

The Bluffs Food & Wine

May 2014 *gazette*

Event Report Happy Hollow Culinary Extravaganza

Also Inside

Chef Jason Hughes' Wild
Mushroom & Gorgonzola Bread
Pudding Recipe

Wine Food Pairings—a Quiz

Tom & Mary Murnan Portuguese
Wine Vacation Vol 10, June 2012



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President's Comments



Dear Members,

Here is a wine that Suzanne and I were introduced to at a wine tasting dinner hosted by Palm Bay Importers and Bella Vita Ristorante. From the Valpolicella wine region in Italy, Secco-Bertani 2010 is a red blend of 70% Rondinella and 30% Corvina grapes.

The wine is produced in a unique style called **Ripasso**, mostly done in the **Valpolicella** region. The process of adding (or “repassing”) the lighter Valpolicella wine over the remainders of the “bigger” Amarone wine (the lees*) imparts additional color, texture and flavor to the Valpolicella wine. Also, it induces a second fermentation of the wine that increases the wine’s alcoholic content. The result provides a balance between the fresh fruity quality and the spicy notes and the concentration and structure which are the result of this particular vinification process. Making it this way produces a wine with more flavor and complexity than a simple Valpolicella. The wine ages in oak and cherry wood casks for about 18 months.

It has a very deep garnet red color with purple nuances. At the nose is a scent of ripe cherry, evolving into black cherry notes, spices and dried fruit. In the mouth it shows a balance of soft tannins and acidity.

We enjoyed this wine with a mushroom risotto that went perfectly. This drinkable yet complex wine is rated 91 points by Wine Advocate. Drink now and for the next 5 years. Serve with duck, veal or pasta with a rich meat sauce.

*Wine sediment that occurs during and after fermentation, and consists of dead yeast, grape seeds, and other solids.

Enjoy,

Bob Kossow
President

“Reality is an illusion that occurs due to a lack of wine.” —Unknown Author

Editor's Corner



Dear Members,

It's finally spring, things are slowly greening up, and the greenest place I've seen lately was the golf course from the Happy Hollow Country Club's spectacular Main Dining room. Chef Jason Hughes made a delicious meal to inaugurate the spring season. We had quite a meal, so if you weren't there, read about it, and if you were there, you can re-live it by reading the Event Report section.

I don't want you to think I have a shoe fetish, but I had to take photos of two of the more unusual footwear...and it wasn't just confined to the ladies, either. Thank you Patti Hipple and David Hayes!

I was mightily impressed by one of the sides on the Painted Hills Center Cut Beef Tenderloin Au Poivre course. I loved the Wild Mushroom and Gorgonzola Bread Pudding. It was so moist and flavorful that I asked the Chef to provide the recipe, which he graciously did. Check out and try this option to potatoes at your next fancy dinner.

This month John Fischer departs a bit from his usual didactic articles to give us another kind of education: The Quiz. Remember the dreaded quiz when you were in grade school? Well, they can be educational as well as fun. But don't do like me and skim over the instructions. You CAN use the same answer more than once. I was getting some less than stellar pairings as I headed for match number 7, and didn't realize I could have used the same answer again until I looked at the answer page. I remember thinking to myself when taking the quiz: Well, this would work but it's not ideal.

It's been a while since we had an article on Mary and my trip to Portugal, so the series continues with this Gazette. We were part of a trip organized by the online wine journal For The Love Of Port. The reason you join one of these trips is because they open all the doors for you, give you the insiders tour of Port Lodges that you could not do on your own, taste far more extensively with older vintages included, and take you to fabulous restaurants that you would be unlikely to know about if you organized the trip yourself. This time we focus on the restaurant Douro In. We were fortunate to have the winemaker from the Port Lodge Niepoort, who commented on all the wines. Read on within!

Errata. The calendar was one day of the week off for the May 18th event at V. Metz. The 18th is on a Sunday, not a Saturday as previously shown.

Don't forget, we now have the opportunity to sign up and pay for an event online. Refer to the March 2014 Bluffs Gazette for a more complete description.

Tom Murnan



Photo courtesy of hugel.com

Event Report

A Happy Hollow Culinary Extravaganza

by Tom Murnan



An unusually warm Spring day found us gathered at the Happy Hollow Country Club. Expectations were high for those of us who are also members of the Omaha Branch because the new, young chef, **Jason Hughes**, did such a stellar job in December. We were not disappointed. Members **Stacie Matz** and her father, **John Fischer** were our hosts and made the arrangements. Twenty-six members and five guests made for a well attended, 31 diners event. The Clarks brought Ron and Gina Stinn, and the Panzers brought Maureen Panzer, Frank Way and “Uncle Captain Father Joel,” as Jon’s children call him (Jon’s brother), a Catholic priest home from the military.

