

February 2015

# The Bluffs Food & Wine gazette

## Event Report:

Quinta do Noval's Traditional  
Field Harvester's Meal

## Inside

Recipe: Arroz de Pato

Wine Breathing

IWFS Rhône River Cruise  
Part 6: Avignon



A publication of the Council Bluffs Branch of the International Wine and Food Society

Cover Photo: View from the Quinta do Noval veranda.

Photo by Tom Murnan



## President's Comments

Dear Members,

After our January event of a *Quinta do Noval's Traditional Field Worker's Meal*, hosted by Tom & Mary Murnan, I decided to look for a locally available Portuguese wine, not an easy task. The wine I found was Caves Celhas, Cabeça de Toiro Reserva Red, 2010. It is rated 92 points by Wine Enthusiast. The winery, Caves Celhas, is north of Lisbon in the Ribatejo region (now called Do Tejo DOC). Ribatejo's appellations straddle the Tagus River.

This wine is a classic blend of Castelo and Touriga Nacional grapes. Castelaio – Touriga blends are found in several parts of Portugal, most notably in the country's south, where they produce powerful, full-bodied wines more typical of the traditional Portuguese style.

Castelao is a key red grape of southern Portuguese regions. It has fresh raspberry aromas and is capable of producing rich, ripe wines. They often lack the structure required for cellaring. For this reason Castelaio is often blended with either Touriga Nacional or Touriga Franca, or both. These two grapes are commonly found in the Tejo Region of Portugal.

Touriga Nacional is a dark-skinned grape variety that is widely believed to produce the finest red wines of Portugal. The variety is a key ingredient in both dry red wines and the fortified Port wines. Touriga Nacional displays bold dark-fruit flavors like hints of spice, leather and violet and like Cabernet Sauvignon has firm tannins and has potential for aging.

It is a vibrant and fruit-loaded wine with rich and ripe black fruit flavor and good tannins. It is best served at room temperature and like most red wines, decanted. This is a wine that would go well with roasted or grilled red meat.

This wine can be found at Costco for about \$20.00.

Enjoy!

*Bob Kossow*

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"Wine improves with age. The older I get, the better I like it."  
—Unknown Author

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A smooth wine, richly structured with tannins and blackberry flavors. The wood is already well integrated, giving a solid base for the concentrated fruit and spice. Named after the bullfighting tradition of the Tejo region, the wine should age for at least four years.





## Editor's Corner

Well, if you missed the Quinta do Noval's Traditional Field Harvester's event on Sunday January 18th, you missed a fabulous one. I think I can safely say that we had the only Portuguese meal in Omaha that night, and very likely, the mid-west. Omaha has so many good restaurants representing many nationalities (including Peruvian), but there's not a single Portuguese restaurant. Chef John Hattam was up to the challenge, however. Chefs love a challenge. It breaks the routine and lets them spread their creative wings. John started his career at the old French Café in the Old Market, worked his way up there, then ran the Durham Café at The Joslyn Art Museum before striking out on his own as a caterer. Replicating the lunch Mary and I had in Portugal, John added a few touches of his own, like the steak with Cabrales Cheese sauce, since this time it was not lunch but dinner. There were more than the usual good comments from diners. Read about it within.

One of the most popular courses at the Quinta do Noval event was Arroz de Pato. It was so flavorful, and the rice so moist, I asked for the recipe, which is printed herein. John substituted chouriço (Chorizo) sausage from the Quinta's bacon. I was not sorry, it was so good. John's sausage came from H. Olefson, a wholesaler in Omaha, which unfortunately does not sell retail.

John Fischer discusses wine breathing this month. To breathe or not to breathe, that is the question. John discusses when to breathe and the benefits of breathing. Read on!

We are nearing the end of our series on the international event put on by our own Stephen Hipple: The Rhône Cruise. This was truly a world class event with marvelous wine destinations and grand cuisine, as only the French put on, during the evenings. And don't forget the wines. They were also carefully selected by Mike Bittel. He has done a number of international events now. Be on the lookout for the 2016 cruise down the Danube that Steve is currently working on.

Bon Appétit et bon vin!

*Tom Murnan*



Photo courtesy of kugel.com

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"You know why fish are so thin? They eat fish."

