

**ALSO INSIDE** • Sous-Vide Cooking • "My Wife and Hard Wines" by J. Michael Broadbent Part 2 of 2



# PRESIDENT'S COMMENTS

#### Greetings to all;

ur monthly events have resumed with a few COVID-19 modifications. The May event at Omaha Prime in the Old Market was hosted by David and Diane Hayes and Steve and Patti Hipple. It was a wonderful evening to see friends again and enjoy fabulous food with spectacular wines. A mini Bordeaux style blind tasting was a special treat of the evening. Thank you to David, Diane, Steve and Patti for a great evening.

As you consider wines that you enjoy, I am guessing that you consider the wine tasting notes and the wine rating. Are you aware that the wine point rating score can range from 20 to 100 based on the wine critic's judgment of the wine's quality. In actuality, few wines score below 80. Wines that receive high wine rating

scores from the best known critics are in high demand. Wine rating scores are considered a convenient shorthand for indicating the quality of a wine. There are several issues with wine rating scores one needs to consider:

- 1. The concept of a wine rating score or number suggests that the score is an objective evaluation of the wine when in reality the score represents the subjective evaluation of an individual wine critic or group of wine critics.
- 2. Different critics apply the same wine scale differently. Some wine critic's may apply 95 points to wines that are truly great compared to all wines of all types. While other wine critics assign the same score to wines that are great among wines of a specific type.
- 3. Most wine critics rate wine by tasting the wine without food. Most wine drinkers taste wine with food. Also, the glasses used by the wine critic may be different from what most use and can seriously affect the way that the wine presents.
- 4. A wine rating score tells you nothing about how the wine tastes. Wine tasting notes become essential in describing how the wine tastes.

While wine scores and tasting notes from wine critics provide a good beginning to your relationship with wine, they are just that.... a good start. Consider your own evaluation of a wine with your wine rating and your tasting notes. Who knows what wonderful wines that you may find.

Be safe and be well.



How come it takes so little time for a child who is afraid of the dark to become a teenager who wants to stay out all night?

*Cover Photo:* Elegant table setting with 18th Century silver epergne centerpiece at the 1808 Nathaniel Russell House, Charleston, SC. Photo by Wayne Markus.

Just a thought: "Detergents often leave a filmy residue in glasses which can affect the aroma and flavor of a wine. To remove this film, use washing soda or baking soda and rinse thoroughly."

-"Wine for Dummies" (2017)

## **EDITOR'S**

CORNER

ell, it is looking like restrictions are beginning to ease and we are able to start coming out of our COVID-19 caves. It can't come too soon for me. While I can drink my cellar down, I am getting restaurant withdrawals. I miss all the creativity and high end recipes we typically get in a normal IWFS year. The restaurant closings have played havoc with our scheduling

restaurant closings have played havoc with our scheduling events. Having half the restaurant closed to start off with, then having to social distance once inside is affecting our ability to socially mix and get caught up with all our friends.

There is no event report to report on since the event was too close to the deadline for a detailed report.

I am noticing that more restaurants are using the sous vide technique for preparing meats, fish and other foods. The system has the advantage that you can select your temperature to get the perfect degree of doneness, especially for meats, but not lose any of the natural juices and flavors. Check out the story of sous vide below.

The second half of Michael Broadbent's November 13th, 2013 annual André Simon Memorial Lecture concludes with this issue. Last time, Michael told a story of a woman who persuaded Harvey's of Bristol to donate the wine for an event at the new WFS branch at mid-Cheshire. It was interesting hearing him speak of going to various large estates and unearthing vinous treasures of the past and selling them at auction.

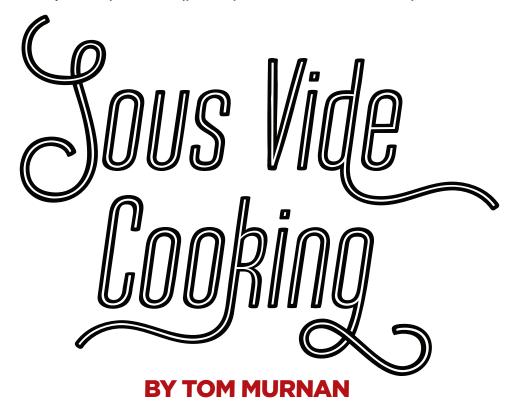
Finally, Wayne Markus continues his narrative of the IWFS Charleston Great Weekend. This time the group went to some interesting museums which shed light on the history of the Charleston area. Our cover photo showed the elegance of the early 19th century table at the Nathaniel Russell house, built in 1808.

