

The Bluffs Food & Wine gazette

Event Report:

Spring Fling at the Twisted Cork

Inside

The Finish of a Wine

Tom & Mary Murnan
Portuguese Wine Vacation
Vol. 15, June 7, 2012





President's Comments

Dear Members,

In April of this year we joined fellow members, Diane and Gary Forristall, on a winemaker's tour to the Southern Rhone in France hosted by the Viticulture & Enology School of Washington State University. We visited over 10 wineries during our stay.

As part of that trip we visited one of the most well-known wine regions in France, Châteauneuf-du-Pape. The wine history of this region goes back a long way. The first vines in this area were most likely planted by the ancient Romans.

Red wines in the region are a blend predominately made with Grenache grapes along with Mourvedre and Syrah. (They can be a blend of up to 13 different grapes.) This Appellation d'Origine was created in 1933 and most of their wines use a bottle with a distinctive trademarked logo- created in 1937 which pictures a Papal tiara placed on of the keys of Saint Peter. Châteauneuf-du-Pape winegrowers were the first in all of France to impose production parameters.

While there we visited wineries and caves, tasting a number of great wines. One wine we really enjoyed was a Châteauneuf-du-Pape from Domaine de Cristia.

Domaine de Cristia was started in 1942 with 2 hectares of Grenache vines in the Southern Rhone. The third generation is now working the lands and it now has 13 hectares of vines in Chateauneuf du Pape. 90% of the terroir is composed of sandy/clay soils planted on the Eastern sector of the appellation (lieu-dit 'Cristia'). These parcels of Châteauneuf-du-Pape benefit from a cool, fresh north-easterly exposition which allows the grapes and wines to develop supple, elegant tannins.

Domaine de Cristia Chateauneuf du Pape is made from 85% Grenache, 5% Mourvedre and 10% Syrah. The average age of the vines used varies from 50 to 100 years of age. The Grenache is aged in vat while the Syrah are Mourvedre are aged in 2 to 3 year old barrels for 18 months.

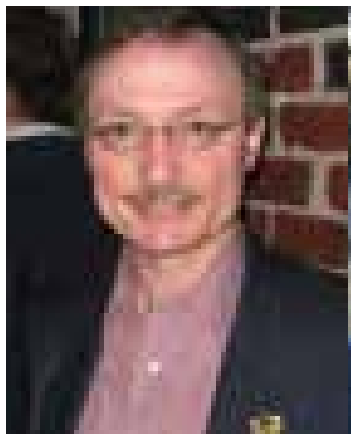
This Châteauneuf-du-Pape is intense but clean and balanced a flexible wine with food. It suits much of today's Mediterranean-influenced cooking.

Enjoy!

Bob Kossow

Is there
a photo?
Please send

**A flashy style, with red licorice
and warm fruitcake notes backed
by flavors of plum sauce and
boysenberry preserves. Singed
apple wood and licorice details
fuel the finish. W.S. 92pts
Best from 2015 through 2025.**



Editor's Corner

We kicked off the Spring season this year with a visit to the Twisted Cork. I was excited to give the restaurant a real try. I had only been there once, when my godchildren took Mary and me out to dinner. We only ordered the gourmet burger, for which Twisted Cork has achieved a certain amount of local fame. We didn't want to rack up the bill on the kids. But as is usual for an IWFS event, the chef had a great reason to get creative. We learned that another Twisted Cork specialty is seafood, since the owner hails from the Pacific Northwest. I also was reminded of how important it is to read your event invites carefully. One couple was late because they went to the Twisted Fork in the Old Market!

John Fischer has provided some wine education with his article entitled *The Finish*. The finish, or farewell, is an important aspect of your wine enjoyment, one that can be easily overlooked if one is socializing. A long finish can greatly enhance your appreciation of a wine, and is critical to your overall evaluation of its quality. Don't miss John's article.

