

FEBRUARY 2020

The Bluffs *Food & Wine* *gazette*

**The International Wine
and Food Society
IWFS Americas, Inc.**

*2019 Douro River Cruise Part 6 June 13, 2019:
Salamanca, Spain*

ALSO INSIDE:

Event Report: Old World vs. New World: President's Holiday Event at Fleming's
Steakhouse & Wine Bar • Tablas Creek 101: Why We Are What We Are



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



courtesy of huge1.com

PRESIDENT'S COMMENTS

As we begin the new year, there is an excitement in the air as to what will the new year bring.

To begin, I want to thank the Board of Directors for their encouragement and support in selecting me as the President of the IWFS Council Bluffs Branch for the next two years. The Branch has a fabulous Board of Directors who are committed to enhancing members knowledge and expertise with food and wines. With that in mind, we are interested in developing fun, interesting and educational events. We would love to hear any ideas or suggestions of event venues, areas or types of food and wine to explore. Feel free to talk with myself and/or any of our current Board of Directors.

Dave Thrasher – Vice President
Tabitha Thrasher – Secretary
Diane Forristall – Treasurer and Membership Chairperson
Patti Hipple – Wine Celler Master
Tom Murnan – Gazette & Photos
Bob Kossow – Web Master
John Matthews – E-Communication Chairperson
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Joe Goldstein – Past President/ member
Jill Goldstein – member
Amanda Harrinton - member
Steve Hipple – member
Suzanne Kossow – member
Gary Martin – member
Mike Wilke – member
Rhonda Wilke – member

By the way, being a Board member is a voluntary, nonpaid position that involves a significant time commitment. The Council Bluffs Branch is blessed to have very talented and dedicated Board members excited to enhance the understanding and experience with various wines and foods for all members. Thank you to all of our Board members.

A bit of news: the Board of Directors has been diligently working for a number of months on the incorporation of our Branch. With the coming of the new year, our Branch is now "IWFS Council Bluffs Branch, Inc." Rationale for the Branch's incorporation centered on protection of the Branch's assests, reduction of liability potentially incurred by the Branch and reduction of possible tax and costs for the Branch. Thank you to Steve and Patti Hipple, Diane and Gary Foristall and Gary Martin for spearheading this process.

Our February 2020 event will be at the Railcar Modern American Kitchen. Chef Jared Clarke has put together an interesting menu and wines. Bring your favorite date for a wonderful evening. The invitation will be available shortly.

Finally, a big welcome to our newest members, Pam and Dennis DePorte. We are delighted that you are joining the Council Bluffs Branch. 🍷

See you at the next event!,

Connie Martin

"Wine and friends are a great blend."

—Earnest Hemmingway

EDITOR'S

CORNER

I haven't been to Fleming's Prime Steakhouse and Bar for a long time and was overdue. But **Joe Goldstein** chose the venue for his presidential swan song. It was classic steakhouse fare, but with a couple of twists. We had French Champagne from a large format bottle, and got to compare wet aged to dry aged beef. President Joe was also awarded the IWFS Americas, Inc. Silver Medallion for his work on organizing the Branch's bylaws. Read the event report for more details.

Connie Martin is our incoming president, and as such, helped present Joe with his medallion. She has introduced herself above. I am confident that Connie has 20/20 vision for the outlook of this Branch for 2020. By some miracle, all the Board members were present at Flemings. Here is a photo of the entire motley crew.



THE WINE DOESN'T
EXIST UNTIL IT
IS DRUNK."

— JEAN-LOUIS CHAVE



I am in the process of gathering all our chef recipes together and putting them on the web site. Over the years we have gathered about 30 of them, and they are too scattered around in Gazettes to easily find. That's my winter project.

Finally, **Wayne Markus** speaks of entering Spain on the IWFS Douro River Cruise. The ship can go no farther upstream, so a bus was taken to **Salamanca, Spain**, marking the farthest destination on the cruise. If you have been noticing, the trip was organized with just one day trip, with the rest of the time spent enjoying the ship.

