





PRESIDENT'S COMMENTS

Greetings to all;

ith the recent COVID-19 developments and concern for the well being of our members, the March 22 event at Dolce and the April 2 event at Avoli Osteria have been cancelled. It was disheartening to cancel these 2 events as they looked to be wonderful evenings. I hope all are following the recommended guidelines from the Centers of Disease Control, state and local health departments to stem the spread of the COVID-19 virus.

As one of our local physicians stated:

"Our nation is the strongest one in the world. We have been through extreme challenges and succeeded many times before. We WILL return to normal life. Please follow recommended measures to reduce the spread of COVID-19."

—Dr. Daniel Johnson, Nebraska Medicine

Please practice social distancing and handwash, handwash, handwash.

Be safe and be well. We look forward to seeing you at a future event.



Cover Photo: Castelo de Guimarães. Photo by Wayne Markus.

Tip-Jar humor in our local coffee shop:

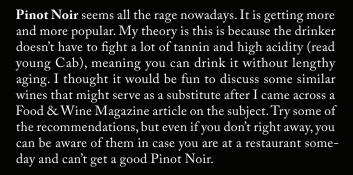
"Afraid of Change?

Leave it Here."

-Paula Hassler, Reader's Digest

EDITOR'S

always enjoy going anywhere that **Chef Jared Clarke** has an event for our branch. That includes Railcar Modern American Kitchen, Timber Wood Fire Bistro, or a catered event like we had at the Martin cabin on the Platte River. He always has a number of original takes on recipes that end up being delicious. **Date Night at Railcar** was no exception. When was the last time you had monkfish? Or Venison Wellington? It was a great place to take your date for the Valentine's day season. Plus the ladies left with roses, and everyone got a small box of Stam chocolates. Sweet!



Wayne Markus wraps up his narrative on the IWFS Douro River Cruise Festival. Having been up the Douro in 2012, I knew it was going to be spectacular. Portuguese still wines are getting better and better. And of course, their Port is world class. The next biggie was supposed to be IWFS visiting Bordeaux but COVID-19 cancelled that. Such a shame. That sounds like a trip of a lifetime, with visits to numerous First Growths. I am planning to re-apply for April 2021.



ONE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN
DEATH AND TAXES IS THAT
DEATH DOESN'T GET WORSE
EVERY TIME CONGRESS
MEETS."

— ANONYMOUS

Todd Lemke seems to use his IWFS contacts as fruitful fodder for the next story in *Omaha Magazine*. If you haven't opened your March / April 2020 issue yet, two of our Branch members were selected for interesting articles. **Mary Murphy** spoke about her life as an artist and her new studio. **Wayne Markus** was in the 60+ section detailing his extensive world travel and his photography hobby. He seems to have taken over for King Lee (Kansas City Branch) in taking thousands of photos for IWFS Great Weekends and Festivals. Congrats to Mary and Wayne. We have a lot of interesting people in IWFS.

Cheers!

Tom Murnan

EVENT REPORT:

"DATE NIGHT" AT RAILCAR MODERN AMERICAN KITCHEN

Story By Tom Murnan // Photos by Tom Murnan & Wayne Markus

n a very mild February evening, we returned to Chef Jared Clarke's Railcar Modern American Kitchen. 24 people signed up, but our number was plagued with two that caught the regular flu, and one with a medical procedure. Dennis DePort was unable to attend his first function as a new member, but wife Pam brought one of her best friends, Jeannie Smay. I was glad we had our own room because the rest of the restaurant was packed. Shelli Klemke and organizer Gary Martin also succumbed to the Type A flu.

Chef Jared always has an imaginative menu, and this time was no exception. For starters, our appetizers included a 600 day Prosciutto (that's almost two years of aging), Soppressatta (a dried cured salami), 3 kinds of olives, pickled artichokes, Dolce Gorgonzola & Flagship Cheddar cheeses and Dijon Grey Mustard. Finally we had delicious, smoky tasting and slightly charred toasts of bread. Finger food all, it was a tasty beginning to our feast. This was washed down by our quaffing wine, a Elk Cove Pinot Noir "Clay Court" 2014. The chef told me that Elk Cove has been sold, something I had not heard before. All the wines tonight came from Railcar.

