

The Bluffs Food & Wine

March 2013 *gazette*

Event Report:
A Sinfully Zinfandel
Wine Dinner

Also inside
Zin Room's Executive
Chef Chase Miller's Lasagna
Blind Wine Tastings
More **Sherry**
Terminology & Serving Tips
The House of **Lustau**
Forristall's **New Zealand** Wine Trip
Part 2



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

President's Comments

Coming February 17th 2013 a Sinfully Zin Dinner



The 2010 Girard Petit Sirah is a dry red table wine from Napa, North Coast, California. This mid-weight complex wine is approachable now with enough tannins and density to last into 2020. It expresses black current, espresso, wild black and blue berry, spices, violets and a hint of tea. This wine will pair well with high fat meats such as duck, braised short ribs, prime rib or rib-eye steak on the grill. You may purchase this wine at Whole Foods for \$21.99 per bottle. Don't forget to ask for a 10% discount when buying six bottles or more. This wine scores 90 points from the Wine Spectator and 93 points from The Wine Advocate.

Best of wine, food & friends,

Patti Hipple
President



Photo courtesy of hugel.com

We are in the middle of winter and have either cabin fever or the doldrums. Luckily, we had Mardi Gras and Valentine's Day to provide a little excitement. Patti & Steve Hipple hosted a Sinfully Zinfandel Five Course Wine Dinner at, where else, the Zin Room! Read about our post-Valentine's Day event below. I cajoled a recipe out of the new Executive Chef at the Zin Room, Chase Miller. Everyone at my table was raving about the Lasagna, so Chef Chase graciously took the time to convert the restaurant portions to the homeowner's size and provide us with a manageable recipe. Thanks Chef! I'm going to get Mary to try this one for our house.

Everyone seems to know someone who loves to turn wine gatherings into a guessing game by covering the bottles in paper bags and conducting a blind tasting. If done too often, it becomes just plain annoying. John Fischer discusses Blind Tastings in his article for this month's gazette. Give it a read.

We conclude our mini-series of educational articles on Sherry with this issue. Sherry is out of fashion now, so you can get some high quality wines for an absolute bargain in today's sometime overheated wine market. If you are knowledgeable and know what you are doing, you can get great bargains out there. Just because it has a high rating doesn't mean you have to pay a fortune. Read about our featured Sherry producer, the

Editor's Corner



House of Lustau, and find out about more Sherry terminology and serving tips.

Be sure to sign up for the tutored Sherry tasting and fabulous Spanish meal planned for Friday March 8th at the Council Bluffs Country Club. The two Toms, Schierbrock and myself are hosting this exciting event. We have not had an educational component at an event since I joined, so that is one compelling reason to attend. But the other is the absolutely wonderful food that Chef Jeremy Buthe and his crew produce. The Titanic dinner last year was one of the best meals the Branch experienced last year. Don't miss it. The sign up deadline is March 1st.

We end with Part two of Diane and Gary Forristall's November 2010 wine trip to New Zealand. Don't be shy about sending me your wine adventure stories as well. I know I enjoyed reading about Diane's perspective on the wine scene in New Zealand.

A tip o' the old Irish walkin' hat ta ya from this Irishman on St. Paddy's day! Erin Go Braugh!

Tom Murnan

Event Report

February 17, 2013

A Sinfully Zinfandel Wine Dinner

story and photos by Tom Murnan

Sunday February 17th found us in downtown Omaha, at one of the best hotel restaurants in Omaha: The Zin Room. Part of the Hotel Deco, a high end downtown hotel, the Zin Room features a main floor, a mezzanine and party rooms. We were seated in one of the latter. I had a little trepidation after I read in the February 8th *Omaha World Herald's* Dining Notes that Chef Ryan Gish had sold his interest in the business and departed for other opportunities, but in fact his replacement, Chef Chase Miller, did a fine job, and Ryan was there to supervise since the menu was originally his creation.

Two couples joined the Council Bluffs Branch that night. A warm welcome was extended to Jon and Jill Panzer, who are the Hipple's neighbors. Bill and Theresa Clark, who are also members of the Omaha Branch, also joined. Welcome aboard. We have been having events second to none, and even Wine Food & Friends, the North American branch of IWFS, seems to have noticed if one uses the larger than average sized photos as a gauge.

