



The Bluffs
Food & Wine
gazette

FEBRUARY 2018

EVENT REPORT:
President's Holiday Dinner
Joyeux Noël at Le Bouillon

INSIDE
IWFS BALTIMORE GREAT WINE WEEKEND

- A Madeira Party in Baltimore 10/13/17
- Plated Luncheon at the Four Seasons Hotel 10/13/17



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



courtesy of hugel.com

President's Comments

Happy New Year!

Not much to tell you about so far this year, so I will keep it short.

Keep in mind there are a lot of great events in the upcoming months. The event planners have done a lot of hard work to make these fun, and informative.

Let's get out and support these events whenever possible. I am hoping for record attendance this year and not just because I am so much fun to be around.

This year the board will be looking into numerous ideas on how to make our events more enjoyable, efficient, and provide the best possible wines and dining experiences possible.

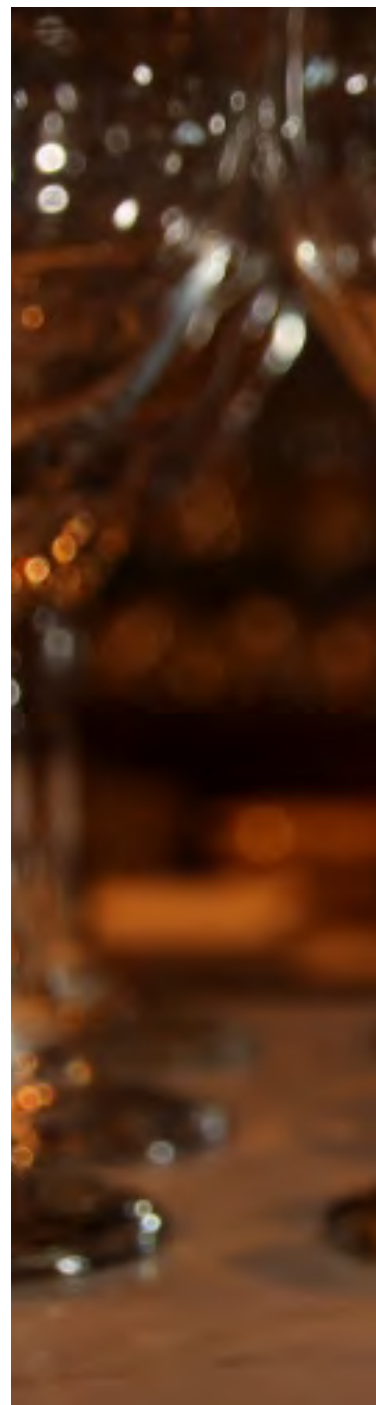
I look forward to seeing everyone at an event soon.

Cheers,

Joe Goldstein

"I told my psychiatrist that everyone hates me. He said I was being ridiculous - everyone hasn't met me yet."

-Rodney Dangerfield Groucho Marx





**EVENT
REPORT**
MORE IMAGES
— ON THE —
NEXT PAGE



Editor's Corner

What an interesting dinner we had at Le Bouillon for the President's Holiday Diner. It was interesting for some wine appellations we seldom experience, such as Chinon. Most people, including me, have never tried a wine from Bugey-Cerdon. B-C is in an unique corner of France that is at a crossroads of France between the Rhône, Jura, Savoie, and Burgundy. One can see snow and palm trees at the same time. Only a confident and experienced chef would serve a sparkling rosé from Bugey-Cedron and build a food course around it. Then there was the intriguing Ham in Hay course. Based on an old Gascon recipe, hay is added to a covered baking pan to finish the meat with the same hay the animal would be eating. Manon cheese was also served which was quite delicious. A chevre, it was spiced with garlic cloves and black pepper and wrapped in grape leaves. There was a lot of wine and food education going on in this event. If you were there, you can be reminded of all the facts that were thrown at you. If you were not there, you can see what you missed. Read about it.

The Baltimore Great Weekend continues with Part 2 of our series. After a messy but delicious evening of manhandling Chesapeake crabs, we moved to the elegance and sophistication of old Madeira. Madeira is one of the most fascinating and complex wines in the world. It defies all the usual rules of wine. You don't have to store it in a 55° cellar. You can partially drink a bottle and come back to it months and months later and it is still good. The styles range from dry to sweet. And it is virtually immortal. Better examples can live several hundred years. The Madeira tasting was one of my main draws to the Weekend. Another reason was that Mr. Madeira himself, Mannie Berk, was going to lead the seminar. Don't miss this one.

Finally, Bob Kossow has started posting the event photos on the international web site. Go to iwfs.org, login, and go to the Council Bluffs site. Click on The Bluffs Food and Wine Gazette. If you want to keep a photo, download it to your computer and save it. Thanks Bob for adding this resource to our site.

Tom Murnan

"Those persons who suffer from indigestion, or who become drunk, are utterly ignorant of the true principles of eating and drinking."

