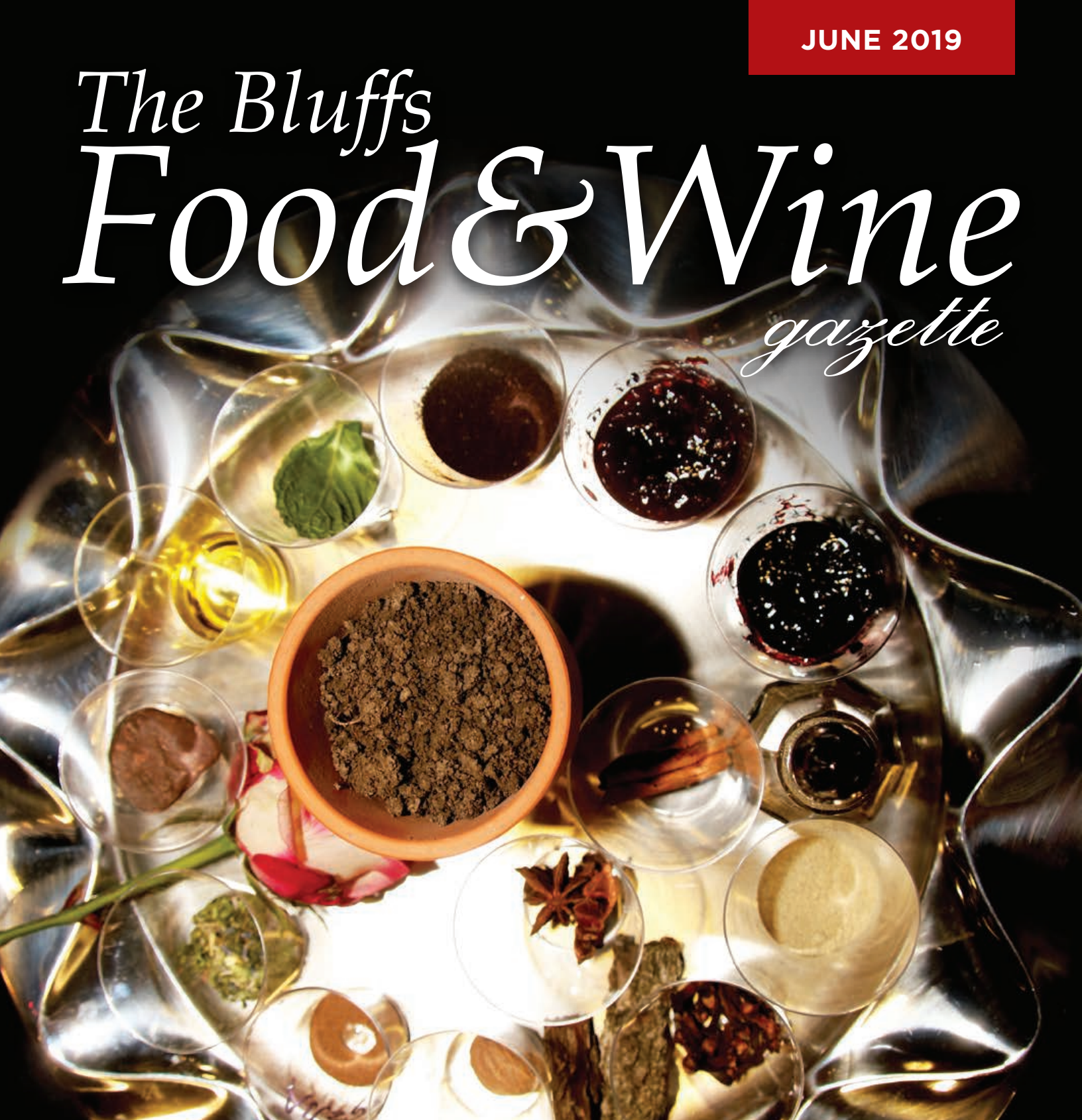


JUNE 2019

The Bluffs *Food & Wine* *gazette*



INSIDE

Event Report: Kutak Rocks the Pinot

Rare Discovery of 18th & 19th Century Madeiras at Liberty Hall

The Omaha Building Restored



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



PRESIDENT'S COMMENTS

Greetings All,

Hope everyone is enjoying the spring and looking forward to some warmer temperatures that come with summer.