—Jerry Seinfeld

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## Event Report: Quinta do Noval's Traditional Field Harvester's Meal

by Tom Murnan

Now for something completely different. I wanted to reproduce, as far as possible, one of the best lunches Mary and I had on our 2012 trip up the Douro River in Portugal: Quinta do Noval's Field Harvester's lunch. After a tour of the winery, a close up look at the lagars (small, shallow ~swimming pool like affairs where grapes are still tread by foot to crush the harvest) and a massive tasting of 13 still wines and ports, we were treated to lunch on the veranda. Sporting a world class view of the nearby rugged, descending valley, two ancient cedar trees dominated our patio. The wonderful lunch that followed was memorable enough to try in Omaha. And from the favorable comments I heard, as well as my own taste buds, I would say that Chef John Hattam did a superb job.

Quaffing wines from the Branch cellar (attention event producers: we're out of

Branch quaffers now) started things off. Three **Aperitivos**, or appetizers were served. Based on the raves for the **Croquetas de Batata com Açafrão Alioli**, the Potato Croquets with Saffron Aioli were a hit. Being potatoes, I was afraid of filling up too early, but I couldn't just eat one. Small, egg shaped and probably deep fried and very moist potatoes had a flavorful dipping sauce of saffron aioli to make them even better. The **Feijão Verde Frito** ( batter coated Deep Fried Green Beans) shared the same sauce. The third appetizer was **Alho Brindes com Acelga, Passas e Pinhões** (Garlic Toasts with Swiss Chard, Raisins, and Pine Nuts). Essentially a bruschetta, these were tasty as well.

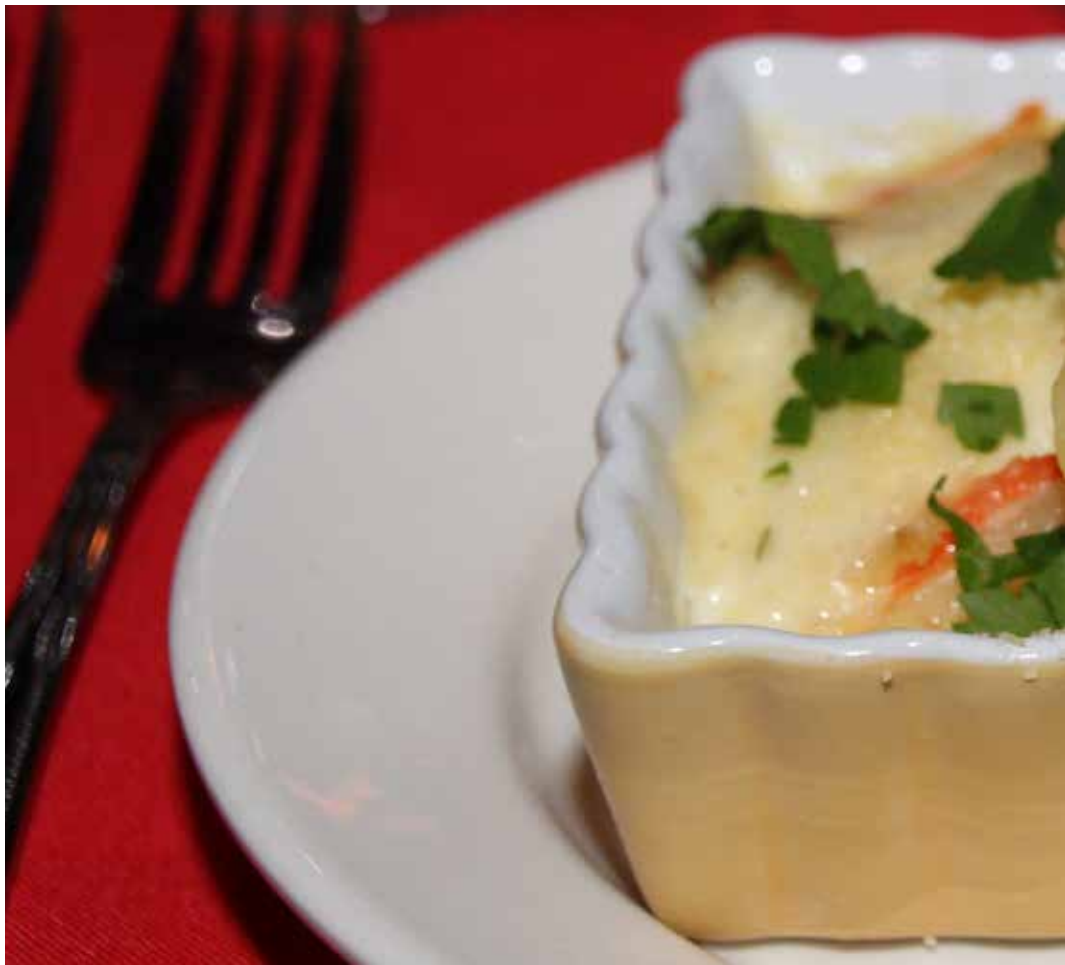
We then sat down for the rest of the meal. I had invited **Ed Jelinek** and guest **Adrian Bento** to my table because both of them have spent considerable time in