-Jean Anthelme Brillat-Savarin

Cover Photo: The Seven-Foot Knoll Lighthouse built in 1856 and active until 1948, it was the second screwpile lighthouse built by the US Lighthouse Service. It was constructed of rolled-iron plates, drilled and riveted together and supported on 9 cast iron screwpiles, which eliminated the need for a masonry foundation. The lighthouse was moved to Pier 5 of the Baltimore harbor in 1988. Photo by Tom Murnan.



courtesy of hugel.com

Event Report

PRESIDENT'S HOLIDAY DINNER JOYEUX NOËL AT LE BOUILLON

Written By Tom Murnan | Photos by Tom Murnan

WE HAVE BEEN GOING to Le Bouillon now for three years, and I wanted to increase our membership participation for this holiday end of the year President's event. So I switched to Sunday to avoid all the numerous conflicts with company Christmas parties, family get togethers and the like. One great benefit was that we were able to get the main dining room. You responded with the largest participation of the year: 58 attendees, 9 of which were guests.

Chef owner Paul Kulik had a treat in store for us. We were going to have a French Christmas feast with all French wines. Paul spent considerable time in France in his younger days, absorbing the French culinary and wine scene in all its details. He selected all of the wines except the two Burgundies for the pork course. It is interesting to me to get an insight as to how a chef picks his ingredients to match wine.

Was it just me, or did it seem like there was an electric, high energy component to this event that began when everyone arrived? Our **Hors d'Oeuvres** were laid out on the bar. We had **Veal Pastrami**, **Mushroom Gougère**, and **Chicken Milanese**. The pastrami were little bite sized sandwiches with pumpernickel bread and thinly sliced pickle to add to the moistness of these tasty bites. The chicken was like chicken tenders but a bit larger and quite nice. The only one that I didn't particularly care for was the gougère, which I found to be on the dry side. Quaffing wines consisted of **2013 Château de Paraza Cuvée Speciale** from Minervois (in the Languedoc-Roussillon AOC), **2015 Emile Beyer Pinot Gris "Tradition"** from Alsace, and **2011 Lupé-Cholet "Comte de Lupé" Bourgogne**. But first among the quaffers was the **R. Pouillon Champagne "Reserve" Brut non vintage**. Nicely dry and minerally with lemon notes, everyone was offered a glass of bubbles as they arrived.

After our call to table, outgoing President Tom Murnan presented our President-Elect, Joe Goldstein who spoke a few words about his plans for the future. Then Stephen Hipple,

a Director of IWFS Americas Inc., surprised **David Tritsch**, a current Board Member and past president, with the **Americas Silver Medal**. Steve called David a Restoration President because when he began his two year term as president in 2010, the Branch membership was starting to dwindle. David and the other Board Members began a policy of having only wines rated 90 points or higher by a professional wine critic as well as going to only the finer restaurants. The strategy has worked, and the Branch is about as large as we want it, at about 70 members. We don't want to get too large otherwise we cannot fit into many restaurants. Next, Steve surprised **Tom Murnan** with the **Americas Silver Medal**, citing your humble scribe's editorship of the Bluffs Gazette since 2012 and the presidency from 2016 to 2017.

Our **First Course** was a **Scallop Crudo** with **Langoustine**, **Compressed Melon** and **Watercress**. Paul Kulik came out to speak before each course. "This is a Nantucket Bay scallop. The Seguinot- Bordet family has been making wine in Chablis for 19 generations. This is not a grand domaine. They are located in Maligny, just north of Chablis. They just have one parcel of Grand cru Valdesir. But they are fortunate enough to have vineyards with Kimmeridgian chalk soil. This expresses itself in that key minerality taste. The Chardonnay sees no oak. This is stainless steel with batonnage (stirring) of the lees where you get additional richness. The wine delivers persistent minerality and persistent chalk. So how do you pair this wine with food? You do crudo. You have Nantucket Bay scallops, a beautiful sweet, like sweet corn like scallop with butter poached langoustine. This is an opulent start and you will find the Chablis has a spritzzy, acid driven finish as well as a voluptuousness to enjoy the langoustines."

Raw [crudo] scallops and one cooked langoustine were accompanied by cantaloupe balls, which provided a bit of sweetness, and chopped cucumber & vinegar, which added a refreshing component. The langoustines added



a very lobster-like flavor. The cantaloupe was also like a palate cleanser. The **2015 Seguinot-Bordet Chablis** was an excellent match. The estate was founded in 1590 at Maligny, what the estate calls the front door to Chablis. Their 16 hectare vineyard on the slope of the Serein River, has a perfect southern exposure, important in France because they need all the heat and sun they can get in Chablis, which is getting rather northerly for France. I found the wine to be high acid and mineral driven all the way.

