



FEBRUARY 2023

# The Bluffs Food & Wine *gazette*

Surprising things to know about Malbec  
Upcoming Events

## What's New

For our holiday party, we had a joint event with the Omaha Branch. Rather than reprise the same story in both gazettes, especially since most CB members who attended are also members in the Omaha Branch, I thought I would pass along some interesting facts about Malbec that I came across.

But first, a few words about that event. IWFS Chairman of the Americas Zone, Steve Hipple, is one who believes in acknowledging those who donate their time and sometimes treasure to promote their Branch. The Society does this through its hierarchy of medals. The Americas Zone has the Silver and Gold medals, recognizable from the standard red and gold medal given upon joining. The Americas medals are round, with silver or gold lettering depending on which was awarded. The next step up is a rather large one. Ten years of continuous service is required. These are the André Simon series of Bronze, Silver and Gold. The Silver and Gold are only awarded if you are in the upper levels of the IWFS bureaucracy. Otherwise, the Bronze is as high as you can go.



Mike Wilke and Dave Thrasher were awarded the Americas Silver Medal under the Council Bluffs Branch, even though both are VP and President of both branches. Your humble scribe and Duke Matz were awarded the André Simon Bronze under the Omaha Branch. Speaking only for myself, I was humbled in being awarded this honor. I have always been pleased to work for you, providing wine and food education through the gazettes. Thank you for the honor.

---

My weight is perfect for my height.

- Which varies

---

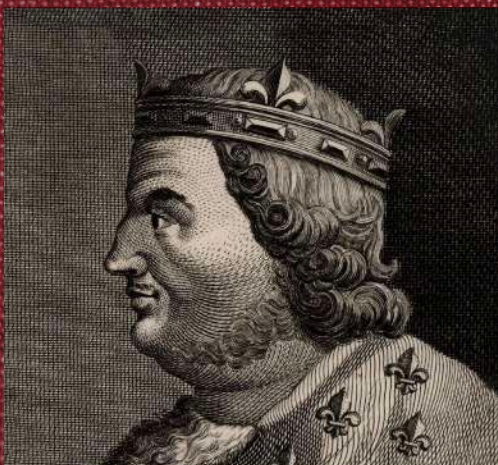




Queen Eleanor of Aquitaine



King Henry II of England



Louis VI King of France



King Francis I

# Surprising things to know about Malbec

Written by Tom Murnan

Malbec is one of the 5 varietals put in a Bordeaux blend, the others are Merlot, Cabernets Sauvignon and Franc, and Petit Verdot. It has a two thousand year old history. We first hear about it when Roman occupied Gallia (Gaul). They identified it as the grape of the village of Cahors. Skip forward to Eleanor of Aquitaine (1122 to 1204), who was first married to two kings of different countries: Louis VII of France, then to Henry II of England. Eleanor loved Malbec and used it in both courts. Three centuries later, Malbec surfaces again as the favorite wine of King Francis I who reigned from 1515 to 1547. He called Malbec the plant of the king, and even had it planted in Burgundy which is associated with Pinot Noir. After Francis I died, Malbec went to Bordeaux. It was considered essential to the wine blend because Malbec softened the tannins of the Cabernet Sauvignon. Between 10 (e.g., Pauillac) to 60 percent (e.g., St Emilion) might be added. It also provided a dark color to the wine.

When phylloxera devastated the vineyards of Europe in the 1860s, Malbec was replaced, mostly because the French were worried about global cooling. It just takes a few cool days, and the yields of Malbec would go way down. They substituted Cabernet Sauvignon and Merlot, which ripen earlier. So Malbec almost disappeared in France. But luckily, in 1852, before phylloxera, Malbec had been introduced to Argentina, because it grew better than anything else there, and made the best wine. So Argentina became the home of Malbec. Meantime, in France, Malbec was replaced by a Malbec relative called Côt. These have long bunches of grapes. Argentina now has a diversity of Malbec of older genetic material, all of which came from France. In addition, it is planted on its own rootstock. There is no cure to phylloxera, but it was discovered that when vitis vinifera (premium wine grapes) was grafted to American wild grape rootstock, it was resistant to the root louse. But in certain areas of the world, there is no phylloxera because of the soil or climate. So now Argentina's Malbec is more like the old world of thousands of years ago than the modern world.

I have attached an interesting link from Laura Catena, whose family owns Bodega Catena Zapata in Argentina.

[https://youtu.be/ULbp\\_UhWXII](https://youtu.be/ULbp_UhWXII)







# UPCOMING COUNCIL BLUFFS BRANCH EVENTS

FEB  
**25**

## **A PERFECT VALENTINE**

Spencer's for Steaks and Chops  
Perfect Matches of food & wine  
Joint event with the Omaha Branch  
Event Producers: Michelle & Hasan Hyder

---

MAR  
**TBD**

**TBD**  
TBD  
TBD

---

APR  
**TBD**

**TBD**  
TBD  
TBD

---

MAY  
**TBD**

**TBD**  
TBD  
Producers: Jason Sullivan & Bob Kossow

---

JUN  
**TBD**

## **AU COURANT REGIONAL KITCHEN**

Burgundy vs. Pinot Noir  
Joint event with the Omaha Branch  
Producer: Tom Murnan

### **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!

Email details to: [iwfs.councilbluffs@yahoo.com](mailto:iwfs.councilbluffs@yahoo.com)