

MARCH 2020

The Bluffs Food & Wine gazette



ALSO INSIDE:

Event Report: Wild Game Dinner at Pasta Amore
Bottle Size...What is that Huge Bottle Called?



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



PRESIDENT'S COMMENTS

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

First, thank you to Rhonda & Mike Wilke and Jill & Joe Goldstein for the January event “Wild Game Feed” at Pasta Amore. Chef Leo prepared some wonderful dishes for attendees. Thank you to Chef Leo and the Pasta Amore staff.

Thank you also to Chef Jared Clarke and the staff of Railcar Modern American Kitchen for the February “Date Night” event. It was a fabulous evening.

March’s event produced by Dave and Tabitha Thrasher looks to be an exciting event at Dolce. Date of the Dolce event is March 22, 2020. There will be a maximum of 40 attendees so watch for the event invitation in your email.

We are always looking for new venues, ideas for a food or wine to highlight at a future event. If you have an idea or suggestion, please let myself or one of the board members know. If you would like to get involved in planning an event, we need you! Event planning is a fun and informative process. As a part of the event planning, you work with a board member (s) and local chef to bring your idea to life. Consider volunteering to help out today.

One last note to add is the upcoming Americas Great Weekend in San Antonio, Texas on October 28 to 31, 2020. Additional information will be coming out shortly.

Looking forward to seeing you at an upcoming event! 🍷

Connie Martin

Cover Photo:

IWFS Douro River cruise attendees from the Council Bluffs Branch. Photo taken 6/14/2019 by Wayne Markus.

**“Every bottle of wine is
an opportunity to learn
something.”**

—The Armchair Sommelier (2014)

EDITOR'S

CORNER

That was quite the game dinner we had at **Pasta Amore** on January 19th. As usual when we attend a **Leo Fascianella** banquet, there is no way you would leave hungry! Generous appetizer and portion sizes prevailed. The game was shot by four individuals, and I have to say, was quite tasty, with no off or gamey flavors. When was the last time you had tortellini stuffed with venison and elk? We had a good number of guests, which increased the fun. Many thanks to the **Wilkes** and **Goldsteins** for jumping in to host the event on short notice.

Ever wonder what all the various wine bottles are called and how much wine they hold? At the **Flemings** event, they poured a 6 liter bottle of Champagne, and that got me to thinking it would be interesting to chart these sizes out. The largest size bottle, **The Maximus**, was a specially made 130 liter bottle commissioned **Morton's Steak House**. 130 liters translates into over 14.4 cases, or 173 bottles of wine! This bottle was 4½ feet tall and had a circumference 4½ feet. It weighed 340 pounds full. It could serve 1,152 glasses of wine. A bottle that size would almost have to have a cradle just to pour it. It was filled with the **Beringer 2001 Private Reserve Cabernet Sauvignon Napa Valley** in the bottle and auctioned it off to a charity.

Continuing on our tour of Portugal via the **Douro River**, we reach part 7 of the **IWFS Douro River** cruise. **Wayne Markus** takes us to **Castelo Rodrigo** on the Spanish border. This outing took the group through the castle, which was, at various times, occupied by the Spanish Christians and the Moors. It wasn't until 1492 that the Moors were driven out of Spain by **Ferdinand** and **Isabella**, the same monarchs that commissioned **Christopher Columbus** to begin exploring for the New World. Dinner on the ship is also described, with wines from a small house, **Luis Seabra**.

Enjoy! 🍷

Tom Murnan



**I READ THAT 4,153,237
PEOPLE GOT MARRIED LAST
YEAR. NOT TO CAUSE ANY
TROUBLE, BUT SHOULDN'T
THAT BE AN EVEN NUMBER?"**

— BILL MURRAY



EVENT REPORT:

WILD GAME DINNER AT PASTA AMORE

Story By Tom Murnan & Photos by Tom Murnan

It's not every day that you have a wild game dinner, let alone have a wild game dinner done "Italiano." Both were the hooks that grabbed me, not to mention a very nice Italian wine lineup. Not to mention the premier Italian restaurant in Omaha. We were in the capable hands of Chef Leo Facianella. We had a nice turnout of 28 people, 13 of which were guests, even though the playoffs for the Superbowl were underway. It was a great way to ignore the bitter cold wintry weather outside. I ran back to the kitchen to get a few photographs of food being prepared. Leo said that a game dinner is a challenge. The game must be cleaned and washed properly. This must have been done because I did not notice any gaminess or off flavors all night. The game was sourced as follows: Nicholas Wilke, venison; Paul Cox, elk; Chef Leo, rabbit; and Mike Wilke, pheasant.

