

JANUARY 2020

The Bluffs **Food & Wine** *gazette*

Event Report:

**PASO ROBLES, A RISING
CALIFORNIA WINE STAR**



ALSO INSIDE:

The International Wine and & Food Society IWFS Americas, Inc. 2019 Douro River Cruise Part 6 June 12, 2019

Recipe: Le Bouillon's Sam Zaccone's Charred Corn Salad with Rock Shrimp



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



courtesy of hugel.com

PRESIDENT'S COMMENTS



Hello All,

I just want to say thanks to everyone for a great two years. Hope everybody has a great holiday season, and hope to see you at an event soon. 🍷

Cheers,

Joe Goldstein

Cover Photo: Old truck at Calcareous Vineyard, Paso Robles, CA. Photo by Tom Murnan September 2019.



EDITOR'S

CORNER

Joe Goldstein has completed his two year stint as President. Joe helped consolidate all the procedures and by-laws of the Branch, kept the Board Meetings on track and kept us laughing with his wry sense of humor. Thanks for the service, Joe! Connie Martin will be our incoming President. Connie will be communicating with our members starting with next month's Gazette.

If you ever get the chance to explore Paso Robles, don't hesitate to do so. You will find a rugged vineyard area, enhanced by oak and almond trees, that specializes in Zinfandel and Rhône varieties like Mourvedre, Grenache and Syrah. But they also raise Bordeaux varieties like Merlot and Cabernet Sauvignon. Freshly returned from a September tour, I found a lot of improvements since last being there in 2007. For our November event at Le Bouillon, I wanted the chance to show everyone how good the wines were by having a Paso themed event. I think everyone enjoyed the wines, and the food was good as always. Give it a read.

People at our table were impressed with the Charred Corn Salad with Rock Shrimp. Light and fresh, it would work expertly in the summer, wowing your guests. I asked Chef Sam Zacchone of Le Bouillon for the recipe, and he agreed to send it to us.

Wayne Markus is moving his IWFS Douro River Cruise narrative east, upriver towards Spain in Part 5 of our multi-part series. Taking the Uniworld river cruise ship Queen Isabel up the five locks of the Douro River, he writes of stopping at Croft's Quinta do Roêda for an educational tour. Every night there was a grand dinner in the ship's dining room. Portuguese wine expert, Richard Mayson was onboard for the entire cruise. Wayne includes his sharing of his knowledge of Port with a discussion of Port styles and nomenclature.

If you want to examine the photos of an event before it comes out in the Gazette, go to our website at IWFS.org, and click on The Bluffs Food & Wine Gazette & Photos. And yes, you can download photos from the site.

Enjoy! 🍷

Tom Murnan



SAVE MONEY BY
JUST BUYING BIGGER
PANTS INSTEAD OF
PAYING A ONE-YEAR
GYM MEMBERSHIP."

— ENVYDATROPIC

EVENT REPORT:

Paso Robles, a Rising California Wine Star

Story & Photos by Tom Murnan

After visiting Paso Robles for the second time since 2007, I was excited to share the areas wine wealth with our Council Bluffs Branch. Paso Robles, or as the locals say, Paso, is one of my favorite wine destinations. It is so laid back, and doesn't have the droves and hoards emptying out of the big cities to visit Paso like Napa and Sonoma. Yet it is a unique grape growing area, with calcareous soils, situated inland to get the heat, but still within the range of the cooling effect of the Pacific Ocean at night. Zinfandel is a major grape grown here, as well as the Rhône varieties like Grenache, Mourvèdre, Syrah, Marsanne, Roussanne and the like. We had 32 sign up, which included 4 intended guests (Stacey & Brooks Call, and Dianna & Robert Foster), one Connie Martin substitute (daughter-in-law Kathy Martin since Connie is still recovering from knee surgery), one husband substitute (Angie Podoll), and two no shows.

