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Event Report:

Dual Chardonnay & Merlot Tasting at Sand Point
Excerpt from Pearl of the Côte by Allen Meadows
Upcoming Events.

Event Report: Dual Chardonnay & Merlot Tasting at Sand Point

— Story by Tom Murnan, Photos by Tom Murnan —

Dave Thrasher has a knack for coming up with great wine themes for his events. This time we had two different tastings in one event. Chardonnay is a natural for New England lobster. This tied in well with Sand Point's culinary emphasis on New England. And the Keenan Mailbox Reserve red wine vertical was just because Dave wanted us to explore the aging process spanning 2006 to 2019. I was excited to try everything, the wines and New England cuisine. None of the wines were served blind, allowing us to concentrate more on the flavors for the Chardonnay and the aging process for the Merlot.



Two courses were served with the 3 Chardonnays: New England Clam Chowder and Maine Lobster Roll Slider. The Ramey Fort Ross Seaview Chardonnay 2016 from the Sonoma Coast had 30% new oak and 100% malolactic fermentation. The Sandhi Santa Rita Hills Chardonnay 2021 was structured and had a higher acidity, while the Vasse Felix Chardonnay 2020 from Margaret River was spare, with little oak. My fav was the Ramey, but actually, all three were good choices.

I assessed the Keenan Mailboxes as follows. **2019** was quite young, forward and a bit disjointed, and too primal at this stage. But it showed great promise as it was really good already. The **2014** had mild tannins and was more integrated than the 2019. The **2010** was delicious now. But my favorite was the **2006**. The complex flavors were coming out, with mature, soft tannins. And it was by no means tired or having one foot in the grave. I felt it could last another 10 years, but it was nearing its peak in a few years. All the Merlots went well with the Marinated grilled Flank Steak with Dijon Mustard sauce. We rarely ever have a Beerenauslese sweet Riesling for dessert, but this one was from Austria, even rarer than a German sticky.

Many thanks to Dave & Tabitha Thrasher and the staff at Sand Point for a very enjoyable evening. Since the restaurant was literally right next door to **Omaha Wine Company**, Michelle and Hasan Hyder invited us to cap the evening off with high end wines from their bins, including a private label OWC made from a barrel of 2021 Napa Cabernet Sauvignon they purchased at the winery. Thank You Hyderys for this pleasant surprise!

I just asked myself if I'm crazy, and "We all said NO."

Excerpt from The Pearl of the Côte by Allen Meadows

Story by Tom Murnan

Allen Meadows (AM) wrote, in 2010, a comprehensive book on the great wines of Vosne-Romanée named *The Pearl of the Côte*. Unfortunately it is out of print now, but still available on Amazon and E-Bay. If you love Burgundy, it is certainly worth investing in the work. One of the most interesting chapters covered the 2007 penultimate tasting of Romanée-Conti (RC) wines, long considered the best wine in the best appellation of Burgundy. The tasting took 4 years to prepare, and the wines were drawn from the cellars of Michael Rockefeller, Douglas Barzelay, and AM. Per Se, a Thomas Keller (think French Laundry) restaurant in New York, was the chosen venue. 18 guests participated, Aubert de Villaine, co-director and owner of RC, being deemed an essential guest.

For three days in April 2007, there were three dinners and two afternoon events celebrating the most expensive wine on earth, along with high end Champagne, RC Montrachet, and Château d'Yquem. Space prevents describing any but the last dinner, but 50 bottles of RC were used in all. Grilled Abalone Mushrooms accompanied the 1972, 1971, 1966 and 1969 RC. Suprême de Poularde highlighted the 1945, 1943 and 1942 RC. The 1945 was highly anticipated as it had been given a perfect 100 points by AM in the past, and this tasting did not disappoint. It was the highlight of the event. Only 608 bottles were made as the old vines had lost their vigor. Aubert called it "the lost voice of Romanée-Conti." By this he meant after the harvest, the old vines were torn out and replanted on American root stock, breaking the connection between vines from Medieval times. Whole Roasted Waygu Sirloin was served with 1928 and two bottlings of the 1929. A salad of Petite Mâche and Black Truffles were paired with the 1915, 1875, and 1870. The evening ended with 1896 Château d'Yquem. Wine from other tastings included the fabulous 1923, 1928, 1921, 1915 (one of the top 5 vintages of the 20th century) and 1911.

This thumbnail sketch does not do justice to the prose and praise heaped upon RC by the author. I would highly recommend getting a copy of *The Pearl of the Côte* for the full impact of this historic tasting.



Tom Murnan with Allen Meadows





UPCOMING OMAHA METRO EVENTS

MAR
21

RED WINE COLOR BLIND TASTING

Omaha Field Club

Event Producers: Amanda Harrington
& John Matthews

APR
14

TOUR DE FRANCE, 8 REGIONS, 11 WINES

Le Voltaire

Event Produces: Patti & Steve Hipple

MAY
21

MOOTZ PIZZA

**Wood Fired Pizza & Good Wine
in a Casual Event**

Event Produces: Brent Rasmussen & Susan Roth

JUN
12

BURGUNDY VS. PINOT NOIR

Au Courant

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: ivfs.councilbluffs@yahoo.com