

# The Bluffs Food & Wine *gazette*

March 2015



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



## President's Comments

Dear Members,

We have learned through our dinners that there is great wine all over the world. Sometimes those great wines get lost because the appellation rules can be confusing. Recently I was introduced to not one but a series of wines from around the world worth trying.

The wine is based on a simple concept - make the best possible wine from a given country or location. The hard part is tracking down the vineyards and grapes along with determining the blending and winemaking techniques necessary to accomplish this goal.

This wine is called Locations. The wine maker is Dave Phinney, probably best known for his California winery Orin Swift, and made famous by his wine *The Prisoner Napa Valley*.

The top rated of this group is E-2, from Spain, is a blend of Grenache, Tempranillo, and Carignan. The next is F-2 is a blend of Grenache, Syrah, and assorted Bordeaux varietals from France with a Robert Parker 91 rating. Finally I-1 is a blend of Negroamaro, Nero d'Avola, Barbera, and other native varietals from Puglia from Italy with a Robert Parker 90 rating. All 3 are barrel aged for 10 months prior to release and have an alcohol level of 14.5%. Although the photo doesn't show it, they put the 2 on the back side of the label. They don't put vintage years but do put F, F-1, F-2. As the next batch is made.

Phinney founded Orin Swift Cellars in 1998, making wines in custom-crush facilities from purchased grapes. His goal has been to develop wines at a reasonable price with most of his wines under \$60 a bottle. He has since gone on to develop a number of wines, including Shatter- a French Grenache, named for the term given to grape clusters that don't fully develop. It is a joint venture with vintner Joel Gott and Trincherro Family Estate.

E-2 is a versatile big red that you can really enjoy at dinner. All 3 Location wines are available at Council Bluffs Hy-Vee for less than \$15 a bottle.



Enjoy!

Bob Kossow

### Robert Parker | 93 Points

Winemaker's notes

An alluring cast of blooming crimson and deep red shades are immediately present in the glass. Complementing the appearance is an impressive intensity on the nose with elevated dark cherry and exotic spice notes. The entry is rich with youthful berry compote, floral, and plum flavors, complimented with bright acidity. The finish is expansive and pleasing with a persistent mocha tinge and silky tannins. **Drink 2014-2019**



Photo courtesy of kugel.com

## Editor's Corner

I felt that I was in la belle France at our Amour du Rhône event. Not only were we in a French restaurant under the aegis of Cedric Fichépain, but we had wines from the Rhône Valley. Recently returned from her IWFS cruise down the Rhône River, Phyllis Hegstrom was inspired to share some of the valley's wine bounty, along with a sample of the nightly bounty aboard the SS Catherine. Phyllis had the great idea of running a slide show of some of the sights, especially in the wine areas. So we were treated to photos of the ruins of the Papal palaces at Châteauneuf-du-pape and Avignon, for example. The wines and food were all well chosen. It was a pity if you missed it, but you can read about it within.

This was also Phyllis' first event where she was a producer. If anyone out there would like to give it a try, it is fun, exciting and a challenge. I invite you to find a board member you are familiar with and try your own hand. All that's needed is a good restaurant who is willing to work with you (most are), a good theme, and some organizational skills. The board member will help you with any aspect, especially the wine pairing, usually the scariest part. The branch has a brochure to help guide you through the process. We welcome fresh, new ideas. That's what makes this branch so exciting.

John Fischer speaks to us about the importance of matching wine to its dinner surroundings. An elegant dinner with wonderfully plated food demands a different wine than a tailgate party, even if the paired food course is similar. And the opposite is true. An elegant wine seems out of place in a rustic picnic setting. Read on to get the details.

Speaking of the IWFS Rhône cruise, we conclude our series on this interesting event with this issue. It proved to be a well organized, educational, historical and gastronomic event with wonderful wines every night. Consider joining the international group for the Danube cruise in 2016.

Bon Appétit et bon vin!

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**"Wine is bottled poetry."**

—Robert Louis Stevenson

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## Event Report: Amour du Rhône

by Tom Murnan

For her first Council Bluffs Branch event, **Phyllis Hegstrom** chose the Rhône River as her theme. Phyllis was one of the attendees on the International Rhône Cruise in June of 2014. The Rhône is a wine area rich in variety, with different kinds of wine made in the northern Rhône than those in the southern. With the help of her son Scott, a diverse and bountiful wine selection was made for our feast. She also selected a hundred photos from the cruise and presented them as a slide show for all to see. Wonderful scenic and architectural shots were shown, including the Papal Palace at Avignon, and the Pope's summer get away at Chateauneuf-du-Pape. Twenty two people committed, and twenty showed. The Panzers brought two guests: **Hasan and Michelle Hyder**.

