify the independent restaurants around the country where chef-driven menus and curated wine lists align

with Two Wolves' ethos. And unless you're lucky enough to nab a spot on their email list, which has a years-long waiting list, ordering a bottle with a meal is the best way to try Moore's wines. Like other winemakers working high-quality land around the world, Moore strongly identifies as a *winegrower*. "Everything happens in the vineyard," she says. "Every decision that I care about happens before we pick."

Moore, who grew up in a rural setting—Doylestown, Pennsylvania, the seat of Bucks County—recalls that her first encounter with wine was sweet, kosher Manischewitz at a family dinner. A self-described high school dropout, she focused on music and gymnastics in her youth, signing her first record deal before the age of 18. She had to reacquaint herself with formal education when learning about fine wine. "They say it takes a lifetime to make your first album but six months to make your second," she says. "So it takes a lifetime, I think, to even understand how to make your first bottle."

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Increasing the odds of success, counterintuitive though it may sound, means knowing when to stay out of the way and let the juice, yeast, and time do their work. "If we're making major decisions every day in the winery," Moore says, "we're doing way too much."

Moore started getting serious about wine with her colleagues on tour in the late 2000s, opening bottles together to share and taste. One became a sort of comfort food: Châteauneuf-du-Pape. Mariah Carey had her blue M&Ms; Moore had the legendary Rhône wine, which she required by contract to have on hand in her dressing room while touring. But loving wine wasn't enough. She wanted to learn. Moore's travels meant she could do that firsthand, by visiting great wine producers from France to Australia. "It changes the course of your life, the uncovering of it all," she says. While touring, she took online wine courses, starting with the WSET—the London-based [Wine and Spirit Education Trust](#), a tiered program for professionals. Later, she studied oenology and viticulture through UCLA and UC Davis, the latter widely regarded as one of the best wine schools in the world.

Among the first steps in learning to taste and evaluate wine is training your palate, so you can accurately and vividly describe flavor. As a novice, Moore often went to a farmers' market to sample produce and verbalize the taste. "To describe in words the difference between a lemon and a lime," she says. "Get every kind of tomato you can find and taste it and smell it, then log in your brain what the differences are." This process made her slow down and consider nature more intentionally. "I was tasting and smelling different mushrooms," she says, "and I was like, Why have I never paid attention to life in this way before?"

Connecting nature and the outdoors with daily existence sharpened her focus. "When you start paying attention to the food that's in front of you and paying attention to the weather, paying attention to the difference between an oyster mushroom and a shiitake mushroom, a light turns on," she says. Learning to be in sync with nature, and making time and space for it, she says, "has been the most beautiful gift of this entire thing."

The vineyard's first noncommercial vintage, in 2014, was made with simple home equipment. "We were true *garagistes*," Moore says, a reference to garage wine, the experimental batches that vineyard workers and up-and-coming winemakers ferment in cool, dark spaces like garages and basements. It's a way to hone craft and approach, to test a new grape or recipe without committing an entire harvest.

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The facilities have seen quite an upgrade, as I learn when Moore shows me around. Her state-of-the-art, 3,000-square-foot winery is located on the crest of a hill, overlooking the reservoir. The crush pad, where grapes are received from the vineyard and sorted before processing, leads into the winery building. To the right is a functional tasting room and small kitchen. To the left, an office and lab leads to the heart of the operation, where fermentation tanks await and empty barrels are stacked four high. There’s a four-foot-tall, hot-pink plastic wolf behind the sliding barn door. Moore, noting that her 44th birthday is tomorrow, hands me her glass, climbs on top of a single barrel wearing three-inch-platform combat boots, and does a handstand.

During the fermentation process—which can take anywhere from a few days to a few weeks—yeast goes to work, consuming the sugar in the juice and producing alcohol. Fermentation stops when the yeast either runs out of sugar or has created so much alcohol that it can’t survive in the environment. The wine can then be moved into clean tanks or barrels to age before bottling.

Most artists wrestle with the tension inherent in nurturing their creative passion and earning the respect of their peers while also enjoying commercial success. Pink is a once-in-a-generation talent, an American original who has written much of her own music (and hits for other stars), earworms that are pumped through grocery stores and nightclubs yet bleed with honesty and emotion. Their resonance cannot be understated, especially to women, mothers, and the LGBTQ+ groups Moore has sought to connect with.

