

The Bluffs
Food & Wine

February 2013 gazette

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

President's Comments

Coming February 17th 2013 a Sinfully Zin Dinner



Just a short preview of what Zinfandels you will be drinking for our next International Wine & Food Society – Council Bluffs Branch dinner. The Zinfandel grape is actually the Italian grape Primitivo. California has been growing this grape since 1850. It was the most widely planted wine grape in California at that time, but no more. It can be made as either red Zinfandel or white Zinfandel. The best examples are made in red Zinfandel style. It is full bodied, high alcohol, with dark black fruit and spicy notes. Characteristics of this wine are black cherry, boysenberry, plum, raspberries, wild berries, sage, dill, black and white pepper, licorice, anise, scents of sweet flowers, earthy mineral flavors and ripe tannins.

The Zinfandels you will be having are from several different areas of California. A 2010 Ridge Ponzo from Sonoma County, 2008 Haywood Estate Los Chamizal from Sonoma

Valley, 2009 Saddleback Cellars from Calistoga, Napa valley, 2010 Artein from Mendocino County, and for the finale, the rare and hard to find (only four barrels made) 2010 Dover Canyon Zinfandel Port from Paso Robles.

I am looking forward to seeing everyone!

Best of wine, food & friends,

Patti Hipple

President



Photo courtesy of hugel.com

Our group event for January was at 360 Steakhouse, atop the Harrah's Casino. The view of the Council Bluffs skyline was wonderful, as was the food. It proved to be a high end steakhouse destination with definite gourmet touches. Read about it below. John Fischer writes about pairing wines to cold food, something that tends to be a bit of an afterthought until you suddenly realize that you need matching wines for that chilled food. And speaking of cold, winter weather is exciting in that it makes us receptive to drinking some of the heavier style, fortified wines, like Port and Sherry. A full bodied, alcoholic wine is unappealing in the sweltering heat of July, but warming and comforting in the winter months. We continue our educational preparations for the upcoming Sherry tasting on March 8th with two articles. One discusses the Solera system and how it "educates" younger wines.

Editor's Corner



The other article discusses the history, microclimate and styles of Sherry. Have fun with your uninitiated friends and pique their curiosity when you tell them you had an educated wine at an IWFS event. Mark your calendars now to attend this tutored event, one where there will be a short review on Sherry, and a tasting, before the meal. We take a pause from Mary and my trip to Portugal and have instead an article from **Diane Forristall** about her trip to New Zealand with husband Gary sponsored by the Washington State University Viticulture & Enology department. I encourage other Branch members to submit their food and/or wine adventures to share in the Gazette. Enjoy!

Tom Murnan

Cover photo

Impressionistic night shot of Council Bluffs through a 360 Steakhouse window showing, from bottom to top, parking, CB skyline, and scenes from the restaurant. Photo by Tom Murnan.

Event Report

January 19, 2013

Harrah's Steakhouse 360 is No Gamble

story and photos by Tom Murnan



It must have been a slow night for Harrah's Casino, because the parking lots were mostly empty, and there was no one in the first floor Stir Lounge where our group met before taking the elevator to the 360 Steakhouse on the top floor. Fourteen members and two guests attended this event planned by David & Debbie Tritsch and Barry & Barbara Kricsfeld. John and Jill Panzer, neighbors of the Hipples, were our guests.



Appetizers and quaffing wines primed our event as we mingled. Of the three hors d'oeuvres, my favorite was the Prosciutto Wrapped Zucchini and Asparagus spears, but Garlic

& Herbs Wontons and Palm Beach Cheese Puffs were also served. Quaffing wines included the whites: 2009 Fox Glove Chardonnay, and a 2011 Mer Soleil Silver Unoaked Chardonnay. This latter is marketed in a ceramic bottle to celebrate how they ferment and age this wine: in small cement wine tanks imported from France. Red quaffers included 2006 Domaine Serene Evenstad Pinot Noir, 2008 Penfolds Koonunga Hill Shiraz Cab, and the 2008 Stump Jump Shiraz by d'Arenberg. Next, we took the elevator to the 360 Steakhouse to see what Executive Chef Kevin Klopenstine and Chef Andrew Loughrey had in store for us.