Portugal. Adrian is part Portuguese and part English and spent time in grade school in Portugal. Ed's father was a Commercial Attaché at the US Embassy to Portugal and spent time in Portugal when he was a teen, where he attended high school. I would occasionally ask them what they thought of the food.

We had 24 members and four guests. President Bob Kossow spoke to us and asked for an introduction of guests. The previously mentioned **Adrian Bento**, an Omaha Branch member, brought his date for the evening, **Liz Hoover**, and the Schierbrock's brought **Andrea Cardenzana**, a dentist that works with Tom, and her husband **Patrick Barnes**, a podiatrist. They were all most welcome.

An **Acorda de Tomate** or Tomato Bread Soup was first. This was one of my favorite courses at the Quinta: soft bread cubes, onion, tomato, olive oil, smoked paprika and garlic on this baked dish was topped with a soft boiled egg. Ed and Adrian were discussing how the tomatoes, so delicious in Portugal because they have the perfect growing climate, are different here. In Portugal, it gets cool at night. Like wine grapes, the coolness allows the fruit to rest at night. In the US mid west, many times the heat does not diminish that much at night. The tomatoes, while good, were intensely flavored here. I did not taste the poached runny egg yolk quite as much as at the Quinta. That, and the bread having crust, were the main differences. Despite these small differences, it was a successful and quite delicious dish. Our wine, the **2011 Delaforce Touriga Nacional Douro** was smooth and fruity, a great match to the strong flavors of the tomatoes. Made from 100% of Portugal's most famous grape variety, it sported good blackberry flavors and was matured for 12 months in oak casks.

The **Arroz de Pato**, or Rice and Duck with Chouriço was next. This was excellent, even though the Chef substituted sausage for the bacon I had at the Quinta. I had requests for the recipe which can be found later in this Gazette. My first impression was the chouriço sausage. (Chorizo is the Spanish spelling.) Chouriço get its distinctive smokiness and deep red color from dried smoked red peppers. The Chef said it came from H. Olefson, a wholesaler at Park Avenue and Harney in Omaha. My Portuguese table companions were



favorably impressed since it was actually like a Portuguese sausage. Instead of being all ground pork, it had chunks of meat in it. The duck was rather muted against the forcefulness of the piquant sausage. Roasted duck was braised in its own fat. The rice was very moist, inviting one to eat more and more. **The 2011 Churchill's "Estates" Douro** I thought was one of the best red wine matches of the evening. Structured and tannic, it reminded me of a fine Bordeaux, strong enough to compliment this hearty dish. We tend to be unfamiliar with Portuguese grape varieties. This wine consisted of 40% Touriga Nacional, 30% Touriga Franca and 30% Tinta Roriz.

The **Peixe** course was next: **Bacalhau com Natas** or Cod in cream. The dish contained, cheese, carrots, garlic and onion, and had a wonderfully clean cod flavor. Cream tends to bring out the best in Cod, and that was the case here. Bacalhau is the national dish in Portugal. It is ubiquitous in their restaurants. My Portuguese companions said that there's a saying in Portugal that if there are four Portuguese in one place, there will be

bacalhau. In the old days of sail, ships would go to Newfoundland to fish for cod, which was plentiful then. The fish would be filleted, salted and stacked in the hold until the crew got back to land, where it was salted again and allowed to dry further on the beach in the sun. This desiccated the fish and preserved them in the days before refrigeration. When it came time to eat it, the fish was rehydrated in water. My Portuguese tablemates' main critique was that there was too many potatoes and not enough cod. The **2013 Soalheiro Alvarinho Vinho Verde** was another winning vinous match, this time using the Alvarinho grape. This off-dry white wine was a good partner to the cream, better than if it was dry. Minerally and low in tannins it went very well with the cod.