Enjoy! 🍷

Tom Murnan



EVENT REPORT:

OLD WORLD VS. NEW WORLD: PRESIDENT'S HOLIDAY EVENT AT FLEMING'S STEAKHOUSE & WINE BAR

Story & Photos by Tom Murnan

Our Branch has never held an event at Fleming's Steakhouse. Maybe the fear was that it was just a chain operation, or that they would not have enough room. But Joe Goldstein told me that he and Jill come there often, sit at the bar, and have a light supper, so he has gotten to know the staff quite well. Working with Wine Manager Brad Van de Lune, they came up with quite a nice Sunday wine dinner. We had 53 attendees, of that total 2 were guests, and two were no shows. Things were a bit snug, but cozy none-the-less.

It is not every day that you have Champagne from a 6 liter bottle of Taittinger Brut La Francaise NV. Just the empty bottle is heavy, but there was a tag team pouring this monster. It was history by the end of quaffing. Brad later told us that in 1932, Pierre Taittinger took over his family's Champagne business and began its rejuvenation into a powerful house. To keep our Old World New World theme, a second bubbler was also available. The Gruet Blanc de Noirs is remarkably like a French Champagne, but hails from Truth or Consequences, New Mexico. We had a nice Charcuterie & Cheese platter that included Manchego (sheep cheese) and Vino Rosso, a Wisconsin cheese aged 21 days in red wine, and a herb crusted chevre. A fig jam was interesting. Toasted Pita Bread, pickled onions, prosciutto, salami, red grapes and olives rounded out the platter.

Once seated, we paused to bid Joe Goldstein farewell as President, and welcome Connie Martin as our incoming President. Connie and Steve Hipple presented Joe with an IWFS America's Inc. Silver Medallion, not to mention framed certificate. I was trying to read the certificate's small print from afar.....which mentions something about heroic valor under pressure (or was it under fire?) at Board Meetings, or something to that effect. Something, something...it might have mentioned using live ammunition, but that must have been the only meeting

I missed in 2019. I can't attest to that. All I have to say is that he had a pretty big smile. Was that because of the medal, or because he didn't have to run the administration of the Branch anymore? We may never know. Dave Thrasher is our new V.P. Joe thanked all the Board Members for their service. Then it was back to dinner!

Our First Course was Lobster Corn Chowder. Wow, was that rich and creamy. Wonderful lobster meat bits joined corn kernels and celery to form the body of the soup. Very successful. We had two whites to compare and see which better matched the chowder. The Beringer Chardonnay Private Reserve 2017 was our New World offering. Deeply oaky and buttery, it is a quintessential California Chardonnay. Our French offering was Domaine Saumaize-Michelin Pouilly-Fuisse Les Ronchevats 2017 from Burgundy. Burgundy is the spiritual home for Chardonnay, so we had two very different styles to study. The Fuisse was a classic Burgundian Chardonnay, minerally, but not as rich and unctuous as its California cousin, but decidedly on the dry side compared to the Beringer, without noticeable oak on the palate.

The Second Course was Roasted Beet Stack. Red and golden beets, goat cheese, pistachios and lemon balsamic comprised the ingredients. This was a colorful dish with two kinds of beets. Herbed goat cheese sat atop the bottom beet, with the same repeated with alternating colors of beets. I think we had a total of 4 beet discs. The beets were roasted and then marinated in olive oil, parsley, rosemary, & thyme, salt and pepper and topped with a lemon balsamic dressing. Served cool, I found it to be refreshing and the essence of earthy beets.