The Second Course was a **Tortellini**. It was stuffed with **ground beet**, **Manon cheese**, and topped with **Salmon Roe**. Chef Paul came out to speak. "I was hoping to forewarn everyone about this next wine because it is probably the least club like wine we will have this evening, kind of violating a couple of rules. A sparkling wine is in the second course, it's a rosé, and there is a little bit of residual sugar to it. But it's delicious. This wine comes from **Bugey Cedron**. Bugey is a region unto itself. If you would go to Geneva or the eastern fringe of France, it is the foot hills of Savoie, partially influenced by Lyon, partially by Geneva, partially by Burgundy. They are alpine approximate wines. The vineyards are located in a high altitude dip. The grapes grown here are Gammay and Poulsard. Gammay is famous in Beaujolais. The AOC style is to stop fermentation before it is completed in tank, then put the wine in bottles and allow the fermentation to complete. Then you trap the bubbles. That's where you get the effervescence. That style is called *Méthode Ancestrale*. A lot of people think it predates the invention of Champagne. And that is the style of wine. There's about 8% alcohol and 100% flavor. Lots of wild strawberries, great and vibrant, plenty of acidity. So what we have done with this wine is a real hodgepodge of things you might find on the plate here in Bugey. Bugey is not famous for a lot of things but its famous son is Jean Anthelme Brillat-Savarin who wrote the *Physiologie du Goût* [*The Physiology of Taste*], a famous treatise on French gastronomy. There is a well known cheese named after him. The cheese we are using from Shadow Brook Farms was inspired by this treatise."

Interestingly enough, my wife Mary saw Chef Paul preparing the pasta for this course the day before at Via Farina. Warm tortellini pasta was sitting on a bed of finely chopped beets (which were presented cold). Nantua Sauce traditionally paired with seafood, was added to moisten the pasta and complement the salmon roe which topped the dish. The non-vintage **Patrick Botex "La Cueille"** [the pick] **Bugey-Cerdon**, a low alcohol sparkling rosé was selected by the



Chef. It was a bit sweet but married expertly with the Manon cheese stuffed in the pasta. Manon cheese is a chevre cheese originally from Australia using specialized goat's milk and a blend of garlic cloves and black pepper. Once the spices are added, the cheese is wrapped in grape leaves to age for 5 or 6 days. I had never heard of or tried Manon, but it was delicious. On its own, the tortellini was a bit salty, but the beets neutralized that. The wine's carbonation cut through the richness and brought forward the strawberry fruit. Superbe.

The **Third Course** was next. This was the much anticipated **Ham in Hay** course. Chef Paul spoke. "We are now moving to two courses where there will be tandem wines. We are going to do some Cabernet Franc here. The dish we are doing is a very classic French way of cooking ham. Essentially you wrap it in hay (straw) and then slowly bake that off, putting a beautiful alfalfa aroma gets into the ham. We are using cured pork loin from Duroc pork from northwest Iowa. We are treating it as though it is ham, but it is in fact pork loin, which is the reason there are quotation marks on the menu card. The **Pommes Aligot** is a potato dish from Southwestern France where 50% is potato and 50% cheese, so really healthy. Then we have fried leeks to finish that will emulate the hay, and a Tarragon Glaze.

"The tarragon is an item to the wine because as we know, wines and grapes that come from the Bordeaux family of wines have that kind of note, that herbaceous or green note: green pepper, tarragon, sometimes described as tobacco, mint, it's all from the same origin, the same thing in the grape called purisy. That is the chemical in Cabernet Franc, Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Sauvignon Blanc, Malbec, Carmenera, and in Chinon, a village which is in the Loire Valley, about 75 miles from the Atlantic. What I love about both these producers is on the left you have **Pallus**, a relatively young domaine. These wines are made by a gentleman who made his fame in Spain and then returned to take over his father's domaine. He really believed he could do something expressive with Cabernet Franc. He only makes this "Grand Vin." He treats it like Bordeaux, his pinnacle wine, extremely low yields, everything is done manually. So you get a little bit more concentration, obviously great expression. This is the classic soil of the Loire. That is what this wine is all about. On the right is a side project from **Anne Claude Lefaive**, from the famous Domaine Lefaive from Burgundy. So her whole life she championed biodynamics

as a way of viticulture and agriculture. It was a big thing to bring to Burgundy, but she also championed this elsewhere. She created a company to help other estates work in this method, in that way she was able to acquire the **Clos de Nell** and took that over. She unfortunately passed away in 2015. Now her husband runs the project. Here you get a chance to see Cabernet Franc as a little more elegant, a little more wood to it. At the end of the day the health of the fruit makes good wine. In this case we are going to see fully expressive Cabernet Franc with great finesse."

Back to the **Ham in Hay**, which was accompanied by **Pommes Aligot, Fried Leeks and Anise Glaze**. The chosen Duroc pork is named after a kind of pig developed in the USA called Duroc. There was a subtle herbal influence of the hay on the pork. The fried leeks looked like the hay and were quite delicious. The potatoes were so rich and satisfying. To watch an interesting video of cooking with hay, click on this link: <https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=AAAMujp4aNda>

I found that the **2013 Domaine de Pallus "Grand Vin" Chinon** was a bit on the acidic side with low tannin, elegant, with good otherwise good balance and a slightly earthy taste. It seemed a bit naked without the food. The 2013 Domaine Clau de Nell was a bit more rustic but with great depth of flavor, smooth tannins, a touch acidic, and earthy flavors as well. The wines were fairly equal, but I gave the nod to the Pallus.