The **Carne** was our entrée. Since our Quinta do Noval experience was lunch, this course was not served at the lodge. **Entrecoto ao Cabrales**, or Steak with Cabrales Cheese was a nicely charred, very beefy, thinly cut steak, that, although tasty, was not particularly Portuguese except for the sauce, according to my tablemates.



Garnished with small onions, cherry tomatoes sliced in half, and mushrooms, they provided a delicious earthy flavor. The steak was covered with white cheese sauce. This course had two wines. The **2011 Quinta do Crasto Reserva Old Vines Douro** was powerful, tannic and intense, the wines came from 70 year old vines. Sixty-five percent new oak barrels were used, and 35% used, which gave it a definite oaky flavor. I thought the Crasto was like a Cabernet Sauvignon. **2009 Quinta do Noval "Cedro do Noval"**, on the other hand, was more like a Pinot Noir. Named after the cedar trees on the veranda, the wine was made from 30% Touriga Nacional, 30% Touriga Franca, 10% Tinta Roriz and 30% Syrah. So the wine combines the traditional 'port' varieties with the innovation of the Syrah. The label itself sports a bit of the cedar branches from the veranda.

**Sobremesa** or dessert. The most spectacular wine match of the evening, in my opinion, was the **Quinta do Noval 10 Year Old Tawny Port** with the **Tarte de Amêndoa**, or Almond Tart. This was

a seamless match made in heaven. Rarely does a food match a wine so well. The bitterness of the ground almonds, and the sweetness of the simple sugar syrup in the dish matched the oxidized woodsy flavors, and the sweetness, of the Tawny Port perfectly. The wine exploded on the palate with the almonds. The whole was greater than the sum of its parts. Marvelous. How great it would be if all wine and food matches could be this dynamic. The dish was garnished with a purple orchid for color, adding a nice touch.

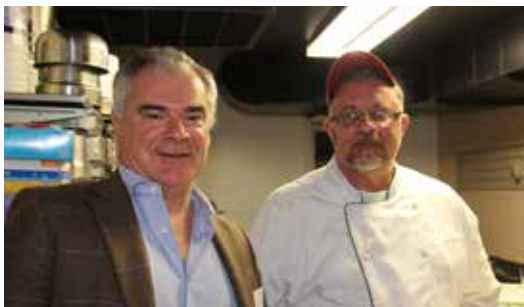
About this time, the staff brought out a birthday cupcake for **Duke Matz**, who would be celebrating his 50th birthday the next day. My two Portuguese table mates then proceeded to sing Happy Birthday in Portuguese!

The **Queijo** or cheese plate was our final course of the evening and featured **Serra da Estrella**, a sheep's cheese. The Chef had a little trouble finding it as it suddenly became scarce in the USA. This was garnished by blackberries and a quince preserve. A somewhat mild cheese, it ranges from a hardened exterior to a soft interior when

very fresh. Our version was not that soft in the middle, but very nice otherwise. This was paired up with two Vintage Ports from the Quinta. We compared the **2003 Quinta do Noval Vintage Port** to the **2007 Quinta do Noval Vintage Port**. Both wines boasted scores in the mid 90's from multiple wine writers.

Deep black purple, the **2007** was complex, tasting of black fruits like blackberries and blueberries. It is still very young, so it had a bit of a grapy taste. I thought it had less tannin than its older stable mate, the **2003**. Again very dark purple in color, it was very sweet and had intense berry flavors and a hint of leather. The Serra da Estrella was a good cheese choice since it didn't overwhelm the ports like a blue cheese usually does.

Thanks to Chef John Hattam and his crew for a truly unusual experience. John has done Spanish dinners before, but not Portuguese. From all the favorable comments I heard, he was responsible for a great success.











### *Ingredients:*

1 5lb Duck with wing tips, feet and fat removed  
Salt and ground pepper to taste  
1 lemon halved  
½ lb chouriço (chorizo) sausage  
2 cups long-grained white rice  
2 Tablespoons olive oil  
2 cups chopped yellow onion  
1 large carrot peeled and grated  
½ lb presunto or prosciutto sliced ⅜ inch thick and coarsely chopped  
½ cup chicken stock, or as needed  
2 Tablespoons grated lemon zest  
2-3 Tablespoons unsalted butter, melted  
¼ cup chopped flat-leaf (Italian) parsley  
6 slices of oranges, cut into 4 pieces



### *Arroz de Pato*

Chef John Hattam

Preheat oven to 450°F

Prick duck all over with fork to allow the fat to drain. Sprinkle with salt and pepper and rub inside and out with the lemon halves. Place it on a rack, breast side up, and roast until tender, about an hour. Remove from the oven and let cool. Leave the oven set at 450°F. Remove meat from the bones, discard the skin, and tear the meat into bite-sized pieces or dice it. Set aside.