We started with a generous amount of appetizers. The **Asparagus Fritters drizzled with Lemon Aioli** had added a citrus sharpness and refreshing tone to the asparagus. The **Caponata Tartlet** with Pancetta seemed to be composed of tomato, green pepper, vinegar and eggplant in a (somewhat tough) mini tart shell. The **Pork Meatballs with Soy glaze** were one of my favorites. Finally, we were treated to a **Cobb Style Tartine**.

What 's a tartine, you may ask? Tartine refers to an open faced French sandwich which can have any ingredients on top. To me, it looked more like a bruschetta. Originally it was a sliced piece of baguette, spread with butter, jam, cheese, pâté, etc. Tartine means to spread in French. Today tartine means an open faced sandwich (while a proper sandwich has a top and a bottom). A baguette slice was toasted and spread with avocado, and topped with bacon, chicken, and small chunks of blue cheese. Yum. We had a **Domaine de la Fruitière Muscadet Sèvre-et-Maine Sur Lie Gneiss de Bel Abord 2016** white

and two reds: the **Angeline Merlot 2017** and a **Pinot Project Pinot Noir 2017**.

Once at the table, we began with a **Charred Corn Salad with Rock Shrimp, Onion, Avocado and Cilantro**. Served on a scallop shell, it had small shrimp perfectly cooked and not at all rubbery, diced avocado, and bright, light sweet corn. The ensemble was not heavy, rather quite refreshing. Everyone at my table loved it, so I got Chef Sam Zaccane to give us the recipe. There was a menu substitution for the next white wine. **Tablas Creek Patelin Blanc 2017**, which was substituted for the **Roussanne 2015**, was served instead. No one informed me that a switch had been made. The restaurant apologized to me about the substitution. Both wines have Roussanne in them, but the 2015 would have been 100% Roussanne. Nevertheless, the Patelin did a fine job. A check of the web site gave it similar wine ratings.

The **Deuxième Course** found us with **Bucatini alle Vongole**. Bucatini is a thick spaghetti shaped pasta with a hole down the middle of it. Buco means hole in Italian, and vongole clams, so we were having pasta and clams. It sported a pan sauce of slow cooked tomatoes, roasted garlic and black pepper. We had two **Cabernet Sauvignons** to compare. Yes, Paso Robles raises **Cabernet Sauvignon** and other **Bordeaux** varieties like **Merlot** and **Cab Franc**. The **San Simeon Estate Cabernet Sauvignon 2015** has nothing to do with San Simeon, otherwise known as Hearst's Castle, which does have a small winery. Founded in 1917 by the Riboldi family, their headquarters is in, of all places, downtown Los Angeles. But they do have a vineyard presence in Paso. Nicely balanced with moderate intensity, it seemed to bring out the acidity in the tomato sauce in the dish. **Daou Cabernet Sauvignon 2017** is a different story. Almost huge in intensity and ripeness compared to the San Simeon, it's 14.5% alcohol content foreshadows what a large presence this wine is. It reminds me of a Napa Valley Cab with its black current flavors and vanilla oak. Quite

nice and reasonably priced. Daou sports one of the nicest tasting rooms in the Paso area, situated at 2,200 feet. It has a stunning view of the valley below.

The **Troisième Course** was next. **Beef Cheek Empanada** was served with a side bowl of **Tomatillo Gazpacho**. Chopped beef cheek was encased in puff pastry and had a deeply beefy taste. The meat was kind of rattling around inside the expanded puff pastry shell. I wish there was more of it. I was not a fan of the **Gazpacho**. I felt it was a jarring contrast with our two **Zinfandels**, but other people liked it. I admit I am not a big tomatillo fan.