The theme was Zinfandel, and except for the quaffing, we had dinner with all Zinfandel wines. John Fischer guided us through the wine portion of the meal. Zins are big, full bodied, powerful wines that only go with big foods, John explained. They are high in tannins and low in tartness. The classic flavors of Zinfandel are black berry and raspberry, with spice. All the dishes, except perhaps the salad course, worked well with Zinfandel, and any salad is difficult to match with red wine.

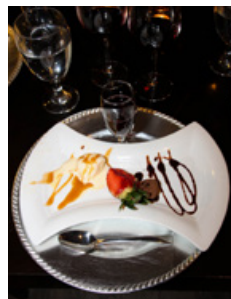


The Braised Pork Belly worked particularly well with Zin. It looked like a little pork chop, but with more intense pork flavor, especially the bits of fat. The little pasta purses of pear and cheese were an artistic touch, and tasty

too as fruit always goes well with pork. The Lasagna was especially rich, as if the white sauce was made with cream. The spice came from the Stoysich Basic Italian Sausage, and it was sprinkled with a green onion oil.

I have never had a steak with a coffee crust, but this one was unusual, very tender, and delicious. Besides the coffee flavor,

to me it hinted at a chocolate component. Ryan explained that an Amaretto Cream Sauce was used on the Black Angus filet, Bob Marley Jamaican decaf coffee and brown sugar formed the crust. Delicious. The spicy flavor in the wine blended with the spicy coating.



We finished with an unusual and hard to find wine: a Dover Zinfandel Port. This was paired with a chocolate truffle and ice cream. John explained that Zinfandel and chocolate only go together if the chocolate is not too sweet. Our truffle was not too sweet. The Port was a bit hot with its high alcohol. It also lacked the high acid of a real Portuguese Port, making it a

bit cloying. The vanilla ice cream and caramel sauce did not enhance the Port, but the chocolate did well.

The two favorite Zins of the evening were the 2010 Artezín and the 2010 Ridge Ponzo. Many thanks to President Patti and first husband Steve for hosting this event.



Ryan Gish, Patti and Steve Hipple



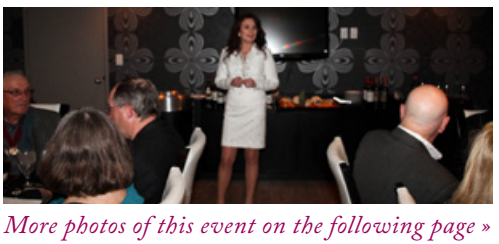
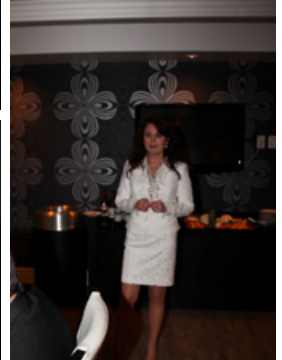
Jon Panzer, Derek and Lorrie Burdeny, Jill Panzer



Steve Hipple, Bill and Theresa Clark



Executive Chef Chase Miller at the stove



More photos of this event on the following page »



The Zin Room's Executive Chef Chase Miller's Lasagna with Sausage and Asiago and Green Onion Oil



Ingredients

Extra Virgin Olive Oil	Half cup of diced onion	3 cups of cottage cheese
1 can diced tomato in juice	3 minced garlic cloves	3 cups of ricotta
1 cup tomato paste	Teaspoon Italian seasoning	2 cups of heavy whip cream
1 cup of water	Tablespoon of brown sugar	1 cup Asiago cheese
1 cup of port wine	Pinch of crushed red pepper flakes	1 ½ cup of Mozzarella
1 pound ground Italian sausage	16 partially cooked lasagna sheets	

Green Onion Oil

6 green onions
½ cup Extra Virgin Olive Oil

Meat sauce

In a large skillet, sauté onions and garlic in tablespoon of evo [extra virgin olive oil, ed]. Add Italian sausage. Brown and then drain return to skillet. Add port wine diced tomato, tomato paste, water, Italian seasoning, red pepper flakes. Let simmer for 25 minutes until all flavors are cooked together.

Cheese mixture

In a large bowl mix cottage cheese, ricotta, and half cup of mozzarella.

Lasagna sheets

Bring a large pot of salted water to a boil add pasta. When water starts to boil again gently drain water and put pasta into ice water bath.