Our first course was a small three ounce glass of Seafood Vermouth Chowder paired with a Greywacke Sauvignon Blanc 2011 from Marlborough New Zealand. The Chowder was very rich with heavy cream, chives and rock shrimp, then garnished with one calamari on top. The Greywacke proved



to be a good choice because the acid in the wine cut through the heaviness of the cream. Greywacke refers to New Zealand's prolific bed rock. I noticed immediately grassiness on the nose as well as the palate, along with grapefruit flavors.



The 2nd course was a Heirloom Tomato Salad with Microgreens, Red Vein Sorrel with White Truffle Vinaigrette. Accompanying this was a 2011 Witness Tree Pinot Blanc. This is a limited wine made on only 2½ acres. There were three



Heirloom tomato varieties: Brandywine (red), Jubilee (yellow) and Black Krim. The truffle flavored oil in the mild vinaigrette was very apparent and elevated this salad with its gourmet touch of ephemeral white truffle flavor. The Pinot Blanc merged nicely with the different salad flavors. We were asked to save some of the Witness Tree for the 3rd course.



Next, we sampled the Scallops, Lemon Butter, Asparagus and Chili. Two nicely seared scallops sat in a bed of Enoko mushrooms, shaved asparagus, red chilies and lemon butter sauce. The chilies gave a nice piquant to the sauce. We again tasted the Mer Soleil Unoaked Chardonnay from 2011 that we had for quaffing, but we also compared how the previous Pinot Blanc went. Some thought the Chardonnay was too sharp, but others preferred the Witness Tree Pinot Banc.





Our 4th Course was the **Beef Short Rib "Osso-Bucco Style"**. This generous piece of beef almost looked like real Osso Bucco. The rib was sitting on parsnip puree dusted with nutmeg, covered with braising jus on top, grilled onion, and

a side of heirloom carrot, parsnip and red pepper medley tossed in maple syrup, thyme and a cooked green onion garnish. Two wines accompanied this course. The First was a **2006 Hall Cabernet Sauvignon Napa Valley**, and the second, a **Domaine Serene 2006 Evenstad Pinot Noir Reserve**, the same as our quaffing Pinot. Both wines performed admirably. The Cab was tannic, structured, well balanced and probably at its peak, yielding flavors of cassis and red fruits. The Domaine Serene hails from the Willamette Valley in Oregon and was smooth and seamless. When asked to vote on which wine they preferred, 10 gave the nod to the Cab, leaving 6 to favor the Pinot.



All in all, we had a lovely meal. I understand most of the courses are available on the everyday menu. This must be the one place at the casino where you do not have to gamble! Nice job, Chefs Klopenstine and Loughrey. *The Bluffs Food & Wine gazette*



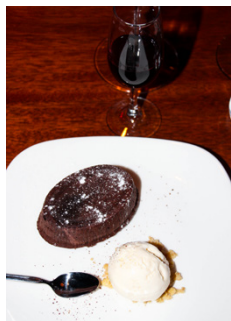
Our Chefs then came out to explain some of the courses. **Chef of 360 Andrew Loughrey** hails from Perth, Australia and



has traveled the world, working in such exotic locales as London and Viet Nam. He is here because his wife teaches English as a second language at Creighton. Executive



Chef Kevin Klopenstine, the 2012 Harrah's & Horseshoe Culinary Battle winner, was also introduced to the group. He was in overall charge of the kitchen.



We finished with a **Chocolate Lava Cake with Vanilla Bean Ice Cream**, paired with **Grahams Six Grapes Reserve Port**. The Port went very well with the chocolate.