Chef Jared spoke about the upcoming courses and wines. Our First Course was Friese Salad. The components included thinly sliced rounds of raw apple at the bottom, topped with friese that had been coated with a hazelnut vinaigrette. To the side was baked apple chunks coated with bacon jam, as well as a baton of Clothbound Cheddar. Chef told us that "friese is a bitter green that can be made correctly with the right vinaigrette and the right accoutrements. Then you can have a nice balance of bitter, sour, savory and salty. You can get a bit of everything." I think he succeeded. The baked apples in bacon jam were the soft component and quite savory. The friese was bitter, the cheese supplied a salty and

savory component. The raw apple discs were a bit sharp and acidic. And the hazel-nut vinaigrette was quite wine friendly for the Martin Ray Russian River Sauvignon Blanc 2018. This was not a grapefruit / green apple fruit bomb (like some of the New Zealand Sauvignon Blancs can be). It had notes of kiwi, honeydew melon and citrus. Overall, it was an unusual and subtle salad with a softer wine. Quite nice.

Our 2nd Course was one of my favorites: Wagyu Steak Tartare. But this was not just a piece of raw meat with salt and olive oil on top. It had caramelized onions, capers, mustard, Black Garlic Aioli, bone marrow breadcrumbs, and a judicious amount of orange zest. I had never heard of Black Garlic. Black Garlic was made by the Koreans in ancient times. In a kind of fermentation, bulbs are kept in a humidity-controlled environment from 80 to 90% and at temperatures that range from 140 to 190 °F for 15 to 90 days, with 45 days being average. There are no additives, preservatives, or burning of any kind. The sharpness of fresh garlic is muted in this process. Black garlic has a very subtle and subdued flavor that is easily overpowered. Nicely salted, I noticed the citrus component in the background even though it was not listed on the menu. The beef had a lot of complexity added to it with all the ingredients.

Paul Hobbs is a California wine-maker whose main base of operation is in California, but crosses the equator in our winter to arrive in Argentina in their spring. He also sources grapes from other sources. Our wine tonight came from Cahors, France, the home of Malbec, known as the black wines of Cahors the juice is so dark. The Paul Hobbs Crocus de Cahors Malbec 2014 was indeed inky dark and impenetrable. I could not see through the glass to view my fork it was so dense. I thought the wine was very closed

in, although it had been left to breathe an hour or two before the event. Tannin wise, it was softer than I expected. By itself, the wine was fairly muted, but it did wake up a bit when paired with the dish and all its wine-enhancing ingredients. I thought it needed at least another 5 years.

The 3rd Course found us with Monkfish. Sitting on a bed of Piquillo Pepper Risotto which incorporated Nduja (pronounced "en-doo-ya" or "new-ja") and Salsa Verde, the fish was crusted with pistachios and sautèed. Nduja is a particularly spicy, spreadable pork salumi from Calabria, Italy. [So how is salumi different than salami? Salumi is a broad category of sausage making, smoked and cured meats, equivalent to saying charcuterie in French, while salami is just one kind of product under the salumi category, as is prosciutto.] The nduja is house made at Chef's other restaurant, Timber Wood Fire Bistro, from pork shoulder and prosciutto. It had a little heat to it to balance out the salsa verde. The salsa verde was cooked in lobster broth to thin it out a bit. The risotto was spicy and lively with the nduja. Monkfish, one of the ugliest fish around (it has teeth and looks like one of those deep sea creatures), is sometimes called the poor man's lobster due to its texture and taste. With the pistachios, nduja, and salsa verde, it greatly enlivened the dish.

