

ALSO INSIDE • Recipe: Biaggi's Chef Kevin Schlotfeld's Salmon Cake with Garlic Lemon Aioli, Spicy Cabbage & Green Onion Slaw • **Recipe:** Biaggi's Chef Kevin Schlotfeld's Golden Beet & Pancetta Purée with Rosemary Crostini, Candied Bacon and Crème Fraîche • Coudoulet de Beaucastel Rouge • Introducing Chef Ryan Arensdorf at the Kimpton Cottonwood Hotel

PRESIDENT'S COMMENTS

Greetings to all;

he first event of 2021 was held at Dante hosted by Amanda Harrington and John Matthews. The "Truffle" themed event was a superb evening of great food and wine. Thank you Amanda and John.

Each year, Wine Spectator's editors survey the wines reviewed over the previous 12 months and select our Top 100, based on quality, value, availability and excitement. This annual list honors successful wineries, regions and vintages around the world. On the Wine Spectator website, you will find every Top 100 list from 2020 back to the debut year, 1988. New regions, grapes and styles have appeared on the list, but the classics are still going strong. Enjoy browsing more than 30 years of the world's top wines! All Lists of Top 100 Wines | Wine Spectator's Top 100.

Be safe and be well.

Connie Martin

Cover Photo: Fruit plate with Chef Kevin Schlotfeld's carved pineapple wine bottle. Photo by Tom Murnan.

"With her marriage, she got a new name and a dress."

— Its Time for some Lexophiles

EDITOR'S

CORNER

e had a great time at the President's Holiday Celebration. Usually, it's a formal affair, but with COVID-19 it was more subdued and casual. So, you may be thinking, why am I using a picture of me wearing a top hat? I just wanted to thumb my nose at the Corona Virus and hearken back to less stressful times. Plus, I haven't used this photo before!



It has been awhile since we had an event at Biaggi's. I'm not sure why, because we always have a good meal at Biaggi's. I am thinking that Aaron King was chef then, but we got introduced to a new chef, **Kevin Schlotfeld**, who is quite enthusiastic about his position. Officially, his business card says he is a Sous Chef, but you wouldn't know it from the meal we had. He is eager to work himself up in the Biaggi's organizational chart to full chef. And don't forget that Biaggi's is the only place in Omaha that will allow IWFS members to bring their own bottles of wine without a corkage fee. Just let them know when you make your reservation that you belong to IWFS.

Chef Kevin graciously brought us two recipes from our wine dinner. Most of the time I have to nag these recipes out of various chefs, but Kevin was right on top of his promise. But getting two recipes and not just the one I was expecting was an unexpected surprise and greatly appreciated because they were so darned good. These will be placed in our recipe book for your convenience. Just click on https://issuu.com/omahapublications/docs/iwfs co council bluffs recipes.

One of the wines we had at our Holiday dinner was **Coudoulet de Beaucastel Rouge**. We have discussed the grand vin, Château Beaucastel, before, but never its second label, which is quite a bit cheaper but still delicious and highly rated by professional critics. Check out the background of what you were drinking. The wine came from our cellar.

Finally, this month the Omaha Branch has invited the Council Bluffs Branch to join them at the **Kimpton Cottonwood Hotel** for a 50th anniversary dinner on Valentine's Day itself. If you belong to both branches, you have two clubs rolled into one and can save a bit of money. **Ryan Arensdorf** has been brought in from Virginia to get things started at the old Blackstone. Read his introduction here.

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

THERAPIST:
YOUR WIFE SAYS
YOU NEVER BUY
HER FLOWERS.
IS THAT TRUE?

HIM: TO BE HONEST, I NEVER KNEW SHE SOLD FLOWERS.