We had quite the assortment of antipasto to begin our feast. I had to be careful. We had 6 courses coming up, and I tend to enjoy the appetizers so much that I fill up on them. Let me list the antipasti: Venison sausage sticks and salami with hard cheese; BBQ elk, Venison and Elk meatballs; Venison Liver Pâté; regular bruschetta; Caponata Bruschetta; and large stuffed green olives. Classic Sicilian Caponata contains eggplant, red peppers, celery, garlic (but of course!), plum tomatoes, onions, basil, vinegar and pine nuts. Delizioso. My fav was the venison liver pâté. Three quaffers awaited us. **Ferrari Brut NV** was our sparkler, along with a **Montsecano Refugio Pinot Casa Blanca Noir 2017** from Chile and a **Ring Bolt Cabernet Sauvignon 2013** from the Margaret River of western Australia. Luckily, I saved room for those upcoming six courses.

Once seated we sampled **Pheasant Tortellini Soup**. Nice chunks of pheasant (with all traces of number 4 lead shot removed) were surrounded with a tasty chicken and beef broth expertly salted. Within the soup were carrot bits, as well as tortel-

ini stuffed with venison and elk. Just the thing for a frigid winter day. Our Italian Chardonnay, which was a bit unusual in itself, was made by Antinori. The **Castello della Sala Cervaro Chardonnay 2017** was on the dry side but was a good match for the light flavors of the soup. It blended right in without any sharp angles. Why unusual? Italy is not known for its Chardonnay.

Fennel Orange and Black Olive salad was next. A wine friendly vinaigrette was used which was not too acidic or tart. Orange slices added a refreshing, and at the same time, a lighter touch. Fennel bulb contributed a licorice taste and crunch. Olives added some tartness. Salad can be tough to pair with wine, but not with this dressing. The **Terlato Pinot Grigio 2018** was rounded, soft and fruity, another good match.

Elk Arancini with Arrabiata Sauce was awaiting us. Arancini are balls made of risotto, mozzarella, peas, hard egg yolk, basil, and in this case, elk bits. They get their name from the little oranges they resemble. Arrabiata sauce is similar to Marinara sauce in that both are tomato based, but Arrabiata contains spicy red chili flakes. Arrabiata means "angry" in Italian, referring to its spiciness. It was a complex sauce, deep and earthy. So the chosen wine, a **Torrione Petrolo Toscana Sangiovese 2010** was made to order. Dark, powerful, earthy with mild tannins, it complimented the dish wonderfully.

The 4th course was **Venison Ragu over Pappardelle Pasta**. Ragu is usually made with tomato sauce, but Leo felt that a brown sauce would be the best for displaying the venison. Pappardelle is a pasta shape like fettuccine only wider and is frequently used in wild game pairings. The word in Italian means to gobble up.

I was getting a little full by this point, but I gobbled my plate up with the assistance of **Orin Swift D66 Shiraz 2013**. The wine hails from the Languedoc-Roussillon region of France, near Maury, not so far from the Spanish border. D66 refers

to what we would call a county. It contains 75% Grenache and 15% Syrah and 10% Carignan. It was a powerful wine with a spine, just what was needed for the venison.

Our last meat course was also the lightest. **Rabbit al Miele over Polenta** was a bit of a surprise to me as it was so light and delicate, with sweeter meat, and miele, honey, to add a bit more sweetness. But the more I thought about it, I realized it transitioned better into the desert course than if it would have been big and burley elk or venison. The polenta married quite well into the whole dish, emphasizing the light and delicate nature of the meat. Appropriately, an **Amarone Allegrini 2015** was used. Although a big wine, it is also a touch sweet because it was partially made with crushed raisins. I thought it would have been interesting to pair the rabbit with a white wine as well.