A nice selection of **quaffing wines** were offered from South Africa, Côtes du Rhône France, Napa Valley, Rioja and the Casablanca Valley of Chile. The more forceful flavors of some of the reds came in handy once one walked over to the appetizer station. Beautifully arranged and presented, they almost looked too nice to eat. Almost. Chef Jason Hughes happened by to explain what was in the spread. **Seared Hawaiian Ahi Tuna** was expertly prepared and rare in the center. Chef told us that the **fresh wasabi root** that he used and grated was about five years old and came from Japan. These roots grow very slowly, and by using a fresh root, you have cleaner flavors which are not as pungent. Fresh is less likely to annihilate your palate with hot horseradish flavors. Fresh is spicy yet sweet at the same time. I found it quite nice, and I am a bit squeamish about something that has the potential to destroy your palate for a few hours.

The **Pickled Ginger** was another assertive possibility, although I found it mild enough to go well with the tuna. An unusual touch was the **White Shoyu**, or soy sauce, that you spooned over the tuna. Clearer and thinner than dark soy sauces, it infuses flavor without darkening foods. **Asian Cucumber Salad** completed the Asian theme. The **Wild Mushroom Gougères** brought us back to Europe and France. Choux paste was filled with cheese and mushrooms and baked into brown balls. They were so savory that I could not have just one.

Next, we moved to table. The spectacular view



we had overlooking the greening golf course lifted ones spirits after a long, bleak winter. Our **Amuse Bouche** course amused our palates with a wonderfully presented brown egg shell, top cut off, and filled with **Maine Lobster and Tarragon Custard with Osetra Caviar**. I must find out sometime how one cuts the tops off eggs without breaking the whole egg. The dish was paired with a **2009 Taittinger's Domaine Carneros** sparkling wine. Tarragon flavored custard filled with small chunks of lobster meat made for a delightful mouthful.

Host John Fischer got up to inform us of the format regiment for the dinner. Each table was to report on the wine, and how it interacted with the food. Each table had its course assignment. John would also be there to correct any inaccurate perceptions!

Representing Table #1 was **Alan Fisher**. They felt the creaminess in the sparkling wine matched and enhanced the creaminess of the custard. John then taught us that the creaminess in a Champagne or sparkling wine has to do with the bubble size. Pinpoint small bubbles make for a creamier drink than larger bubbles. Table #1 felt that the **Domaine Carneros** was "a wonderful match. Could not be better."

The **First Course** was next, and consisted of a **Wild Pacific Dungeness Crab Stack**. A **2012 Duckhorn Sauvignon Blanc (SB)** was the chosen wine. Diced avocado formed the base of this

stack, then the crab, and was then topped by diced heirloom cherry tomatoes, hardboiled egg slices and micro greens. A spicy Remoulade Sauce pooled around the bottom. The sauce's richness was tempered by the plainness of crostini made of French bread.

Table #2 thought the brash flavors of the wine went well with the crab, tomatoes and greens. They liked the grassiness of the SB. John said he was initially disappointed with the nose of the wine, but later the mid palate began to open, and finally the wine's flavors exploded with the food at the end. The freshness of the green ingredients went well with the wine. Avocado, like asparagus, especially is difficult to match to wine, but SB usually works well.

The **Second Course** presented **Painted Hills Center Cut Beef Tenderloin au Poivre** with **Wild Mushroom and Gorgonzola Bread Pudding**, local **baby vegetables**, and **Courvoisier Cream Sauce**. The beef was Oregon raised. I thought the mushroom and wonderfully moist gorgonzola bread pudding was very imaginative and quite delicious. It had bits of embedded bacon and tasted of the essence of mushrooms. It had a blue cheese flavor that shadowed, rather than dominated, the pudding. The local vegetables consisted of baby carrots, candy stripe beets and gold beets.

Table #3 had to present its wine choice. The **2011 Girard Petite Sirah** from Napa Valley was



fruity and peppery with low tannins and was a bit raw and young. Some thought it could not stand up to the au poivre crust on the meat. But other tables preferred it to the **2009 Vina Herminia Rioja**. Table #3 found the Rioja more tannic but also more refined. John said the Rioja was more Bordeaux- like. So the larger group as a whole was fairly evenly split as to their favorite red.

Dessert was a **Baked Alaska** paired with **Frangelico Liqueur**. Chocolate cake was topped with liquid nitrogen salted caramel ice cream and covered with piped meringue on a base of streams of hot fudge sauce. A Florentine tuile with coca nibs, stuck into the side of the meringue, served as a garnishment.