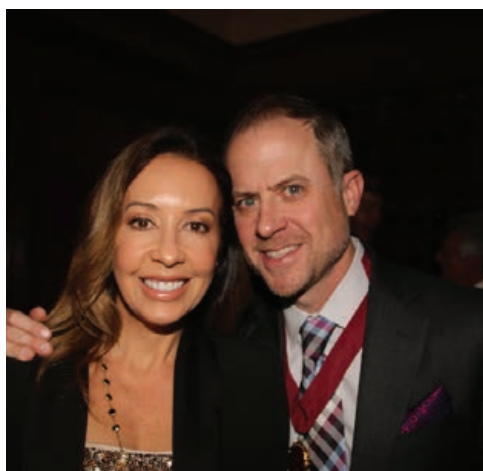
Two Pinot Noirs graced our table. We compared Sonoma Valley to a French Burgundy. Walter Hanzel North Slope Russian River Valley Pinot Noir 2013 competed with the Albert Bichot Secret de Famille Pinot Noir 2016. It is a little

unusual that a French wine lists the grape variety on the label. Usually they only tell you what place it came from. The Sonoma wine was rich, rounded, a touch sweet, velvety and hedonistic, while the Bourgogne was a touch austere, lean, but with good depth of flavor. It was a solid Pinot Noir, but I had to give the nod to hedonism, or the Hanzel. Both were a nice match to the beets.

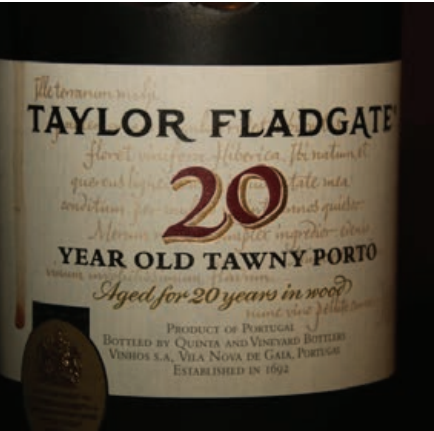
Our third course, the entrée course, had an imaginative pairing of two styles of aging beef. A Duo of Dry / Wet Aged Ribeyes were served with a trio of flavored salts: lava, merlot and herb. This was served with Hasselback potatoes and Corn Au Gratin. I seem to recall that one was aged 21 days (probably the Wet Age) and one 29 days. The dry aged seemed to have a bit more beefy flavor.

What is the difference between the two different aging styles? Dry Aged has been done for centuries, but is safer now because of refrigeration. All meat benefits from some aging. Chicken needs much less time than beef. After slaughter, enzymes break the beef down to make it tender. A side of beef is hung in just above freezing temperatures in the open air of a refrigerated unit. This dehydrates the beef and changes its flavor. It also reduces the weight, which, with the increased time and refrigeration costs, increases the cost of dry aged beef. In Nebraska and the Midwest, Wet Aged beef is primarily what is sold. It is a relatively new procedure made possible because of refrigeration and improved plastics. Cuts of beef are vacuum-sealed and shipped to market in the 4 to 10 days after slaughter. The enzymes still have some time to soften the meat, but the beef is not desiccated since it is enveloped in plastic. Less hang time, monitoring, refrigeration and evaporation equals a cheaper product. Which is better? It boils down to personal preference.

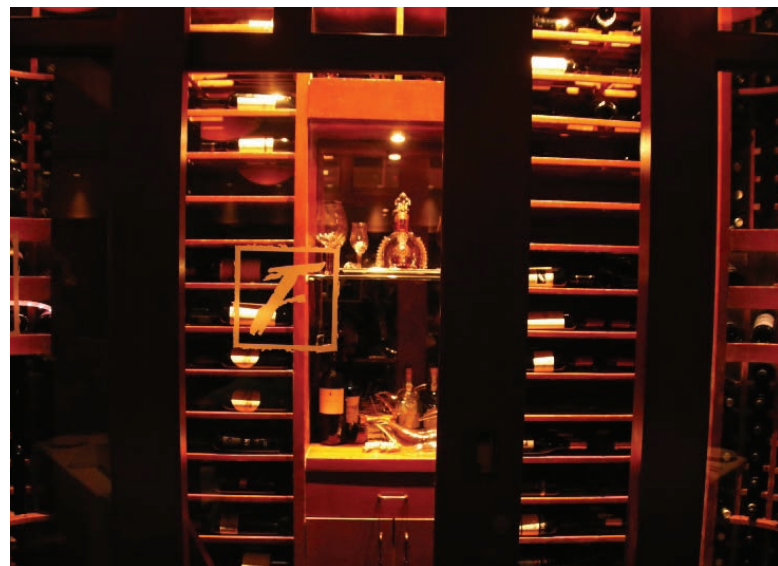
I just recently learned what a Hasselback potato is. Originating from the Hasselback Inn in Sweden, they have grown in popularity throughout the potato eating world. Said to be potato perfection, they have crisp edges but creamy centers. They are labor intensive because the potato is cut in half lengthwise, then sliced at 1/8 inch slices...but not all the way through the bottom. Do-it-yourself chefs would flank the sides of a potato with chopsticks to keep from cutting all the way through. ▶