Finally, dessert found us with **Tiramisu with Toblerone Chocolate and Brandy Cream Sauce**. The coffee flavored dessert means "cheer me up" in Italian. It is made of ladyfingers dipped in coffee, layered with a whipped mixture of eggs, sugar, and mascarpone cheese, flavored with cocoa. The Chef added fresh fruit, which gave it a nice color: blueberries, strawberries, blackberries, orange, and dark chocolate bits. The **Alvear 1927 Solera Pedro Ximenez Sherry** was sweeter than the desert, the usual rule. But I thought it was way sweeter than the delicate tiramisu, and a little heavy handed, so much so that it pretty much obliterated the nuances in the dessert. A light Moscato might have been a better choice.

Many thanks to Chef Leo Fascianella and wine manager Robyn Davis for an excellent dinner. Thanks to our hunters for the game, and Rhonda & Mike Wilke, Jill & Joe Goldstein, and Patti Hipple who sourced most of the wines for our cellar. 🍷















Bottle Size...

What is That Huge Bottle Called?

Edited by Tom Murnan

At the Flemings event in December, 2019, the restaurant poured a 6 liter bottle of Taittinger Brut La Francaise. All these outsized bottles have names, including many Biblical names. I couldn't recall the name of a 6 liter bottle, so I looked it up. I then discovered that Champagne has a different name for a 6 liter bottle (Methusela) than Bordeaux (Imperial).

Wineries, especially in Europe, produce larger and smaller format bottles than the typical 750ml bottle size that most people are familiar with purchasing. The larger sizes are ideal for groups and special events. The smaller sizes offer conveniences for individual servings. If you have ever been curious about what sizes have ever been offered and the industry terms for those sizes, here is a succinct chart.

And here are some interesting facts on the naming of these bottles, because where in the world did they get these names!?!

Jeroboam II was King of Israel during the traditional year of Rome's founding (753 BC) and as the Greeks were emerging from the Dark Age that separated Homer from the Parthenon. There are two sizes of Jeroboam bottles

A son of Solomon, **Rehoboam** became King of Judah in 933 BC.

Methuselah was an antediluvian patriarch described in the Old Testament as having lived 969 years and whose name is synonymous with great age. He may well have evolved from a character of earlier Sumerian legend who lived for 65,000 years. To the Old Testament scribes this was perhaps too tall a tale, so they may have cut him back to a more conservative lifespan.

Salmanazar, derived from Shalmaneser, an Assyrian monarch who reigned around 1250 BC, just about the time the science of iron smelting was first imported into his kingdom from Anatolia.

Balthazar ("King of Treasures") is the traditional name of one of the Three Wise Men who traveled to Bethlehem for Christ's birth. The other two magi were **Melchior** ("King of Light") and Gaspar ("The White One"). Many scholars nowadays tend to characterize the trio not as kings, but rather as Zoroastrian priests, while others speculate that at least one of them was a king - namely Azes II of Bactria who reigned from 35 BC to 10 AD. Whatever their occupations, legend has it that the Three Wise Men, or at the very least their skulls, lie buried in a golden shrine at Cologne Cathedral.

Nebuchadnezzar, originally nabukudurri-usur meaning "Nabu protect the boundary", became King of the Chaldean Empire in 604 BC. He was actually the second Nebuchadnezzar; a less celebrated Nebuchadnezzar I preceded him by 500 years. The king during the Jewish Babylonian exile.

Solomon was the son of King David and Bathsheba. When asked by God what gift he would like, he chose wisdom over riches.

Goliath was the Philistine giant who David fought and slew with a slingshot.

Melchizedek was the king of Salem and a high priest who blessed Abraham after he rescued his nephew Lot from the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. Abraham gave him one tenth of his wealth, which is today known as tithing.

Maximus. The largest size bottle was a specially made 130 liter bottle commissioned for Morton Steak House in 2004, who was celebrating their 25th anniversary. It could hold a massive 130 liters, which translates into over 14 cases, or 173 bottles of wine! This bottle was 4½ feet tall and had a circumference 4½ feet. It weighed 340 pounds full and 150 lbs empty. It could serve 1,152 glasses of wine. A bottle that size would almost have to have a cradle just to pour it. Morton's, which has a close relationship with Beringer Winery, put the Beringer 2001 Private Reserve Cabernet Sauvignon Napa Valley in the bottle. It took a tour of the US, going to 27 of their 61 restaurants. Customers would get their photographs with the bottle. The bottle was named Maximus by the legendary Master Sommelier Fred Dame. The bottle was made in Czech Republic. The cork was sourced in Portugal and was 130mm wide and 75mm long. The filled bottle was sold at a Sotheby's auction on 11-20-2004.