A non-vintage rosé from **Domaine Serene Vineyards, "r" Rosé,** was the chosen wine. For a rosé of Pinot Noir, it was hearty, with lively acidity and strawberry flavors. Technically, it is not a non-vintage wine. Rather, it is a multi-vintage wine. You can tell what vintage it is by pulling the cork. Ours was branded IX, indicating it was a **2016**. It was blended with a little Chardonnay. I thought it worked with the fish. >















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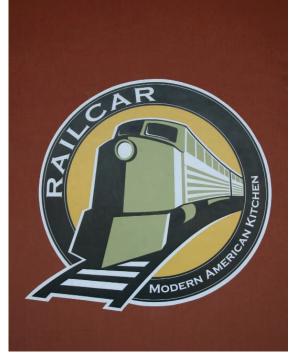












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✓ Moving onto the main entree, the **4th Course** was an unusual **Venison Wellington.** Chef Jared found a source for venison, so he had the idea to use deer meat rather than the traditional beef. A large vol-au-vent puff pastry shell had the venison topped with Shitake Duxelles and Foie Gras. Half the bottom had a pool of Aligot Potatoes. These are French cheesy mashed potatoes that traditionally have Tomme de Laguiole or Tomme d'Auvergne cheese from the Massif-Central region of France. It is too hard to get those cheeses in Omaha, so we had gruyere and sharp provolone cheeses. The mixture stretches out like rubber bands according to the Chef. The other half of the bottom pooled with dark, rich veal demi glace. To top the dish off, we had Butter Poached Broccolini and Asparagus with Moroccan spices.

The venison was not at all gamey, and sat in its puff pastry shell with chopped shitakes and foie gras. The demi glace was a perfect accompaniment to soften the shell with flavor and keep the venison moist. The aligot, however, was thick, dense and very rich...too rich for me. The cheese made its surface a bit hard compared to regular mashed potatoes. The richness seemed a bit of a distraction from the earthy game flavors. Our red wine was the **Blackbird Vineyard "Arise" Proprietor Red Blend Napa Valley 2014.** 38% Merlot with 32% Cabernet Sauvignon and 30% Cabernet Franc were used in the blend. The wine was mildly tannic, deep in fruit, well balanced, but closed in, needing another 3 to 5 years to really open up. But I did get favors of cassis in the glass.

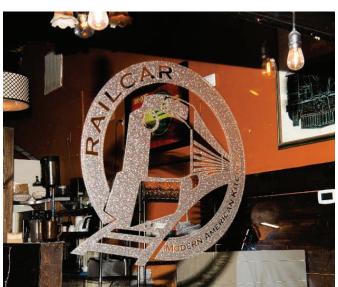
Dessert was brought out in a shallow porcelain bowl, filled with French Silk Crème Brûlée. French silk equals chocolate, and in this case real Belgian dark chocolate was used, along with vanilla bean. Crème Brûlée means they take a torch to caramelize the sprinkled sugar on top, resulting in a nice crunch when you put a spoon in it. Whipped cream, strawberry, and an Almond Tuile finished the presentation. The tuile, or tile in English, was not the traditional curved cookie, but almond bits bound in a caramelized sugar glue. All in all, it was quite sweet and gave the Taylor Fladgate 20 Year Tawny Port a run for its money on which was the sweetest. I would say the dessert won that match by a hair.

Thanks to Connie and Gary Martin for organizing our Date Night. Special thanks to Executive Chef and owner Chef Jared Clarke, as well as Chef de Cuisine Nate Crawford for crafting a fine meal. Service was great as well, and we thank Rachael Kirshenbaum and Maria Olivera for their efforts. Denise Meyers made up two galvanized water tubs filled with roses, fern and a kind of baby's breath assembled in her shop Arrange This and That. Finally, we were treated to a small box of Stam Chocolaterie bonbons. These specialty chocolates began in the Netherlands in 1817, but now they have a presence in the USA. They are a real treat. I have to say, that was a great date!