The **Fourth Course** found us with Duck Breast, Soubise Sauce, Winter Potato, Truffle and Young Onions. Chef Paul spoke again. He is captivated by Burgundy, with its "profound sense of place and history. You get a sense of the importance of food and wine in everyday life. It is a real pleasure to pair two Burgundies that are the apex representation of wines that are beguiling, that are age-able, age worthy, that are extremely pedigreed, have tremendous finesse, and if you think about it, it is probably the oldest appellation on earth that has had the kind of reputation that it has. One of the main keys about understanding Burgundy is place. There is an intense amount of scrutiny from one vineyard to another. It is a really simple subject. If it is red wine it is Pinot Noir. If it is white wine it is Chardonnay. But it is complex because there are thousands of terroir. So here we have two producers next to each other. Both are Negotiants, which means they are houses. One was established in the mid 1800's. The other was established in the early 1900's. Jadot

was established in 1859. [Our 2012 bottling is the 153rd anniversary of the house founding.] **Jadot** is the largest owner of classified vineyards in Burgundy. Jadot is located in Beaune, the epicenter, the cultural center of Burgundy. Famously, it is the home of the Hospice de Beaune, where Burgundy was auctioned to the rest of the world so it would raise money for the monks who cared for the sick. This is a bottling of multiple Premier Crus of the Beaune appellation. Then we have **Faiveley**, another highly regarded, highly esteemed house, also with very modern style of winemaking. This village, Mercurey, is a little bit further south, it is no longer in the esteemed Côte d'Or, but in this charming Côte Chalonnaise, where the village of Mercurey has a few vineyards planted on these important limestone slopes. The key to understanding the best expression of Pinot Noir is that mixture of clay and limestone, or limestone and clay, from one winemaker to the next. Either way it is Pinot Noir. Either way what you have is supple tannins, great acidity, you have depth, that beautiful array of fruit, and a wonderful, very vibrant aromatic complexity that goes with that. Our dish to pair is duck, Muscovy duck from New York. We are doing that over a Soubise, a kind of onion cream and truffle cracker and a little bit of young onion to complete the allium note which goes really well. Mushrooms and allium goes really well with Pinot Noir."

The **Duck Breast** was sitting atop the **Soubise** (a white sauce with onions in it), small winter potatoes, and young onions. A strip of brown sauce was poured over the bird. The duck was tender and nicely rare at the center. It was rich and umami, a great way to define a savory course. A tad bit salty, the onions softened the effect of the saltiness. A truffle and dill cracker was placed atop this heap of goodness. The **2015 Faiveley Mercurey 1er Cru Clos des Myglans Monopole** was tannic and young, a bit raw and acidic. The designation Monopole means that there is only one owner, unusual for Burgundy where multiple owners, even for a small vineyard, is the norm. The **2012 Jadot Beaune 1er Cru 153rd Anniversary Cuvée**, in contrast, was polished, well balanced and sported moderate tannins. Take a look at the photo of the label and you will see at least 16 Premier Cru vineyard names around the artwork indicating the multiple vineyards where these grapes were sourced for this bottling.

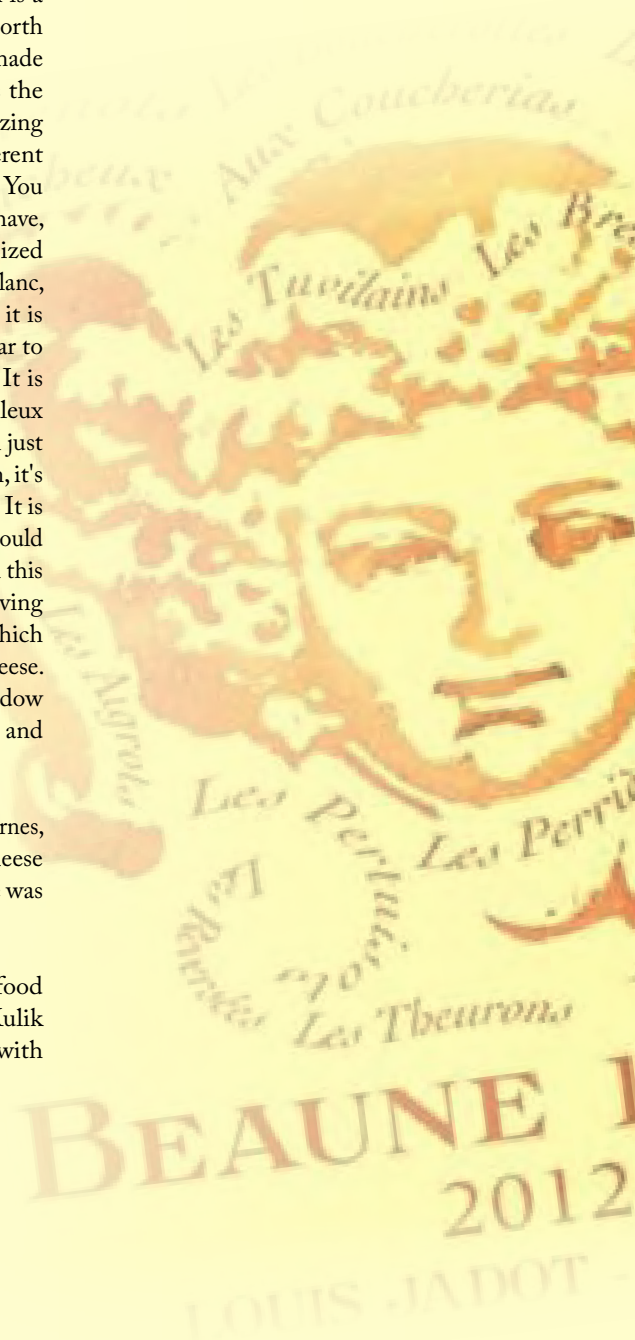
These dishes work as a whole. Don't just concentrate on, say, the meat without also