All the wines, including the quaffing, were from the Rhône except the dessert

Sauternes. As we mingled and caught up with each other, a **2013 Côtes du Roussillon Blanc Vieilles Vignes** from **Château Saint-Roch** was offered. I was pleasantly surprised as to how good and refreshing this was and heard several favorable comments as to how good this was (unusual for a quaffing wine). Two red starters were also offered, both with the word Garrigue in their name. One was the **2013 Domaine la Garrigue Côtes du Rhône Cuvée Romaine**. The second was a **2011 Bouquet des Garrigues Côtes du Rhône Clos du Caillou**. The word **garrigue** refers to the earthy, wild underbrush: juniper, kermes oak, but also lavender and wild thyme.

The passed hors d'oeuvres were different than the printed menu (and with an additional item) and very tasty and diverse. These included **Spinach Artichoke**



**Roulade, Pork Rillettes Croquette,** and **Olive Goat Cheese Crostini.** Traditionally, a Rillettes is pork chopped into very small pieces and cooked in lard. I enjoyed them all, but have to remark that the crostini was aggressively garlicky, noticeably so, and needed the red wines to clear the palate.

It was time to come to table. Phyllis had negotiated another upgrade that didn't make the printed menu: **Crab Stuffed Grilled Zucchini.** Shredded crab was wrapped like a small gift with two thin slices of grilled zucchini. Served cold, it was topped by a roasted red pepper **Romesco Sauce** and drizzled with **Balsamic reduction.** Besides red peppers, the Romesco Sauce contained tomatoes, garlic, olive oil and almonds, all put in a blender and ground into a sauce. The accompanying wine was a **2011 Michel Ogier Viognier La Rosine.** Viognier is a nice change to Chardonnay, and is typically more lush, softer in character and known for its aromatics of peaches and pears. On the palate, it was minerally with notes of peaches and went well with the crab. I thought was a bit flaccid and could have used a bit more acidity.

The soup course brought us back on the printed menu. An unusual **Beet, Goat Cheese and Pecan Soup** awaited us. Rich and creamy, this tan colored soup had three whole pecans in the bottom of each bowl, was earthy, lightly nutty and had a chicken stock base. It was garnished with caramelized onion strands on top and was accompanied by a slice of baguette. Unusual and just the thing for a winter's evening. The Viognier also accompanied this course. It's unassertive nature matched the soup well.

Beef with Syrah was next. Our Rhône selections now moved to the **northern Rhône**, which is known for Syrah. Halfway between those giants of Syrah production, Hermitage and Côte Rôtie, on the west side of the river, lies **Saint Joseph.** A large area, it is known for good values. The appellation has never lived up to its potential, however, but if care is taken in selection, you can find good Syrah producers. One such bottle of the good ones was our **2010 Louis Barruol St. Joseph Les Cochés.** This was compared to a **2011 Franck Balthazar Cornas Chaillots.** Cornas can have brutal tannins in its youth and is known as a source of wild, forceful Syrah. Cornas means burnt



or scorched earth. This name comes from the sun drenched area whose temperature is hotter than other appellations.

Two medium rare (red center) pieces of **Beef Tenderloin** with a nicely browned crust were sauced with a **Grape Mustard Sauce**, and accompanied by pan fried and lightly browned **Brussels Sprouts** halves and piped mashed potatoes. The potatoes seemed a bit dry and uninspiring to me. Nothing extra in them like sour cream or cream cheese. One could see round grains of mustard, black pepper and herbs in the sauce. True to form, the St. Joseph was more refined than the Cornas, with fine ripe tannins and dark fruits and plum flavors. The Cornas was not as tannic as I expected and was more forceful and assertive. It

might have been a better match to wild game. So I thought the St. Joseph won out with the beef match.

An **Apple Sorbet** served as a palate cleanser for the next course. Interestingly, it came surrounded by **Calvados**, the French apple brandy. I thought at first the sorbet had been allowed to melt, but the high alcohol was a dead giveaway that something more was at hand.