Enjoy! 🍩





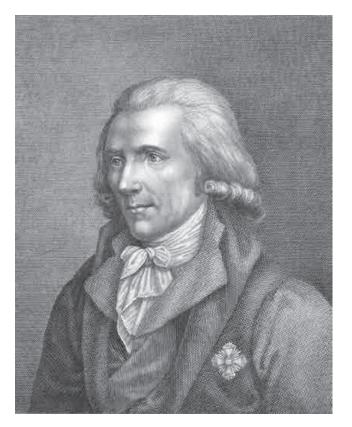
THERE IS THE STORY OF A
PASTOR WHO GOT UP ONE
SUNDAY AND ANNOUNCED TO HIS
CONGREGATION: "I HAVE GOOD
NEWS AND BAD NEWS. THE GOOD
NEWS IS, WE HAVE ENOUGH
MONEY TO PAY FOR OUR NEW
BUILDING PROGRAM THE BAD
NEWS IS, IT'S STILL OUT THERE
IN YOUR POCKETS."



ous Vide (pronounced soo-veed) is a method of cooking that yields perfectly cooked vegetables, fish or meats. It can precisely target the perfect temperature desired without over or under cooking. It preserves all the cooked juices without dilution by water or other liquid, promoting the original flavors of the cooked medium. It takes some specialty equipment, but nothing too exotic or expensive, and can be used by novices or expert chefs alike. Sous Vide (SV) means under vacuum in French and was developed by French and American engineers. The first written mention of the SV method was in 1799 by an ex-patriot United States citizen.

Benjamin Thompson was born in Woburn, Massachusetts in 1753 and was a curious mix of scientist, social climber, and American traitor. He was just a middle classed person before the Revolutionary War, but was able to marry a rich widow. Instantly he had a house, which he named Rumford,

land and social status. When the war came, he liked thing they way they were, with the British in charge of the colonies, so he recruited other British loyalists to fight the likes of George Washington. Discovering



Sir Benjamin Thompson aka Count Rumford

what he was up to, he provoked the ire of a popular local party, and a mob attacked his well appointed house. Thompson fled to the British army, abandoning his wife. He never returned to her, but informed

the Brits of American troop dispositions. They rewarded him by making him a colonel. He left for London, and was knighted by King George III in 1784. In 1791 he worked to reorganize the Bavarian army, modernizing everything from tactics, food rations, to uniforms. He was later made Reichgraf von Rumford, a count of the Holy Roman Empire. Count Rumford was a scientist, designer, inventor (the double boiler and a drip coffee pot are just two examples) and worked on thermodynamic theory. Thompson did the first experiment on SV when he tried a heat transfer method to cook mutton using a dryer he had for potatoes. The culinary results were remarkable. Nothing much happened with the idea until the 1960s when French and American engineers were working to prepare and preserve food under pressure.

The pressure was created by vacuum sealing, (cryovacking was the term they used to use). Even without cooking, the pressure concentrated the flavor of certain foods like fruits. In 1974, Chef Georges Pralus





Compact vacuum packing / sealing device

Sous vide cooking

at Restaurant Troisgras in Roanne, France discovered SV was the perfect way to cook delicate foie gras. Goose liver quickly melts with excess temperatures (even the human hand when deveining the liver), but with the SV method, the appearance improved, the fat did not melt, and the flavor improved. The food industry eventually joined vacuum packaging with low heat water immersion and SV was born. Next the industry developed cooking times and temperatures for different kinds of food preparation. At first, SV was a very expensive cooking method used only by high end restaurants, but now it is affordable to the average home chef.

Like your convection oven, SV also works on the principle of convection, only this time it is circulating perfectly heated water instead of dry, hot air. And water works faster than air. Think of when you have to quickly defrost something using a stream of lukewarm water. It can transfer heat more efficiently than air because it is heavier, and because it is circulating. The vacuum sealing in pouches not only prevents the loss of juices and flavors, it prevents the air acting as an insulator, just the same as double paned insulated glass in your windows. That quarter inch of air (or gas in higher end windows) acts as a buffer

from the heat or cold. With a vacuum packing, the food in a SV pouch is directly against the heated water, separated only by the pouch, no air buffer. Slightly under pressure, with no air, lowers the resistance to the heat exchange process.