including the "sides." The potatoes neutralize and absorb the salt. The duck fat is the essence of umami. Both wines enhanced the food, especially the duck fat, which smoothed over any harsh ridges. The soubise sauce was wonderful and tied things together.

Dessert was a **Pear Tarte Tatin with Chèvre Ice Cream**. Our wine was the **2009 Domaine Huët "Le Haut Lieu" Vouvray Molleux**. The chef spoke of the course and wine. "This producer, Huët, is probably the standard bearer in Vouvray. It is not terribly far from Chinon. The grape here is Chenin Blanc, the noteworthy grape in Vouvray. Victor Huët started the domaine in the 1920's, kind of a victim of World War I. He found peace in the vineyards. Most of the Loire was untouched by the war. The three main vineyards the domaine owns started with this one, the Haut Lieu, the high place, which is a full southern exposure and the first slope north of the Loire River. Guess what the soil is made from? Clay and limestone, right? That's the magic ingredient. Chenin Blanc is an amazing grape. It is probably styled in more different ways than any other grape I can think of. You have dry, bone dry. You have demi sec. You have, in this case, fully sweet. You have botrytized Chenin Blanc, you have oxidized Chenin Blanc, and you have sparkling Chenin Blanc. So it is an extremely versatile grape, kind of similar to Riesling in its really floral characteristics. It is a high acid grape. But here, in the moelleux style where the grapes are allowed to ripen just a little more. There's no official designation, it's just a higher ripening end of the spectrum. It is perfectly suited for the classic dessert you would find in the Loire, which is the tarte tatin. In this case it is a pear tarte tatin, and we are serving that with another specialty of the Loire, which is chèvre. They are famous for their goat cheese. So we incorporated that, again from Shadow Brook, into our ice cream. A little hibiscus and honey syrup to complete the dish."

If you are used to the sweetness of a Sauternes, this wine was about half of that level. Cheese in ice cream? It worked because the cheese was not too aggressive.

This dinner was a trove of wine and food education. Many thanks to Chef Paul Kulik and his staff who worked to provide us with seamless service.



















IWFS Baltimore Great Wine Weekend:

A MADEIRA PARTY IN BALTIMORE 10/13/17

Written by Tom Murnan | Photos by Tom Murnan and Wayne Markus

OUR EVENT TITLE, A Madeira Party, may partially be a reference to the 1895 **Silas Weir Mitchell** book of the same name. The book is interesting for its peek back into American history, Madeira wine history & terminology, American drinking rituals for the wine and so forth. The book is still available and has been reprinted numerous times. A quite polished and professional brochure was prepared for attendees by **Andrew Jones**, Chairman of the IWFS Americas, Inc. and **Mannie Berk**, America's expert on Madeira. Andrew wrote detailing the shippers and grape varieties, while Mannie introduced us to the history. Both contributed bottles to this unique tasting. As members entered the large hotel tasting room, a thousand glasses of pre-poured Madeira perfumed the air, giving us a unique olfactory experience.

Although most of modern Madeira wine is made from the red grape Tinta Negra Mole, Madeira made from classic varietals are white grapes. They are some of the longest lived wines in the world. This is partly because it has been raised as an oxidized style of wine from its beginnings, in the presence of high alcohol. The Portuguese had discovered that the addition of high alcohol (grape spirits) helped preserve the wine, especially important during shipping in the old days. Madeira is an utterly amazing wine that defies all the usual rules of wine. It is resistant to decline by heat or oxygen. It has been already been aged in a high oxygen environment: either gently and slowly, in moderate temperatures (the **canteiro method**); or heated (**estufa method**), to speed up the aging process. Estufa mimics the effect of having a barrel of wine cross the equator in a non air-conditioned ship under high temperatures. Canteiro is the preferred method for quality grapes.

The island of Madeira itself is a mountainous, volcanic island whose weather remains constant in the moderate range, rarely going over about 77 degrees. Modern wines are many times made from the ubiquitous and easy to grow **Tinta Negra Mole**, a red grape variety that is a chameleon which can mimic other grape varietals. But there are five Noble grapes, all white, all named after their grape variety. They include **Sercial**, the driest style; **Verdelho**, a bit sweeter; **Bual**, noticeably sweeter, and Malvasia (or **Malmsey**), the sweetest style. **Terrantez** is a dry but high acid grape that was almost extinct but has made some of the most memorable wines. Finally, there is **Bastardo**, a red grape which is very rare. We tried all the Noble varieties but Bastardo.

