

“Sideways” Author Pickett Highlights “Merlot Fights Back” Dinner at UC San Diego

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Paul K. Mueller

Rex Pickett, a UC San Diego alumnus and author of the novel "Sideways" and the resulting popular movie of the same name, will be the featured speaker at a "Merlot Fights Back" dinner on Friday, Feb. 16, in the Faculty Club on campus.

Pickett, best known for "Sideways", is an accomplished editor, director and author of screenplays, including "California Without End," "From Hollywood to Deadwood," and "My Mother Dreams the Satan's Disciples in New York."

In the hit film, two friends embark on a road trip through California's wine country. Miles wants to give his friend a nice sendoff before married life, while Jack simply wants to have a fling beforehand. As they're both nearing middle age with not much to show for it, the two explore the vineyards while ultimately searching for their identities.

The Faculty Club dinner's theme, suggested by Pickett, is a wry reference to disparaging remarks about merlot in "Sideways" - remarks that apparently had a "negative effect" on merlot sales at the time. The special dinner will, therefore, feature a variety of superior California merlots.

Sally Ashburn, a president of the Faculty Club board, said that Pickett will speak "most humorously" on the perils of success. "He plans to present a somewhat autobiographical update on his life since the resounding success of 'Sideways,'" she said.

The event is open to the public (\$60 for Faculty Club members; \$75 for all others); make reservations by calling the Faculty Club at 858-534-0876.

Media Contact: Paul K. Mueller, 858-534-8564 Comment: Lynda Corey Claassen, 858-534-1272