

The Bluffs Food and Wine Gazette



A publication of the Council Bluffs Branch of the IW&FS

March 2010 Issue #4



A message from the President

I would like to start by thanking you for giving me the opportunity to serve as President this year. We're off to a wonderful start!

We welcome six new members; Art and Andrea Hill, Julie Hruban, Sandy Lemke, and Frank and Laurie Sobetski. We look forward to sharing really great wine and meals with you. With great wine and a great meal in mind, the February 26th event, hosted by Steve and Pattie Hipple at Stokes Grill in the Old Market was "off the chart". The food was a masterpiece with each wine thoughtfully paired to enhance the flavor of each course. The pairing that caught me by surprise was the Pinot Noir with the roasted hothouse tomato soup with crème fraiche. I'm not usually a tomato soup guy (unless it's served with a grilled cheese sandwich) but this is a combination I highly recommend. Debbie's favorite wavers between the veal cheeks and the chocolate pot a crème; both were perfectly paired to the wine served. Thank you Steve and Patti for hosting such a memorable meal.

Our next gathering is a low key mixer; for those interested, we are meeting Thursday, March 18th at 7:30 p.m. at **Cellar 19, 928 Valley View Drive, Council Bluffs (712-323-9463)**. Cellar 19 offers a variety of sandwiches, soups and a nice selection of wines, both by the bottle and the glass. The owner has graciously offered to waive the corking fee for wines purchased that night, we invite you to come, buy a bottle to drink and maybe share a glass or two among our members.

An event for April 17th is in the works, more details will be released soon.

As Benjamin Franklin said, “Wine makes daily living easier, less hurried, with fewer tensions and more tolerance”.

Here’s to a great glass of wine, living easier, less hurried with fewer tensions and surrounded by true friends.

David

**International Wine & Food Society,
Council Bluffs**

Schedule of Upcoming Events

Date	Theme	Event Producer
<i>March 18, 2010</i>	<i>Casual mixer</i>	<i>Dave & Deb Tritsch</i>
<i>April 17, 2010</i>	<i>To be announced</i>	

Wine Tasting Fundamentals—by *John Fischer*

We all know when we have tasted something exceptional, but often have little appreciation of what makes it so special. Most people never take the time to evaluate what causes a wine to be extraordinary.

Consider the experience of biting into a flawless, firm, fully ripe red apple. You smell the fruity aroma as your teeth dig into its flesh for the first bite. The morsel of apple crisply snaps free at the attack, and luscious flavors explode in the mouth. The fruit is tart, but not too tart, it’s sweet but not too sweet, and the luscious flavors persist in your mouth long after you have swallowed it. Everything is in perfect balance, and you wallow in the hedonism of Mother Nature’s perfection.

It is your sense of sight, smell, taste, and feel that take in the simple experience of biting into the apple. Your eye sees the beautifully formed, firm shiny red apple, your nose smells the aroma, your mouth feels the crisp snap as your teeth sink into its flesh, and your sense of taste perceives the perfect balance of its flavors.

What you experience in the above example is precisely analogous to the wine tasting experience. We use as many senses as we can to evaluate the quality of the wine. Each of the sensory attributes of a wine contributes to its overall quality.

The visual aspects of a wine are a window into its age, state of health, and overall quality. For example, the red/purple color of a young wine picks up brown tones and loses color intensity as it ages. Brilliance is a sign of health and cloudiness is a sign of deterioration. A good wine should have a good sheen and coruscate light.

A fully-matured red wine will have a narrow rim of brown tones at the upper outer rim of the glass. In “over-the-hill” wines, brown tones extend well down into the bowl of the glass. A lack of brilliance in a white wine or overt cloudiness is a sign of deterioration, and any sign of brown tones is an indication of spoilage.

There are three main characteristics found in all mature, high quality wines. I like to call these the ABC measures of quality: A for aftertaste, B for balance, and C for complexity. Complexity is a measure of the diversity of flavors that the wine possesses. A mature Cabernet Sauvignon might have flavors of black currants, cedar, berries, truffles, tobacco, smoke, eucalyptus, and licorice. The more flavors appreciated, the greater the complexity. Of course, you must be happy with the flavors that you are experiencing. If you taste burnt rubber, cheese, barnyard scents, or other such “off-flavors” the wine is kaput.

Balance is a word that plays on the adverb “too.” Balanced, fully-matured high quality wines are not too tart, too sweet, too tannic, too rich, too light, too heavy, and so on. In other words all of the wines attributes are in perfect harmony—everything is just right. The wine has no excesses or deficiencies in its make-up. Upsets in balance are a major cause for flaws in a wine’s character.

The after-taste (finish) of a wine is a measure of the duration that the wine’s flavors persist in the mouth after it has been swallowed. When you have a pleasurable sensation, the longer it lasts, the better you like it. In some very great wines, the after-taste will persist for a minute or more. On the average, a good finish should persist for at least 10 to 20 seconds.

After-taste is the heart and soul of a wine. Of all the measures of a wine’s worth, the finish is the most accurate indication of quality. After-taste encompasses both balance and complexity, because a wine will not have a pleasing finish unless of is also balanced and complex.

Now that you have all of this knowledge in hand, it is time to test your wine tasting abilities. Wine tasting is a premier social event. Invite some friends over and have each of them bring a bottle of good wine. The Australians make good wines at reasonable prices, so you might try a Shiraz, Cabernet, or Shiraz Cabernet. You will also need some good quality glasses. Choose glasses that are thin lip and without a rolled edge. Riedel is known for their fine stemware and is highly recommended, but there are also less expensive good quality stemware available.

Make sure that you have at least one high quality wine. You will learn very little drinking the real low-end stuff. I would recommend a wine like Penfolds Koonunga Hill Shiraz Cabernet 2006 (Australia). It’s is a little young yet but is inexpensive, readily available, and highly rated. Check out the wines aroma, balance, flavors, and finish. Discuss the wine among yourselves. As a group, you’ll be surprised at the number of different flavors discernable. Your newly acquired wine tasting skills will provide you with many hours of enjoyment; what’s more, wine in moderation is a very healthy beverage.

Officers

President: *David Tritsch*
Vice President: *Patti Hipple*
Membership Chairman: *Diane Forristall*
Secretary: *Suzanne Kossow*
Wine Chairman: *John Fischer*