We were in for a master class on Madeira, its wines, its history, shippers and pricing. Our guest guide was none other than Mr. Madeira himself, **Mannie Berk**, owner of the

Rare Wine Company (RWC). Mannie knows more about Madeira than anyone in the United States and has written several scholarly books on the subject including *A Century Past: A Celebration of the Madeira Party in America*; and *Antebellum Nectar: Champagne & Madeira in Pre-Civil War Charleston & The United States*.

America's history is intertwined with Madeira, even before our war of independence. It was considered the finest (and most expensive) wine in the colonies. Disaster struck the island in the 1850's when it was infested with the powdery mildew **Oidium**. Then a second scourge in the mid 1870 afflicted not only Madeira but Europe and the United States as well: **Phylloxera**, a root louse that sucks the nutrients from the vine's roots. Production and sales dropped to miniscule levels. The world began to forget about Madeira. Prices were in the doldrums and wines of great age could be purchased at incredibly low cost. In the 1970's, the early days of the RWC, Mannie bought over 700 cases of Madeira from an auction in London, imported them to the United States, and began selling them at the RWC.

In association with house of **Vinhos Barbeito** and its charismatic manager and winemaker, **Riccardo de Frietas**, the RWC has developed the **Historic Series** of Madeiras, with different styles of Madeira named after American Cities (like Charleston Sercial, Boston Bual, New York Malmsey or Baltimore Rainwater). The idea of the Historic Series is to reintroduce Madeira to a new generation of Americans at an affordable price.

Half the tasting wines were sourced from the RWC and the other half from our IWFS Americans Inc. Chairman, Andrew Jones, who purchased them at auction years ago. Our lineup of ten wines were tasted in pairs going from dry to sweet. Andrew decanted the wines a week before the tasting. Very old Madeiras in the bottle for a long time need to be decanted days ahead of time to get rid of bottle funk so they can show their best. This was a big job for so many wines. They were decanted a week before our tasting and transported to Baltimore for our tasting.

Mannie began the master class with fascinating facts about Madeira. "The island was perfectly positioned for ships to put barrels on board to America. It wasn't until the early 1700's that Madeira was fortified. Prior to that it was a relatively low alcohol wine. Benjamin Franklin wrote of adding alcohol to wine coming to America in Poor Richard's Almanac in the 1740's. By the time of the American Revolution, Madeira was affordable only to the rich. It was very popular to toast with



Madeira. Stories of the founding fathers toasting the signing of the Declaration of Independence or the Constitution with Madeira are not documented (apocryphal), but it is very likely true because that was the custom and that is what people drank. In 1803, the **Louisiana Purchase** was ratified by the three participating countries. Spain toasted France and the US with **Malaga**, France toasted Spain and the US with **Champagne**, and the United States toasted France and Spain with Madeira. **Madeira** was universally considered as truly an American wine.

“Madeira reached its peak just before the Civil War. Barton's Hotel was considered the best hotel in Baltimore, and Charles Dickens called it the most comfortable hotel in America. They had an incredible wine list. At the top of the list were 30 Madeiras. The most expensive wine was an 1822 Blackburns Shark Madeira. It was 36 years old and sold for \$10.00 a bottle. The most expensive Claret was a 24 year old Château Lafite Rothschild which sold for \$2.50.

“After the Civil War there began a steady decline in Madeira. This went on for 50 years. First, in the 1850's, there was the Oidium epidemic. Then in the 1870's began the Phylloxera infestation. By the turn of the century there were only pockets of Madeira appreciation among the very wealthy. **J. P. Morgan** was one who appreciated Madeira. Morgan's guru was a man in Baltimore named **Douglas Thomas**, a local banker. He had Madeira in his blood. He did great Madeira tastings in Baltimore in the 1890's and in 1902. Thomas provided Morgan with great wines. Morgan had wines from the time of George Washington and John Marshall. Morgan died in 1913, and Thomas died in 1917 with a fabulous Madeira collection. Thomas' heirs tried to get J. P. Morgan's son to buy Thomas' Madeiras, but he refused. He was more interested in drinking cocktails. That was the official death of Madeira in America. Then Prohibition came along and further damaged Madeira.

“Finally in the 1970's, 80's and 90's there was a resurgence. The RWC played a small role in getting Madeira appreciated and popular again. But what is most important is the survival of the wines. The thing that most sets Madeira apart is its **immortality**. The fact that you can have wines dating back to the 1700's, not only are they alive but they are wonderful. No other wine could say that.

“Part of the reason why we have so many old wines today dates back to the 1850's. They started keeping wines in barrels because they were so panicked that they were not sure if they could make more wine. Prior to that they would always ship it in a year or two after the vintage. It was either shipped to India, the UK or America in barrel and gone immediately, or bottled. It found very little time in wood. It wasn't until the 1850's that they started aging the wine in wood. It allowed the wines to survive, but also to take on richness and color [remember they are white wines]. Today there are just a



handful of producers, of which 4 or 5 are important producers. Two hundred years ago there were a couple hundred. The producers never owned their own vineyards. They would buy the grapes or juice from hundreds or thousands of small landowners on the island. They would make a normal white wine, fortify it before it went in the barrel and aged it in barrels before shipping it. Today a vintage wine must **age 20 years** in barrel. A new category called **Colheita** has been created which allows a vintage dated wine to only be **aged 5 years**. This has been a boon to the industry. It is also why the level of quality today is higher than it has been for a long time.”