Our last entrée was **Seared Pheasant with Wild Mushroom Sauce.** We now moved to the **southern Rhône** for our pair of wines. The southern Rhône is known for Grenache. Red **Châteauneuf-du-Pape** can have up to 13 different grape varieties, including one white grape for bouquet (only two producers use all 13). It is capable



of making profound wines. In the good old days before wine writers, it was fairly cheap. But after Robert Parker Junior's ascendancy and constant promotion, and with modern winemaking, prices have escalated significantly. Not as well known, the appellation of **Gigondas** uses a good percentage of Grenache and the best wines can be powerful if not a bit rustic.

A piece of pheasant breast sat atop **soft polenta**, and was covered with a Wild Mushroom Sauce and thin carrot slices. The pheasant was moist and nicely cooked. The lightly flavored mushroom sauce was a good match for the bird.

The **2009 Grand Veneur Châteauneuf-du-Pape** comes from 70 year old vines and sports 50% Grenache, 30% Mouvedre and

20% Syrah. Tannic and structured, with sharp acidity, it was a bit too assertive for the light bodied pheasant. The **Domaine St. Damien Gigondas Grand Veneur** was a bit better match. Soft tannins and pleasing, it still could have used a heartier food pairing like perhaps venison.

Dessert was a **Chocolate Mousse** covered with whipped cream and crowned with a single whole red raspberry. Very dense and flavorful, the mousse was penetratingly chocolate. But did a golden Sauternes, with its honeyed flavors, work with chocolate? We were about to find out with our last wine of the evening, the **2010 Petit Guiraud**. The wine was sweeter than the dessert, so it passed that hurdle. Your dessert wine always needs to be sweeter.

The match worked. However, in my opinion, the chocolate submerged many of the nuances in the Sauternes. Many of the diners enjoyed the matchup.

Many thanks to Phyllis Hegstrom for all her efforts to produce this event. Thanks as well to Scott Hegstrom for the wine selection. Scott lives on the east coast. Thanks as well to servers Elizabeth Czopkiewicz and Nic Henke for attentive service. Many merci's as well to Chef Wilson Calixte; Alex Woockman, Tournan; Joe Vaughn Garde Manger; and Robert Poehling, Patissier.









# Refinements in Matching Wine with Food

by John Fischer



The key to matching wine with food is to link the wine with the food along as many facets as you can. This article delves into some of the subtler aspects regarding wine-food pairing. Let's begin with makeup of a food.

Character is a quality found in both wine and food. Foods that are soft, tender, refined, and chic require similar styled wines—wines that are mature, polished, and sophisticated. For example, a prime filet of beef would be a great match with a classy Bordeaux or top quality Cabernet. Contrast that with a pot-roast of beef, which might be better suited with a younger, somewhat more aggressive, and bolder wine such as a Zinfandel, Malbec or Cotes du Rhone.

Your considerations do not end just with the character of the food; another deliberation is how the food is presented. Is it thrown on the plate cafeteria style or is it presented with an air of class and artistry? The plate itself can make a strong visual impression: A fine china plate sets the stage for what is on the plate. Food should be carefully placed so as to avoid crowding and

concern should be taken to keep the plate edges and space between food items on the plate clean and free from droppings. The addition of colorful food items and artistic garnishes provides the final touch. Of course, the food quality must be high; no amount of visual artistry can cover bad food. Elegant visual artistry in presenting the food is a strong factor in selecting a wine: it upgrades the quality of wine being served.

Ambiance is another important consideration. An outdoors fish fry, picnic style, calls for totally different wines than what you would serve at an elegant dinner party. If you served the same food as was served at the picnic, but in an stylish environment—white table cloth, soft background music, candle lighting, flowers on the table—it seems quite obvious that an upscaled wine would be in order. I have drunk expensive, high quality wines at a tail-gate party that I thoroughly enjoyed, but I must admit, they seemed a little out of place.