Source: Chart posted by Karen Orlandi on June 29, 2009 in Wine IQ; <https://www.thewinecellarinsider.com/wine-topics/wine-educational-questions/size-matters-explanation-large-bottle-formats/>; <https://www.businesswire.com/news/home/20040729005682/en/Wine-Bottle%21-Worlds-Largest-Wine-Bottle-Holds>



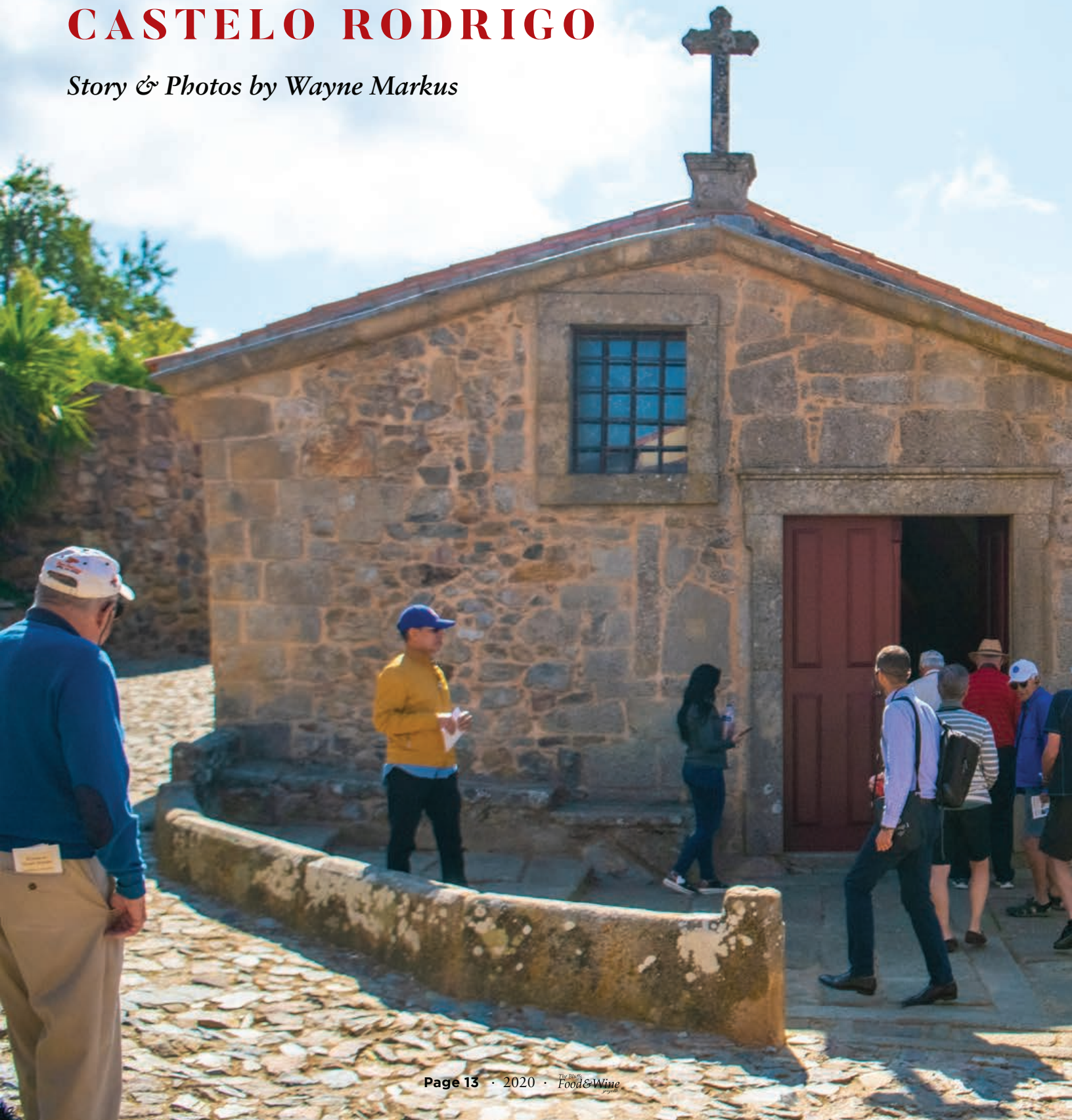
Bottle Equivalency

Name	Volume	Bordeaux	Burgundy/Rhône	Champagne
Split or piccolo	187.5 ml	1/4 Bottle	1/4 Bottle	1/4 Bottle
Half	375 ml	1/2 Bottle	1/2 Bottle	1/2 Bottle
Bottle	750 ml	1 Bottle	1 Bottle	1 Bottle
Magnum	1500 ml (1.5L)	2 Bottles	2 Bottles	2 Bottles
Marie Jeanne	2250 ml (2.25 L)	3 Bottles	-- (not used)	-- (not used)
Double Magnum	3000 ml (3 L)	4 Bottles	-- (not used)	-- (not used)
Jeroboam	5000 ml (5 L)	6 Bottles		
Jeroboam	3000 ml (3 L)		4 Bottles	4 Bottles
Rehoboam	4500 ml (4.5L L)	-- (not used)	6 Bottles	6 Bottles
Imperial	6000 ml (6 L)	8 Bottles	-- (not used)	-- (not used)
Methuselah	6000 ml (6 L)	-- (not used)	8 Bottles	8 Bottles
Salmanazar	9000 ml (9 L)	-- (not used)	12 Bottles	12 Bottles
Balthazar	12000 ml (12 L)	16 Bottles	16 Bottles	16 Bottles
Nebuchadnezzar	15000 ml (12 L)	20 Bottles	20 Bottles	20 Bottles
Melchior	18000 ml (18 L)	24 Bottles	24 Bottles	24 Bottles
Solomon	20000 ml (20 L)	(not used)	(not used)	26 Bottles
Sovereign	25000 ml (25 L)	(not used)	(not used)	33.3 Bottles
Primat or Goliath	27000 ml (27 L)	36 Bottles	(not used)	36 Bottles
Melchizedek	30,000 ml (30 L)	(not used)	(not used)	40 Bottles
Maximus (Beringer)	130,000ml (130L)	173 Bottles		

THE INTERNATIONAL WINE AND & FOOD SOCIETY IWFS AMERICAS, INC. 2019 DOURO RIVER CRUISE PART 7 JUNE 14, 2019:

CASTELO RODRIGO

Story & Photos by Wayne Markus







We had a choice of tours. One was in four-wheel drives to an archeological park that is considered the most important open-air Paleolithic engravings of the world. Most went to the **Castelo Rodrigo** on the Spanish border.