April and May have been busy with events and venues that have not been tried before. Kudos to the work done by the event hosts that have come up with creative new ideas for events.

June promises to be no exception. On June 23rd, the event will be at Mode de Vie in Regency Fashion Court. The event, hosted by the Hyders, and Goldsteins (with very little to no help from the Goldsteins). It will feature mostly French cuisine, and a great selection of French wines. Weather permitting, we will quaff on the newly redone patio, followed by dinner indoors. Expect some great wines, and food that night.

I know how busy everyone is with summer activities, but let's try and get out and support the people who put a lot of time and effort into these events, and the venues for shutting their doors and allowing us in.

One last thing.

Special shout out to my good friend Bill Clark. Bill has been sidelined with some surgery. Hope you feel better soon buddy. 🍷

Cheers,

Joe Goldstein



Cover Photo: Sensory and tactile aids to describe Pinot Noir. White pepper, cloves, a whole nutmeg, ground allspice, Herbes de Provence, a real rose, wet stone, truffle oil, fresh mint leaves, ground coffee, raspberry jam, blackberry jam, cinnamon sticks, star anise and a pepper shaker of black pepper. Photo by Tom Murnan

EDITOR'S

CORNER

I have to say that the Council Bluffs Branch certainly has interesting events. This month, the Gazette focuses on a catered event at one of the most historic buildings, the 1887 Omaha Building. At the time, it was the tallest building in the West. Built before steel frames allowed building to be even taller, the structure has a massive brick base designed to carry a lot of weight. Founding attorney Robert J. Kutak spent a veritable fortune restoring the building and buying modern art, which is scattered throughout. The all Pinot Noirs, from around the world, was a great way to take a wine tour without leaving town. It was a unique experience.

Serendipity is defined as making discoveries, by accident, of things that were not sought for. At historic Liberty Hall, in New Jersey, an inventory count of an old wine cellar yielded a trove of 18th and 19th century Madeiras, as well as whiskey and spirits...the stuff dreams are made of. This was in 2015. Three years later, at the end of 2018, an auction of the treasure was held at Christie's New York. If you love Madeira, you must check this story out. The best thing was that this wine was still good.

Todd Lemke wanted me to pass this along. As you know, the Gazette comes to you now from issuu.com. This is the professional way to send a magazine. Todd urges members to join issuu.com. Not only will you then be able to print the Gazette if desired, but the functionality and usability is superior, especially on your mobile devices.

The IWFS international web site has been upgraded, especially with smart phones in mind. Take a few minutes to familiarize yourself with it. If you can't find much on the site, it probably means you have not logged in yet. You only get two tabs if you have not logged in. Don't forget that you can go to the web site for event photos before the Gazette comes out. Also, if you forgot to print out the details of an event, and the registration period has closed, you can go to the web site to get event details.

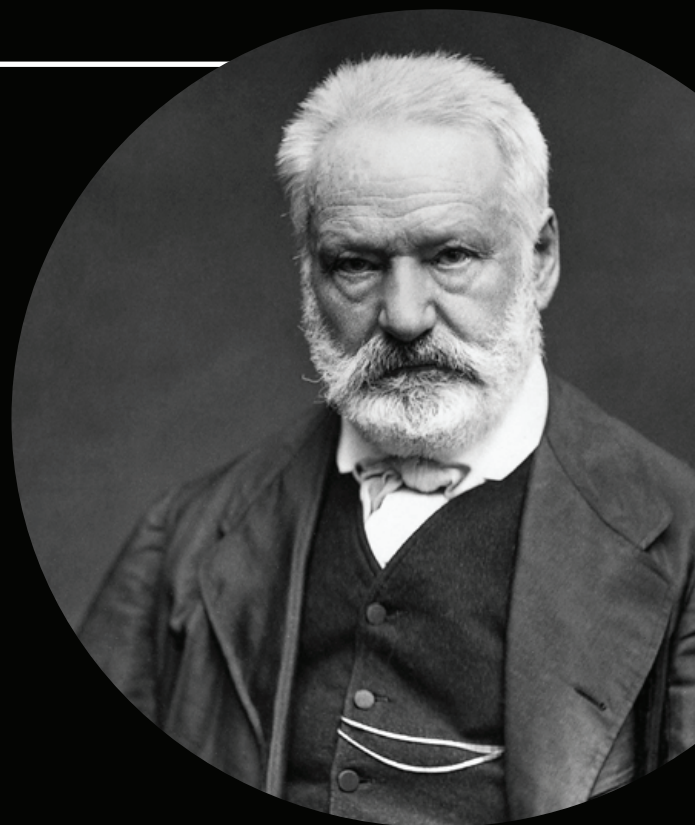
Skoal! 🍷

Tom Murnan



**“GOD MADE ONLY WATER,
BUT MAN MADE WINE.”**

— VICTOR HUGO



EVENT REPORT:

