

# The Press Democrat

## Historic photos show the early days of Buena Vista Winery

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Buena Vista Winery is one of California's oldest commercial wineries. Founded in 1857 by Agoston Haraszthy, the self-proclaimed "Count of Buena Vista," the winery helped establish Sonoma Valley as the cradle of the California wine industry.

Haraszthy, who immigrated from his native Hungary in 1840, first settled in New York and then Wisconsin, where he planted hops, paving the way for that state's thriving beer industry.

In 1849, Haraszthy packed up the wagon and hauled his family to San Diego, where he served as sheriff and was later a state senator before turning his eyes north to Sonoma County.

While the forty-niners looked for gold, Haraszthy made his fortune through viticulture, collecting and planting hundreds of European grape varieties and earning the nickname the "father of California Viticulture."

In a 1869 trip to Nicaragua where he hoped buy land to grow sugar cane and make rum, Haraszthy disappeared in alligator-infested waters, never to be seen again.

On July 28 from 2 to 6 p.m. Buena Vista Winery celebrates its founder and the town of Sonoma's rich

history with a living history day that culminates in the performance of a new historical play: "An Uneasy Future: General Vallejo, the Count and Joaquin Murietta in Sonoma."

Written by local historian and playwright George Webber, the play brings to life the historical question: "What if General Vallejo and the Count helped hide the noted California bandit Joaquin

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Sonoma Valley Wine History Weekend, filled with live music and entertainment, is free to attend. Wine will be available for purchase by the glass and by the bottle. For more information about the event, go to [buenavistawinery.com](http://buenavistawinery.com).