Tom Murnan

EVENT REPORT:

President's Holiday Celebration at Biaggi's

STORY BY TOM MURNAN PHOTOS BY TOM MURNAN & WAYNE MARKUS

Tith so many holiday cancellations happening this year, I was glad that we were able to hold our President's Holiday Celebration. The last time we were at Biaggi's Ristorante Italiano was when Aaron King was in command of the kitchen. I got to meet our new chef, Kevin Schlotfeld, who told us that he had worked under Chef King's tutelage for a number of years until he landed the sous chef's position at Biaggi's. He was excited to prepare a wine dinner, and started with various preparations about a month ago. It all came together on Sunday night, the 6th of December. Twenty six members signed up with no guests, a comfortable number for the Italian themed, holiday decorated party room. Tuxedos were not required this year. We went with a little more relaxed style. The staff wore masks, and all wines were poured by the staff.

We started with quaffing seated at our table assignments after going to a large fruit platter to fill our appetizer plates. Not printed on the menu was an assortment of red and green grapes, pineapple slices, cantaloupe, honeydew, blueberries, and festively sliced apples. Showing a bit of originality, Chef carved a wine bottle out of two pineapples. Never have seen that before! A nice touch for a wine club. Our quaffing wine, also not listed, turned out to be the **Gloria Ferrer Sonoma Brut NV** listed under the 1st Course. The sparkler went well with the fruit, especially the pineapple. Our head waitress, **Robin White**, came out to talk about all the wines. Most came from Biaggi's, except for the Rose Rock and Coudoulet reds.

1st Course found us continuing to use the Gloria Ferrer. Robin told us it was composed of 86% Pinot Noir and 14% Chardonnay. It had lively small bubbles, a sign of a quality sparkler, and a nice citrus flavor with a creamy mid palate. This time it was paired with **Pistachio Breaded Prawns, Herb**

Goat Cheese, Avocado and Roasted Garlic Aioli. Beautifully presented in a small oval shaped porcelain bowl, two prawns were butterflied and covered with a fine pistachio grind. This was sitting on a slice of avocado, with goat cheese in the middle and two dollops of aioli on either side of the cheese. The aioli seemed to bring out more of the comfort food flavors than the goat cheese. I could have used more aioli than cheese, which had a tendency to overwhelm the shrimp. The pistachio looked great, but seemed pretty neutral in flavor to my palate. The Ferrer was a good match, with the acid and bubbles cutting the richness of the cheese and enhancing the seafood.

The 2nd Course was Salmon Cakes, Garlic Lemon Aioli, Spicy Cabbage and Green Onion Slaw. Nicely presented again, two generous patties of salmon sat touching, side by side, with a thin slice of cooked lemon covered the top center. The cakes sat atop the spicy cabbage and green onion slaw. The slaw had red pepper flakes in the mix. Dots of various sized garlic lemon aioli covered either end of the plate. Upon first bite, I was surprised that there was a manageable spicy heat inside the cakes, making for a lively mouthful, and to chase that, the slaw was likewise spicy. Again, it was not a burn-your-taste-buds-off spicy. We switched white wines to a Cloudy Bay Sauvignon Blanc 2019. Cloudy Bay, Robin told us, is so named because of the silt that flows into the bay from the New Zealand soil. It had mandarin and grapefruit flavors. What she didn't say was that it had a pronounced grassy nose, with similar flavors on the palate. Just me, but I don't appreciate grassiness. My salmon had a slight fishy taste, but there was enough going on that it was not objectionable. The cabbage had a delayed action heat that took about 30 seconds to manifest itself. All that spice from the salmon and slaw helped to kill the grassiness in the wine, which I appreciated. The chef offered to write down one recipe for our IWFS CB collection of recipes, and this was voted the recipe most members wanted.













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Seating Arrangements

Table 1

Gary & Jane Hagebush Joe & Andi Kafka Wayne & Karen Markus Table 2
Steve Elfson
Chris Rix
Tom & Mary Murnan
Gary & Diane Forristall

Table 3

Patti & Steve Hipple Cristina & Chris Toth Amanda Harrington John Matthews Rhonda & Mike Wilke Table 4