Spokesman for Table #4, **Steve Hipple**, thought the Frangelico was “a match made in heaven.” The hazelnut flavors, and pure 20% alcohol paired nicely. Steve also stated the dessert wine should always be sweeter than the dessert, which was the case here. John commented that the soft creamy and nutty flavors went with the salty caramel ice cream.

Many thanks to Stacie and John for all their hard work in hosting this event and selecting the wines. Thanks as well to Chef Hughes and his staff for an imaginative menu and great execution and service. It was truly a spectacular meal.

Chef Jason Hughes' Recipe

for Wild Mushroom & Gorgonzola Bread Pudding

by Chef Jason Hughes

6 CUPS	FRENCH BREAD (CUBED & DRIED OUT FOR ONE DAY)
2 POUNDS	WILD MUSHROOMS -DICED ROUGHLY (SUCH AS CHANTERELLE, CREMINI, ETC.)
½ POUND	BACON DICED SMALL
¼ CUP	VEGETABLE OIL
½ EA	YELLOW ONION DICED
3 EA	GARLIC CLOVES MINCED
½ EA	SHALLOT
3 TBSP	FRESH THYME MINCED
½ CUP	MADERIA WINE
8 EA	EGGS
4 QUARTS	HEAVY CREAM
1 CUP	GORGONZOLA CHEESE CRUMBLED
	SALT & PEPPER TO TASTE

METHOD OF PREPERATION:

- Add vegetable oil and bacon to pan and render until bacon is crisp
- Add mushrooms & sautee 3-4 minutes (season with salt and pepper)
- Add garlic, shallot, onion, thyme and sautee for 3 more minutes
- Deglaze pan with maderia and reduce til liquid is almost gone
- Cool mixture down
- Mix the eggs and cream together with 1 tsp pepper, 1 tbsp salt
- Add egg and cream mixture to bread cubes
- Add mushroom/bacon mixture and gorgonzola cheese to bread mixture
- Mix well and let stand for 30 mins to allow ingredients to blend together
- Stir every 10 mins
- Portion in greased 8oz souffle cups or ramekins (or large caserole dish)
- Bake at 350 in water bath for 30-35 minutes until toothpick comes out clean
- Let stand 10 mins before unmolding

Yield: 8 servings









Wine Food Pairings—a Quiz

by John Fischer



Try your hand at some interesting wine food challenges. Pick a wine from the below list that will match the described dishes below. If more than one choice is workable, choose the one that best matches. Answers are the opinion of the author and reasons for the choices are given. Have a little fun and take the quiz.

Wines

- Sauvignon Blanc
- Chablis
- Pinot Noir
- Cabernet Sauvignon
- Zinfandel
- Beaujolais
- Riesling Spätlese
- Champagne



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 is the author of two books: *The Evaluation of Wine* and *Wine and Food – 101*.

Dishes

- Traditional corned beef and cabbage with root vegetables.
- Breaded, fried oysters topped with Nantua Sauce (creamy sauce enhanced with crayfish butter, white wine, and sometimes cognac)
- Shrimp with a sweet, tart, and spicy pineapple mango flavored sauce.
- Poached eggs on toasted English muffins, hollandaise sauce, accompanied by crispy fried potato cakes.
- Crown roast of lamb stuffed with buttery bread crumbs, blackcurrants, mushrooms, onions and herbs.
- Grilled duck breasts topped with a sweet and tart apricot glazing.
- Salmon steak topped with a beet relish and served with buttered baby potatoes.

Answers

1. (a) Beaujolais: This is a hardy, unsophisticated rustic, full-bodied dish that calls for a wine in kind. The dish is a little on the salty side and salty foods works best with acidic wines. Beaujolais fills the bill on both accounts.

2. (h) Champagne: This is a moderately light-bodied dish embellished with a creamy sauce. Light-bodied Champagne with its creamy mousse is a great match (creamy dish paired to creamy wine). Oysters are often served with a squeeze of tart lemon and the tartness of Champagne complements the dish (takes the place of the lemon). Champagne also goes great with crispy foods such as the crunchy breading on the oysters. Champagne is a great Breakfast wine.

3. (g) Riesling Spätlese: Sweet foods look for sweet wines with equal or greater sweetness, and the tropical fruit flavor in the wine matches that in the dish. In addition tart dishes call for wines with equal or greater tartness.

4. (h) Champagne: The scrubbing bubbles in the Champagne clean the palate of the creamy residue from the egg yolk and hollandaise, while the creamy mousse of the Champagne tie into the creaminess of the dish. What's more, the crispiness of the toasted English muffins and fried potato cake is complementary to the wine. Champagne is a great match for crispy and crunchy foods.

