

FEBRUARY 2022

The Bluffs *Food & Wine* *gazette*

Holiday Celebration
President's Event at
Au Courant



Inside: Past President Connie Martin Awarded the Americas Silver Medal

Introducing New Members Ann and Jason Sullivan | Tin City Part 4: Field Recordings | Upcoming Events



EDITOR'S

CORNER

I always love going to Au Courant. One of the reasons I joined IWFS was to have gourmet meals. And Au Courant delivers superbly in that area. There always are unusual spices, the freshest, locally sourced ingredients, and wines you are unfamiliar with. We had a **Jansz** bubbly. Never heard of it before. But it comes from Tasmania. Tasmania? thought it was pretty good, though. Ever heard of **Fennel Pollen**? How **Black Pearl Mushrooms**? Or **Wildcot Bay Scallops**? We had all that and like a cheese whose rind was covered with ash and flower petals. Check out



I
about
more,
the story.

During the dinner, **Connie Martin** was awarded the **Americas Silver Medal**. has worked hard for us as our President. I for one was glad she had been nominated Medal. Check out that story as well.

We are excited to welcome two new members: **Ann and Jason Sullivan**. Ann has her own OB/Gyn private practice, while Jason is recovering from software development by becoming a franchise owner. They both love wine but want to learn more about it. I'd say they came to the right place! We have had a few more new members, but they have been shy about introducing themselves in the Gazette. Newbies, we would love to put your wine journey story in the Gazette. Just contact murnantom@gmail.com (me).

Tin City Part 4 takes us to **Field Recordings**, an unusual place that has a multitude of labels from small producers. Winemaker Andrew Jones worked as a vine nursery field man and made friend with a lot of small vineyard owners. Today, as a winery owner and winemaker, these vineyard owners sell him small amounts of their best grapes. Check out this unusual concept for a winery.

Don't forget, **Biaggi's Ristorante Italiano** is about the only restaurant in Omaha that doesn't charge IWFS members a corkage fee. Inform the restaurant when you are making a reservation that you are a member of IWFS, and their corporate office waived corkage if you bring your own bottle. They may want proof. Offer your vintage card that you receive annually from IWFS as verification.

On a more somber note, we would like to extend our condolences to our founder, Dr. John Fischer, for the loss of his son Stan in Arizona. Stan was riding a bicycle when he tipped over. A car that was going too fast and was out of control hit Stan when he was on the ground, and then sped off without stopping. We are so sorry for your loss, John.

Some members have had trouble reading the Gazette on issuu.com, Or, they don't want to sign in, which means you can't even read the Gazette at all. They prefer a PDF since all you have to do is click it open. We have decided to offer it in both formats. In your email, a PDF will be sent along with the issuu.com link. The advantage of issuu.com is that you can see both right and left pages, like a paper magazine. Our PDF only lets you view one page at a time.

You can also access the Branch Recipe file by clicking: https://issuu.com/omahapublications/docs/iwfs_cb_council_bluffs_recipes. 

Cheers!

Tom Murnan

Cover Photo: Cover photo: Colorful Jansz Tasmania sparkling wine packaging fond amidst the wineglasses at the 12/5/2021 Au Courant event. Photo by Tom Murnan.

TEACH A CHILD TO
BE POLITE AND
COURTEOUS IN THE
HOME AND, WHEN
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NEVER BE ABLE TO
MERGE HIS CAR
ONTO THE FREEWAY."

— IT'S TIME FOR SOME
LEXOPHILES

EVENT REPORT:

Holiday Celebration President's Event at Au Courant

Story & Photos by Tom Murnan

Our holiday feast was held at one of Omaha's truly gourmet restaurants, Au Courant. Executive Chef Ben Maides has mostly left the restaurant in the capable hands of **Chef de Cuisine Anthony "Chovy" Canigla**. And "Chovy," along with the help of **Sous Chef Andy "Barnie" Barnard** crafted a delicious eight course meal for us. I say eight because there was no mention in the invitation of the huge five foot appetizer plank that came out during quaffing. There were 33 people in attendance. **Connie Martin & Gary Martin** were the event organizers, along with the aid of **Michelle & Hasan Hyder**, who picked out the wines. Unfortunately they were unable to attend because of COVID.