Kathy & Don Wittler Denise & Jon Meyers Gary & Connie Martin











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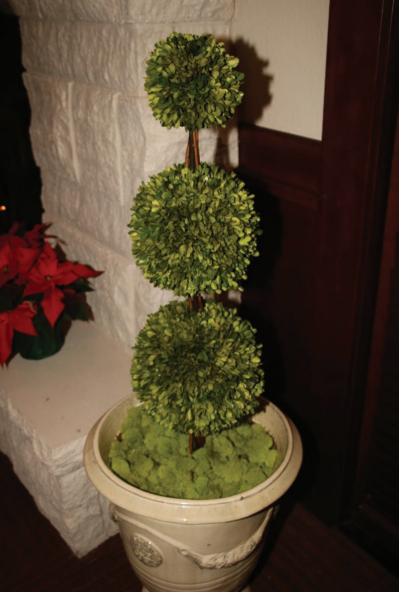








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On to the 3rd Course, which featured a Golden Beet and Pancetta Purée with Rosemary Crostini, Candied Bacon and Crème Fraîche. Basically a homemade soup, at first sip it seemed to have the texture of a finely ground potato soup, but not for long. The deep earthy flavors and sweetness of the golden beets came through prominently. The chopped green onion stalk garnish added a boost of flavor. Chunks of pancetta were mostly found at the bottom of the bowl. On either side of the bowl rim was laid a strip of candied bacon and a slice of rosemary crostini, which was flat and thin, like a pizza crust. Again, a nice presentation. You could decide what to do with both pieces. The crostini was heavy and filling with light rosemary flavor. Some tablemates crumbled the crisp bacon up and put it in the soup, I decided that the bacon flavor was too strong for the way more delicate beets so did not incorporate the entire stick into the soup. Likewise the crème fraîche itself was a stronger agent than the soup base. The Rose Rock Drouhin Oregon Eola-Amity Hill Pinot Noir 2016 was a good wine choice. Robin told us it was grown on volcanic soil with a cooling effect from the Van Duzer Corridor. ["The Van Duzer Corridor is an anomaly in the Coast Range through which oceanic winds funnel into the valley, creating a cooling effect that occurs as early as 2:00 in the afternoon. This breeze dries out the vine canopy and decreases fungus pressure, making the area highly attractive for grape growing and supporting sustainable practices by drastically reducing the need for fungus spray. As a phenomenon of wind protection, the grape skins thicken, leading to an abundance of anthocyanins (color) and tannin. Within the 35.9 square mile triangle that composes the Van Duzer Corridor, nearly 1,000 acres are occupied by 18 commercial vineyards and 6 bonded wineries."* Editor.] 2016 was the earliest harvest on record. The Rose Rock was intensely flavorful with its crushed berry flavors, and quite in synch with the delicate nature of the purée.

the 4th Course was our entrée: Garlic Herb Roasted Lamb Chop, Pistachio Arugula Pesto, Horseradish and Cauliflower Purée. Really a rack of lamb cut, we had two chops, one with the two (or in some cases 3) bones crossing each other atop the mound of cauliflower. A small, cute porcelain spoon similar to those used in Oriental restaurants held the pistachio arugula pesto. Its piquancy quickly convinced the palate that this was no basil pesto. Two garnishes flanked the spoon: a ribbon of cucumber and one of orange zest. The chops were excellent, perfectly cooked, and great lamb-y flavor. The arugula added its own salty piquant, bright flavors if that was the direction you decided to go.

We had two wines to compare this time. **Coudoulet de Beaucastel 2015** is a second label of the more famous Châteauneuf-du-Pape (CduP) Château Beaucastel. Located to the north east of the CduP area, Coudoulet

is a Côtes du Rhône, a less prestigious appellation. However, the humble beginnings of Château Beaucastel began at Coudoulet, when in 1549 Pierre de Beaucastel built a barn there, and the winery took his name. It is known as a reliable substitute for the grand vin, and a bargain compared the CduP. It is composed of 40% Grenache, 30% Mouvérdre, 20% Syrah and 10% Cinsault. Its raspberry, herbs and a touch of leather went very well with the lamb. It seemed on the tannic side to me, but otherwise well balanced. The competitor wine was a Castellare di Castellina Chianti Classico 2017. Located in the Chianti region of Tuscany, the vineyard sits at 1200 feet, one of the highest in the appellation. It is traditionally made. Classico means that the wine must be made with 80% Sangiovese, while just Chianti means only 70% must be Sangiovese. Castellare is known for their bird labels. They make a different label of an endangered bird from the Chianti area every year. The texture of the Chianti was a bit rougher than the Rhône, has blackberry and cherry fruit, with some tobacco flavors, and a bit more acidity than its competitor. Both wines were good, but coated the mouth with tannin without food.