In our serialized story of Mary and my wine trip to Portugal in 2012, we continue our busy day, after an extended and wonderful lunch (in last month's Gazette), by going to our first Madeira lodge. Henriques and Henriques has a modern winery built right on the side of an incredibly steep slope in an area known as the Câmara de Lobos. The view was spectacular, as were the wines. We tasted through 17 different Madeiras. It was a slog, but I was only too happy to do it! I love how old some of the library wines of these lodges can be. The oldest wine we sampled was a solera started in 1894. Recall from previous gazettes on Sherry that a solera starts with a particular year, but that other vintages are added over time so that, in our case of the 1894, only a very small amount of the original wine was still in the bottle after 118 years.

Please feel free to submit your own articles that have to do about wine and food for publication in the Gazette. Bob and Suzanne Kossow, along with Diane and Gary Forristall, just came back from France. Bob wrote of one of the wineries on his tour in the President's Comments section. We are always searching for good stories. Take plenty of photos as well. If you have a vertical (as opposed to the more common horizontal) photo, it might end up on the cover. The January 2015 cover was such a vertical shot, taken by Jill Panzer when she went to the Institut Paul Bocuse on the Rhône River Cruise. So, going to Napa? Sonoma? The Willamette Valley? Write an article, take plenty of photos, and send it in. The article does not have to be long.



Photo courtesy of hugel.com

"My kids really hate my
ice-cream-truck ringtone."

—Jeff Lyons
@USEDWIGS

Bon Appétit et bon vin!

Tom Murnan





Event Report: Spring Fling at the Twisted Cork

by Tom Murnan

It was a beautiful evening for a Spring Fling. Beautiful temperatures and a threat of rain. But inside the Twisted Cork was an excited atmosphere. The Branch has never been here before. The restaurant is somewhat small, and divided into two rooms, but it could have handled more than the number of attendees we brought. The staff worked on their usual day off, and we had the place to ourselves. Thirty-four total attendees participated, of these, nine were guests. Our guests were **Tami Cleaves, Pete Denes, Howard Hahn, Dave & Kari Kirchoefer, Gary & Connie Martin and Don & Kathy Wittler.**

I had only been to the TC once, and that for just their gourmet hamburger. With our Branch, owner and **Chef Darrell Ault** had a chance to get creative and go off the menu. Darrell came out after every course to explain what went into the dish. We learned that Ault came from Seattle

and moved to Omaha in 2007 to be near his wife's family. Darrel's first love is seafood, which is reflected on the menu. A lot of it is sourced from Washington State and Alaska. The restaurant also has a wine list made up of 100% wines from the Pacific Northwest.

True to form, our first appetizer was **Mahi-mahi Croccantini Rafts on Apple Smashed Potato**. What appeared to be a wafer (the raft), and what the chef called a cracker (made from a potato) formed a base on which was placed the Apple Smashed potato (like mashed potato only a bit dryer) and crowned with small pieces of fish. It was tasty and unusual, although I didn't get too much apple taste out of the potato. **Grilled Asparagus and Kalamata Olive Crostini on a Goat Cheese** base was next. The olives were ground up into a tapenade, and small spears of asparagus topped all. Tangy and palate cleansing. Both were washed down by quaffing wines. My favorite quaffer was the **2011 Terra Noble Gran Reserva Carmenere Maule Valley** from Chile.

We had assigned seating so the guests could sit with their hosts. One room was very loud, with two long tables. Everyone was having a good time getting caught up. The other side was half as noisy, and sat at smaller tables.

Our **First Course** continued the seafood theme. A plate with two different recipes appeared. Two **Shrimp, Avocado, Grapefruit and Spicy Whidbey Sauce on Toast Points** surrounded a **Grilled Oyster with Lemon Beurre Blanc** sauce. The oyster came from Chef Creek, British Columbia, while the shrimp hailed from Whidbey Island, 30 miles north of Seattle. The grapefruit brightened the flavors of the shrimp, avocado and tomato, while the oyster was still warm with an unusual sauce. Can't say I've ever had a beurre blanc sauce with an oyster before, but it went very well. Personally, I think cooked oysters have more flavor than raw. A **2013 Cape Point Vineyards Sauvignon Blanc** from South Africa was an excellent wine pairing. It contains about 93% Sauvignon Blanc and 7% Semillion. Not too sharp or grassy but with a lot of fruit, this wine was refreshing.