The nice thing about SV cooking is that you can't overcook since you set the temperature to the ideal heat. Once you reach that heat, it doesn't increase, unlike a frying pan. A sauté pan relies on contact between the food and the skillet, but there is little control of the temperature. The flavors remain undiluted in the pouch and the food doesn't dry out or get diluted as it can with boiling or braising. If it stays in the pouch an hour longer than you planned, no worries. It is not overcooking.

For about \$300.00 you can have your own SV system. You need an immersion circulator which allows you to program the water temperature and impel the water around the pouch(s). If you only cook for two, maybe you can get by with a large Dutch oven, but probably you will need a large container you can fill with water and cook a number of pouches. You can get metal racks to hold the pouches up and allow space for the water to circulate. You must also have a vacuum sealer and a

supply of pouches. The food is inserted, then the air is sucked out and the pouch sealed with a hot wire.

Once removed from the pouches, your piece of meat or other food items may need a quick finishing on a very hot sauté pan. The final sear especially gives meat an improved appearance and especially a better flavor, but you must be quick about it so you don't overcook the interior and defeat the whole purpose of SV.

So, don't be afraid of SV cooking. It is easy, and has the advantage of perfectly moist, delicious food with all the natural juices and added herbs and spices that you added.



Sources: Sources: https://en.wikipedia.org/ wiki/Sous-vide; https://en.wikipedia.org/ wiki/Benjamin\_Thompson

# THE ANDRÉ L SIMON LECTURE 2013 PRESENTED BY MICHAEL BROADBENT MW

On Wednesday November 13, 2013 at the In & Out Club, London, UK

#### "MY WIFE AND HARD WINES"

#### PART 2 OF 2

he ensuing sale was a huge success. The catalogue title page was impressive...'Finest & Rarest wines from Private Cellars, the properties of The Most Honourable the Marquess of Linlithgow; The Rt Hon the Earl of Rosebery KT, The Dowager Countess of Sandwich, the Rt Hon the Lord Bruntisfield, Colonel Ian Anderson, Major J S C Magnay and Mrs V A Watney (whom I did not like:—I made the mistake of valuing, in detail, all her wines, which she then sold to her friends—that taught me a lesson). The two triple magnums of Lafite sold for £125 and £155 respectively. A large sum at that time. The first was bought by Mark Birley of Annabels, who, to my horror, opened and drank it the very next day, the other was bought by a charming American in San Francisco where he kept it for a year to let it settle. It was perfect.

The last sale of the 1966/67 season, was on 17 July and I was put into the rostrum at very short notice. I had been sitting in on all 32 wine auctions. I was terribly nervous, of course. The first ten lots were miniature bottles of liqueurs and virtually impossible to sell because the amount of duty far outweighed the value of the contents. However, to my surprise a man in the front row bought all of them and then left the room. It was an enormous relief. About a fortnight later we received a letter from a gentleman saying that his friend, Mr So and So, had, alas, made a mistake. He had recently come out of a 'home', and thought he was buying picture miniatures! I thought, what on earth should I do? My second in command, Alan Taylor-Restell, an experienced auctioneer, solved the problem. But had I known at that time that my first ten lots had been bought by a man just out of a mental institution, I would have lost my nerve forever.

Christie's went from strength to strength. There were all the great pristine cellars: Glamis Castle, Sir William Gladstone, Fasque, The Duke of Buccleuch and other grandees. A 'pristine cellar' is a cellar which houses wine which has never been moved since the first purchase. In each instance, the second generation of the family, even the third generation simply didn't understand old wines. The bottles had remained unopened.