Larry Turley founded his winery specializing in **Zinfandel** at the bottom of **Vineyard Drive** in Paso Robles in 1993, after giving up his profession as an emergency room physician. He has been extraordinarily successful in raising **Zinfandel** but also does **Petite Sirah** and has recently started on **Cabernet Sauvignon**. We had the **Old Vine Zinfandel** bottling to compare with the **Dusi Ranch Zinfandel**, both from 2017. Dusi comes from Paso Robles, while Old Vines comes from all over California. The Old Vines has aged **Zinfandel** parcels as old as 125 years. I found it complex and a bit earthy. It is one of the least expensive zins in the Turley portfolio after **Juvenile**. The Dusi was nicely balanced, brighter in fruit than the Old Vines. Turley makes their zins rich, rounded and ripe, just the way I like them. Both did a good job with the beef cheeks, and withstood the gazpacho to some extent. It was not, however, a marriage made in heaven with the tomatillo.

Moving on to the **pièce de résistance**, **Roasted Rack of Lamb** was served with **New Potatoes**, **Fresh Herbs** and **Plum Sauce**. A garnish of **rosemary** and **sage** was tucked under the lamb. The meat was expertly cooked medium rare. Our main wines of the evening were served here: **Tablas Creek Esprit de Tablas 2015** was compared to the **Tablas Creek Panoplie 2015**. **Tablas Creek** is half owned by the prestigious **Château Beaucastel** in **Châteauneuf-du-Pape**, France, and half by the **Robert Haas** family. Robert was an American importer of **Beaucastel**. The two businesses came together to form **Tablas Creek**. The **Rhone** varietal cuttings for **Tablas** came imported directly from **Beaucastel** after a 3 year quarantine once in California. ▶







◀ The **Esprit** is the winery's signature red blend, always Mourvèdre forward. Its inspiration is the regular bottling of Beaucastel, which uses 13 varieties of grapes in their production. Besides a high percentage of Mourvèdre (dark red fruit, earth, spice and mid palate richness), our Esprit also contained Syrah for its density and dark fruit, Grenache (helps open up more closed in varieties) and Counois for purple fruit, sweet spice and acidity. The Panoplie (pronounced Pan-O-Plee) is a members only wine and their elite Mourvèdre based cuvée is modeled after Beaucastel's Hommage à Jacques Perrin, their top of the line cuvée. It comes from the top 5% of the harvest. Only 800 cases made.

I found the Esprit to be surprisingly drinkable and lush with fine tannins and blackberry flavors for a 4 year old wine. In the background for now, the Mourvèdre was waiting to emerge with more age. The Panoplie also had fine tannins and was approachable now. Cassis and raspberry flavors were noticeable. I would say the Panoplie was a bit deeper and earthier, and more complex than the Esprit, but only slightly.

We finished with an Apricot Bombe with Elderflower, Almond and Vanilla. Named after its spherical shape (a cannonball), a bombe is a traditional French dessert made of sherbet, ice cream or custard. Ours was the latter, a custard made rich by the addition of apricot. Almond bits adhered to the bottom rim. The **Château Tirecul la Gravière "Chateau" 2004** was selected to match, and a wonderful match it was. The dessert was bright, light, with lively acidity. There was a pastry crust bottom to provide crunch. The Tirecul, which hails from the Monbazillac region of South West France, was quite similar to a Sauternes with its use of Semillon and Sauvignon Blanc, but they also add Muscat. Both have botrytis, which gives it a honeyed taste.

Many thanks to the Le Bouillon and Howard Street Wine Merchant employees: **Alex Nelson** wine, **Tammi Hunter** mgr, **Katie Hefeli** assistant mgr, **David Amidon** server, **Sam Zacchone** chef, and **Paul Kulik** executive chef and owner. Also thanks for the wine commentary, Paul. It provides a lot of education for our members. 🍷