With wine, she set out to nurture her passion and create something lasting for her family. But there was also pressure to be legitimately great, not just launch a celebrity wine label. Her plan? “Never tell anyone that I’m doing this,” Moore says, describing her attitude in the early days. “I’m going to make all the mistakes while people don’t know about it. I don’t want anybody to know I’m making wine because it’s my love, and I don’t want to be judged.”

Most celebrity wine and liquor producers hire a fleet of consultants to set up their operations and make every decision, fine-tuning the business for financial success. This approach requires absolute consistency of product, typically featuring a specific wine or spirit intended to taste the same year after year, pleasant but stripped of uniqueness.

Moore took a different tack. She met like-minded winemakers from California and started asking questions. “What I’ve noticed from talking to winegrowers is that they’re the most passionate, fascinating people,” she says. “Music is very solitary, and I find that traveling for wine knowledge and for farm knowledge makes friends for life.”

One such friend is the famed Napa winemaker [Steve Matthiasson](#). After listening to him talk about his approach to winemaking on a podcast during a pandemic-era road trip to Lake Shasta, California, Moore says, “I literally just slid into his DMs. I was like, ‘Hey, man, this is going to seem really forward and aggressive, but can we be best friends?’ He skateboards, he’s a total plant-geek scientist—but punk rock—and he totally does his own thing.” >

A few days later, Moore, Hart, and the kids pulled their RV into the Matthiassons' vineyard. "We parked our rig, walked out, petted the dog, ate some chicken, and now he consults for our vineyard," she says.

Actually, she admits, it took a little more convincing than that. Matthiasson and his wife, Jill, have devoted their careers to sustainable vineyard practices, educating and connecting growers while raising the bar for the industry. Moore had a feeling that Matthiasson, one of California's most celebrated botanist-winemakers, could help Two Wolves improve its sustainability, ensuring the health and longevity of the vineyard.

"He was like, 'Yeah, I'm really trying to slow down,'" Moore says. "That's what my music manager said when I met him. I take that as a personal challenge."

Matthiasson helped Moore develop confidence in the decisions that she, Thomson, and their team make. During the pandemic, when touring and travel were off the table, uninterrupted time at home gave Moore the opportunity to deepen her commitment to the property's ecosystem. In 2020, for example, she hand-pruned all of Block 4, which is planted with cabernet sauvignon. "Took me a month and a half to get through that tiny little beautiful block," she says.

She can't maintain the whole property, so Two Wolves is assisted by a vineyard management company that helps with cyclical tasks like pruning, mulching, irrigating, and harvesting. But in 2020, "This place was wild in its neglect. It was the most beautiful thing I'd ever seen." Seeing the land rewild made Moore want to pull back even further. Vineyard management is a matter of selective intervention. "We are in the business of thoughtful guidance and thoughtful observation."

Two Wolves makes "estate" wine, a legal distinction, monitored by the federal government, which tells you that the wine sold is made solely from grapes grown by the winery. Moore also employs low- or no-intervention practices, like not inoculating the grapes with commercial yeast and allowing only local, wild yeast to start fermentation.

The result: wines that are not overly hot with alcohol, a characteristic that has become common among California wines as the climate warms and grapes yield higher sugar content. "We've developed a style of really balanced, elegant, reserved but complex, food-friendly, daytime, you-don't-need-a-nap-after-you-drink-them wines," Moore says.

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Offering these kinds of wines and imbuing them with depth and energy is a testament to the vineyard. The extreme diurnal shifts, or temperature swings, preserve natural acidity in the grapes while keeping Brix—a measure of the sugar level in grapes—in check.

Though geography plays a huge role in the quality of Two Wolves wines, climatologically the past decade has been the most volatile on record. "When I got here in 2014, we were already in the middle of a really devastating drought, and 2015 was worse," she says. "We got a tiny bit of rain in 2016. The

following year was the worst. That's when all our oak trees decided to just lay down and give up, and Lake Cachuma"—Santa Ynez's primary reservoir—"was empty. I've been evacuated six times in the past seven years because of a fire." Despite heat spikes getting harsher, 2023 was the wettest year in decades, refilling bodies of water across California and regreening the lush countryside.

A high tolerance for volatility might be considered a prerequisite for the pop-star life, but it's now essential for winemaking too. "Being on stage is the most alive I've ever felt. And it's the most authentic I've ever felt, because I don't question anything. I'm not thinking, I'm feeling. And with wine, it's Mother Nature doing that," Moore says. "When we're here, I'm watching Mother Nature, and I get to be the audience."