Back to that five foot plank covered with appetizers. It takes two to haul this loaded board out to the bar, where all could help themselves to its treats. It took me more than ten minutes to write down all the different hors d'oeuvres. Chef "Barnie," who was in charge of assembling the board, helped me write it all down through all the noise of 33 conversations bouncing off the brick walls. We had **Spec**, a smoked prosciutto from the Alto Adige (north) region of Italy. Then there was **Black Pepper Salumi** from Southern Italy. There was **La Tour**, a French cow and goat cheese, **Mortadella** (which is similar to Bologna except Mortadella has cubes of fat that breaks up the meat, whereas with Bologna the fat and meat are emulsified into one uniform texture). **Lamb Croquettes** were the dark brown, round items topped off with a dot of lemon cream. The lamb is surrounded by breadcrumbs and deep fat fried, then covered with Za'atar, a Middle East spice mixture of oregano, thyme and/or marjoram with toasted sesame seeds and dried sumac. There was a light-green colored cheese, **Primo Sale**, a sheep's cheese that had basil added. The name itself literally means "first salt" and is used to describe early stages of the aging process. It hailed from Genoa. The **Queso con Oveja de Fores** is an Italian soft sheep cheese with the rind covered with volcanic ash and flowers: rose pedals, blue corn flowers, jasmine, lavender, and orange blossoms. **Peach Jam**, **White Dijon Mustard**, and **Toast** were available. **Pickled Raspberries** and small **Pickled Green Tomatoes** from the restaurant garden added some mouth puckering options. Fresh **Beausoleil Oysters** sat off to the side on a bed of ice. Beausoleils (the French name means beautiful sun) are farmed in floating trays in Miramichi Bay, New Brunswick, Canada. They are suspended just below the surface, gently jostled by the waves, where they never touch the sea floor. ➤



















◀ Finally, just when you thought nothing further would come out, there was a spectacular square of **Honey Comb** that just seemed to compliment many of the different ingredients. Wow. That was some spread! We had our choice of Prosecco or Beaujolais to imbibe.

As an interesting aside, those pickled raspberries would do a number on your wine. John Meyers pointed out to me that if you took a sip of white wine, then ate a pickled raspberry, when you took your next sip of that wine it would obliterate most of the wine's nuances and completely change its flavor.

We were called to table by **President Connie Martin**, where she said her goodbye to us all. For family reasons, she will not be renewing her membership. This was her last event as President. Dave Thrasher will succeed her. At this point Connie was presented with the **Americas Silver Medal** by the Chairman of IWFS Americas, Inc., **Steve Hipple**. See separate story in this Gazette for more details and photos. **Chef Chovy** (Anthony Caniglia) came out before all the courses to explain the dish, and General Manager **Sam Bloomer** guided us through the wines.

The **Amuse Bouche** was brought out first. Like in a French restaurant, the amuse bouche is just a small item designed to delight the palate. On a short piece of wood sat two pieces of mouth entertainment. Tempura fried green cherry tomatoes, topped with bacon jam, sitting on spicy aioli and a local micro green. You were allowed just one of these mini jump-starters. Along with the tidbit, we had the **Jansz** sparkling wine from Tasmania, which was a pretty good match with the green flavors of the tomato. Jansz was surprisingly similar to a French Champagne, considering it came from New Zealand, with its dryness and minerality.

The **Second Course** was **Chovy's Egg**. After practicing this poached egg for years, Chef Chovy has the timing down to a science. The egg was sliced in half lengthwise. The yolk was just coagulating but not runny. It was sitting on a falafel base, spiced with za'atar and salt, and topped with beef tartare. Overall, it was crunchy because of the falafel, (but somewhat dry if you ate the falafel alone, without the egg), spicy and fortified by the raw beef. Another small mouthful with a lot of flavor. The chosen wine was a **William Fevre Chablis Champs Royaux 2019**. Another great wine match, it was dry, minerally and refreshing.

