



# PJ's Wine Trip

EXPLORING WINE THROUGH THE AFRICAN DIASPORA

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# Welcome to the Business of Winemaking

Much in the vein of Anthony Bourdain's *No Reservations* and *Parts Unknown*, as well as Stanley Tucci's gorgeous exploration of Italian cooking, *Searching for Italy*, *PJ's Wine Trip* will be documentary in nature. It will be shot in the same entrancing cinematic style as *Chef's Table*. Our host, Dry Creek Valley, Sonoma winemaker Paula J. Harrell (aka PJ), will take us across the globe from Napa to South Africa to discover winemaking through the African Diaspora. Each episode takes us to a black-owned vineyard, wine store, custom crushing facility, restaurant, or venue where wines made by black vintners are sold. Our featured guests will share their stories about their wines, traditions, and practices.

PJ's Wine Trip is rooted in authenticity, exploration, Black history, and a passion for wine. We will introduce our viewers to engaging, entertaining, unexpected places to meet fascinating and charming local winemakers. We'll explore unknown pockets of culture and as each story unfolds, we'll learn what drives our winemakers' creativity and applied science, leaving us with a new perspective.

Each episode will be an adventure, as our guests invite us to learn the how and why behind their endeavors and how they've forged new ground in an industry that has been closed off or inaccessible to people of color in the past.



*Black Winemakers are  
Changing the Industry*



Black Winemakers are transforming wine culture, buying vineyards across continents, and cultivating wine with a passion for the science of winemaking, where a rich new history is being written with powerful and widespread influence. As these vintners continue to stake their claim, there is a huge opportunity for the industry to have an impact that will shift the status quo and present opportunities for more black winemakers to be seen and their stories to be told.



A man with short, dark, curly hair is leaning over a large, dark metal barrel in a winery. He is wearing a maroon jacket over a grey hoodie and a gold chain. The background shows a large, industrial-style building with a corrugated metal roof and a large white door. The lighting is warm and focused on the man.

# The Format

PJ's Wine Trip is :22 minutes and features three subjects per episode. Paula introduces us to a local co-host in each segment who is beloved and knowledgeable about the particular destination we will explore. That host will take us to a vineyard, restaurant, tasting room, or concept space and break down three educational and entertaining elements. We will learn about the business, process, selections and edits, and the science behind winemaking. We would learn about how specific land creates good wine, how wine pairs with the local dishes, and the history of each place we visit.



# Sample Episodes



## 01 CALIFORNIA & THE PACIFIC NORTHWEST

We'll visit [Angwin Estate](#) with owners Jon Larson and Angela Henszel in California.

[Lyons Wine](#), owned by entrepreneur [Chris Lyons](#), runs Andreessen's Cultural Leadership Fund and is one of a few black winemakers to produce in Italy.

[Bertony Faustin](#) is the first black winemaker in Oregon and owns [Abbey Creek Vineyards](#). He's Paula's former co-star in Best Bottle and the creator of a documentary about black winemakers called [Red, White, and Black](#).



## 02 SOUTHERN & EASTERN UNITED STATES

We'll spend some time with [Krista Scruggs](#) of Vermont's [Zafa Wines](#), which has become one of the pioneers in the "New American" wine revival. Zafa makes biodynamic, organic wines and is 100% woman-owned and has intentionally maintained an 85% all-woman staff at minimum.

North Carolina's family-owned [Williams Farm](#) produces muscadine grapes and has a rich history. The owners' goal is to educate visitors about early African-American farm life in the rural South. The Rev. Gabriel Williams founded the farm in 1924, where he lived with his wife Mary and 20 kids in one crowded farmhouse as the first generation out of slavery. Today, the Williams Vineyard has won preservation awards for keeping its land and farmhouse intact. After his father's passing, David Williams converted the farm from tobacco, cotton, and corn production to muscadine. As a result, their farm is a fascinating piece of Southern history.

[Family-owned](#) South Carolina [Bowman Vineyards](#) has two locations in Round O, South Carolina. They produce and bottle their varieties of muscadines grown and harvested at another location at Oakman Branch Road nearby.

## 03 STAR SOMMELIERS

We will learn all about the art of wine through Louisiana native [Rhonda Russell](#), a sommelier and the only black woman in the United States to have the Certified Executive Chef of Wine Arts (CECWA). She's the founder of [Taste Collection Cellars](#) and loves educating people about wine and pairings.

[Lydia Richards](#) is a "wine evangelist" from Panama who founded Vino Concierge in 2017 and runs PR for the Taub Family Companies. During COVID, she launched Hispanics in Wine to empower Latinx/Hispanic wine lovers to grow the wine industry.

[Cortney McKenzie](#) is a young pastry chef and sommelier from The Bronx who hosts the [Signs and Vines](#) podcast and runs the [Corkscrews and Caramel](#) platform.



## 04 WINE SHOPS

We'll visit the black-owned, women-owned [Adams Wine Shop](#) neighborhood of Los Angeles stop by the beautiful outdoor [Gingergrass Wine Truck](#) window, also in Los Angeles.