A **Scallop, Corn Chowder Corn Pudding** was brought out for the second course was a Cornhusker kind of dish due to all the corn. Quite savory and smooth, the seared scallops was a marvelous accompaniment to the corn flavors. The corn pudding was like a cake that sat in the chowder. It was a fun, imaginative,

and out of the box kind of dish which was paired up with a Chilean Chardonnay, the **2013 Errazuritz Chardonnay Aconcagua Costa**. One hundred percent Chardonnay, the wine was not at all heavy and able to moderate the flavors of the corn pudding. Chef Ault told us he makes the corn pudding every Thanksgiving.

Our third course was **Wild Sockeye Salmon, Sundried Tomato Beurre Blanc, Basil and Asparagus Tips**. There is definitely a difference using wild salmon over pen raised. This came from Alaska, the flesh was firmer and more flavorful, and had more Omega 3 than pen raised. The Italian type ingredients of sundried tomatoes and basil were a harmonious match to the fish. The salmon was grilled and garnished with asparagus spears.

This time we had two wines to compare, both Pinot Noirs. The **2012 Adelsheim Pinot Noir Willamette Valley** hails from the Pacific Northwest, where as our comparison wine, the **2012 Pali Huntington Pinot Noir Santa Barbara County** also comes from great Pinot Noir country, in this case, from southern California. Which would go best with the dish at hand? Chef Darrel likes Pinot Noir with salmon because the oils in the salmon can handle the tannins in the wine. The Adelsheim was smooth and elegant, with earthy fruit flavors. The Pali Huntington had higher acid and was a bit spicy. Chef Ault preferred the Adelsheim in this setting.

Moving on to our last entrée with two different wines, we were presented with **Grass-fed Ribeye, Coffee and Peppercorn Crusted with Pomegranate Sauce**. The beef came from Hollenbeck Farms near Elmwood, NE. It was given a coffee and peppercorn rub and grilled with a great and tasty char to perfection. A small amount of Pomegranate sauce covered the steak. With the richness of the rib eye, you needed a rich wine. Two different grapes were tried. The **2013 Seghesio Zinfandel Sonoma County** was compared to a **2012 Jaffurs Petite Syrah Thompson Vineyard**.

Petite Sirah is a cross between the **Peloursin and Syrah** grapes, which was originally named Durif when the new grape variety was discovered in France around 1868. Most of the Petite Sirah in the USA today is actually the French Durif grape, and the name can be used interchangeably. Nowadays, the Durif grape is no longer grown in France. Petite Sirah has great resistance to powdery mildew. But back to our tasting.

The Seghesio was incredibly rich and full bodied with low tannins and very **fruity...perhaps** even too fruity and intense. The Petite was a tad bit more austere, but still inky dark, deep and intense, just a little more restrained. The meat brought out the flavor of both wines in spades, showing how important food is to wine. All in all, I thought the Petite Sirah was the better match, but that is just my opinion. Others liked the Zinfandel best.

We finished with **Tangerine Cake** and a **2012 Joh. Jos. Christoffel Erben Ürziger Würzgarten Spätlese Riesling**. The cake was gluten free, made from almond flower, eggs and sugar, topped with whipped cream and tangerine zest, sprinkled with powdered sugar. The cake was quite tasty, and the tangerine zest enlivened the flavors of the cake. The Spätlese had enough sweetness to enhance the cake as well, a nice match.

Many thanks to **Chef Darrell Ault** and his cooking staff and servers **Tammy Barker and Lauren Ault** for giving up their Sunday off to prepare and serve our dinner. It was great fun trying a new restaurant for our Branch. I'm sure we will return!

















The Finish

by John Fischer

If you had to pick one part of the wine tasting experience as being the most revealing in regards to wine quality, it would unquestionably be the finish. The finish is the lingering aftertaste you experience after swallowing a wine. This effect is due to the continual evaporation of volatile compounds clinging to the surface of the mouth.

The volatile flavor elements that travel up the back of the throat to the olfactory (smell) receptors (located in the upper part of the nose) create the sense of smell. The sense of taste (sweet, tart, salt, bitter and umami) is formed when the residual elements coating the mouth stimulate the taste buds and send their signals to the brain to create the sense of taste. The combination of the taste and smell signals are interpreted by the brain as flavor. The higher the concentration of the elements that create taste and smell, the more intense the flavor.