◀ Once sliced, you are supposed to try to insert butter and herbs into the uncooked slices, a somewhat difficult task. Then they are baked covered with foil. Do not expect them to taste all doctored up with sour cream or creamed cheese. They taste like pre-buttered baked potatoes.

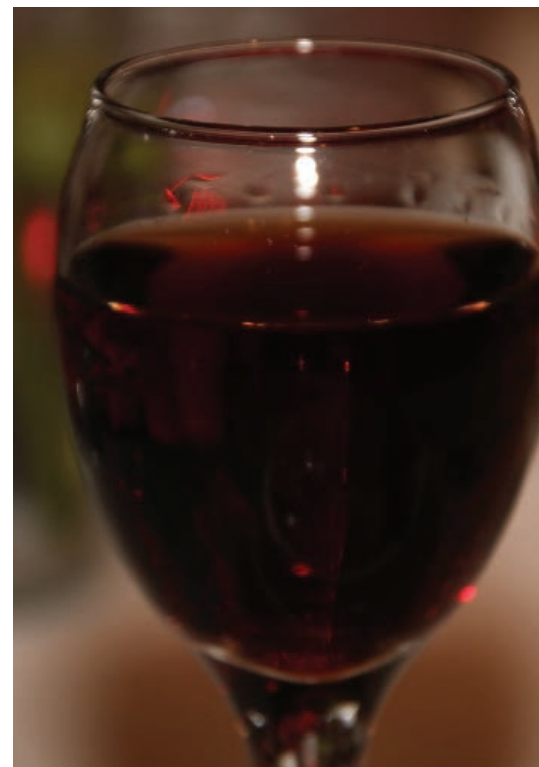
To increase your sense of experimentation, we had the trio of salt flavors to compare. I found the dry aged ribeye to have more concentrated beefy flavors, while the wet aged seemed moister, but with slightly less flavor. No one warned us to go sparingly with the salt. Too big a pinch would render your dish too salty. Personally, I only got much flavor out of the merlot salt. To my palate, the salt overpowered any flavor they were supposed to have.

We did have two Cabernet Sauvignon based wines to compare. There was the **Faust Cabernet Sauvignon 2016** from Napa Valley. This was 100% Cab. Then we had a Bordeaux blend with the **Château Pédesclaux, a Grand Cru Classé from Pauillac 2016**. It typically sports 47% Cabernet Sauvignon, 48% Merlot, and the rest Petit Verdot and Cabernet Franc. The Faust was a fruit bomb, rich, rounded and ready to go. The Château P was strong, structured and mildly tannic. My preference? I found the French wine to be delicious and the better wine with this dish than the softer fruit bomb.

The **Fourth Course** was dessert. **Apple Crumb Pie with Bourbon Bacon Ice Cream, Cinnamon Strudel, Caramel and Candied Bacon**. Rich and filling, it was a perfect steakhouse kind of finish. Interestingly, the **Taylor Fladgate 20 Year Tawny Port** paired quite well due to its oxidized flavors. One thing you should know is that just because the label says 20 years, that is not to be taken literally. Various vats of wood aged port are blended to make the wine, where it is approximately 20 years old. The same goes with 10, 30 and 40 year old tawnies.