More photos of this event on the following page »



More photos of this event on the following page »



*Thanks to everyone who
made this event a success!*



Matching Wines to Cold or Raw Foods

by John Fischer



Photo courtesy of: Christian Sahn, flickr.com

Since most of the time we match wines to hot, cooked foods; most people have considerably less experience in matching wine with cold and/or raw foods. Often such foods are served as appetizers or first courses. For example, foods such as green salad containing cold red meat, cold beet salad, Carpaccio, pickled herring, cold beef roll-ups, sushi (California roll), sashimi, steak tartare, ceviche and other like delicacies can make for difficult choices.

First, it is important to examine the characteristics for these styles of food. The weight (body) of raw foods is considerably lighter and less flavorful than when it is cooked. Cooking enhances the flavor and weight of any food. Most of the volatile flavorful essences locked into raw foods are not released until cooked. For example, that raw turkey sitting on the counter awaiting the oven has little to no aroma; however, the savory scent of the roasting bird is familiar to us all. Wine served too cold is another example. Coldness blankets many of the volatile flavorful extracts in wine and prevents them from reaching the nasal receptors, a necessary condition for the creation of flavor. Cold temperatures also decrease the weight (body) of wine.

Raw foods are lighter and more delicately flavored and often need sauces or other flavor enhancing substances to support their flavors, such as sushi with soy sauce and wasabi, pickled herring with spices, herbs, and onions, or Carpaccio with olive oil, lemon, shavings of parmesan cheese and arugula. A majority of these enhancing ingredients favor pairing with white wines.

Our goal in pairing wine with food is to match the flavors and weight of the wine to that of the food. Red meats are

more compatible with red wine flavors (dark fruits) such as berries, cherries, plums, and other flavors such as truffles and mushrooms, while most seafoods are more at home with white wine flavors (light colored fruits) such as lemons, grapefruit, pears, and apples. White meats, being lighter bodied than red meat, can frequently fit with either red or white wines, but lean toward white wines; it all depends on the context of the dish. In many cases, a red or white would work equally well.

With the above information in hand, we are now prepared to discuss what type of wine is needed to match these styles of foods. It is evident that the wines should be light in body. There are two prominent qualities that make a wine light bodied: lower alcohol (responsible in great part for the body of a wine) and higher acidity. High acidity mollifies the weight and richness derived from alcohol, but perks up and supports flavor. That means that wines like Sauvignon Blanc, Pinot Grigio, Champagne, and Riesling are prime candidates for white wine choices. And wines like rosé, or reds such as Bardolino, Valpolicella, light bodied Pinot Noir, light bodied Chinon, and Beaujolais make congenial choices for the reds.

The best way to integrate these concepts is by working out a couple of examples. Let's consider beef Carpaccio in combination with olive oil, lemon, arugula and shavings of parmesan cheese. The beef favors a red wine; however the arugula, cheese (salty), and lemon favors a white wine. The choice would depend on the dominate character of the dish. If the dish is basically a salad with just small dollops of meat, go with a white such as a citrusy Sauvignon Blanc. If the dish is dominated by meat, Valpolicella would be a great choice.

Let's try another: cold pickled herring marinated in a sweetened, spicy, acidic marinade. Here we have sweet, tart and spicy. Look for a sweet, tart wine. German Riesling Kabinett would make a stellar match. And one more example: creamy crab salad on toast points; try extra dry Champagne.

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John Fischer is a member and two-time president of the Omaha Branch of the IW&FS, past director of the Nebraska Chapter of LADV, and founding member of the Council Bluffs Branch of the IWFS. He teaches a course on wine and matching wine with food at the Institute for the Culinary Arts in Omaha, NE and is author of two books: *The Evaluation of Wine* and *Wine and Food - 101*.