KUTAK ROCKS THE PINOT

Story & Photos by Tom Murnan

It is not every day that one gets to drink wine in one of Omaha's most historic buildings, a building that is not a restaurant destination. We were in for quite a treat. Board Member Jill Goldstein is an attorney who works for Kutak Rock, the current owner of the Omaha Building. It was her brainchild that got this event started. She assembled a great team to help her. Whenever you put on a catered event, it is a lot of work as most everything must be brought in. Abraham Catering, a longtime caterer since 1968 and Omaha fixture, provided the meal. We had 35 people attend, which included two guests. Our producers were Jill & Joe Goldstein, Rhonda & Mike Wilke, and Patti & Steve Hipple.

And what an educational event this was. Our theme was Pinot Noir, a grape varietal that is becoming more popular by the year due to its early approachability, even when young. We had a virtual tour of the world's Pinot Noir with eight Pinot Noirs from six countries. But what set this dinner apart, besides its historic venue, was all the educational experiences available at each of the tables. This was not just printed material, although Patti Hipple provided us a booklet of Pinot Noir facts, growing areas, and Flavor & Aroma profiles. The group went above and beyond with **tactile examples of aromas and flavors** by providing each table with mason jars or small containers of different foods, oils, plants and inert materials (earth) for the diner to experience. These are all used by wine writers to describe how Pinot Noir tastes and smells. This was impressive. I decided we needed to document this in the Gazette. I have never seen such an assembly of flavors and smells.

There were mason jars with cranberries, cherries, wet leaves, red licorice, stone, black tea, blueberries and coca cola. I had trouble with the latter. The nose was identifiable, but I couldn't quite place it until I asked. I guess my mindset was not thinking of a non-wine item like that. There was also a little pot of soil, as earthiness is a prime characteristic of Pinot Noir, as well as a live lavender plant. But wait... there was still more! In smaller shot glass type containers there was white pepper, cloves, a whole nutmeg, ground allspice, Herbes de Provence, a real rose, wet stone, truffle oil, fresh mint leaves, ground coffee, raspberry jam, blackberry jam, cinnamon sticks, star anise and a pepper shaker of black pepper.

We had the whole building to ourselves, and there was a lot of building. **Quaffing** took place across the hall from our dining salon, in an employee lounge area. Modern artwork from Robert J. Kutak covered the wall throughout its various rooms. We had a nice **Charcuterie Board** that included **Gouda, Comete Swiss, Farmhouse Cheddar, Blue Cheese, Figs, Dried Fruit and Nuts**. We had two Pinots available with the appetizers: a German 2016 George Breuer Spätburgunder Rosé and a 2017 Montescano Refugio Casablanca Valley from Chile. I liked the rosé better than the red.

David Orchard led anyone who was willing on a tour of the building. One unfortunate effect of this touring was throwing the kitchen staff's timing off as things were delayed about 40 minutes. After being seated at table, Patti Hipple spoke of the Pinot Theme and the reason for all the tactile aids on the table. Besides the various fruit flavors, **Bridge Ingredients** help us to connect the food and wine together through their interactions in

