

APRIL 2024



The Omaha Metro *Food & Wine* *gazette*

Event Report:

Background to our New Orleans Mardi Gras dinner.

Upcoming Events.

What's New

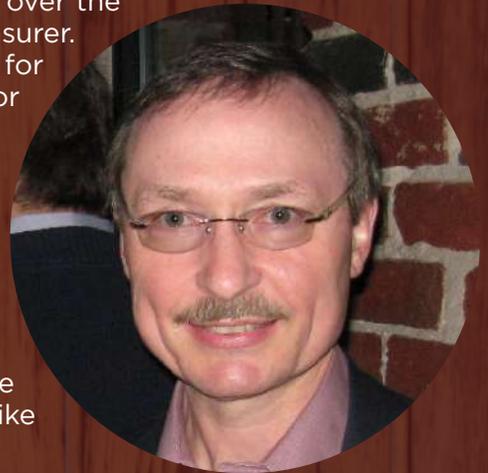
Our new 2024 Executive Board consists of Mike Wilke, President, and Michelle Hyder, Vice President & Secretary. Dave Thrasher is our Wine Cellar Master, taking over from Patti Hipple. Susan Rauth now runs Membership, and Brent Rasmussen has taken over the Treasurer duties. Diane Forristall used to do both Membership and Treasurer. Jason Sullivan continues as our Webmaster, as does John Matthews for the E-Communications post. I will continue on as your Gazette editor and photographer.

Starting with the May issue, we will explore what happened on the New Orleans Great Wine Weekend, March 14 through the 16th. The home of Creole and Cajun cuisine, this should be interesting, especially the wine pairings. Eight couples from the Omaha area attended.

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You can also access the Branch Recipe file by clicking:

https://issuu.com/omahapublications/docs/iwfs_cb_council_bluffs_recipes.



“Do something every day that you don’t want to do; this is the golden rule for acquiring the habit of doing your duty without pain.”

- MARK TWAIN

Event Report: Background to our New Orleans Mardi Gras dinner

Written by Tom Murnan, Photos by Tom Murnan

Rather than relate an account of the event, I thought a quick review of New Orleans' Mardi Gras traditions would be fun. In the Catholic Church, Mardi Gras (Fat Tuesday), is the day before Ash Wednesday and a day of festival before the rigors and fasting of Lent. Mardi Gras was a French tradition since Louisiana was a French colony that escaped Canada after the English conquered Quebec. The French settlers moved south to Louisiana, which was under French control, rather than pledge loyalty to Britain. They were called Acadians. The first Mardi Gras in Louisiana was in 1699. Rather than get into all the traditions of parades, floats, costumes, krewes (social clubs) and "throws" (beads, trinkets, etc. thrown from the floats), we will just focus on New Orleans cuisine.

The first thing to know is that there are two culinary traditions: Cajun and Creole. Acadians, or Cajuns for short, learned to live off the swamps and land. They were poor and used whatever food they had on hand, many times one pot dinners. Creoles were city dwellers from New Orleans, and their recipes were more complex. Cajuns are from the rural parts of Louisiana. Creole food uses tomatoes while Cajun does not. Cajun typically uses more spices, like cayenne pepper and paprika.

Traditional New Orleans' Mardi Gras food includes Gumbo, a stew made with seafood or meat, vegetables, and a roux-based sauce. Jambalaya, a rice dish with meat and vegetables, is also a favorite. Crawfish is a beloved ingredient in many Mardi Gras dishes, such as étouffée, which is a thick stew made with crawfish, onions, and a roux-based sauce. Other Mardi Gras treats include Beignets, shrimp Po'boys (sandwich), and the Louisiana comfort food dish, red beans and rice.

We had Muffaletta, a sandwich invented in 1906 by Sicilian immigrant Lupo Salvatore who opened Central Grocery and noticed other Italians were buying the ingredients to make a sandwich, but making a mess in the assembly process. So he put Mortadella, ham, Genoa salami, Provolone and Mozzarella cheeses, olive dressing with chopped black and green olives, sandwiched between great Italian bread, all together for his customers.

We also tried Blackened Redfish, made famous in 1970 by New Orleans chef Paul Prudhomme. Using a combination of Cajun and Creole spice mix of thyme, oregano, paprika, cayenne, onion powder, garlic powder, sugar, salt and pepper, he coated a then trash fish known as red drum or redfish. It was a national culinary sensation and almost caused the redfish to go extinct.

For dessert we had King Cake, a sweet pastry, twisted into a ring shape, that is decorated with colorful icing and sprinkled with sugar in the colors of Mardi Gras: purple for justice, green for faith, and gold for power. The king cake, also known as a three kings cake, is a cake associated in many countries with Epiphany or 12th Night, where the Magi found the baby Jesus using the light of a star to guide them. Like the Biblical story, the "search for the baby" adds excitement, as each person waits to see in which slice of cake the tiny baby trinket will be discovered. While custom holds that the person who "finds" the baby will be rewarded with "good luck," that person is also traditionally responsible for bringing the King Cake to the next party or gathering.





UPCOMING OMAHA METRO EVENTS

APR
14

**TOUR DE FRANCE, 8
REGIONS, 11 WINES.**

Le Voltaire.

Event Produces: Patti & Steve Hipple.

MAY
21

**WOOD FIRED PIZZA AND GOOD
WINE IN A CASUAL EVENT.**

Mootz Pizza.

Event Produces: Brent Rasmussen & Susan Rauth

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