The Solera System: A Way to Educate Wine

by Tom Murnan



Photo courtesy of wikipedia.com: El Pantera

A Sherry Solera

An essential thing to know about Sherry is that it is almost exclusively made using the **solera system**. For those who do not know, a solera is a way to include old wine with new. Wine from different years are blended together to make the finished product. There is such a thing as a vintage dated Sherry where the grapes all come from one year, but this is very rare. We had a dessert Sherry at the November 2nd 2012 Tapas Event: the **Alvear Solera 1927**. The base wine of Pedro Ximenez was started in 1927, and in subsequent years, new wine has been added.

Alexis Lichine explains it this way in his [New Encyclopedia of Wines and Spirits](#) 1981:

The most interesting thing about Sherry...is the peculiar system by which it is kept at its best. A very old, very fine Sherry has the power to educate and improve a younger one. Because of this, the old wines are kept in the oldest barrels of what the growers call a **solera**. This is a series of casks graduated by age. A series (or scale) is made up of identical butts [casks]. The oldest class in a solera is the one called the **solera**. The next oldest is the first **criadera**, the next the second **criadera**, and so on. When the wine is drawn from the **solera**, it is drawn in equal quantity from each butt. Then starts a progressive system, which the **solera** is refilled by the first **criadera**, etc. The magic result of this system is that the oldest cask remains eternally the same in quality. A cask of 1888, for instance, may retain hardly a spoonful of its original vintage;

If you have ever raised teenagers...

“I’m not young enough to know everything”

Sir James Matthew Barrie, Scottish dramatist—author (1860–1937)

but each replacement poured back into it over the years will have been educated to be the 1888, and replacements still to come will be schooled to the same standard. By this system, it is possible not only to preserve the same quality and character of wine over the years, but also, by constantly refreshing the Fine types with younger wines, to keep these from losing their freshness.

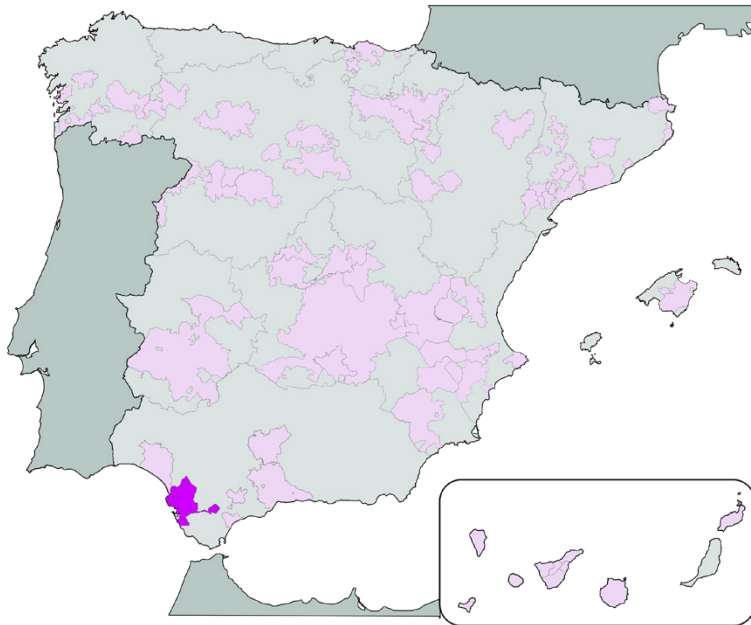
What a great quote. I had forgotten the “education” part of a solera. In this case, the grape Pedro Ximenez was used instead of the Palomino. **Criadera** (translates to “nursery” and is pronounced **kree-ah-DEHR-ah**) is so named because it is where young the wines are nursed and cared for as they are raised and become educated. So this system of fractional blending is very important, expensive and time consuming to the Bodega, but it assures great consistency in the wine.

Serve the **Alvear Solera 1927** at home and display your wine prowess by explaining that, even though it says 1927 on the label, the wine isn’t all from 1927, but is a solera where the old wine “educated” the younger wine. Your listeners will no doubt think you are quite erudite in the ways of wine.