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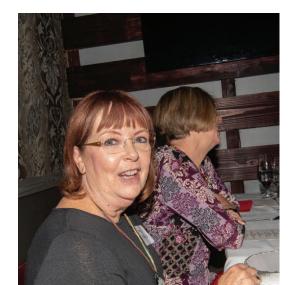
















Pinot Noir SUBSTITUTES

BY TOM MURNAN

inot Noir is all the rage now. I wonder if it is a reaction to all the monster Cabernet Sauvignons out there, especially in California. But (especially if you have a young Cab) if you are in the mood not to have to deal with monster Cab with its palate-coating tannins, where your entire mouth tastes as dry as chalk, then Pinot Noir is the grape for you. It is so user friendly, with its light tannins and many times velvety texture, it is a crowd pleaser. And of course Pinot Noir includes Burgundy, the spiritual home of Pinot Noir (PN). What is not to like with that range of deep, earthy flavors to fresh berries?

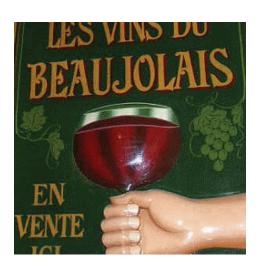
But knowledge is power, and you should be aware that there are substitutes to PN, if for nothing else, to keep from getting in a rut. One reason you joined the IWFS was to increase your wine knowledge, right? Here are a number of PN options.



When Philippe the Bold outlawed the cultivation of Gamay in Burgundy, it pushed the grape south to the Beaujolais region.

GAMAY

Grown right next to Burgundy is the Gamay grape. It was kicked out of Burgundy in 1395 by Duke Philip the Bold, saying that it was "a very bad and disloyal plant", so it took up residence in nearby Beaujolais. Go for one of the 10 Cru Beaujolais, which most closely approach PN. These include Moulin à Vent, Chiroubles, Morgon, Juniénas, Chénas, Saint-Amour, Fleurie, Côte de Brouilly, Regénie, and Brouilly. Lighter in texture than PN, it still has those bright red fruit flavors of cherry or wild strawberry.



MENCÍA

Grown in Spain in the Valdeorras, Bierzo and Riberia Sacra regions, Mencía has fresh berry notes and minerality from the granite soil. If you prefer a fuller California style of PN, Mencía gives you earthy, rich fruit with a smoky background.

SANGIOVESE

From Italy, here is another thin-skinned grape like PN, it is a similar finicky grape that is hard to grow. The grape of Chianti, it ripens slowly, but gives off wonderful, complex aromas. Search for Chianti Classico, which is superior to regular Chianti and yield bright cherry and earthy flavors.



Nerello Mascalese grown on Mt. Etna, Sicily

NERELLO MASCALESE

Another Italian varietal hailing from Sicily, you typically see Nerello in wines coming from Mount Etna on the eastern side of the island. Drunk by itself, it strikes the middle ground between PN and Nebbiolo (see below). Nerello wines are refined and aromatic, with soft tannins and tart fruit. I just had a comparison of a Super Tuscan 2015 Sassicaia with a 2016 Tentua Della Terre Nerre Santo Spirito Etna Rosso. I was thinking to myself while comparing the two that I was contrasting Cabernet Sauvignon (Sassicaia) with PN (the Terre Nere).

NEBBIOLO

Since we just mentioned it above, you might try Nebbiolo, the wine from Italy's Piedmont region featuring Barolo and Barbaresco. You are starting to get a bit afield here because Nebbiolo can be pretty tannic, but it has some of the flavor profiles of PN. They are both elegant and have aging capacity. Both have mushroomy, earthy flavors, spice, as well as cranberries and cherry notes. If you go this route, get a well aged Nebbiolo.



BONARDA

This is Argentina's second most planted grape, originally from Italy. Bonarda is similar to PN in that it has soft tannins but with more robust fruitiness.



CORVINA

This is another substitute to a big Sonoma or Napa Valley PN. Usually found in the blended wine called Valpolicella, when served unblended and on its own, it displays big cherry, nutty flavors in a light to medium body with soft tannins and cherry flavors.