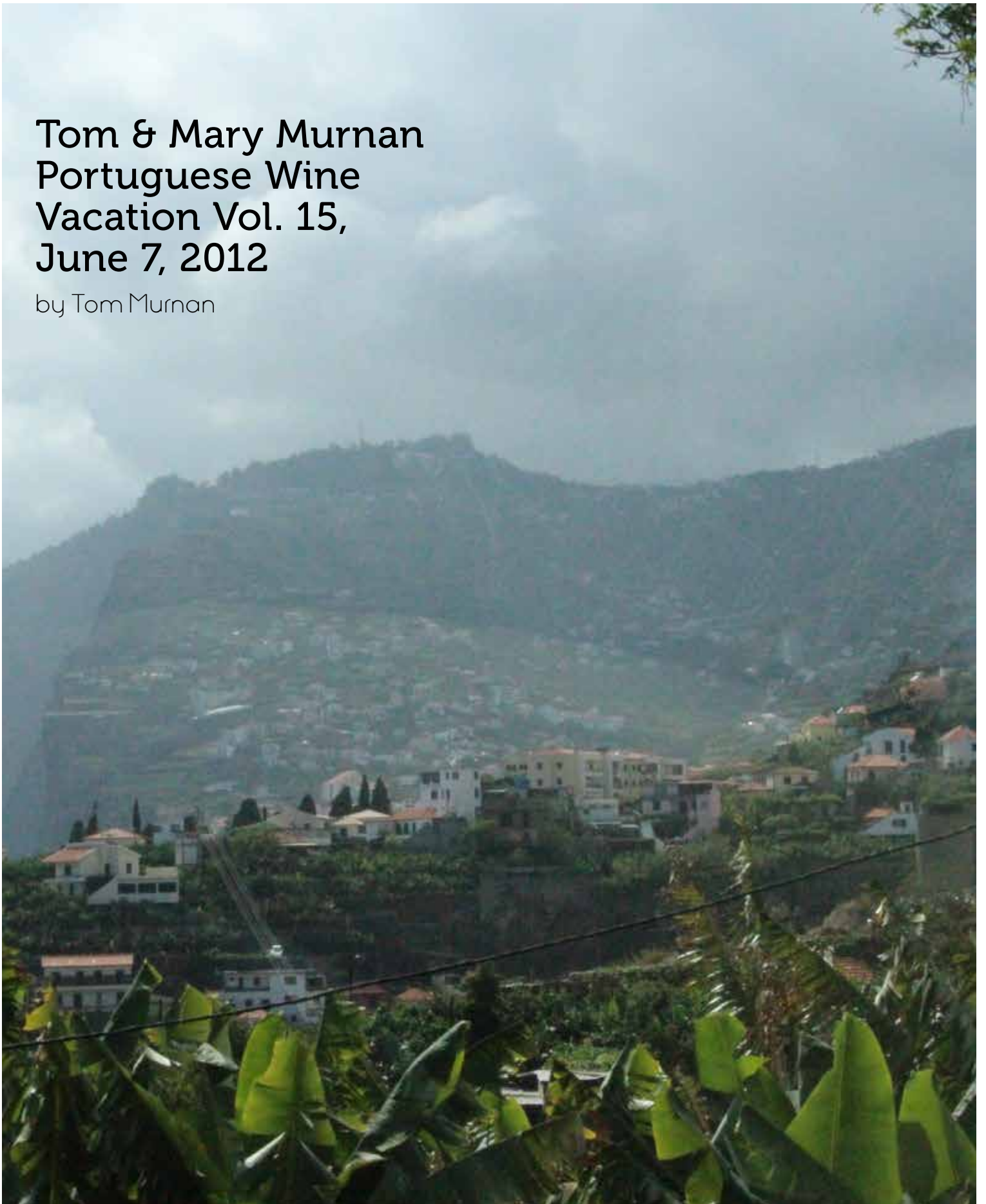
If there is a lack or excess of any of the taste and smell elements the defect will be immediately apparent and the wine will appear out of balance. When there is an overall deficiency of the taste and smell elements, the aftertaste will be short lasting and dilute. Of course, the presence of any offensive elements (vinegar, barnyard, burnt rubber, etc.) will spell the ruination of the wine.