Our tasting featured only the noble grape varieties. We started with a pair of **Sercial** wines: the **1940 Vinhos Justino Henriques** and the **1937 Pereira D'Oliveira**. Sercial is the driest category, but Mannie said you do not have to slavishly go from dry to sweet. The age of the wine, its concentration and time in the barrel is much more important than the sweetness level. So you could have a Terrantez at the end of a meal, after a Malvasia, a sweet style.

A pair of **Verdelho** was next. **Pereira D'Oliveira 1986** was compared to **Berry Brothers and Rudd 1851 Solera**. Berry Brothers of London is not a producer, rather the oldest continuous wine merchant in the world, over 300 years old. The wine was made by **Cossart Gordon** and sold in cask to Berry Bros. who then labeled and bottled it. Wine drinkers have the impression that a Madeira solera is inferior to a vintage wine. This is because they assume that it is made the same way as a **Sherry solera**, which is a very structured, organized and methodical system of adding new wine to old. You may have a thimble full of the original starter wine in the cask

by the time you drink a current Sherry solera offering. In Madeira, it was much less structured. The original wine was probably 1850, and it was topped up a few times with other vintages, the last time being in 1953. It was sold to Berry Bros. in the 1950's or 1960's, so it has not been diluted with other vintages since then. Our bottling was last topped up in 1973. In a Madeira solera, it if is a quality wine, that is all you need to know. The laws have been changed so it is no longer economical to make a solera.

We moved on to a bit sweeter category: **Bual**. The **Barbeito 1995** and **Cossart Gordon & Co. 1895** were next. The Barbeito winemaker really prized elegance, and after 11 years in barrel, he became concerned that the wine was becoming too concentrated, so he moved the barrels into a cooler, more humid part of the winery. So half of its life in the barrel was in relatively warm conditions where the wine had a lot of evaporation and the second half was in a cooler place where evaporation was slowed down dramatically. The effect of that is that you have relatively light color. If it had been in the heat, for 20 years, it would have been darker in color. The 1895 was the opposite. The longer a wine remains in barrel the more concentrated it becomes. This wine had been in barrel a very long time. Andrew told us that you can also make some guesses as to length of wine in the barrel by what condition the corks are in when you open it. Traditionally, the Madeira cork is about half the length of a traditional long cork, and cut on the bias on one end. All these corks fell apart when opened except for two. There was a crust on all the bottles. They all had to have the bottle cleaned out. Probably they were in cask for 50 years.

Mannie has edited Noël Cossart's book *Madeira the Island Vineyard*. In the **second edition**, he has a section on Madeira at Auction. One can track 681 Madeiras by the number of bottles, their high and low prices, the year sold and the location sold from 1970 to 2010. For our 1895 Bual, only 92 bottles were sold in 40 years.

Mannie was asked to describe **Terrantez**. It is a mythic grape variety that he has never come across in early writings. He has come across Sercial, Bual, Malmsey and the others, but not Terrantez. He has only come across anything written about Terrantez in the last hundred years. But some of the greatest old wines that have survived have been Terrantez, especially in the 18th century. He is unsure of the origin, but after Phylloxera, it was not commercially available for a long time. It is making a comeback now. What distinguishes it is a sweet/bitter taste. It can be on the dry or sweet end of the spectrum. The **1960 Blandy** is a good example of their house style. It is definitely on the sweet side. Blandy wines tend to be a bit sweeter, compared to Cossart Gordon. Terrantez can carry sweetness quite well because it has this sweet/bitter thing going on. It could be the greatest of all the major grapes, but there has never been very much of it. It is characterized by whiplash acidity in the finish. The **1971 D'Oliveira** has

been in the cask much longer than the Blandy's, despite its younger age, being bottled in 2016 for 45 years in the barrel. The Blandy's were bottled in 1992, for 32 years in the barrel. Time spent in the barrel is what makes a great, concentrated, complex vintage Madeira. The D'Oliveira wine was not made by D'Oliveira but by **Partidistas**, which are companies that make and age wines. They don't actually ship it. In 2010, there were just four plots of Terrantez comprising of just 5 acres on the island.

Honorary IWFS President **Sid Cross** was sitting next to me in the front row of our master class. He has written about the tasting in his blog which can be accessed at <http://blog.iwfs.org/2017/10/madeira-masterclass/> but Sid focuses more on the wines in the glass than on the history. Click on the link to learn more about the master class. You will have to log if you do so.







IWFS Baltimore Great Wine Weekend:

PLATED LUNCHEON AT THE FOUR SEASONS HOTEL 10/13/17

Written by Tom Murnan | Photos by Tom Murnan

LUNCH WAS CONVENIENTLY LOCATED just outside Grand Ballroom B, where the Madeira tasting was held in the Four Seasons Hotel. It was interesting that during the tasting, Mannie Berk spoke of how Baltimore was a food city, and had a long standing rivalry with Philadelphia, PA. In terms of Madeira, Philadelphia used Sherry and cream in their Terrapin soup, while Baltimore added no cream but used Madeira instead.