We'll learn about building an edit with a visit to [Davidson Vine Co Wine](#) in North Carolina, owned by Lindsey Williams. Lindsay is a lawyer turned winemaker who discovered a deep appreciation of wine later in life. She started Davidson Wine Co. to bring affordable and locally made wine to her local town and opened her wine bar in the historic downtown location. There are remnants of a large golden organ inside!

## 05 FAMOUS WINEMAKERS

NBA star Dwayne Wade has a wine label called [D Wade Cellars](#) produced by his winemaking partner Jayson Pahlmeyer. His collection includes Rosés, whites, and Cabernets.

[Titus Burgess](#) developed a Pinot Noir label after his breakout song “Pinot Noir” went viral from his breakout TV role in Netflix’s Kimmy Schmidt.

We will learn about the much-lauded Sauvignons made by Forbes’ featured 30 Under 30, cookbook author and Food Network staple Ayesha Curry, who owns [Domaine Curry](#) wines.

NBA star [Channing Frye](#) owns [Chosen Family Wines](#) with Chase Renton and Jacob Gray. Their wines are made at the stunning L’Angolo Estate in Oregon.

## 06 AFRICA

The [M’Hudi Family](#) makes red, white and sparkling wines. From the Setswana word “mohudi,” which means harvester, the Rangaka family runs the Stellenbosch-based brand.

[Pardenkloof](#) is one of the first South African Black-owned wine estates to cultivate vineyards. The brand features single-vineyard, single-varietal wines from Cabernet Sauvignon Pinot Noir, Shiraz and Sauvignon Blanc.

Award-winning Sommelier and now winemaker [Carmen Stevens](#) launched her line of wines through the support of angel funding through Naked Wines.

[Kumusha Wines](#) is owned by Zimbabwean Tinashe Nyamudoka, a Sommelier who has served as a Sommelier in Africa’s best restaurants, including The Test Kitchen, before launching his brand of wines. He has won countless awards and received global recognition as a Sommelier.



## 07 EUROPE

Actor Idris Elba takes us through his prestige wines for his British label [Porte Noire](#), selections made in France's Champagne and Provence regions. Proceeds from each bottle of his popular Rosé benefit local community programs. We go to beautiful St. Tropez to try [Le Fete de Rose](#) with owner Donae Burston.

We will meet Robert "Kool" Bell to try his [Le Kool Champagne](#). Produced in Reims, next to d'Epernay, he chose his plot of land to harvest 100% rated Grand Cru grapes. Champagne maker [Maria Cesaire](#) has gorgeous champagne in the village of Ecueil, famous for its champagne. Marie also produces local wines from white to red.

## 08 ANCIENT WINES

Two types of ancient wines and winemaking processes deep roots in African and African American culture are Palm Wine and Mead, also known as Honey Wine.

We'll visit Ayele Solomon's Sonoma County vineyard, [Honey Wine Company](#), which uses oenological science to make his wines less sweet. His wines were inspired by traditional t'ej honey wine from Ethiopia, his native country, but he's formulated his wines to cater to a broader audience.

We'll also meet Eric Depradine, owner of [Zydeco Meadery](#), which makes wines from American honey. Eric's Trinidadian grandmother taught him how to ferment flowers and fruits into beautiful, refreshing beverages, and he's applied this family tradition, bringing a wine rooted in Caribbean culture to Kansas.







# Our Host



# Paula Harrell

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At a family dinner in Paula's hometown of Oakland, California, Paula mixed a Zinfandel with Petite Syrah. She shared this blend with her discerning uncle Greg, who had been casually teaching Paula about wine by sampling from his home cellar. He tasted her blend, told her she had a refined palette and good instincts for making wine, and suggested she make her own.

The San Francisco native first fell in love with wine culture while studying abroad in Spain during her undergrad years at UCLA. Paula's nascent interest quickly grew into a passion for all things wine. After earning her MBA from SF State, she wholeheartedly began dedicating herself to learning everything she could know about the extraordinary world of viniculture.

Paula purchased a timeshare in Napa, began studying with local vintners, developing relationships with winery owners, participating in harvest, crush, working barrel tasting events, and learning the production and bottling process. Once she decided to produce her wine, she went on a mission to find a winemaking option that would work for her.

While researching, she discovered "custom crushing," which means making wine in a facility with equipment and resources provided by a highly experienced winemaker and their in-house team. Given that this was a new experience for Paula, this option allowed her the benefit of winemaking experts to guide her in making her wines to her exact specifications without the overhead and capital investment of a dedicated winery. Custom crushing was very rare at the time, and it took Paula several years to find a winery that offered this service. Once she did, she pursued her dream, and in November 2015, she launched a private wine label using sustainable practices: P. Harrell Wines. She began with two varietals: Haight Street, a dry Riesling, and Three Fifteen, a Zinfandel. Since then, Paula has added three more wines to her portfolio: Revere Avenue, a Petite Syrah, Broadway, a sparkling Blanc de Noirs, and P.J. Rosé, a Rosé.