The Bluffs
Food & Wine
gazette

History, Microclimate and Types of Sherry

by Tom Murnan



Jerez-Xeres-Sherry DO in the province of Cadiz, region of Andalusia (Spain)

Photo courtesy of: Té y kryptonita: wikipedia.org

Sherry seems to have crept into the English speaking world's consciousness when Sir Francis Drake sacked the Cadiz shipyards in 1587. During a preemptive raid on the ships that would become the Spanish Armada that Philip II had ordered built to invade England, Drake pillaged about 2900 butts of sherry destined for the New World and instead brought them back to England. This made a huge impression on the English, who began drinking large quantities of Sack, or **Sherris Sack** as it was then known. Sherry was mentioned in several of Shakespeare's plays, and it was a favorite tippie of Falstaff. Read **2 Henry IV** in which Falstaff praises the benefits of sack to one's constitution: "If I had a thousand sons, the first humane principle I would teach them should be



Shakespeare's Falstaff and his affection for Sherry "sack" did much to spread the reputation of the drink.

Photo courtesy of: Eduard von Grützner: wikipedia.org

to forswear thin potations and addict themselves to sack." (4.3.100). Sack, however, was not a fortified wine at that time, rarely topping 16% alcohol. Before the Elizabethan Age, the Phoenicians founded an island city near the Bay of Cadiz, which they named Xera. The grapes flourished there. The Romans later conquered the Iberian Peninsula, and renamed the town Ceret. When the Moorish hordes took over Spain in 711 AD, they called the city Scherish. In the Castilian dialect, it was called Jerez (pronounced "hereth"). The English had trouble pronouncing Jerez so called it Sherry. Columbus was the first exporter of Sherry, carrying casks to the New World. After the Portuguese's success with fortifying Port wine, Sherry producers tried adding brandy to Sherry. In addition to stabilizing the wine in high heat, high alcohol killed off the flor. During various wars, like the War of the Spanish Succession, and the Napoleonic Wars, sales to England and Holland were dramatically reduced. Stocks of Sherry would sit around in the bodegas in the barrel waiting for buyers. These wines would oxidize and take on nutty flavors with the extra wood aging. As a few orders of Sherry would trickle in, the Sherry merchants would bottle a small quantity and then top up the rest of the barrel with wine from some of their newer inventory. This began to develop into a system of "fractional blending" which was soon to become the modern concept of **solera**.

Jerez has a unique microclimate that is perfectly suited to the Palomino grape from which Sherry is produced. First, it is very sunny, with about 300 days of sunlight a year. It also gets little rain, most of it coming between October and May. But a unique feature is that it has a soil that is almost white. Known as **Albariza**, it consists of 40 to 50 percent **chalk**. It's advantage is that the white color reflects much sunlight back onto the leaves, promoting photosynthesis. In addition, the chalky/clay soil absorbs rainfall like a sponge, retaining water in this hot climate. It can get up to 104° F in the summer, but the yearly average temperature is about 64° F. By law, 40% of Sherry must come from Albariza soil. A heavier soil, known as Barros, has only 10% chalk, and is used to raise Pedro Ximenez (PX) and Moscatel grapes. Ocean breezes help moderate the temperature in the vineyards and the bodegas as well.



A venenciadora pours Sherry drawn from a cask (or “butt”) into a catavino.

Photo courtesy of: Jesus Solana: flickr.com

Types of Sherry

Last time, we discussed how the wine mysteriously decides to become a **Fino**, which develops **Flor** in the cask, or an **Oloroso**, which does not. Flor adds a fragrant quality to a wine. Within these two great divisions, there are several categories. First, let's dissect **Fino**. All these wines are affected by flor. Then we will categorize the **Olorosos**, which are not flor affected. In the below chart, **alcohol by volume** will be expressed as a range of percentages, and **sugar content** is expressed as grams per liter.

FINO

Palma is the finest of the Finos, distinguished and rare. 15-17% 0-5 grams.