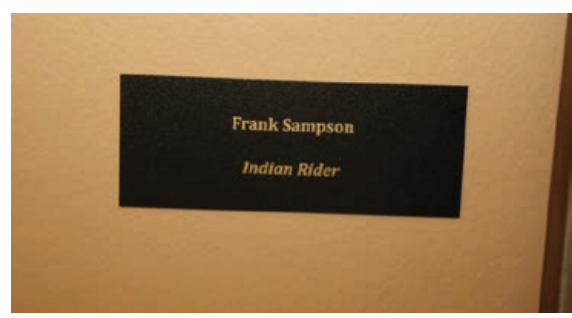
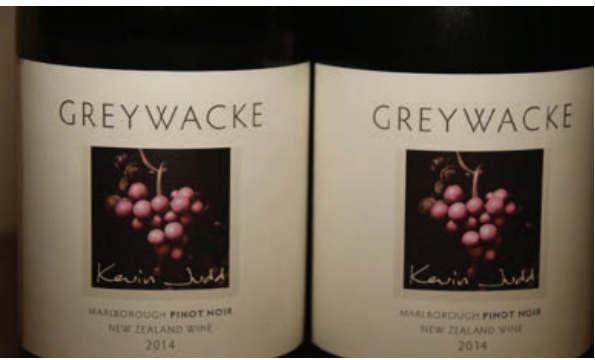
flavor, body, intensity and basic taste. Berries, mushrooms, truffles, onions, garlic, cheese, pesto, beets, lentils, spices, herbs and tomatoes all can be Bridge Ingredients. Many of the fruits, spices and herbs were on our table to sample. We received our booklet, a compilation of different articles, which contained a wealth of information regarding the aroma and tasting of Pinot Noir.

Our **2nd Course** was **Beet Salad with Baby Greens, Goat Cheese, Candied Walnuts, Honey Dijon Dressing and Baguette Slices**. I suspect the salad warmed up a bit due to our tardiness. It was delicious, with its earthy beets and wine friendly and mild vinegar dressing. Any salad is a bit problematic for wine, but the **2014 Greywacke Pinot Noir** from Marlborough, New Zealand, paired nicely. Not an especially elegant wine, I thought it held its own in the wrestling match with the salad. Our Bridge Ingredients were beets and goat cheese.

The **3rd Course** found us with two glasses of Pinot. **Grilled Salmon Filet with Raspberry, BBQ Butter Sauce with Brussels Sprouts & Pancetta** was our offering. The salmon was cooked through but was not dried out, which could have easily happened with our delay. The bacon (our Bridge Ingredient) and sprouts had a natural affinity and made the sprouts a bit more wine friendly. We were going to be asked which Pinot we preferred. The **2014 Cristom Estate** from the Eola Amity district in Oregon was compared to a South African wine, the **2017 Hamilton Russel Hemel-en-Arde Valley**. More elegant than the Greywacke, the Cristom was better balanced and integrated than the Hamilton Russel, which was three years younger and less developed and more closed in. I gave the nod to the Cristom, but overall, the group was evenly split. ▶











EVENT REPORT:

◀ The 4th and final main course was **Cajun Pan Seared Filet & Pinot Noir Reduction Sauce with Risotto & Mushrooms**. Nicely presented with a sprig of rosemary mounted like a flag in the risotto, the Bridge Ingredient here was Enokitake and white mushrooms. I'm sure our delay affected the steak a bit. Still sporting a pink center but a bit dry, it probably would have been more juicy without the delay. I would have liked a bit more char on the outside. The sauce and mushrooms, our Bridge Ingredients, were quite nice and married seamlessly with our two wines. I have to say the red Pinot Noirs were getting better as the night wore on. We sampled a 2016 Philippe Colin Santanay Les Gravières Premier Cru from Burgundy France and compared it to a 2015 Hartford Court Land's Edge Sonoma Coast from California. Both wines were quite elegant. The Burgundy was lighter in color than the Californian, had raspberry flavors, good balance but with a slight acid farewell. The Hartford was darker in color, richer, bright, with a deep earthy concentration that I felt gave it the edge over the Santanay. It seemed just a bit better balanced.

Our 5th and final course was the **Almond Torte with Peach Compote, Garnished with Whipped Cream & Hint of Lemon**. The tort was quite cakey, tasting of vanilla and almond. The peaches were ripe and pleasing. Our wine was a 2014 Schramsberg North Coast Blanc de Noirs Brut sparkling wine from Calistoga, CA. Blanc de Noirs indicates that it was made from all Pinot Noir grapes. I think we went a bridge too far with this wine pairing because the wine was Brut, almost the driest style of sparkling wine. To me it desperately needed sweetness to pair with the dessert, but of course, none was to be found. To be fair, it is probably hard to find an Extra Dry, Sec or Doux style of Pinot Noir sparkler. This was the least successful pairing of the evening, but a learning moment nonetheless. You learned what did not work.