P. Harrell Wines hosts its wine club, offers educational training, speaking engagements, social events, fireside chats and other panel discussions for corporations and has done a masterclass for a consultancy firm, Spoons Consultancy. Paula's 2018 Haight Street Dry Riesling won the Gold Medal in the 2019 San Francisco Chronicle International Wine Competition. She was also featured in the wine competition show [Best Bottle](#) representing Team California and was named a Tastemaker at San Francisco's Chase Center program.

Paula has been appointed as a fellow of USF's hospitality department, creating a program that will advance people of color in the hospitality industry, with a focus on wine. She also sits on many boards and does speaking engagements for non-profit and diversity and inclusion organizations. P. Harrell Wines has been featured on KCRA Sacramento, KRON SF, ABC, and more.

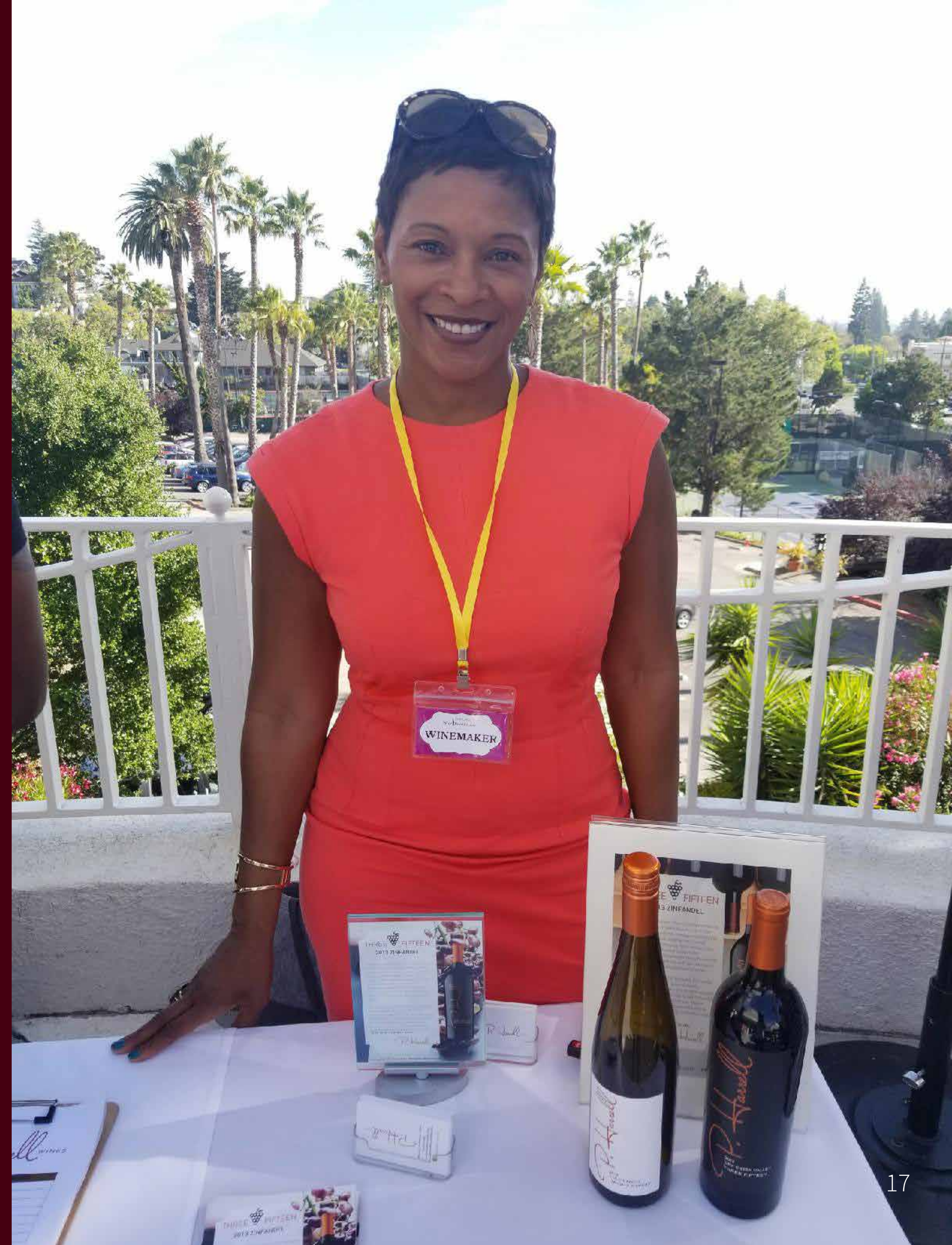
Paula is the daughter of a Panamanian immigrant mother and Oklahoma-born father who raised Paula and her siblings in San Francisco, building a successful real estate business. She celebrates her love for Black and Latino culture, family legacy, and history by storytelling through wine.



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*“My wines are an overall tribute to my family’s legacy. Our dedication to community, friendship, cultural heritage and one another.”*

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# Contact

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*Thank You*