ZWEIGELT

The most widely planted red grape planted in Austria, Zweigelt makes a light weight red due to its cool climate. It is a cross between Blaufränkisch and St. Laurence, it tastes like a PN from Germany, and has a bit of pepper to its taste. With careful vineyard attention, it can taste like fresh strawberries, cinnamon and violets.

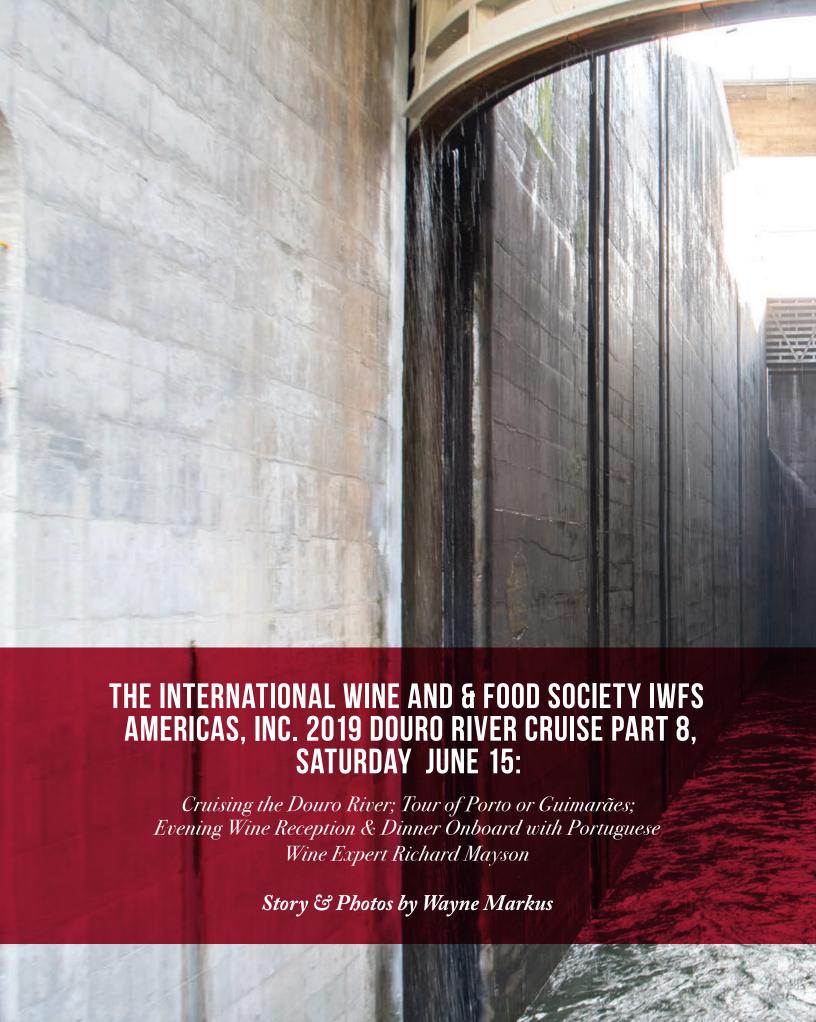
XINOMAVRO is primarily grown in Macedonia, in the northern part of Greece. Some think it is similar to an PN from Oregon with its tart cherry fruit, but it is more tannic than PN. Drink with hearty dishes to mask the tannins.

TROUSSEAU is native to France's Jura district, which is not that far from Burgundy and was at one time part of it. It has a similar body and palate to red Burgundy with a soft fruitiness and a bit of tartness on the palate. Its natural high acidity makes it a good food match.

CABERNET FRANC from the Loire can be similar to PN. Look for such AOCs as Bourgeuil, Raffault Chinon, Filliatreau Saumur, and Chanteleuserie. Cab Franc from the Loire is quite aromatic, has soft tannins, and is relatively inexpensive for the price.