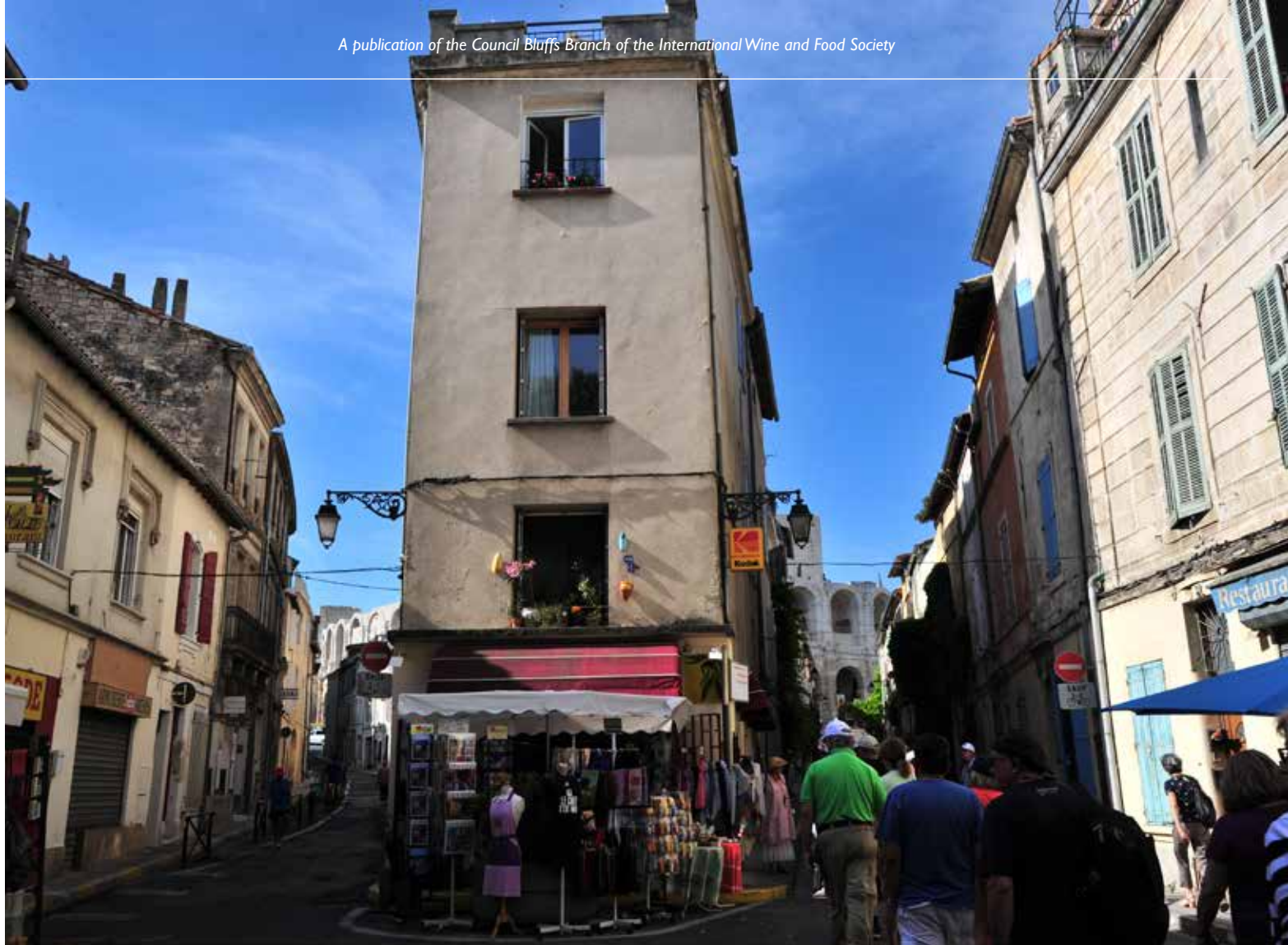
You should always try to serve a wine with the same ethnicity as the food being

served. Although a Beaujolais may pair very well with spaghetti and meatballs, a Chianti would be a better choice. Both wine and food have the same ethnicity—the eye sees the label and pairs it to the food. This may seem a mute point, however, it is usually easy to do. But not always. For example, if you are looking for a red wine to serve with a German dish, you may be quite challenged to find one. There are few quality German red wines. You are therefore forced to pick a wine from elsewhere.

The few considerations listed above may seem obvious, but are easy to do. They will add the final touches to your wine-food pairings. After all, carefully thought-out pairings increase both enjoyment of the wine and the food.







## IWFS Rhône River Cruise Part 7: Arles & Conclusion

by Tom Murnan

Photos by King Lee

Saturday June 14th, 2014. The final day of the tour found the SS Catherine near Arles, the home of painter Vincent Van Gogh. At 8:30 am, participants boarded a bus for Arles while the ship departed for Tarascon. The old, walled city lies on the Rhône, south of the point where the river divides into the Grand Rhône to the east and the Petit Rhône to the west. The two arms of the river enclose the **Camargue**, a region of marshlands, lagoons, and lakes joining the Mediterranean Sea. Arles has preserved impressive remains from the Roman and Medieval past. Arles (or Arelate, the town of marshes) was originally a Greek colony before becoming a Roman colony in 46 BC. Its position at the crossroads of the river and sea routes helped the town to grow into an important commerce center. A Christian community was present at an early age, and in 314 AD the first church council in the Western Empire was held. From the 10th century onwards it was linked to the region of Burgundy. In 1481 it became part of the Kingdom of France.