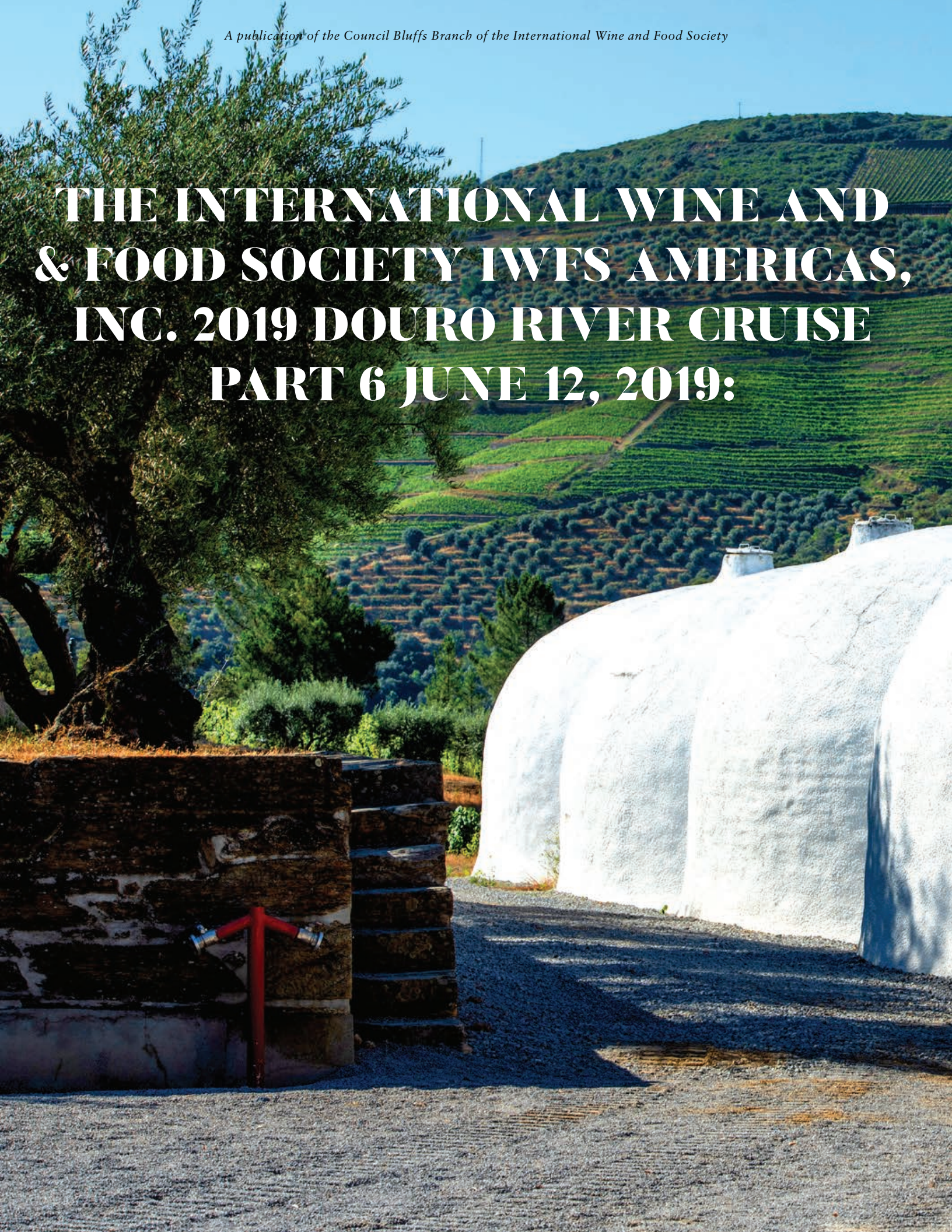








**THE INTERNATIONAL WINE AND
& FOOD SOCIETY IWFS AMERICAS,
INC. 2019 DOURO RIVER CRUISE
PART 6 JUNE 12, 2019:**



A large, white, rounded wine vat (fuder) is the central focus, situated in a vineyard. The vat is partially covered in a layer of white material, possibly a protective coating or a layer of dust. To the right, a stone wall with a rustic, irregular pattern is visible, featuring a small, dark, rectangular opening. The background shows rolling hills covered in rows of green grapevines under a clear blue sky. The ground in the foreground is a mix of gravel and dirt.