The Castelo is next to the medieval village of **Figueira da Castelo Rodrigo** that dates back to the 6th century. The Castelo was built in the 11th century and has been occupied by Muslims, Christians, and Jews. At one period the Spanish ruled and told the locals to convert or expel the Jews. The locals asked the Jews to change their names and not expose their religion in case the Spaniards came. The Castelo was cold and windy, but has wonderful view. The history was very interesting as was the very small **Igreja do Reclamador** Church with paintings and statuary. We sampled multiple flavored almonds and local wines and local drinks including **Ginjinha** (ginja) a liqueur made from combining aguardente (distilled spirit) and ginja berries (sour Morello cherries). On the way back to the Queen Isabel we heard the story of a Stork named Juana that broke her wing and was adopted by the town.

Returning to the ship for dinner, the aperitif before dinner was **2018 Caves São Joao Rose Bruto sparkling wine** made of Baga and Touriga Nacional grapes.

Felicity Jones was awarded the Americas Silver Medal for exceptional service to the IWFS. My observation over several events over several years is that she is truly deserving of this award. She appeared to be unaware of the impending honor and told me that she was totally surprised. Congratulations Felicity!

Our dinner speaker was **Luis Seabra**. In contrast to the other wine speakers Luis is a small winemaker. He was with Niepoort making Port until 2013 then began making his own wines. He said the big Port houses start by buying the wine already made then age them. He feels there is a big lack of knowledge of the different soils and terroirs because the blend is always the most important thing. His main goal is to show the different vineyards from different places and terroir. His blends often include grapes from very similar terroirs. He tends to use spontaneous fermentation with indigenous yeasts and winemaking techniques to show the terroir.