Vichyssoise was our **Third Course**, but unlike any vichyssoise I have ever encountered, it had scallops floating in the soup. It was served the traditional way, cold. Vichyssoise consists of potato and leeks, stewed down by cooking the vegetables in chicken broth, then adding cream with some oil to finish, put in a blender to make it a smooth soup. **Wildcot Bay Scallops** from Maine were added, and sprinkled over all was black pepper, poppy seeds and chive slices. We had two wines to compare here. A **Diatom Chardonnay (un-oaked) 2020** from Santa Barbara and a **Vinos de Arganza Vina Século Godello 2017** from Spain. Godello is the name of the grape, which is raised in the northwest region of Galicia, near the Atlantic Ocean. Sam Bloomer,

General Mgr. and our Sommelier for the evening, called it "a super version of a white Burgundy." Godello is known by several names, including Verdello [not Verdelho, editor], a grape coming from central Italy. The Diatom was bright and lively with no oak to distract from the fruit flavors. The Seculo with its unusual grape variety Godello (no one at our table could place this Spanish grape) with its zesty, lemony and green apple flavors seemed better on its own than with the soup, where it seemed to fall flat when paired. Neither wine was a bowl-me-over favorite, but the Chardonnay did a bit better.

4th was **Cappellacci**, a pasta made to hold a small piece of something, in this case squash. Ours was house made. To the pasta was added locally sourced **Black Pearl Mushrooms** in a butter glaze with smoked squash stuffing made in the house smoker, topped with sage and red onion crumble on top. This was a more hearty course, so we moved to a pair of red wines. **Roserock Pinot Noir 2019** from Oregon's Eola-Amity Hills competed with **Château Thivin Brouilly Reversion 2019**, a Beaujolais made from the Gamay grape. In the Beaujolais AOC firmament, the Cru Beaujolais are the best wines, and Brouilly is one of the 10 named areas. [The other 9 are: Saint-Amour, Juliéna, Chénas, Moulin-à-Vent, Fleurie, Chiroubles, Morgon, Régnié, and Côte de Brouilly. Editor.] The Roserock Pinot



Fennel Pollen

with the food was deep, earthy, and a great match. The Thivin Brouilly was lighter in body, not so earthy. For a Beaujolais, it was approaching all that the Gamay grape could do. Without the food, the Thivin was the superior pair. I can't believe I'm writing this because I am usually not a big Beaujolais fan. With the food, however, the Pinot Noir was the superior pair.

Duck was our **Fifth Course**. A locally grown spinach and sweet potato "risotto," as they call it, but without the rice, formed the base. Perhaps they nicknamed it risotto because of the sweet potato dice reminds one of rice. A Magret French duck from Oregon was placed on top brushed with fennel pollen and honey. Magret refers to

Back row L to R: Joshua, Jacob Tiny, Joe
 Middle row L to R: Andy, Jameson (bar), Christy, Emily, Kylie
 Front Row L to R: Sam, Chovy, Connie Martin, President



the breast of a Moulard duck that has been reared for foie gras. A pretty exotic ingredient, **Fennel pollen** is expensive because it is gathered by hand (think saffron). It was the yellow looking specs on your duck breast. It gives you a licorice taste, but finishes sweet, with citrus notes. Just the thing for duck. My written table notes said there was a licorice smell. The rare duck was delicious. Our two red wines were the **Elk Cove Goodrich Pinot Noir 2018** and the **Marchesi di Gresy Barbaresco Martinenga 2017**. Sam reminded us it consists of the Nebbiolo grape grown in northern Italy. It has hints of dried fruit, black currants and tobacco spice. The Elk Cove hails from the Willamette Valley in Oregon. It was a bigger, bolder Pinot than the Roserock. Dried cherry, plum pie, with spicy violet notes made up the flavor profile. To my palate, the Pinot was the better wine with the food.