5. (d) Cabernet Sauvignon: Big, rich, full-bodied dishes call for similar styled wines. The weight and sophistication of the food match that of the wine. In addition, the blackcurrant flavor in the dish matches similar flavors that are often found in the wine.

6. (g) Riesling Spätlese: Same reason as question #3. Note that a light weight wine can be served with a heavy weight dish, but not the reverse.

7. (c) Pinot Noir or red Burgundy: This is a medium weight dish paired to a medium weight wine. The flavors of beets found in the dish pairs to the same flavor that is often found in Pinot Noir. As you can see here, the dictum "white wine with fish" does not always hold true.



Murnan Portuguese Wine Vacation

Dinner at the Douro IN · 5 June 2012: Vol. 10

by Tom Murnan

It was time to leave the **Quinta do Panascal**, which supplies world renown Port house **Fonseca** with grapes, and head to dinner back down the Douro River to Régua. We were taken to a superb restaurant named **Douro In**. We were in for a treat because **Jorge Seabra**, winemaker for the well known Port Lodge **Niepoort**, was also a guest. He would speak about all the wines we were going to have that evening. Starters consisted of a tuna puree, olives and olive oil with balsamic vinegar floating on top.

Our **first course** was a spicy sausage wrapped in phyla, a sweet apple sauce and an arugula salad with balsamic dressing. A light tawny port, only slightly sweet, was our first wine. We then had to guess what an older white wine might be. It turned out to be a **Niepoort White Port** from the 1950's, a blend of several years. It had some sharp acidity but not much in the way of woody flavors anymore.

For the **second course**, a **Niepoort 2008 Redoma Branco Douro** was brought out. A white (**branco**)



table wine, it was light straw in color and dry. It had seen some oak. It was paired with a nicely presented plate of grilled octopus atop sautéed turnip greens and garlic, atop a flattened baked potato formed in the shape of a cylinder. This was garnished with carrots, red and yellow peppers in a green cilantro sauce. Very tasty.

A **2010 Coche Niepoort** was brought out for the octopus. **Coche** means coach in Portuguese,

DOURO **IN**
RESTAURANTE - BAR



as in a horse and coach. It was a more complex white wine, dry, oaky with more stuffing than the previous white. It brought out the brine and grille flavors of the seafood and was a great match. Only 2000 bottles were made. Only available in Portugal, I suspect.

Our **third course** was a sorbet. Lemon with extra virgin olive oil and mint and whipped egg whites had a powerful lemon taste and was a great palate cleanser.

The **fourth course** found us with two wines to compare. The first: a **2003 Terceiro Dado Alvaro di Castro E**, again from Dirk Van Der Niepoort. It was a young tasting dry red table wine with an odd nose, tasting of black pepper and tar. The other wine was a magnum of **2005 Battuta Niepoort**, more tannic and younger than the first, with a closed in nose. These two wines were paired with a filet of beef with port wine sauce and wild mushroom risotto. My notes say the risotto was a creamy, unami delight. A third wine was brought out, a magnum of **1995 Redoma**, which was an old school Niepoort red table wine with a field blend of port variety grapes.

The **fifth course** was a dessert plate of warm apple pie with cinnamon. The pie consisted of sliced apples on a cream sauce. Two Niepoort Ports were brought out. We tasted a **2009 Bioma Vinha Velha** (old vines), a young Vintage Port with mouth coating tannins. Then we had a **1968 Colheita** (vintage dated tawny), which had a pronounced woody nose and somewhat bitter finish. This wine

was raised continually in wood cask until 1994, or 26 years in the wood.

Feeling quite stuffed and not a little tipsy, we waddled back into the bus for a short ride to our hotel (The Douro River Hotel) on the other side of the Douro River. Next time: one of the most famous Lodges in Portdom: the **Quinta do Noval**.



Upcoming Council Bluffs Branch Events

Mark Your Calendars!

 **May 18, 2014**

Patti Hipple hosts a Spring Fling at one of Omaha's best restaurants: V. Mertz in the Old Market.

 **June 29, 2014**

Cordie Fisher & Deb Tritsch host a wine and all appetizer event at Vine & Branch in the Old Market.

 **July 13, 2014**

Hosts: Jon & Jill Panzer and Patti & Steve Hipple

Come and experience the culinary fusion of Chef Jose Dionicio's Peruvian heritage with the local summer harvest. Taita's (Peruvian for Father) is becoming one of Omaha's top seafood restaurants, but, it is so much more. Please join us on Sunday, July 13, 2014 for a Peruvian inspired meal and some South American wines.

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: dmatz@darland.com



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Keep In Touch!

Please notify Club Membership Chairman
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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
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