We finished with Dessert. Mild Roasted Coffee Infused Gelato with Chocolate Port Sauce was delightful Homemade gelato not found on the usual Biaggi's menu, the chocolate sauce had shreds of chocolate decorating the dome of the gelato. The coffee was noticeable but not assertive. Our 10 Year Fonseca Tawny Port was a good match. Tawny starts out as a ruby port, and is allowed to oxidize in the barrel. It is usually a blend of other vintages, so it cannot be said to be strictly 10 years old. The average is 10 years old. As you get to 20, 30 and 40 years old, the color gets remarkably more brown, or tawny, and more concentrated due to evaporation in the barrel. At only 10 years, you can still see reddish color notes.

Many thanks for Chef Kevin Schlotfeld for his enthusiasm and creative menu. Thanks as well, Chef, for the menu. Thanks as well to Tammy Mulder the Beverage Manager, who helped select the restaurant wines, as well as Robin White and her crew of Stephanie and Kirstin who provided great service. Robin also artistically set up the display of the wines and gave us details of the wines we drank. Thanks to Connie and Gary Martin, who had to go through a number of other places, who cancelled because of COVID, or went out of business, before landing on Biaggi's. We all left with a small box of Stam Chocolates to comfort us in a small way in this time of pandemic, and one lucky person per table won the poinsettia / orchid centerpiece.

*Van Duzer Corridor source: https://willamettewines.com/about-the-valley/willamette-valley-avas/ van-duzer-corridor-ava/

Biaggi's Chef Kevin Schlotfeld's Salmon Cake with Garlic Lemon Aioli, Spicy Cabbage & Green Onion Slaw



Salmon Cakes

INGREDIENTS:

2 lbs Salmon

4 oz Scallions

4 oz Artichoke Hearts

1 Red Bell Pepper

1.5 liq oz Ground Mustard

10 oz Parmesan Breadcrumbs

1 tsp Cayenne

1.5 liq oz Salt/Pepper

2 liq oz Egg White

DIRECTIONS:

Set up: Cut salmon into 1/2 inch pieces. (Use salmon scraps if you have any on hand) Cut artichoke and red pepper into 1/8 inch pieces and scallions into 1/8 inch bias cut.

Yields: 8 cakes

Procedure:

- 1. Mix all ingredients besides the egg white in a medium mixing bowl and fold together until none of the breadcrumbs are dry.
- 2. Add the egg whites using your fingers to fold the mixture together.
- 3. Split into 8 oz cakes and bake for 15 minutes on 350 degrees.

Biaggi's Chef Kevin Schlotfeld's Golden Beet & Pancetta Purée with Rosemary Crostini, Candied Bacon and Crème Fraîche



Yields: 12 Cups

Golden Beet & Pancetta Purée

INGREDIENTS:

2 lb Golden Beets
4 oz Yellow Onion (Diced)
2 Cloves Fresh Garlic (Rough Chopped)
6 oz Pancetta (1/3 in. chop)
2 liq oz Brandy
1/2 Gallon Chicken Stock
.25 lb Butter
Salt, Pepper

DIRECTIONS:

Peel beets and add them to a pot of boiling water. Boiling the peeled beets will help not only soften them for your puree, but also eliminate some earthy flavors. Do this for 25 minutes or until you can poke the beets with little resistance with a knife. In a stock pot on medium flame, add the onions and garlic. Do not let the onions overcook, you are looking for them to turn soft and translucent. Allow the garlic to sweat. When the onions are soft add the pancetta. The pancetta should resemble soft bacon after about two minutes. Do not drain the fat, add the brandy and deglaze. Reduce the brandy 80 percent, then add the beets and chicken stock. Meanwhile, melt the remaining butter in a small pan on low heat. Once the stock has come to a boil, you may begin your emulsion. Most people do not have an industrial bir mixer, and thats okay. To use an every day blender, simply ladel the soup and a proportionate amount of the other ingredients into the blender. Make sure it is vented as hot liquids expand and cause burns. If you can not guarantee a good ratio of ingredients, don't worry. Grab another stock pot, or container big enough for the batch. After each portion you blend, add it into the container and mix together with a whisk. Once the task is complete, mix in the remaining butter and season to taste. Enjoy!

