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Buena Vista Winery Donates \$5,000 to Sonoma-Tokaj Sister City Committee

The gift will help offset costs of the Tokaj delegation's visit to Sonoma last year and a winemaker exchange program this year.

By [Julie Pendray](#) | [Email the author](#) | February 2, 2013

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Sonoma's relationship with the wine region of Tokaj, Hungary got a boost this week, when [Buena Vista Winery](#) donated more than \$5,000 to the Sonoma-Tokaj Sister City committee, which it sponsors.

Buena Vista was established in 1857 and is the oldest commercial winery in California. It was founded by Hungarian immigrant Agoston Haraszthy, known in Sonoma as "The Count." Local actor George Webber appears as the Count there for visitors and is also the chairman of the Sonoma-Tokaj Sister City Committee.

On Thursday, the winery's general manager Tom Blackwell, representing owner Jean-Charles Boisset, presented a check for \$5,755 to Webber and fellow committee members. One dollar from every bottle of The Count: Founder's Red Wine sold in the tasting room in 2012 went into the donation.

"I am very grateful for this generous donation from Mr. Boisset," Webber said. "The outpouring of affection for The Count of Buena Vista has been extraordinary, and with this donation we were able to put on wonderful events in 2012 featuring Hungarian culture and history in Sonoma."

The money will help cover the costs of a visit to Sonoma by Hungarian citizens last September. A delegation from Tokaj, led by Mayor János Májer, came here to celebrate the Count's birthday and sign the official documents making Sonoma and Tokaj sister cities.

Funds will also be used to offset the costs of a Winemaker Exchange Program between Tokaj and Sonoma in 2013.

"I am thankful to politicians in Tokaj and Sonoma, and to Bill Boerum, president of the Sonoma Sister Cities Association for helping make this relationship come to life," Webber said.

He said the Sister City committee is comprised of Hungarian-Americans in Sonoma and elsewhere in the Bay Area, as well as wine lovers and people interested

in the Count.

Many of the committee members will visit the Tokaj Wine Festival in May. Wine production there dates to the 12th century. The town, in northeastern Hungary, is known for an amber-colored dessert wine, known as Tokay.

Buena Vista Winery on Old Winery Road in Sonoma is a State Historic Landmark.

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