2018 Luis Seabra Xisto Ilimitado Branco Douro is a blend of Rabigato, Codega, Gouveio, and Viosinho (white) grapes. Starters were Tuna fish rolls, with Captain's Salad of fresh garden greens, cherry tomatoes, mushrooms, and Mrs. Tollman's favorite dressing as the next course. **2017 Luis Seabra Granito Cru Alvarinho Vinho Verde** accompanied the salad. The Vinho Verde grapes were grown on granite soil. Fermentation used the spontaneous fermentation technique utilizing indigenous yeasts.

A Portuguese fish soup was next, accompanied by **2017 Luis Seabra Xisto Cru Branco Douro**. This is a single soil field blend of the same grapes as the other **Xisto Ilimitado Branco 2018**, which was poured with the appetizer.

With the next two courses, we switched to red wines. The two red wines underwent 100% whole cluster fermentation. Seabra drinks a volume so likes less alcohol with elegance and less tannins. With the first red, we had a Mushroom and Lasagna with Hollandaise Sauce. With the lasagna, a **2017 Luis Seabra Xisto Ilimitado Tinto** was served. This is a "Village" wine from several vineyards. It is 40% foot trodden and 60% stays in the vats for 25 days, so the tannins are softer and rounder.

Mushroom and spinach lasagna with Hollandaise sauce and low roasted beef tenderloin, sauce Financière, baby vegetables, and domino potatoes comprised our Main Course. Sauce Financière is made with demi-glace, chicken stock, truffle essence, Madeira (or Sauternes), and garnished with truffles or mushrooms. **2016 Luis Seabra Cru Tinto** – from 200-year-old vineyards, had greater than one-month skin contact, spent 2 years in used barrels, and contained at least 20 different varietals, some not identified.

Our Ice Mango Cheesecake dessert was accompanied by a **2015 Noble & Murat Vintage Port**. This is a new producer, and this is their first vintage Port. It was a little young. It is 100% foot trodden.

Our trip is almost over. Next time we will cover our voyage downriver back to Porto.

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





UPCOMING COUNCIL BLUFFS BRANCH EVENTS

Mark Your Calendars!

**MAR
22**



DOLCE

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

Producers: Tabitha & Dave Thrasher

**APR
02**



AVOLI OSTERIA

Italy At Your Table,
Avoli Osteria 5013 Underwood Ave, Omaha, NE

Producers: Connie Martin & Joe Goldstein

**MAY
29**



OMAHA PRIME

Producers:
Hayes & Hipple



HOSTING AN EVENT?

Let us know when, where and a little bit about what's going on! We would love to include YOUR event on the calendar! **Email details to: iwfs.councilbluffs@yahoo.com**



When you hire Omaha Door & Window for your home remodeling needs you can expect exceptional service and quality products.

With having served more than 130,000 customers for over 50 years we are a company that you can trust to be there after the sale.

Our products include Garage Doors, Windows, Siding, Entry Doors, Attic Insulation, Sunrooms and much more.

OMAHADOOR.COM
402-733-6440

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: Connie Martin

Vice President: Dave Thrasher

Treasurer/Membership: Diane Forristall

Secretary: Tabitha Thrasher

Cellar Master: John Fischer & Patti Hipple

Gazette & Photos: Tom Murnan

happygardener1988@yahoo.com

dave@supportworks.com

diane@forristall.us

tabithathrasher@hotmail.com

jrudyf@cox.net | stephenhipple@hotmail.com

murnantom@gmail.com

The Bluffs **Food & Wine** *March 2020 gazette*

Publisher: Todd Lemke

Editor: Tom Murnan

Graphic Design: Omaha Magazine, LTD.

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

All versions of Wine & Food Gazette are published monthly by Omaha Magazine, LTD, P.O. Box 461208, Omaha, NE 68046-1208. Telephone: (402) 884-2000. No whole or part of the contents herein may be reproduced without prior written permission of Omaha Magazine, excepting individually copyrighted articles and photographs. Unsolicited manuscripts are accepted however no responsibility will be assumed for such solicitations. The opinions expressed in this publication, except as specifically stated to the contrary, are solely the opinion of the author and do not necessarily represent the views of the Board of Governors of the Americas. The International Wine & Food Society, LTD., the publisher and any officer, director, member or agent thereof. The international Wine & Food Society does not endorse advertisers' products and is not responsible for damages incurred from the use of such products nor does it guarantee such products.