Rosemary Crostini

INGREDIENTS:

1.5 cup Flour
1.5 tsp Kosher Salt
1 tsp Sugar
1/2 cup Parmigiano Reggiano Cheese
(Grated)
3 tbsp Extra Virgin Olive Oil
1/2 cup Cold Water
1 tbsp Fresh Chopped Rosemary

DIRECTIONS:

Mix flour, kosher salt, sugar, and parmigiano reggiano cheese into a small mixing bowl. Add the oil and the water and mix well with a wooden spoon until the mix is consistent with sticky dough. Add the chopped rosemary and begin kneading the mixture together until the sticky dough more resembles childrens playdough. Dust an even surface with flour and begin rolling the dough into 1/8 inch. You may cut this dough and re roll it as many times as you need. Bake in the oven at 400 degrees for 11 - 13 minutes. Allow the crostini to rest for 2 to 3 minutes before serving.

Candied Bacon

INGREDIENTS:

1 pkg Bacon 8 oz Dark Brown Sugar 1 liq oz Sea Salt Fresh Cracked Black Pepper

DIRECTIONS:

Take a baking rack out of your oven and let it cool down. In the mean time, use foil to line the baking rack directly under it to catch dripping fat, cookie sheets or any other pan are useful if you can cover the entire rack. In a bowl, mix the brown sugar and sea salt. Take each piece of bacon and roll it around in the sugar mixture. Lay the bacon on the baking rack and crack the black pepper over it. Place the rack back in the oven at 350 degrees for 12 - 14 minutes. The bacon may not be stiff at that time, but when the sugar solidifies it will. Take the bacon out and place directly onto a cooling rack.

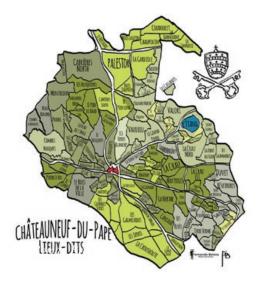
WINERY PROFILE:

Coudoulet de Beaucastel Rouge

BY TOM MURNAN



The Perrin family



ost members of the IWFS are familiar with the Châteauneuf-du-Pape (CduP) domaine named Château Beaucastel. It is one of the top wineries in the Southern Rhône, making mostly red wines, but also a much smaller amount of white wine. Beaucastel is located in the far northeast sector of the CduP appellation in an area called Coudoulet, where they have a second label called Coudoulet de Beaucastel. It's nickname is Baby Beaucastel.

CÔTES DU RHONE

Coudoulet is located to the east of CduP, outside the official CduP AOC (Appellation d'Origin Côntrolée), and so is classified as a Côtes du Rhone (CDR). As such, has its own set of regulations for which to comply. CDR is a huge appellation, both in the size of the area, 44,000 hectares, and the number of wine produced, close to \$100 million dollars. Only Bordeaux has a larger appellation in terms of hectares planted. The Romans used the area extensively for vineyards.

◀ As the region gained more fame due to its superior wine, in 1737 it was decreed that the barrels be branded CDR to guarantee quality and source. Two hundred years later, in 1937, when Baron Leroy made CduP the first French AOC (Appellation d'Origin Côntrolée), CDR was also declared an AOC. The purpose of the AOC was to guarantee quality by limiting the kinds of grape varietals used, the yields, the minimum percentage of certain grapes, and on and on. Within the CDR appellation, 89% of the wine is red, 4% is white, and 7% is rosé. There are 21 permitted red varietals, but the majority are primarily Grenache, followed by Syrah, Mouvedre, Cinsault, and Carignan. White grape varieties include Grenache Blanc, Clairette, Bourboulenc, Rousanne and Marsanne. There are two classification levels: 1. Côtes du Rhône Villages, and 2. Côtes du Rhône. The CDR Villages is more prestigious, has better terroir and command a higher price than simple CDR. Every rule can be broken, and Coudoulet, even though it has a

simple CDR appellation, is considered as good as a CDR Villages. Many CDR have terroirs that, in spots, are as good as CduP. Regulations forbid the use of village names except for 18 permitted communes (villages).