Attractions in Arles include the **Musée Souleïado**. Colorful calico printed fabrics are displayed, along with 40,000 wooden print blocks with brass tips used to manually dye the cloth. The Camargue is a wetlands delta area famous for its bird life, including storks, aigrettes, herons, pink flamingos and birds of prey. The amphitheatre, or **Arènes**, dates from about 75 AD, where gladiatorial combat or games pitting men against wild animals took place. The **Café La Nuit**, made famous by Van Gogh's colorful painting, still is in business.

The former hospital where Vincent Van Gogh was treated after he cut his ear off has been turned into a cultural center and is available to visit. The afternoon offered a bus trip to the Château des Baux and an olive farm.

The **Château des Baux** is built into the rocks above the town of Les-Baux-de-Provence as a fortress to protect the small towns that surrounded it. The **Moulin à Huile du Mas Saint Jean** in Fontvieille is an olive oil producer run by two sisters. Mas means farmhouse in French. Olive





oil has been produced from this area since the 12th century. The bus took everyone to Tarascon, where the ship was moored.

At 7:00 pm the ship departed for Avignon. The final Champagne reception featured the enameled bottles of **2006 Perrier Jouët La Belle Époque Brut**, with its wonderful Art Nouveau flower. Dinner started with a **César Salad Riviera** with chicken, and a traditional fish and seafood soup with saffron. Both were paired with a **2011 Meursault 1er Cru Les Charmes** from **Dom. Gauffroy**. The hot appetizer was **Seared Fillet of Sea Bass with Pastis Herb Butter, Ratatouille and Rosemary Skin Potatoes**. The **2012 Châteauneuf-du-Pape Insolente** from **Dom. des Trois Celliers** is a rare white Châteauneuf and went perfectly with the sea bass. **Slow roasted duck breast with lavender honey**

**sauce** was the entrée. A **2012 Gevrey Chamberlin 1er Cru Lavaux** from **Magnien** was the Burgundy selected. The cheese selection was paired to a **2012 Vosne Romanée 1er Cru Les Chaumes** from **Jerome Chezeaux**, Burgundy. Finally, the sweet was an **Apricot Clafoutis with Madeline Ice Cream and Hazelnut Whiskey Sauce**. A **Château Coutet** from **Barsac** was the dessert wine.

Disembarkation the next morning at Avignon was bittersweet. It was sad that this splendid trip was over, but participants could look forward to the next cruise down the Danube in 2016.

*Historical Source: Wikipedia, Google. Additional Source: Mark Lazar's article in the Autumn issue of Wine Food & Friends; the SS Catherine Daily Program.*