Lasagna assembly

Preheat oven to 350 degrees

Grease the bottom and sides of a 9×13 baking dish add 1/3 cup of sauce to bottom. Then layer 4 lasagna sheets to make a solid bottom. Add half cup of sauce spread evenly. Then add cheese mix on top of sauce. Add 2 lasagna sheets on top of the cheese mix. Repeat. On the top layer add remaining sauce then mozzarella cheese cover with foil bake in oven for 30 to 45 min. When time is up let lasagna set for 15 min

Asiago cheese sauce

In a large sauce pan add heavy whip cream bring to boil add Asiago cheese turn down heat stir constantly add salt and pepper to taste

After lasagna is set top with hot Asiago cheese sauce and serve.

Optional to add color: Green Onion Oil

Bring pot of water to boil. Blanch onions by adding 6 green onions. Boil for 5 minutes. Place onions in a food processor and add a half cup of evo. Puree. Add salt and pepper to taste.

Blind Wine Tastings—*are we kidding ourselves?*

by John Fischer



Photo courtesy of: grapefriend.com

Does the average serious oenophile have the sensory faculties to be able to identify specific wines on a relatively consistent basis? By that I mean being able to be “usually” correct in identifying a particular producer, a specific vineyard, a particular year, a specific varietal, or any one of these variables.

Let’s look at the playing field. As red wine ages, its sensory qualities significantly change. The color intensity diminishes and the wine picks up brown tones. Tannins and acidity decrease, and the flavorful profile dramatically changes. The fruity flavors gradually dissipate and are replaced by non fruity savors such as mushrooms, truffles, anise, coffee, chocolate, etc. For example, the flavor of cassis (black currant), a fairly reliable flavor found in Cabernet Sauvignon, will likely disappear as the wine ages and be replaced by other non fruity savors. In addition, the characteristics of wines from the same producer may differ significantly from one vintage to another.

Think about it! Say you have been sipping on a case of Heitz Martha’s Vineyard over the past several months and could recognize this wine without a single doubt in your mind. Seven years later this same bottle appears in a blind wine tasting. First of all, how good is your memory? Second, could you interpolate the changes this wine has undergone as it

aged? I don’t know about you, but I probably couldn’t.

In 1976, Stephen Spurrier organized a tasting known as the “Judgment of Paris.” This tasting involved spectacular Bordeaux wines the likes of Château Mouton-Rothschild, Haut Brion, Montrose, Leoville Las Cases along side of a grouping of superior California Cabernets: Stag’s Leap, Mayacamas, Heitz Martha’s Vineyard, Freemark Abbey, and Clos du Val . Included in the panel were 9 very experienced judges from France. The surprise winning wine was Stag’s Leap (which was very disconcerting to the French). The tasting also included a judging of California Chardonnay and White Burgundy. The winner for white wines was Chateau Montelena (California).

The most astonishing result from this tasting was the great variability in the judges ranking for both red and white wines; they were all over the place. A comment made by Steven Spurrier best sums up the essence of this article. “The results of a blind tasting cannot be predicted and will not even be reproduced the next day by the same panel tasting the same wines. In one case it was reported that a “side-by-side chart of best-to-worst rankings of 18 wines by a roster of experienced tasters showed about as much consistency as a table of random numbers.”

We all like to pride ourselves on our wine tasting acumen. I am included in a group of four that blind taste a selection of wines. The game is to determine if they are French or California. We have a record that is better than random chance—but not that much better.

Personally, if I am drinking high quality wines, I like to see what I’m drinking, look for their specific characteristics, see how they evolve, and luxuriate in the pleasure they evoke.

The Bluffs
Food & Wine
gazette



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

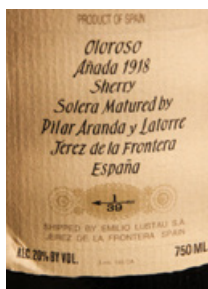
More Sherry Terminology & Serving Tips

by Tom Murnan

We end our mini-series on Sherry with some terminology we have not spoken of yet. By now you are familiar with **Flor** (a yeasty flower that mysteriously affects Sherry and keeps it from oxidizing), **Fino** (light style of Sherry that develops Flor), and **Oloroso** (Sherry with no flor). Sub categories of Fino include **Manzanilla**, **Amontillado**, and the finest Fino, **Palma**. Sub categories of Oloroso include **Palo Cortado** (the best of the non-flor Sherries), **Crema Sherry** (sweet but inferior), and **Jerez Dulce** (quality sweet Sherries). You also know that the **Palomino** grape is the primary workhorse variety, but **Pedro Ximénez** and **Moscatel**, the only other two grape varieties allowed, are also used for sweet wines.