Many thanks to our Producers who did much planning, educating, and work for this event. Just all the tastes and aromas assembled on our tables was a big job. I think that we first must to thank mostly the ladies for this one: Jill Goldstein, for the venue and original idea, Patti Hipple for sourcing the wine and printing the booklet, Rhonda Wilke for assembling the aroma samples. Joe seemed to be in charge of keeping us all up to date on the Final Four Basketball game that was on when we arrived, but I could be wrong. It was a valuable service because the guys all were interested in who won. I am sure he slaved endlessly to keep things on track behind the scenes and before the event. Mike and Steve were in charge of logistics, lugging wine and glasses, pouring, and the like. Many thanks to Hap Abraham crew. Executive Chef Jim Major, and Assistant Chef Emily Fastenau crafted a fine meal, as well as our wait staff, especially the McCoy husband/wife team with their 45 years of experience at Abraham Catering, kept things on tract once we finally got to table. This was a unique experience on so many levels. 🍷







Pictured at a wine sampling luncheon is Edwin Vos, Head of Wine, Continental Europe, Christie's.



(above) A hidden room in a wine cellar at Liberty Hall Museum yielded a collection of historic Madeira wine and spirits.



Hand-written tags and labels were still on the antique bottles.

RARE DISCOVERY OF 18TH & 19TH CENTURY MADEIRAS AT LIBERTY HALL

BY TOM MURNAN, COUNCIL BLUFFS & OMAHA BRANCHES



Large “demijohns,” or straw-covered bottles, contained some of the antique wine found at Liberty Hall Museum. Photos courtesy of Christie’s New York.



Imagine your excitement if you had inherited an old painting and an expert on Antiques Road Show told you it really was an unsigned Van Gough. Or you were a researcher in an obscure library who came up with a lost piece of music from Mozart. The stuff of fantasies and daydreams. But a real-life discovery happened in the world of wine when a hoard of very old Madeira was discovered at Liberty Hall in 2015. Wine so old that the United States was less than 20 years old when the wine was made: 18th century wine labeled 1796. Unlike paintings, books or music, wine is a unique, visceral taste experience of a specific moment in time.

Liberty Hall in Elizabethtown (now Union), New Jersey started its existence as a 14 room Georgian mansion built in 1772. Over the years it has expanded to 50 rooms and has been the residence of, among others, Alexander Hamilton, William Livingston, New Jersey’s first governor, and the Kean political family, who purchased the house in 1811. In 1949, it

began to be transformed into a museum. It currently is on the campus of Kean University. In 2015, the museum realized it had never done an inventory of the wine cellar. While in the cellar, they noticed that a false wall had been constructed, likely during Prohibition around 1920. Upon tearing the wall out, they made a most serendipitous discovery. Covered in dust and soot, they discovered almost 36 bottles of Madeira from 1796, as well as some whiskey, gin and other liquor. Other cases of early 19th century Madeira bottles were also found. More exploration of the mansion discovered, buried under piles of straw, 40 demijohns of Madeira in the attic wine closet. No one would put wine in the attic today, it is simply too hot, but fortunately, Madeira is mostly immune to all the usual demons of wine: heat and oxidation. Because it is an oxidized style of wine made in a high alcohol environment, it is virtually “immortal.” Think most red wines being totally past their prime in 100 years. The best Madeiras are just getting started after a century!

Demijohns are glass containers. The standard sizes ranges from 5 to 16 gallons. To protect the glass, Madeira demijohns were wrapped in wicker. They are

finished with a cork. The 40 Liberty Hall demijohns were no more than 5 gallons, and date from the 1820’s. Remarkably, the Kean family still has the original receipts for most of the wine. They were imported by Robert Lenox, Esq. a banker and financier. He would buy the wine in demijohns, then split it into bottles in his home. In 1795, he began importing Newton, Gordon & Murdoch, the largest shipper of quality Madeira at the time. From research done by the museum, it was determined that the 1796 bottles were purchased by the Kean family to celebrate John Adam’s election. Mozart had only been dead 5 years.

From our Baltimore Great Weekend, at the master class on Madeira presided over by Rare Wine Company owner Mannie Berk, we learned that it wasn’t until the 1850’s that Madeira was aged for extended periods of time in oak. That was because, after the oidium infestation, producers were so panicked they might not be able to make more wine that they would set barrels aside to weather the financial storm that would inevitably come. Before that, Madeira was shipped a year or two after the vintage. ▶



◀ Another clue that the wine had not seen much time in the barrel is the color, which is said to be golden. Extended wood aging would probably have turned the color brown. We also learned from Mannie Berk that in the earliest days, Madeira was not fortified. The first confirmation of fortification came from Benjamin Franklin's *Poor Richard's Almanac* where he wrote about Madeira coming to America having alcohol added. This was sometime in the 1740's. A local brandy called Aguardiente was added and is one of the main reasons Madeira has such a long lifespan.