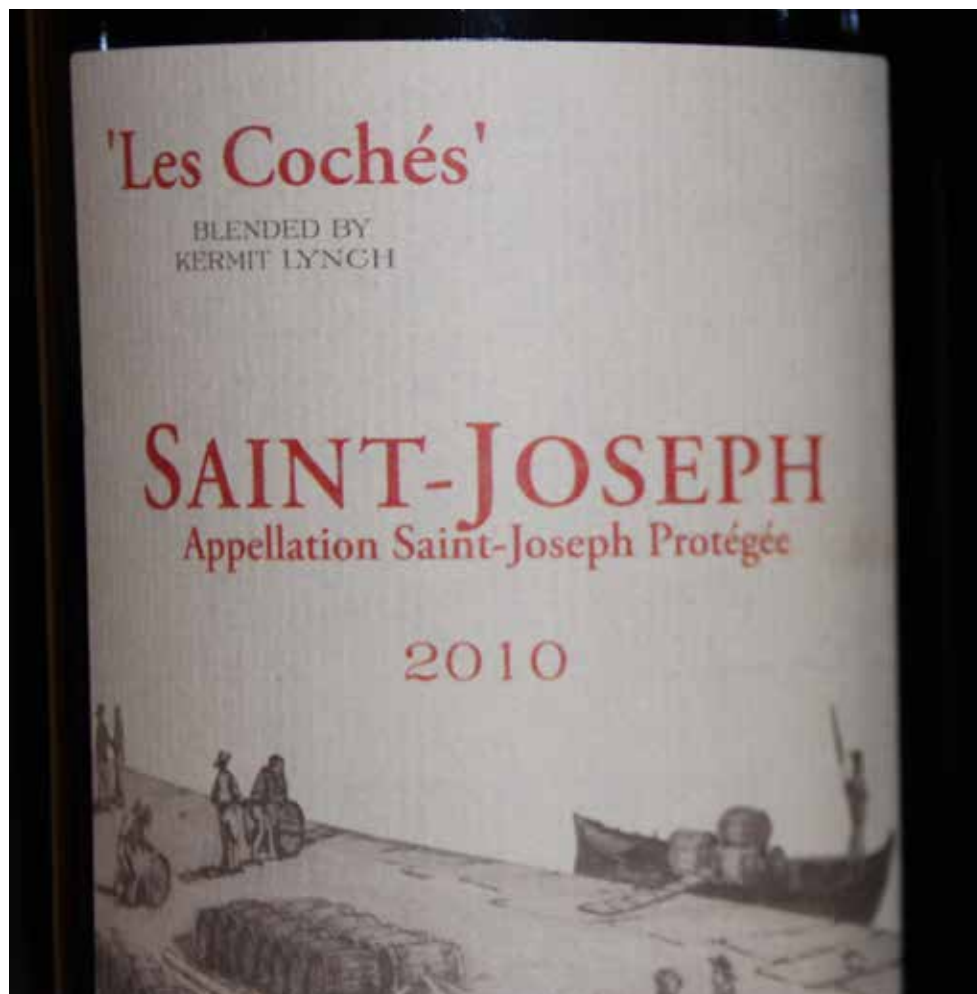






# New European Wine Classifications: Appellation d'Origine Contrôlée System Replaced

by Tom Murnan



During the Amour du Rhône event, I noticed for the first time, on the label of a bottle of St. Joseph Les Cochés Louis Barruol imported by Kermit Lynch, the Berkley CA importer, new words. Instead of the expected Appellation Saint-Joseph Contrôlée the label read Appellation Saint-Joseph Protégée. I decided to use a great resource available to all IWFS members. I wrote to our honorary president, Sid Cross. Sid puts out a Presidents blog online about once a month ([blog.iwfs.org](http://blog.iwfs.org)). This is what he had to say:

Question: For the first time I have seen a new French appellation marking: protégée. The actual appellation mentioned on the label said "Appellation Saint Joseph protégée". What can you tell us about this new marking? Why does it say protected all of a sudden?

Answer: "Good timely question. You will be seeing more of this on the labels of the new wines arriving at your local wine shop. Most of us are familiar with the wine appellation systems in France for specific locations defining where the grapes are

grown and the wine is produced. Starting with 2012 the European Union has intervened and these systems are now revised. For example there is no longer any wines labeled VDQS." There now are 3 main categories:

1. "VIN DE FRANCE Basic wines formerly called Vin de Table. Quite a general name lacking any specific location but enticing to use because easier to comply with than the stricter regulations of the 2 higher categories. May find more wineries using this including the new natural wines. We should all encourage more information on the back label from the wineries to help the consumer understand where the wine grapes are actually grown."

2. "INDICATION GEOGRAPHIQUE PROTÉGÉE (IGP) Basically replacing the former Vin de Pays ("country wine") such as the old Vin de Pays d'Oc from Languedoc-Roussillon and the like."

3. "APPELLATION D'ORIGINE PROTÉGÉE (AOP) These are the very top wines starting in 2012 such as your Saint Joseph Syrah from the Northern Rhone which are protected (protégée) and basically

replacing the former Appellation d'Origine Contrôlée (AOC) designation."

Don't be afraid to use the Ask Sid feature to answer your questions. It is a great resource to answer any of your wine questions or plan an event with food and wine pairings. Even though the blog comes out once a month or so, he will answer you quickly and email you his answer.



Honorary President  
Sid Cross



# Upcoming Council Bluffs Branch Events

## Mark Your Calendars!



April 12, 2015

Cheese & wine pairing.

V. Mertz

Producers: Diane Hayes and Patti Hipple



May 3, 2015

Twisted Cork Bistro, which just received a fabulous review in the World Herald.

Producers: Jill and Joe Goldstein, Stacie and Duke Matz



June 2015

TBA

### 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:

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in hosting an IWFS event.

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The International Wine & Food Society in the Americas.*

To access past Gazettes and other features about our Branch, go to the international  
website following this link: [www.iwfs.org/americas/council-bluffs](http://www.iwfs.org/americas/council-bluffs)

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