PINHÃO; CROFT'S QUINTA
DO ROÊDA; RECEPTION AND
DINNER ON BOARD WITH WINE
EXPERT RICHARD MAYSON;
OVERNIGHT VEGA DE TERRON

Story & Photos by Wayne Markus





We departed Pinhão for Croft's Quinta do Roêda where we visited a vineyard and tasted Croft wines. It was a very educational stop. In the afternoon we continued the cruise of the Douro Superiore. The vineyards were spectacular, the camera was clicking away.

Our visit to Croft's Quinta do Roêda was very special. Croft, founded in 1588, is the oldest firm still active today as a Port wine producer. A 430th anniversary port is available in their wine shop. Interesting old photographs from the Douro and wine making are on display. We were treated to see the famous Ginas, and had the best vineyard experience of the cruise with spectacular views. We watched workers pruning vines. The shapes and colors of grape leaves of different varieties were obvious. The entire process of making Port was explained. Croft averages three vintage Ports per decade, always announced on April 23, Saint George's day, when the wine is two years old. The pristine rectangular granite concrete lagares for human foot treading of grapes that are making a comeback for the best Ports were on display.

The Croft tasting included side-by-side Reserve Tawny Port and Croft Pink. The former is well fitted to a cold winter night and the latter to Summertime, chilled or on ice. Croft Pink was developed in 2008 and is a light ruby red rosé style port described by Croft as having ripe cherry and raspberry flavors with lovely nuances of honey and grapefruit.

Richard Mayson discussed the **types of Port** before dinner. The two basic types are wood-matured and bottle-matured. The official classification includes ruby, tawny, rosé and white comprising 80% of all Port. The remainder are special categories including tawny with indication of age (20-year tawny), reserve tawny, vintage, late-bottled vintage (LBV), white with an indication of age, colheita (dated tawny held at least 6 years), crusted, and garrafeira. Garrafeira is a rare port that is aged like a LBV (late bottled vintage), but then poured into glass demijohns to age further. This is a topic of its own and well described in his book "*Port and the Douro.*"

Of interest is that most tawny Port is washed out ruby with grape finings added for color and flavor. The real tawny is aged in small wood barrels for at least seven years for tawny reserve or longer with indication of age (10-, 20-, 30-, or 40-year-tawny). These might be served cold as "mouthwash" after a tasting of vintage Port. Richard prefers the 20-year taw-



nies. **Crusted Port**, vintage quality wines blended, but not from the same year, are popular in the UK. Single Quinta Port from non-vintage years and held for 10 or more years are great values according to Richard.

Responding to a question of **how long will an opened bottle keep?**, Tawny and Colheita aged in wood will resist oxidation and last up to a month in the refrigerator. Vintage and LBV, aged mostly in the bottle should be consumed the next day. Asked about the Coravin he said the sediment will plug it. Plus, he likes the ritual of decanting and using the sediment in gravy.

Richard presented the wines with dinner. The sparkling **Vértice Espumante non-vintage**, "**la methode Champenoise**" produced by a partnership of Vértice and Schramsberg of California is made of grapes from high altitude, as are most espumantes, to maintain the acid. They have been working with several varieties including Malvasia Fina, Rabigato, Viosinho, Códrega, Touriga Franca, Gouveio, Chardonnay, and Pinot Noir, the latter three as single varietal sparkling wines.

The two white dinner wines were **2018 Meandro Vinho Branco** from Quinta do Vale Meão in Douro Superior, a blend

of 60% Rabigato and 40% Arinto. This wine is proof that a good white wine can be made in hot weather. It was served with baked octopus fritters and tomato coulis. The other was **2017 Vinha Grand Branco Malvasia** by Sogrape with Salmon filet.