Many thanks to Wine Manager **Brad Van de Lune** who principally helped organizers Jill and Joe Goldstein plan this event. Thanks to Chef Partner **Raphael Ponce** and Executive Sous Chef **Jose Velasco**, and all the wait staff for a great culinary experience. I particularly liked the waiter who came out balancing 6 plates on one extended arm. By the time I got my camera out, he had already deposited one plate onto a table! 🍷









**THE INTERNATIONAL WINE AND
& FOOD SOCIETY IWFS AMERICAS,
INC. 2019 DOURO RIVER CRUISE
PART 6 JUNE 13, 2019:**

SALAMANCA, SPAIN

Story & Photos by Wayne Markus



Motor coaches took us to **Salamanca, Spain**, about an hour and forty-five-minute ride. The Douro river in Spain has dams, but no locks so riverboats cannot go further into Spain. Along the way were pastures, olive and almond trees, black bulls bred for bull fighting, horses, storks, and rare donkeys. The city is known as **the golden city** because the buildings are built of a honey-colored sandstone that glitters like gold. We shopped in the **Plaza Mayor** formerly the site of bull fights. Silver, leather, cosmetics, and toiletries are less expensive in Spain than Portugal. **Charro** is the souvenir jewelry of Salamanca. We toured the **University of Salamanca** where the famous (small) **Frog of Salamanca** was pointed out. The University is the third oldest in Europe after Bologna and Oxford.

We also toured the old Romanesque/gothic cathedral and the adjoined new late gothic/baroque cathedral. The waiting list for weddings is two years so brides reserve a date then find a groom! Many storks entertained us from the bell towers and high buildings. **Jamón Ibérico** dry-cured ham from the black Iberian acorn eating pigs was on display and available to purchase and in sandwiches.

Back at the ship, **Richard Mayson** again discussed the evening dinner wines. The first was **Dow's Fine White Port with Schweppes tonic** that is Portugal's national aperitif. **2016 Prazo de Roriz** red wine by Prats & Symington was served with the starter courses. It is not big and costs €9-10 Euros.

The two reds with the main courses were from **Prats-Symington**, both are from essentially the same property and both blends of **Touriga Nacional** and **Touriga Franca**. Both are available in the American market.

The **2017 Post Scriptum** is the second wine, with less oak, more purity of wild fruit, and more ready to drink costing about €20. It was Richards favorite wine of the night. It was served with Mrs. Tollman's Shrimp Stroganoff, Mushrooms and Fettuccini noodles.

The **2016 Chryseia** at €60 is the top non-fortified wine of the Prats-Symington label. It is made with new French oak, is dry and has finesse. It is a youngster and needs more time. It was served with Sautéed Duck Breast, Sweet Potato, and Red Cabbage.

2000 Quinta de Roriz Vintage Port was served appropriately with cheese cream, ice cream, and seasonal fruits. It had lovely sweet ripe fruit. This Quinta was well-known by the end of the 17th century and is now owned by Prats-Symington.

Source: <https://tablascreek.typepad.com/tablas/tablas-creek-101/> 🍷









UPCOMING COUNCIL BLUFFS BRANCH EVENTS

Mark Your Calendars!

FEB
22



RAILCAR MODERN AMERICAN KITCHEN

Date Night

Producers: Connie & Gary Martin

MAR
22



NOTE DATE CHANGE - DOLCE

Casual vs. Connoisseur wines: A blind tasting of weeknight wines followed by dinner with wines for the weekend connoisseur.

Producers: Tabitha & Dave Thrasher

APR
02



RESTAURANT TBD

Theme TBD, Venue Change.

Producers:

Connie Martin & Joe Goldstein

MAY
29



OMAHA PRIME

Producers:

Hayes & Hipple



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

COUNCIL BLUFFS, IOWA BRANCH - EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

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Vice President: Dave Thrasher

Treasurer/Membership: Diane Forristall

Secretary: Tabitha Thrasher

Cellar Master: John Fischer & Patti Hipple

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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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