If using a fresh chouriço, prick the sausage with a fork in a few spots, place in a baking dish, and bake until cooked through, about 15 minutes. Remove from the oven and transfer to a cutting board. Remove some of the drippings. Let sausage cool and cut into one inch chunks. Set aside. Reduce oven temperature to 350°F. Meanwhile, bring saucepan three-fourths full of salted water to a boil. Add the rice and boil until just tender, about 10 minutes. Drain, rinse under cool water, drain again and set aside.

In a large frying pan over medium heat, warm the olive oil along with the reserved drippings. Add the onion and carrot and sauté until the onion is tender, about 10 minutes. Add the ham, sausage, rice, stock and lemon zest and cook until some of the liquid is absorbed, 5-8 minutes. Transfer the rice mixture to a baking dish. Top with the duck meat and drizzle with the melted butter.

Bake in oven until piping hot, 15-20 minutes. Remove from the heat and season with salt and pepper. Sprinkle with parsley and garnish with orange slices. Serve at once.

Serves 6

## Wine Breathing

by John Fischer



I am sure that you have heard the expression: “let the wine breathe.” Breathing is nothing more than exposing a wine to air. It is one of the least understood concepts involved in wine tasting. Wine is exposed to air from the moment that it is created, albeit in very limited amounts. This tiny exposure continues throughout the wine’s repose in bottle causing it to evolve and develop its unique character. Once the bottle is opened to large amounts of oxygen, the wine begins to breathe.

Most wines that are designed to be drunk when purchased improve the least from breathing. However, when a robust red wine is opened, especially before its time, aerating it may soften its rough, tannic edges, increase its complexity, and enrich its aromas.

Tannins are the principal substance affected by oxidation (breathing). They give wine the rough scabrous feel of astringency and cover over much of its flavors. Breathing decreases the number and astringency of tannins, which softens the wine and uncovers its bevy of scents and flavors. The change in its flavor profile can be dramatic. What’s more, oxygen also reacts with a wide variety of other compounds found in wine causing it to create new and exotic flavors.

The practice of simply opening a bottle to let it breathe is practically useless as the surface area in the neck of a bottle is so

small. Decanting the bottle is an efficient method for aerating a wine, but most people find this to be too much of a bother. The process of simply pouring the wine into a glass, giving it a few swirls, and letting it rest a bit before drinking is perhaps just as effective as decanting. There are also several different aerating devices, many of which can be quite effective.

One should be very careful when dealing with old wines. Prolonged exposure to air can be ruinous to old wines, even when the surface area of exposure is small. They have a tendency to give their all shortly after opening and then rapidly decline. It is best to serve old wines immediately after opening, and let them aerate in the glass while sipping. On occasion one can see the appearance of an old wine change while drinking— gradually picking up brown tones and losing its brilliance.

White wines improve little from breathing; however, letting a white wine rest in the glass before drinking can allow some noxious substances that may be

present (usually sulfur compounds that develop during the wine making process) to blow off. Nevertheless, several white wines, such as some of the white Burgundies and Chenin Blanc based wines can improve in bottle. This improvement is usually the result of decreasing acidity that naturally occurs as a wine ages.

There are some individuals that do not agree with the idea that wine improves from breathing stating that the perceived improvement is the result of the euphoria derived from alcohol. I do not agree with this position. People who sip and spit witness the evolution of a wine from breathing.



## IWFS Rhône River Cruise Part 6: Avignon

by om Murnan

Photos by King Lee

When last we met, we concentrated on a side trip that Jill Panzer was able to take to the Institut Paul Bocuse when the SS Catherine was in Lyon on June 10th. But now, it is Friday, June 13th, 2014 and the ship has docked at Avignon. Besides a lecture in the Van Gough lounge on, who else, Arle's most famous citizen, the Troubled Destiny of Vincent Van Gough, the day's activities included a walking tour of the Papal Palace and the Pont d'Avignon. Other choices for the afternoon included a tour of the Pont du Gard Aqueduct or Kayaking on the Gardon River. The ship left for Tarascon after the sightseers debarked for Arles.