The red wines from Douro Superior were **2016 Quinta do Vale Meão** and **2016 Sogrape Quinta de Leda**. These were two very different wines, served with Black pork neck confit. Quinta do Vale Meão is legendary, in the 1950s they were producing first growth type wines. They brought ice in sawdust to keep it cool in the Lodge. These are fantastic age-worthy wines. Richard recently tasted a 1966 and it was fantastic. The Quinta de Leda was more elegant. Both are primarily Touriga Franca, Touriga Nacional, and Tinta Roriz (Tempranillo).

Ramos Pinto 20-year-old tawny was served with Sponge cake for dessert. This is a very serious Port made in the blending room, not the vineyard. Richard said you do not want vintage Port in the hot summer. The Portuguese will choose tawny in the hot summer. Do not treat tawny as a second-class citizen. It is very soft, elegant, suave, silky, fresh, lovely wine, consistently so. 🍷



Recipe

LE BOUILLON'S SAM ZACCONE'S **CHARRED CORN SALAD** with **ROCK SHRIMP**



COURT BOUILLON

- 1 1/2 cups water
- 1/2 cup white wine
- 1 lemon, juiced
- 1 onion, chopped
- 1/2 celery rib, chopped
- 1 garlic clove, chopped finely
- 1 teaspoon black peppercorns
- 4 to 5 sprigs fresh thyme
- 1 bay leaf

COURT BOUILLON PROCEDURE

Combine all ingredients in a saucepan and bring to a boil over high heat. Reduce the heat and simmer for 8 minutes. Strain or use chunky the first time, then strain through a fine mesh and either refrigerate for up to 3 days or freeze for up to 2 months. Either way, be sure to bring to a boil before reusing.

SALAD INGREDIENTS

- 2 Cobs Sweet Corn - charred on a grill, cut off cob
- 2 cups of Rock Shrimp - lightly blanched in a court Bouillon
- 1/4 cup pickled & diced Red Onion
- 1 - Avocado - small diced
- 1 - Romaine Heart - shredded

CILANTRO DRESSING

- 1/4 cup olive oil
- 1.5 Tablespoons Lime Juice
- Salt and Pepper to taste
- 1/4 cup Cilantro - finely chopped

PROCEDURE

- Step 1:** Mix all ingredients together except Romaine
- Step 2:** Cover and refrigerate for 1 - 4 hours
- Step 3:** Serve on small bed of Romaine

Enjoy!



Sam Zaccone
Chef de Cuisine
Le Bouillon

UPCOMING COUNCIL BLUFFS BRANCH EVENTS

Mark Your Calendars!

JAN
19



PASTA AMORE

Wild Game Feed

Producers:

Rhonda & Mike Wilke, Joe Goldstein

FEB
22



RAILCAR MODERN AMERICAN KITCHEN

Date Night

Producers: Connie & Gary Martin

MAR
15



DOLCE

Columbia Valley vs. Napa Valley
Weeknight Wines, Blind Tasting

Producers:

Tabitha & Dave Thrasher

APR
02



PLANK SEAFOOD PROVISIONS

Springtime at the Seashore

Producers:

Connie Martin & Joe Goldstein



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**



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The mission of the Council Bluffs Branch of the International Wine and Food Society is to develop a profound understanding and appreciation of both wine and the culinary arts and to enjoy this experience in the camaraderie of friends. Our task is to educate our membership about wine and to develop the skill of matching wine with food. We strive to drink high quality wines and to experience an eclectic array of foods prepared by the area's top chefs.

The International Wine & Food Society of London, England

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KEEP IN TOUCH!

Please notify Club Membership Chairman Diane Forristall at DIANE@FORRISTALL.US to let her know if you are interested in hosting an IWFS event.

To access past Gazettes and other features about our Branch, go to the international website following this link:

www.iwfs.org/americas/council-bluffs

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