There are other markings on your Sherry label you should be familiar with. Especially with the house of Lustau, you will see the word **Almacenista** (pronounced **al-math-en-esta**) on rare and selected bottles. This indicates a specialty sherry that comes from an Almacenista, a stockholder or businessman who raises Sherry as a hobby, not as a profession. These are great old Sherries bought from private individuals and bottled in very small quantities. In the Sherry district today, there are only about 54 Almacenistas acting as stock holders. The house of Lustau itself was an Almacenista until 1950. Whenever a Bodega may want to improve a blend of Oloroso or Fino, they may obtain a butt or two of Almacenista wine to add to their blend.

Solera Size. Reading the label for an Almacenista one will come across a fraction looking number such as $\frac{1}{143}$ or $\frac{1}{39}$. This indicates that the bottling is from a solera consisting of, say, only 39 butts. The smaller number of butts, the rarer the wine.



Landed Age was a 19th century English tradition and mostly unavailable in the United States. Young Sherry was sent to England in bulk to age in the cool, humid English climate rather than the hot conditions of Spain. Sherry was found to benefit from this rest away from the searing heat, yielding a more pronounced oakiness and greater refinement, complexity and more mellow tone than the same wine aged in Jerez. This slowing down of the cask aging process was known as Landed Age. Extremely rare nowadays.

East India is a revival of an older style and the opposite of Landed Age. The wine is aged in a hot, humid cellar. The wine is oxidized, similar to a Madeira.

Old In Bottle or bottle aged Sherry is almost extinct and only found in England. This style was aged extensively in the wood, then bottled for prolonged further aging. Only very high quality wines are selected, and slightly sweetened before bottling. With prolonged aging, the wine dries up in the bottle, changing its character. Snatch this up if you ever find some.



Serving Suggestions for older Sherry that has been in the bottle for several years and has thrown sediment should be decanted after the bottle has stood upright for several hours. Once opened, old bottled Sherry should be consumed within 24 hours.

Finos should be drunk young and do NOT repay cellaring. The younger the better here. They should be served well chilled, about 45°F. **Most other Sherries** should be served at cellar temperature, or 57°F to 60°F, but if that is impractical, at least not warm. Sweet Sherries like PX should be served at about 65°F, or just below room temperature. These temperature suggestions are not set in stone, and you can determine at what level of chill you enjoy a particular style of Sherry best. Like all fortified wines, such as Madeira and Port, the bottle should be stored standing up as the high alcohol eats up the cork with time. The Bluffs Food & Wine March 2013 page 8

Neither youth nor age but, as it were, an after-dinner's sleep dreaming on both!

Shakespeare on vigorous, masculine old Sherry

Sources: *The Underground Wine Journal*; Corti Brothers Grocers; www.star chefs.com/wine/starvintners/html/lustau/lustau.shtml

Winery Profile: Emilio Lustau

by Tom Murnan • photos courtesy of lustau.com



One of the most exciting Sherry bodegas currently is the House of Lustau. Relatively young by Sherry Standards, Lustau was founded in 1896. It was founded by Don José Ruiz-Berdejo y Veyan, who was an Almacenista, and began raising Sherry in his home. The firm is actually named after his son-in-law Don Emilio Lustau Ortega. In 1940, the firm moved to the Santiago district, near Jerez where they had larger facilities, and began exporting. The real move towards quality began around 1981, when the current manager, Rafeal Balao, added the Almacenista line of Sherrys to the company portfolio. Returning to the founder's roots, he realized that wonderful, high quality Sherry from Almacenistas was being blended into large soleras and getting lost in the process. Recall that an Almacenista is a small storekeeper or stockholder, many times professional people like doctors or lawyers, who made high quality butts of Sherry almost like a hobby. They would sell their stock to larger Sherry Bodegas. Lustau began

to bottle these small lots without further blending them into a larger solera. The results can be seen in the Robert Parker scores, which are uniformly quite high. These are all made in, by Sherry standards, small quantities. Currently, Lustau uses about six Almacenistas: Vides, Jurado, Florido, Jarana, Obregon and Zamarano.