Maryland Crab Chowder with Oyster Crackers was served first. Fittingly enough, having just come from a Madeira tasting, we were served **The Rare Wine Company Baltimore Rainwater Madeira**. Not named after a grape variety, Rainwater was a very popular style. However, not much is known about how the wine got its name. Noël Cossart, in his book *Madeira the Island Vineyard* researched the question and came up with this explanation. In the old days, half empty pipes (barrels) of Madeira were floated out by men swimming and pushing the casks to waiting ships in the harbor. These were hoisted onboard, and topped up. The empties were floated back the same way. In the mid 18th century, a Francis Newton was sending his brother Andrew, who lived in Virginia, a shipment of Madeira. Some barrels were inadvertently left on the beach with the bungs open when it rained. The pipes were then floated out to a waiting ship and delivered to Andrew, unaware that they had been diluted with water. Andrew wrote back to Francis that he very much liked this Madeira because it was "Soft as Rain Water and the colour of rain water which has run over a straw thatched roof into a butt." He asked his brother to send more of "the pale, soft wine." His brother started to market this style, but the name was never patented, so it became a common term that anyone could use. Agua Pura (pure water) is one of the components in Rainwater Madeira. By the end of the 18th century, Rainwater was on all the price lists of Madeira, indicating its popularity.

Our crab chowder was rich and creamy, with the Rainwater adding an interesting component to the flavor profile. Like a Verdelho in its sweetness level, it was a lighter style that did not overwhelm the crab flavors. Quite interesting and apropos considering our recent education on Madeira.

Our Entree was **Jerk Chicken Breast, Sautéed Swiss Chard, Garlic Fingerling Potatoes with Tomato & Olive Relish**. The chicken was nicely browned albeit a bit dry. The tomato and olive relish was like a tapenade and offered a bit of piquancy. There was no discernible jerk flavor. An Italian **2016 Castello de Nieve Piemonte Grignolino** from Piedmont, Italy was a good choice given the olive and tomato relish.

Dessert found us with **Mango Mousse Cake**. Yellow and looking like slices of a small mango, the cake was very moist and quite lemon-like in taste, but had no Mango flavor that I could detect. Daubs of cream with small sugar balls acted like a garnish. I for one appreciated the fact that there was no wine for dessert. With about 15 ounces of highly alcoholic Madeira just before, I didn't need any more alcohol. I wanted to be at my best for the grand Burgundy dinner later that evening.

Source: *Madeira the Island Vineyard Christie's Wine Publications 1984, page 109-110.*







UPCOMING COUNCIL BLUFFS BRANCH EVENTS

Mark Your Calendars!

**FEB.
11**



BLOCK 16

Mardi Gras theme

Producers: Jill Panzer & Michelle Hyder

**APRIL
29**



V. MERTZ

Note Date Change

Producers: Patti & Steve Hipple

**MAR.
10**



TIMBER WOOD FIRE BISTRO

and Wayne Markus

Producers: Jill & Joe Goldstein,

Stacie Matz

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



When you hire **Omaha Door & Window** for your home remodeling needs you can expect exceptional service and quality products.

With having served more than 130,000 customers for over 50 years we are a company that you can trust to be there after the sale.

Our products include **Garage Doors, Windows, Siding, Entry Doors, Sunrooms** and **much more.**

www.omahadoor.com

402-733-6440

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 **Council Bluffs, Iowa Branch - Executive Committee**

President: Joe Goldstein
Vice President: Jill Goldstein
Treasurer/Membership: Diane Forristall
Secretary: Connie & Gary Martin
Cellar Master: John Fischer & Patti Hipple
Gazette & Photos: Tom Murnan

goldie2@cox.net
Jill.Goldstein@KutakRock.com
Diane@Forristall.us
happygardener1988@yahoo.com
jrudyf@cox.net | stephenhipple@hotmail.com
murnantom@gmail.com



The Bluffs **Food & Wine** *February 2018 gazette*

PUBLISHER: **Todd Lemke**
EDITOR: **Tom Murnan**
GRAPHIC DESIGNER: **Katuska Núñez**

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

All versions of Wine & Food Gazette are published monthly by Omaha Magazine, LTD, P.O. Box 461208, Omaha, NE 68046-1208. Telephone: (402) 884-2000. No whole or part of the contents herein may be reproduced without prior written permission of Omaha Magazine, excepting individually copyrighted articles and photographs. Unsolicited manuscripts are accepted however no responsibility will be assumed for such solicitations. The opinions expressed in this publication, except as specifically stated to the contrary, are solely the opinion of the author and do not necessarily represent the views of the Board of Governors of the Americas. The International Wine & Food Society, LTD., the publisher and any officer, director, member or agent thereof. The international Wine & Food Society does not endorse advertisers' products and is not responsible for damages incurred from the use of such products nor does it guarantee such products.