Palma Cortada is slightly darker and less delicate than Palma 15-17% 0-5 grams.

Manzanilla is an especially light variety of fine type of Fino Sherry made around the port of Sanlucar de Barrameda. The salty sea breezes improved the flavor of the flor on the wine. It has a fresh, more delicate, with a taste of apples. Manzanillo means “little apple.” 15-17% 0-5 grams.

Manzanilla Pasada is a Manzanilla that has undergone additional aging, giving it a richer nutty flavor. 15-17% 0-5 grams.

Fino (means fine in Spanish) is light and delicate in color and flavor but less so than the above. It has an aroma reminiscent of blooming flowers or fruit still ripening on the tree. Crisp, piquant and dry to the taste. Good with seafood, olives or cheese, it is also an excellent aperitif. Serve chilled. 15-17% 0-5 grams.

Fino Amontillado is a transition wine but with deeper color, and a nutty flavor. 16-17% 0-5 grams.

Amontillado is aged under flor, but then is left to oxidize in the cask, giving it a darker color than Fino and a rich, nutty flavor. Total aging: 3-4 years. Golden amber, it has a bouquet reminiscent of hazelnuts. Mild to the palate, medium dry to the taste, it is best accompanied by soups, salad or cheese. It is naturally dry with a slight bitterness. If it has been sweetened, it can no longer be called an Amontillado. 16-17% 0-5 grams.

OLOROSO

Rayos, common and coarse. 17-22% 0-5 grams.

Crema Sherry made from Rayos and blending wines, this category is sweetened with PX and Moscatel. Its intense sweetness can mask poor quality Oloroso. Very dark brown color, it is served as a liqueur after dinner or as an accompaniment to coffee. 15.5-24% 115-140 grams.

Oloroso, (means scented or pungent in Spanish) is golden brown in color, aged longer than the Finos, taking on an oxidized quality. Fuller bodied than Amontillado, it can be slightly sweet. It can have the taste of walnuts. Richer and higher in alcohol (18-20%), these wines are naturally dry. 17-22% 0-5 grams.

Palo Cortado is a variety of Sherry that is initially aged like an Amontillado, typically for three or four years, but which subsequently develops a character closer to an Oloroso. This either happens by accident when the flor dies, or commonly the flor is killed by fortification with brandy or filtration. Like a style of Fino, but without the Fino taste. The best of the non-flor Sherries. 17-22% 0-5 grams.

Oloroso Viejo, aged Oloroso, dark in color with rich, nutty flavors. 17-22% 0-5 grams.

Oloroso Viejísimo, very old Oloroso, very dark with rich and powerful flavors. 17-22% 0-5 grams.

Jerez Dulce (Sweet Sherries) are made either by fermenting dried PX or Moscatel grapes, which produces an intensely sweet dark brown or black wine, or by blending sweeter wines or grape must with a drier variety. 15-22% 160+ grams. Included in this category is **Moscatel** made from the muscat grape. 15-22% 160+ grams as well as the intensely sweet **Pedro Ximenez** made from the eponymous grape. Serve as a liqueur after dinner. 15-22% 212+ grams.

Sources: Wikipedia and Sherry by Cork Millner in *Vintage, The Magazine of Food Wine and Gracious Living Holiday 1986 Vol. XVI No.2*

New Zealand Washington Alumni Winemakers Tour November 2010: Part 1

by Diane Forristall

After a summer of chemo & radiation, Gary thought it would help get me back in shape by booking a 2 week trip to New Zealand. That was pretty good motivation to get outside & start walking so I'd be ready for the journey just 3 months away from my last radiation treatment.

The trip was sponsored by Washington State University Viticulture & Enology department. We learned of it through ISU Extension viticulture newsletter. Even though we are neither WSU alumni nor commercial winemakers, we persuaded them we were more than casual wine enthusiasts. Having a small private vineyard of 200 vines and being amateur winemakers seemed to qualify us for tagging along.