Why was the Madeira left untouched for such a long time? The current President of Liberty Hall, John Keane Sr. just figured that the wine went bad many years ago, a pretty safe assumption for

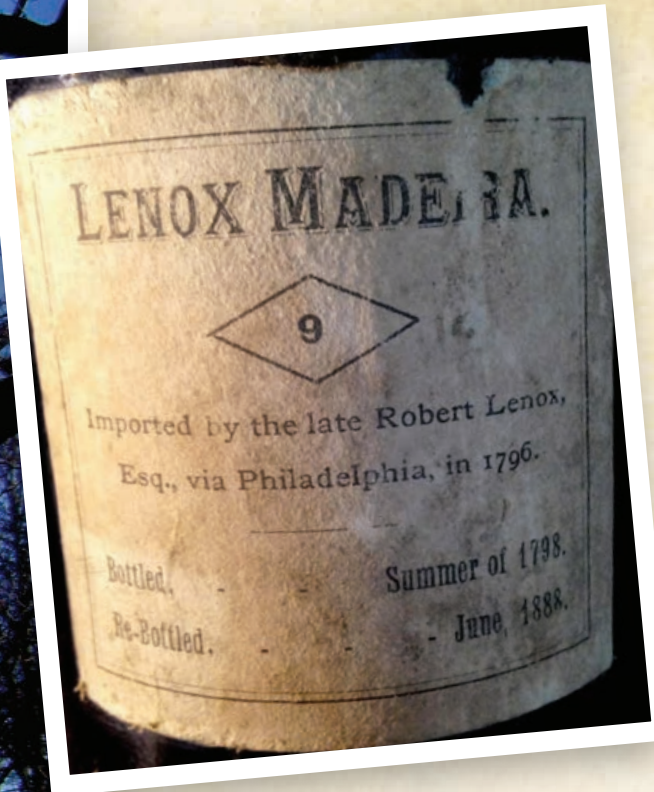
most wines. Besides, Madeira had been out of fashion by 1850. He just wanted the old bottles as props for the museum. His original thought when the demijohns had been found in the attic was to give them to the staff to make lamps. He didn't realize that Madeira is almost immortal, and it was still likely in great shape. The bottles were sealed with a cork and then dipped in sealing wax. As long as the cork is dry, and the sealing wax intact, the cork would protect the wine. The proper way to store Madeira for an extended time is to stand it up, not lay it down, where the high alcohol would attack and soften the cork.

Keane called in experts from Christie's, the London auctioneers. Madeira expert Edwin Vos and the winemaker from Blandy's Madeira Wine Company,

Francisco Albuquerque, assessed the wine. Vos stated they were "flabbergasted by the quality of the wines." "Very rich and concentrated" Francisco noted. "Exotic woods, even some passion fruit in there" Vos commented in a video Christie's made. They recommended that the bottles be re-corked, which was done by APCOR, the Portuguese cork association, who measured the old containers, so they knew exactly what dimension they needed to make. APCOR, by the way, recommends re-corking every 20 to 30 years. Vos and Albuquerque compiled an inventory and prepared a portion of the wine for auction at Christie's in New York on December 7, 2018. Most of the demijohns still had tags on them. For example, there was an 1846 demijohn that had been re-corked in 1871. There were 40 demijohns, 6 cases



*Liberty
Hall Museum,
New Jersey*



A wine sampling luncheon was conducted before the auction, attended by wine writers and bidders. Prices from the December 7, 2018 sale ranged from \$6,738.00 to \$15,925.00 for a quart bottle of 1796 Lenox Madeira. Christies catalogue notes the wine was imported by Robert Lenox Esq. via Philadelphia in 1796 and bottled in the summer of 1798. It was Re-bottled in June of 1888. A bottle of 1820 Smoke, Madeira, realized \$1593.00. 1808 Holmes, Madeira, yielded \$3675.00. A 5-gallon demijohn of "Old Madeira" (no date given) sold for \$18,375.00. Another 5-gallon demijohn of 1846 Old Sercial realized \$39,200.00. Total receipts yielded \$325,000.00. Many thanks to William Schroh, Jr., the Director of Museum Operations at the Liberty Hall Museum, for assistance on facts and photos for this story. The photos are from The John Kean Collection at the Liberty Hall Museum.