Our **Sixth Course** was **Hanger Steak**. A cylinder of hanger steak was wrapped with bacon sitting on some red colored au jus sauce with turnip, radish, onion and other winter vegetables, along with a croquette and deep fried potato cake. There was another brown colored sauce that was quite lively. I could have used more of that. Unfortunately, I didn't catch the name. Again we compared an Italian wine to an American wine. The **Stag's Leap Artemis 2018** is 98% Napa Valley Cabernet Sauvignon, 1% Malbec and 1% Petit Verdot. It had blackberry and dark cherry flavors. This was compared to the **Binomio Montepulciano D'Abruzzo 2016**. Unusual for Europe or Italy, the name of the grape is the same as what is says on the label. It is

also known as Cordisco, Morellone or Uva Abruzzese. It had flavors of cured meat and brandy soaked cherries and blackberries. The best wine for the assertive flavors of the food was the Cabernet Sauvignon.

Our final course was a **Sicilian Pistachio Cheesecake** with **Ice Cream and Strawberry Gelée**. The cheesecake was nicely done, a light brown in color, studded with bits of pistachio. But it had a bit of mint on it that I thought distracted from the cheesecake goodness. My vanilla ice cream with the strawberry gelée base was a nice match. Sam described the wine, a **Trefethen Late Harvest Riesling 2018**, which had floral notes, golden apricot, dried plum and raisin notes, with a crème brûlée background which paired nicely with the dessert.

Many thanks to producers **Connie & Gary Martin**, who worked with the restaurant, and **Michelle and Hasan Hyder** who chose the wines. Thanks also to **Denise Meyers** for the centerpieces. They come from her shop, Arrange This and That. Thanks as well to Chef de Cuisine **Anthony "Chovy" Caniglia**, Sous Chef **Andy "Barnie" Barnard** for an imaginative, gourmet dinner, and Manager Sam Bloom, who with the service staff, provided quick and efficient service. 🍷

Connie Martin Awarded the IWFS Americas Silver Medal

Connie Martin was awarded the Americas Silver medal after being nominated by Chairman of IWFS Americas, Inc., Steve Hipple, who is also on our CB Board, and quickly ratified by the rest of our Board Members. Connie is always so organized at our board meetings. She has a good grasp of Roberts Rules of Order in case a procedure was not being followed. Her major accomplishment was to get our branch incorporated.

Her certificate reads as follows...

The Members of the Board of Directors of the International Wine and Food Society of the Americas and on behalf of the grateful members of the Council Bluffs Branch

In recognition of Connie Martin's significant contributions to the Council Bluffs Branch since 2015. She has served on the Board of Directors since 2018. A guiding force on the Board serving as Secretary for two years, 2018 and 2019, and as President in 2020 and 2021.

During her leadership, the Branch membership has increased and the quality of the monthly Branch events has been enhanced. Her greatest contribution to the Branch was transforming the Branch from an unincorporated association to a Limited Liability Company.



For being an extraordinary resource to the Council Bluffs Board of Directors and the entire membership.

In the best tradition of our founder, André Simon

By a grateful Society and an appreciative Branch

Awarded on this Fifth day of December Two thousand and Twenty-One

Thank you for all your work, Connie! 🍷

Introducing New Members

Ann & Jason Sullivan

Hello all! Jason has delegated this job to me.

