



Livermore Area
Recreation & Park District
An independent special district

NEWS RELEASE

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Harvest time at Ravenswood ties together site's past and present

LIVERMORE — The recent harvesting of grapes at Ravenswood Historic Site echoes back to the golden days of the Victorian estate.

The current vines were planted in 2006, however the Ravenswood grounds historically held vineyards when the home was in its heyday in the 1890s. Some of the vines currently at Ravenswood mimic the historic style that allows for sustainably grown grapes with one vine per stake. Planted in this historic way are some of the varieties traditionally grown in the area, including Grenache, Mourvedre and Zinfandel.



Operated by the Livermore Area Recreation and Park District, Ravenswood was built by Christopher Buckley Sr., who was known as the “Blind Boss” of San Francisco politics in the 1870s and 1880s. Buckley Sr. died in 1922 and left Ravenswood to his son, Christopher Buckley Jr. The estate was sold in 1931 to a Catholic order, the Redemptorist Fathers, which used it as a retreat for more than 30 years.



The estate was sold in 1971 to a real estate developer. The larger portion of the property was developed for housing, and the remaining property – about 30 acres – was given to the public as a park site to be administered by LARPD in 1972. Using funds from the State Beach, Park, Recreation and Historical Facilities Bond Act, the District restored the larger Main House and the Tank House in 1979. The 1885 Cottage House was restored in 1986.

The vineyards – removed by the Redemptorist Fathers at the recommendation of Joseph Concannon because of improper soil conditions – were restored five years ago through a

partnership with the City of Livermore and Coastal Viticultural Consultants. Restoration was made possible by a donation from local nonprofit Friends of the Vineyards.

In addition to its vineyards providing grapes for winemaking, Ravenswood serves a variety of uses today. The historic site serves as a serene setting for event rentals, including about 20 weddings and receptions annually. LARPD park rangers hold educational events on site, such as the annual Applefest that uses fruit from the antique apple orchard and Ravenswood Days for third- and fourth-graders to learn about history.

Costumed docents from the Ravenswood Progress League offer free tours of the site on the second and fourth Sunday from January to November and the second Sunday in December. In addition, the League annually holds an Old-Fashioned Ice Cream Social, a Victorian Tea and a Victorian Yuletide.

Ravenswood is on the National Register of Historic Places, is a State of California Historical Point of Interest and is a City of Livermore Historic Preservation Landmark Site. To learn more about Ravenswood, visit www.larpd.dst.ca.us or call 925-373-5700.

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