Besides the limited Almacenista wines, the other area that emphasizes quality is in their Solera Reserva line. These include Old East India Solera Reserva, and Pedro Ximénez Solera Reserva. Regular wines include a full lineup of Fino, Manzanilla, Amontillado, Palo Cortado, and Oloroso. In addition, they have a private label named **Sainsbury's Taste the Difference**. Sainsbury has several styles, such as Fino, Amontillado and Oloroso. This is a supermarket type wine, with a lower price point, that has won a surprisingly large number of competitions.

The Bluffs
Food & Wine
Gazette

New Zealand Washington Alumni Winemakers Tour November 2010: Part 2

by Diane Forristall

Continuing my account of the North Island of New Zealand, we ended last month at Vidal Estates Winery. The next morning we made a stop at a vineyard in the famous Gimblett Gravel area: **Craggy Range Winery**. The winery is owned by the Peabody family from the UK (my brother-in-law worked for Peabody Coal). Australian business man Terry Peabody was looking for exceptional climate and terroir to create benchmark wines. He found it here. Founded in 1986, Craggy Range Winery was the first winery in New Zealand to pursue the **single vineyard** philosophy and select the perfect varietal to match the terroir. We were met there by the assistant winemaker (can't remember his name but very good looking!) and learned more of how it was discovered and its unique terroir and high commitment to quality. **Gimblett Gravel** area was created when great floods swept over the Hawkes Bay region in 1876. The local river changed its course, and a section of gravel was left behind. It was felt to be a useless wasteland until winemakers began planting vines there. Today, the various sections are best suited for Chardonnay, Merlot, Cabernet Franc, Syrah, Cabernet Sauvignon and Malbec. Craggy Range owns about 100 hectares of this 850 hectare area. Then we travelled to the **Craggy Range Giants Winery**. As we arrived a film crew was on site to shoot a scene for a movie – complete with cool Jaguar auto. Wow – nice first impression! Sad to say this was also the day of the Pike River mine disaster that killed 29 on the south island.

The winery architecture was unbelievable as money was no object. & we met one of the Peabody grandsons with an interest in the winery. The young single women on the trip were especially intrigued. Our handsome winemaker gave us a tour of the stunning facilities and ended with a tasting in a circular room with large wooden tanks. Notice the concentric circles of granite pavers. Our visit ended with lunch on the



patio overlooking their beautiful scenery with a pond and Te Mata peaks in the background.

After lunch we travelled a short distance to **Te Mata Winery**. When we arrived we could see that a new vineyard

was being laid out. Te Mata has some of the oldest vineyards planted in the late 1800's. Their focus is on Bordeaux blends, Chardonnay and Sauvignon Blanc. Their owners were generous with their time and let us tour their facility and let us sample many of their wonderful wines.





The final day in Napier was spent enjoying & exploring the city. We had dinner with Terry & Kathy Sullivan who have a great blog that gives much more in-depth detail of our trip at www.winetraveler.com, then click “Winery Reviews”, then “New Zealand”.

Our last day on the north island we traveled to Wellington and had the day to ourselves. Gary & I took a gondola up the hill to the botanical gardens & enjoyed the scenery. The next morning we boarded the ferry along with our bus to the south island. We were amazed at all the tanker trucks that were exporting wine from the south island to the north for processing & exporting. We even saw a train board the ferry.

The Bluffs
Food & Wine
gazette

More later – south island to go, then 2 more countries before our trip to Italy in March!

We spent part of our last day in Napier walking to the Botanical Gardens, and then met part of our group for a bicycle trip to the pier. I finally took off my wig as it was too hot with a helmet. Scuba diving was also an option but the water was a bit cold for me. Our fearless guide Theresa went sky diving by herself & we thought we were being adventurous!





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Upcoming Council Bluffs Branch Events! Mark Your Calendars!

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

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

May 16 • Fischer and Fisher host this event at another Council Bluffs Casino, Jack Binion's Steak House in the Horseshoe Casino, a beautiful setting of tapestries and leather.

Hosting an event?

Let us know when, where and a little bit about what's going on!

We would love to include **YOUR** event on the calendar!
email details to: stephenhipple@hotmail.com

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KEEPING In Touch!

Please notify Club Membership Chairman Diane Forristall at Diane@Forristall.us to let her know if you are interested in hosting an IWFS event.

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

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