After several long slumps where prices were in the doldrums, Madeira is making a comeback, but the supply of ancient Madeira is finite, and dropping by the day. Now is the time to buy a few bottles of very old Madeira. To the fortunate auction winners, they will be able to immerse themselves in the 18th or 19th century

(if only for a few hours) for a unique visit where time has virtually stood still. What a fantastic and romantic notion, to taste virtually the entire history of the United States in a glass of 1796 Madeira. 🍷

Sources: William Schroh wschroh@kean.edu; <https://www.kean.edu/news/liberty-hall-museums-200-year-old-wine-be-auctioned>; <https://www.christies.com/features/One-of-the-largest-early-collections-of-Madeira-in-the-USA-9451-3.aspx>; <https://www.npr.org/sections/thetwo-way/2017/07/14/537276241/new-jersey-museum-holds-a-stash-221-year-old-madeira-wine>; [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Liberty_Hall_\(New_Jersey\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Liberty_Hall_(New_Jersey))

of Madeira, some going back to 1796, There was also 300 bottles of spirits and pre-Prohibition whiskey.

Madeira is a wine that is closely related to American history. George Washington collected Madeira, for example, as did Chief Justice John Marshall. It was said to have been used to toast the Declaration of Independence in 1776. It was a wine of the wealthy. It was easy to ship and was improved by heat. The United States imported about 95% of Madeira's production in the 18th century. One unique thing about the discovery is the superb provenance of the bottles. The Kean family still has the original invoices, giving the prices and documenting that the shippers were among the best in the United States.



OMAHA BUILDING



OMAHA BUILDING



THE

Omaha Building

RESTORED

By Tom Murnan



THE
Omaha Building
 RESTORED

David Orchard, the Omaha Building building manager, offered to take everyone on a tour of the structure. The **New York Life Building**, as it was originally known, was begun in 1887 and constructed in the Italian Renaissance Revival style. This was before the time of using steel to reinforce buildings. It was all brick construction, which meant that the foundation was 9 feet thick at the bottom. It was Omaha's first skyscraper at 10 stories, the tallest building on the prairie. Most of the original fireplaces have been removed except for one. Numerous professionals rented the building for office space, including lawyers.

In 1906, the building was purchased by the Omaha National Bank, who installed two large vaults, one on the main level, and one in the basement. Each door weighs 20 tons and are so well balanced that one person can move them. The basement vault is now part of the employee fitness area.

On the second level is the Stanford White conference room, with its spectacular arched window with grille that surmounts the building's entrance. Opposite that is the Oculus, a circular window that had been covered with drywall, but re-discovered and excavated for renovation after 1978, when the building was purchased by Kutak Rock and Huie and saved from demolition.

The third story contains the crowning glory of the building's façade is the "Nesting Eagle." This 2-ton bronze statue was made in 1891 by Louis St. Gaudens, brother of the famous sculptor Augustus St. Gaudens who designed many US coins.

I for one am so glad that Mr. Kutak poured his energy into preserving this treasure of a building, preserving a significant Omaha monument, and covering the interior with modern art. All the historic minded citizens of Omaha give a hearty thank you, Robert J. Kutak. 🍷

UPCOMING COUNCIL BLUFFS BRANCH EVENTS

Mark Your Calendars!

**JUNE
23**



MODE DE VIE

French Theme

Producers: Hyders & Goldsteins

**JULY
13**



COUNCIL BLUFFS COUNTRY CLUB

South American Theme

Producers: Schierbrocks & Kossows

**AUG
25**



VENUE TBD

Champagne Brunch

Producer: Jill Panzer

**SEP
15**



AU COURANT

Featuring Seasonal Produce

Producers: John & Amanda Matthews



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: ivfs.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: Joe Goldstein

Vice President: Jill Goldstein

Treasurer/Membership: Diane Forristall

Secretary: Connie & Gary Martin

Cellar Master: John Fischer & Patti Hipple

Gazette & Photos: Tom Murnan

goldie2@cox.net

Jill.Goldstein@KutakRock.com

Diane@Forristall.us

happygardener1988@yahoo.com

jrudyf@cox.net | stephenhipple@hotmail.com

murnantom@gmail.com

The Bluffs **Food & Wine** *June 2019 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.