It should not be surprising that you should pay close attention to the finish of a wine; after all, isn't it what you do when you sip and spit. People who have to taste a large number of wines over a short interval of time (like Robert Parker) cannot afford the luxury of swallowing; yet, they can accurately discern a wine's merits and deficiencies. Personally, I would be hard-pressed not to swallow a wine that costs hundreds of dollars a bottle. Come what may, I just feel the need to get my money's worth—one of my many defects.

The aftertaste of a wine is like a fragrant flower that suddenly blossoms releasing its essence. It is indubitably the most sensual and ethereal part of the tasting experience—the celestial part. The finish of a wine is what separates a good wine from a poor wine and a great wine from a really great wine. When you evaluate the merits of a wine pay close attention to its finish: The longer it lasts, the more enjoyable it tastes, the better the wine. Nevertheless, there is a caveat: if the wine is immature or in a dumb state all bets are off, and you may not get much of a finish at all. Other factors will then need to be evaluated to establish the wine's future evolution which are beyond the scope of this article.

Tom & Mary Murnan Portuguese Wine Vacation Vol. 15, June 7, 2012

by Tom Murnan



After our extended lunch at Chalet Vincente Restaurante, we all boarded a bus to go to H&H, or more properly, **Henriques & Henriques**. The winery invested 5,000,000 € in 1992 to build a state of the art winery in the **Câmara de Lobos**, a renowned Madeira fishing village and winegrowing area. It was a favorite haunt of Winston Churchill, who used to paint scenes of the area, where the topography was rugged. The famous **Cabo Girão**, with its 1903 foot cliff, is within sight of the village. The H&H offices, laboratory, aging areas, tasting room and blending rooms are located in Câmara de Lobos. It was perhaps a 20 minute ride from downtown Funchal.

H&H was founded in 1850 by João Gonçalves Henriques. He died in 1912, and a partnership was formed between his two sons, Francisco Eduardo and João Joaquim, so the firm has been called Henriques & Henriques ever since. In 1925, the firm began marketing their own wine rather than supplying other shippers. In 1968, the last of the Henriques died without heirs and the company was left to three of his friends. Unlike most of the Madeira producers and shippers, H&H actually has some of their own vineyards. In fact, at 10 hectares, they have the largest vineyard on the island of Madeira.

The current managing director is **Dr. Humberto Jardim**, and he conducted our tour and tasting. As an aside, we learned that the firm ages Madeira in casks from Jameson and Bushmills Irish Whiskeys, and Glenfiddish Scotch Whisky and sends their casks back after a year. Aging is done in 700 liter tonnels. Whiskey producers will send empty casks here, where they are used to age Madeira one year, and then sent back. The Madeira left in the barrel staves subtly flavors the whiskey. We toured the facility and saw the barrel aging rooms and laboratory.



Humberto then provided us with a slide show and gave us interesting information about the Maderian wine making process. There are two ways to age Madeira: one

is by heating it quickly, a process called **Estufagem**, and the other by heating it gently, over time, a method called **Canteiro**. In the first method, H&H heats the wine to 113° F (the maximum is 122°F). This method is used for the cash cow wines, the three and five year old Madeiras, which the firm needs to get to market quickly for cash flow reasons. It also keeps the price down and reasonable, which attracts younger drinkers. The wines are put in stainless steel containers with water jackets where the hot water circulates. A propeller in the tank also circulates the wine and keeps the wine from getting caramelized. This is done for three months. The Canteiro method is used for finer wines, ones aged 5 to 20 years or more. Twenty is the minimum age for a vintage Madeira. These wines are aged in oak in upper rooms where the heat of the sun can warm them. But recall, it never gets too hot in Madeira. 79°F is the average high.

If the vineyard is not too steep, the **espalier** system of cultivation is used. The one drawback is that it has to be used on land with hardly any slope to it. In the old system of cultivation, called **latada** or the **pergola** system, the leaf canopy of the vines is laid out **horizontally** on wires, suspended off the ground with stakes. These set at heights of about three and six feet off the ground, making pruning and harvesting difficult. In the **espaldier** or **espalier** system, introduced after about 1950, the training is conducted **vertically**. The idea is to increase the percentage of the leaves to the sun, increasing exposure to light. In addition, it is easier to work these kind of vines.