Baby Beaucastel is made just to the east of the Beaucastel vineyards, across Highway A7. Coudoulet is made with virtually the same concern for quality as the CduP grand vin. Both have had organic vineyards since the 1950's and in the early 1970s, biodynamic farming. 75 acres are devoted to red, and 6 acres for white. Just like at Beaucastel, each grape variety is vinified separately. Mouvedre and Syrah provide structure, aging ability and color. Their flavors are straight forward. Grenache and Cinsault provide warmth, color and roundness. Coudoulet does

not use all 13 grape verieties permitted for CduP, however. The terroir is quite similar to

Beaucastel. Both have galets, the round fist sized stones which collect heat during the day and release it at night. In prehistoric times, the Rhône River tore down bits of the Alps and deposited them downstream, in these vineyards. Both have sandstone (marine molas-

ses) and alpine alluvium. The climate of plentiful sunshine and low rainfall are the same, of course, since they are so close together. And both do not use new oak barrels because it overwhelms the fruit.

So if you want the taste of a Château Beaucastel for 25% of the price, you cannot do any better than get yourself a bottle of Coudoulet.

Sources: http://www.vineyardbrands.com/producer.aspx?id=28; https://www.thewinecellarinsider. com/rhone-wines-cote-rotie-hermit-

age-chateauneuf-du-pape/cotes-du-rhone-ap-pellation-rhone-valley-wine-guide/

FAMILLE PERRIN

adoulet de Beaucass



INTRODUCING CHEF RYAN ARENSDORF AT THE KIMPTON COTTONWOOD HOTEL

or our Valentine's Day 50th Formal Dinner event at the old Blackstone Hotel, a high powered culinary star has been brought in from a five star resort, the Salamander Resort and Spa (38 miles from Washington, DC), not just for our event, but to get the Cottonwood on the Omaha hotel and culinary map. The menu will be inspired from the Omaha Branch's first couples dinner at the Blackstone in 1972. Our Branch has been invited to join the Omaha Branch in their celebration and will be collaborating on the wines. Since Chef Ryan is new to the Omaha area, it is appropriate to introduce him here and whet your interest for this historic and fun event.

CHEF RYAN ARENSDORF

With over 15 years of high-touch, hands-on culinary experience, Arensdorf joins us from the Salamander Resort and Spa, where, as Executive Chef, he played a key role in its distinction as a Forbes Five Star rated resort. After completing his education at Chicago's Kendall College, Chef Arensdorf began his career at Gibson's Bar & Steakhouse in Chicago. Working extensively in the Windy City food scene with renowned chefs, Arensdorf heightened his culinary skill while working with Chef Martial Noguier at notable Chicago establishments including Bistronomic, Michael Jordan's One Sixtyblue and Café des Architectes at Sofitel Chicago Water Tower. He also opened Cibo Matto at theWit Hotel alongside Chef Todd Stein. Chef Arensdorf is committed to creating a unique dining experience in Omaha, centered around kitchen-wide scratch cooking. This is a philosophy instilled in him by both of his grandmothers, who made lasting family memories with their kitchen traditions, especially their hand-crafted jams and jellies, and freshly baked pies. Chef Arensdorf is excited to bring his experience and passion

to The Cottonwood Hotel.



FEB.

THE COTTONWOOD

(FORMERLY THE BLACKSTONE HOTEL)

IWFS Omaha 50th Anniversary Formal Dinner Producers: Todd Lemke & Mike Wilke

IN THE PAXTON
Theme: Are You a Master S
Produce:

MAR. 801 CHOPHOUSE

Theme: Are You a Master Somm?? **Producers:** Tabitha & Dave Thrasher

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The International Wine & Food Society of London, England

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www.iwfs.org/americas/council-bluffs

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