Many members enjoyed just walking throughout Avignon and a tour of the Papal Palace. In Roman times, Avignon was known as Arvino. When the empire declined, the city was taken over by the Burgundians and the Franks. It is most famous for the Avignon Papacy, which stretched from 1309 to 1377. Sometimes called the Babylonian Captivity of the Papacy, there was a conflict between the Pope and the Holy Roman Emperor as to who







was the leader of Christendom: the secular or the religious. In 1305, the conclave of Cardinals elected the former Bishop of Bordeaux, Clement the V, as Pope. He never went to Rome. Rather, in 1309, he moved the Papal court to Avignon. Seven Popes reigned at Avignon for 67 years, increasingly coming under the influence of the French king. Finally, in 1377, Gregory XI moved the Papal court back to Rome. This was not the end of the Avignon Papacy, however, as two years later, when Gregory XI died, a series of Anti-Popes began, some of whom resided at Avignon until 1403. The schism was finally healed in 1417 at the Council of Constance. During all this time of controversy, Italian artists made Avignon a center of the arts. The Papal Palace is still standing, unlike the ruins of the summer palace at Châteauneuf-du-Pape, which was destroyed by the Germans during World War II.

The Pont Bénézet is the most famous bridge in France, immortalized in a

children's nursery rhyme called "Sur le Pont d'Avignon." The chorus goes like this:

On the bridge of Avignon  
We all dance there,  
we all dance there  
On the bridge of Avignon  
We all dance there in a ring

Built between 1177 and 1185, the monk Bénézet wanted to span the Rhône River at any cost. The bridge was subsequently partially washed away in a flood during 1668. Now only four of the twenty-two arches remain. The chapel of St. Nicholas sits on the second pier of the bridge. The bridge has been classified as a World Heritage Site.

An optional afternoon excursion to the Roman Aqueduct and kayaking was available. Known as the Pont du Gard in French, this is a Roman Aqueduct built before the Christian era to cross the Gardon

River. It carries water to the city of Nîmes. 160 feet high, and 21 feet at its widest, it has three levels of arches. It is one of France's most popular tourist attractions. The aqueduct was also declared a World Heritage Site. The Kayaking adventure was done on the river below the aqueduct.

Back on the ship, it was the evening for the Gala Dîner. Tonight, the Champagne Reception featured the 2000 Pol Roger Winston Churchill Brut. Speeches from Stephen Hipple, BGA Governor Andrew Jones, Mile Bittel, and BGA Governor Sherry Knott. This was Sherry's last trip.

The captain's Farewell Dinner began with appetizers: a medley of chicken galantine, thin sliced cured ham, Irish smoked salmon and sides like kumquat chutney. Chicken soup came next. Both courses were paired with a 2011 Chassagne Montrachet 1er Cru Morgeot Domaine Jourd from Burgundy. The Hot appetizer was a Broiled Lobster Tail with Champagne Beurre Blanc Sauce. The 2011 Hermitage

Blanc Les Dionnieres from Fayolle was the white wine selected. The Entrée was a Châteaubriand with Sauce Béarnaise and a Port reduction sauce served with baby vegetables and Duchess potatoes. A 2007 Corton Les Hautes Mourotes Grand Cru from Dom. Thibault de Planiol was the high end Burgundy. Dessert consisted of a cheese selection, and a trilogy of sweet pastries: a Chocolate Macaroon, a Raspberry Éclair, and a Mirabelle sorbet. The 2011 Château Puech Haut Clos du Pic Saint Loup from the Languedoc was the cheese wine, and a 20 year old white Anderson Porto Blanc went with the pastries.


Next time we conclude our tour with a stop in Arles, the home of Vincent Van Gough.


*Historical Source: Wikipedia, Google. Additional Sources: Mark Lazar's article in the Autumn issue of Wine Food & Friends; the SS Catherine Daily Program.*




# Upcoming Council Bluffs Branch Events

Mark Your Calendars!

 **March 1, 2015**  
Omaha Country Club  
Irish theme replete with Irish dancers  
More details to follow.  
Producers: Jill Panzer and Bill Clark

 **April 12, 2015**  
Cheese & wine pairing.  
V. Mertz  
Producers: Diane Hayes and Patti Hipple

 **May 3, 2015**  
Twisted Cork Bistro, which just received a fabulous review  
in the World Herald.  
Producers: Jill and Joe Goldstein, Stacie and Duke Matz

## Hosting an event?

Let us know when, where and a little bit  
about what's going on!

We would love to include YOUR event on the calendar!  
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in hosting an IWFS event.

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