Food & Wine magazine paired up 6 recipes in its April 2011 issue. They developed recipes to go with Gamay, Sangiovese, Mencía, Bonarda, Xinomavro, and Zweigelt. Be adventuresome and try one or more of these PN alternates!

Sources: https://www.complex.com/pop-culture/2013/10/red-wines-to-drink-if-you-like-pinot-noir/nielluccio; Food & Wine April 2011 p. 126, Not Pinot: The New Food Friendly Reds.





ne of the tour choices Saturday was the medieval city Guimarães, a UNESCO World Heritage Site. It was founded in the 9th century and is the birthplace of Portugal because it is believed that Portugal's first King Afonso Henriques was born here. The Castelo de Guimarães is the principal medieval castle in the municipal area of Guimarães in the northern region of Portugal. It was built under the orders of Mumadona Dias in the 10th century to defend the monastery from attacks by Moors and Norsemen. The castle is a military fortification grounded primarily in the late Romanesque period in the second half of the 13th century.

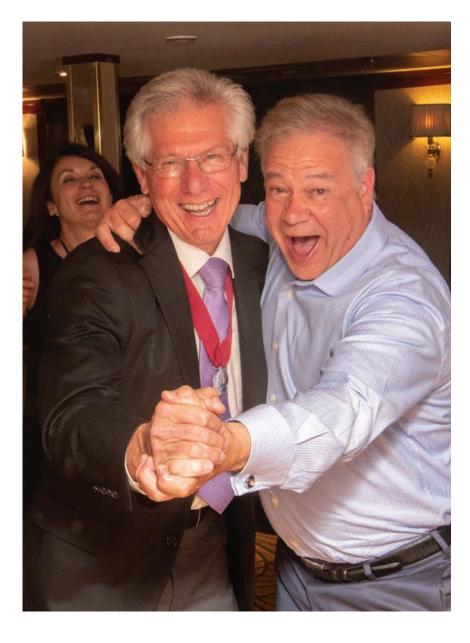
For our final banquet on board the *Queen Isabel*, Richard Mayson presented the dinner wines. We started with two white wines with the Mrs. Tollman's Millionaire Salad and pumpkin cream soup.

Anselmo Mendes Parcela Unica meaning "unique parcel" is an Alvarinho with a little bit of wood aging. We have had Alvarinho in many guises.

The other white was the **2017 Niepoort Coche** – one of leading whites made in Burgundian style from 110-year-old Rabigato, Viosinho, and Códega do Larinho vines. It is barrel fermented and spends one year on the lees. This wine is seriously age worthy.

Vol-au Vent with Mushroom ragout was next. A 2013 Dona Berta Reserva Tinto was made with Tinta Roriz, Touriga Nacional, Tinta Cão, and Touriga Franca grapes in a not so great year.

Braised Leg of Lamb followed with Ratatouille, Bread Pudding, Blue Cheese and Mint Sauce. **2015 Quinta do Crasto, Vinha da Ponte** made from vines over 100 years old, foot trodden, and aged in new wood. It is so concentrated that you don't get wood flavors. It



is very young. Hugh Johnson praised it stating that it is "half of a good vintage Port." It will be fantastic in 10 years.

A Variety of Cheeses from the Galley were next, served with condiments. The **2015 Quinta do Crasto, Vinha Maria Teresa** is from a most beautiful sloping vineyard.

Dessert was Mr. Brett Tollman's Individual Baked Alaska. This consisted of three kinds of Ice Cream, Vanilla, Strawberry, Chocolate, with Sponge Cake, Meringue and Cherry Jubilee. **2003 Quinta do Noval Vintage Port** is one of most emblematic Ports in the Douro valley. Richard gives this Port a 20 out of 20 score.

The next morning, we said our goodbyes to new and old friends as we went our own ways. We had fond memories of another IWFS event and are looking forward to the next.





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Mark Your Calendars!



AVOLI OSTERIA

Italy At Your Table, Producers: Gary & Connie Martin



OMAHA PRIME
Spring Fling Theme Producers: Patti & Steve 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



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