Basically we are Midwest kids. I was born in Nebraska, but grew up in Wichita, KS. Jason grew up in Beatrice, NE. We both went to Kansas State where we met. We are still active alumni and have held season football tickets for over 20 years. After we graduated, I went on a girl's trip to California and toured Napa. (This is the first time I drank anything other than white zinfandel.) I traveled home with my carry-on wine carrier boxes and made Jason try some wine. He was reluctant to trade in his microbrews, but we slowly explored wine together. We lived in Omaha while I attended medical school at Creighton and Jason worked as a software developer. We moved to Phoenix for 4 years for my residency. While closer to California, we took a trip together to wine taste in Napa and Sonoma. We joined wine clubs and enjoyed more wine. We eventually made our way back to Omaha where I now practice as an Ob/Gyn in private practice. Jason hung up his software developer hat a few years ago and is now a Scooter's Coffee franchisee. We have twin boys who are 15 and sophomores at Elkhorn North. They are active in Cross Country and Soccer. We love travel, active vacations, and our Bernedoodle Toby. When we built our house 11 years ago, Jason designed a small wine cellar in the basement. We fill it with wines we have enjoyed from previous trips to Bordeaux, Champagne, California, and Tuscany.

We are excited to learn more about wine and have been known to travel just to eat at good restaurant, so we are super excited to be a part of this group. Plus, everyone has been very warm and welcoming! 🍷

Thank you!

Ann



“WE ARE EXCITED TO LEARN MORE ABOUT WINE AND HAVE BEEN KNOWN TO TRAVEL JUST TO EAT AT GOOD RESTAURANT.”



TIN CITY PART 4: FIELD RECORDINGS

Story by Tom Murnan

Located above **McPhee's Canteen**, where incidentally I had a fantastic Tuna Poke, and a hoppy, hard to find Pliny the Elder beer on tap, I next went upstairs to Field Recordings. They pretty much had most of the second story, a nice spacious venue. It literally has a basketball net and back board as well as lockers along the wall. Pretty unconventional. They also have a bewildering array of wines available, with numerous labels. Their first offerings were in 2007. The primary label is **Field Recordings**, but there are also two secondary labels: **Fiction** and **Wonderwall**. The winery makes about 12,000 to 15,000 cases a year.

The web site sums up Field Recordings best. "Winemaker **Andrew Jones** has a keen eye for diamonds in the rough: sites that are unknown or under-appreciated but hold enormous untapped potential. He strives for unique wines loaded with personality and a one-of-a-kind experience.

"Field Recordings is winemaker Andrew Jones' personal catalog of the people and places he values most. Our wines are all about the flavor — with none of the pretension.

"Spending his days as a vine nursery fieldman planning and planting vineyards for farmers all over California, Andrew is sometimes offered small lots of their best fruit on the side. Having stood in just about every vineyard on the Central Coast, he's all about finding those underdogs with untapped potential. As friendships are made and opportunities are embraced, Andrew produces small quantities of soulful wine from these unusual, quiet vineyards. ▶

Owner and winemaker at Field Recordings, Andrew Jones





◀ “We offer single-vineyard wines with a sense of place and personality, as well as delightful blends under our Wonderwall and Fiction projects. These bottles are good enough to save for a special occasion ... but we’re a laidback crew, so don’t feel bad about putting one back on a Tuesday night.”

So, Andrew has relationships with 22 different small vineyards in California. The most famous vineyard, the Bien Nacido, doesn’t appear on the website map.

Second label **WONDERALL** fruit is grown in extreme coastal locations, breaking rules with Chardonnay, Pinot Noir, Syrah, and Nebbiolo. Third label **FICTION**, the original spinoff label, offers a white, rosé and red wine produced from multiple vineyards and multiple varieties. “We take what the season gives us and create a delicious blend made for every occasion. Ready for tonight, tomorrow or this weekend.” 🍷



Map of Tin City, with the location of Union Sacré marked



UPCOMING COUNCIL BLUFFS BRANCH EVENTS

FEB
10

BARREL AND VINE

1311 S 203rd St, Omaha, NE 68130

Valentine's Day theme

Combined CB and Omaha Branches

Producers: Todd Lemke and Mike Wilke

MAR
5

SPENCER'S FOR STEAKS AND CHOPS

102 S 10th, Omaha, NE 68102

Producer: Bob Kossow

APR
3

801 CHOPHOUSE

Producers: Hipples

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

President: Dave Thrasher

Vice President: Mike Wilke

Treasurer/Membership: Diane Forristall

Secretary: Rhonda Wilke

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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