The first part of our trip was spent on the north island which is a warmer climate than the south island. November in New Zealand is like June here. I don't think we could have picked a better time.



We arrived in Auckland after a 14 hour flight from LA. We found our way to an ocean side restaurant and had green lipped mussels and seafood with a local sauvignon blanc for lunch. We spent a day exploring Auckland, but most of our time was focused in Hawks Bay area based out of the beautiful ocean side city of Napier. Cabernet Sauvignon & Merlot grow well on the north island were the pinot noir is grown on the cooler south island. Both islands grow Sauvignon Blanc.

The next morning we arrived at Villa Maria, a large family owned estate outside of Auckland. Villa Maria is New Zealand's most awarded winery. The modern style winery was located in a recessed volcanic basin and includes an indoor & outdoor restaurant and tasting room. We were greeted



The Winemaker

by the winemaker & winery director (and taken to a large private room where we sampled 16 wines.

The north island Villa Maria winery focuses on wines mainly grown in the Hawkes Bay area, primarily Chardonnay, Merlot, Merlot Cabernet Sauvignon blends and Syrah. Lunch was served followed by a tour of the production facility, barrel room, lab and tasting room. We ended with a walk into the vineyard.

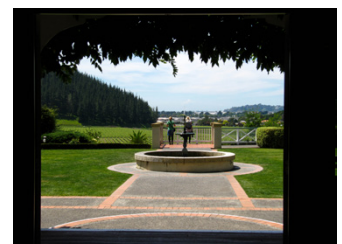


After spending Day 3 traveling to the ocean side city of Napier in the Hawks Bay region, we visited the Mission Estates Winery &



Vineyards. The winery is the oldest winery in New Zealand and founded by missionaries who brought grape plants with them in the mid 1800's. The architecture and

landscaping invited you to stay and enjoy their stunning alfresco seating overlooking the area's oldest vines. We walked into the vineyard with winemaker Paul Mooney to talk about viticulture practices. Then we toured the





production area and sampled wines in the tank room with Paul. Alfresco lunch was served at the award winning Mission Restaurant.

After lunch we traveled to Sileni Estates in nearby Hastings. We were met by chief winemaker, Grant Edmonds who showed their production facilities, barrel room and presented us with

a tasting of Sauvignon Blanc from Marlboro, Hawkes Bay Pinot Gris and Chardonnay on their patio.



After spending a couple hours at Sileni, we departed and arrived at our 3rd stop at Vidal Estates Winery where we were met by winemaker Hugh Crighton who has made many award winning wines. Here we learned about the world famous Gimblett Gravel terroir whose average temperatures are up to three degrees hotter than most other areas in Hawkes Bay, resulting in complex and elegant red wines. We toured the production facilities, sampled a few wines from the barrel room then had an in-depth discussion of their wines in a formal tasting setting. What a day!

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Next time: More wineries on the North Island of New Zealand





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Upcoming Council Bluffs Branch Events! Mark Your Calendars!

February 17 • The Zin Room. Patti and Stephen Hipple have an all Zinfandel dinner planned. Take your sweetheart to the Zin Room for your Belated Valentine's day night out.

February 25 - March 4, 2013 • Steve Hipple asks that we join him for an 8 day wine and food extravaganza, featuring a 3 night/3 day Miami culinary adventure followed by a quiet and relaxing Caribbean Cruise. You may choose one or both. If you didn't get an email, already, contact Steve.

March 8 • The Two Toms, Schierbrock and Murnan, host a Sherry Tasting and Spanish dinner at Council Bluffs Country Club.

April 14 • President Patti Hipple and David Hays have a Spring Fling planned for one of Omaha's best restaurants: V. Mertz in the Old Market. Pencil this one in on your calendar now!

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: stephenhipple@hotmail.com

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KEEPING 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.

PURPOSE: To meet communication and service needs, to broaden participation and understand and to be an information exchange for the membership of The International Wine & Food Society in the Americas.

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