The grape **Tinta Negra Mole** produces 85% of the wine on the island. It can take on the characteristics of the other major grapes, like Bual and Malvasia. H&H has also been bringing the forgotten Terrantez grape back. The whole island only produces about 3,400 kilos annually of Terrantez.

We then proceeded with a large tasting of 17 wines, progressing from dry to sweet. We started with their **Monte Seco**, a sharp and totally dry Madeira and a **Rainwater**. Named after its pale color, Noel Cossart lays claim that his company, Cossart Gordon, conceived the name after a barrel was left on the beach in the 1700's. The Rainwater name is rarely used anymore after it became associated with cheap Madeira. Some firms are bringing the style back now. Other wines in our tasting were the **5 Year Old Tinta Negra** (only about 9€

or \$12.00), **1997 Colheita** (single harvest, not blended, from a single year), **1998 Colheita**, **15 Year Old Sercial** (a dry style), **Sercial 1971** (110€ or \$143.00), **Sercial 1964** (121€ or \$157.00). We then tried the rare and nearly extinct Terrantez grape with the H&H **20 Year Old Terrantez** (48€ or \$63.00) which had great aromatics and the famous slightly bitter taste and whiplash acidity.

Moving towards more sweetness, we sampled the **medium dry range** next. We started with a **15 Year Old Verdelho** from the Quinta Grande. Jardim called it "the pride of our house." The cost was 25€ or \$32.50. We then jumped to an **1898 Verdelho Solara**, which had a greenish meniscus or rim (a sign of a good, old Madeira) and noticeable acidity detectible in the nose. This wine sold for 485€ or \$631.00.

The **Buals** were our next and sweeter category. The **15 Year Old Bual** was voted the best by Decanter Magazine in 2011 (25€ or \$32.50). It had coffee and caramelized flavors and was wonderful with pineapple. A **2000 Bual Colheita** was called the pleasant Bual (22.5€ or \$29.25). A **1980 Bual** was next and displayed a darker brown color and much more concentrated caramel and coffee flavors all balanced by acidity (95€ or \$123.50).

Finally, we ended with the sweetest category, the **Malvasias** or Malmseys, the English term. **Malmsey** means **Sweet Heart** in old English. We started with the **10 Year Old Malvasia**. Malvasia was first planted in 1425 at the decision of the Portuguese Crown to try to get more people to stay in the island. This Malvasia was a bargain at 17€ or \$22.00. We then tried one twice as old, a 20 Year Old Malvasia. Concentrated sugar and complex toffee flavors with good acidity was noted in my notebook. Should pair well with chocolates. 45.5€ or \$68.25. The **1954 Malvasia** was brown with a green rim and complex caramel flavors.

We ended with the **1894 Founders Solera**, which was quite good. Brown in color, it was powerful, sweet and rich. It was selected by the two H&H brothers from their father's stock. As the story goes, God is said to like to listen to Bach, but when the angels come together, they like to listen to Mozart, and God likes to hear them play it. This was a wine to please the angels while they were playing Mozart. 545€ or \$708.50.

Next time: Restaurant O Classico.



Upcoming Council Bluffs Branch Events

Mark Your Calendars!



July 12, 2015

What's the Point? A discussion by V. Mertz sommelier, Matt Brown, of 6 different wines and what the professional raters are looking for when giving a rating. You will have an opportunity to rate the wines yourself.

Producers: Jill Panzer and Diane Hayes



August 15, 2015

Council Bluffs Country Club. Italian theme.

Producers: Tom Schierbrock and David Tritz.



September 13, 2015

Little España in Rockbrook.

Producers: Patti & Steve Hipple



October 11, 2015

A Halloween themed Walk-around at the homes of the Hipple, Panzers and Farmers.

Producers: Patti Hipple, Jill Panzer and Liz Farmer



November 8, 2015

The Heritage (the old Zin Room) 316 South 15th St, Omaha

Producers: Barb & Barry Kricksfeld and Tom Murnan

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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Keep In Touch!

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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

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