I will just deal with one such 'pristine cellar': Glamis Castle. Most of these major sellers around this time were introduced to me by wine merchants I met during my days at Harveys. Gloag's of Perth (the Famous Grouse whisky) supplied Glamis with everyday wine. But there in the cellars was a shelf with 42 magnums of 1870 Lafite which had never been moved. The butler of the day kept a meticulous cellar book and I discovered that the 1870 Lafite had been bought by the 13th Earl of Strathmore in 1878. A keen collector, he actually bought 48 magnums, but didn't like the wine. He tried it and found it absolutely undrinkable and then he tried another magnum and didn't like this either. The 14th



Earl tried it and also decided to leave it. The 1870 Lafite was one of these rare wines which took fifty years to mature before it became drinkable. First though we had to get permission from the trustee, who, to say the least, was a little bit difficult. The trustee, Lord X, saw me in my working clothes and couldn't believe I was a director of Christie's and that we were serious. But eventually he gave us permission and we rushed it down to Perth.



J. Michael Broadbent

There was some urgency because Sotheby's had just started wine auctions for the first time (Christie's had been auctioning wines since 1766) and on the board was a member of the Bowes-Lyon family. I thought that before they hear about this I had better get it in the catalogue.

But I suddenly had a slight worry that perhaps the 13th Earl had been right and that it was undrinkable. I felt we had to open a magnum to taste. I organised a lunch at Christie's with London's leading Bordeaux experts including, Harry Waugh, Hugh Johnson, and Cyril Ray. The magnum looked impressive, perfect level, perfect cork; it was deep in colour; nose perfect, no oxidation and not acetic—it was the most beautiful wine, certainly the most memorable I have ever tasted.

The Americas saga started in a strange way. Harveys London office was on the corner of St James's Square and King Street. Christie's was just a couple of blocks away. There, in the late 1950s, I met the Chairman of Heubleins, importers of Bristol Cream. With them, Sandy McNally, who was the head of their Fine Wine Department.

Out of the blue, about ten years later, I received a telephone call, "Michael would you like to conduct the first wine auction in America?" I always said yes to everything, so the first of what was to be an annual event was in 1969, just three years after joining Christie's.

I was a bit nervous beforehand. However, I had prepared the catalogue and I enjoyed the challenge. Soon I realised that I was a performer, looking and sounding more English than the English, in a morning coat with a carnation.

The first two Heublein wine auctions had been in Chicago. For the second, I had to collect from Mrs James de Rothschild's cellar in London a jeroboam of 1864 Lafite—probably Lafite's greatest ever vintage. I had the big bottle on the seat next to me on the plane, and on arrival walked towards the exit to pose, cradling it, with two armed policemen

either side. Good publicity of course. However, the problem was it didn't sell. It failed to reach its \$10,000 reserve. What Heubleins were going to do with it was not my problem, but hoped they were going to keep it in a cool place. Nine years later, the same bottle came up for sale

again—it had been cunningly stated that 'the previous owner had very generously left it for other people to have a chance to buy'. This time it sold to a Memphis restaurateur, Mr John Grisanti, who, later that summer, wrote inviting me to pay \$1000 a plate to attend a charity dinner. I was disinclined to pay, nor would Christie's, but, as it happened I was due to take a sale in Houston two days later, so I was able to attend. I was met by Mr Grisanti and taken to his home to collect the bottle. He had an underground cellar, with a circular steel staircase, but the minute it was opened I smelt vinegar. The bottle had a wet cork, it was very ullaged. However, I carried it diligently up the stairs, banged my head on the ceiling and nearly dropped it. There was a motorcade to the Holiday Inn, where I was greeted by television cameras and reporters who, by then, were more interested in what might turn out

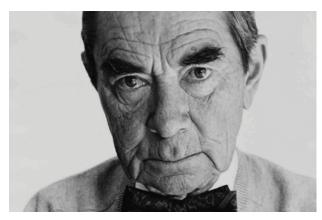
to be the most expensive vinegar in the world. After its rest, the bottle was taken down to the ballroom where about one hundred people had paid to attend a memorable dinner.

I drew the cork, what was left of it, and arranged six decanters just below. It is always tricky to decant such a large bottle and used a method that wouldn't be allowed (in public) these days. I lowered a plastic tube into the bottle, taking care to

avoid disturbing the sediment, and then briefly sucked the end of the tube, the wine filling one decanter after another. I poured some into my glass from one of the decanters. Of course it was acetic, known as 'pricked' in the trade. I smelt it, nodding sagely, and passed it to Mr Grisanti saying you must, of course, have the first taste. In turn he nodded sagely, whereupon I announced "Ladies and gentlemen, tonight you are not drinking just wine but history." [laughter]. Because, when General Sherman, in 1864, started marching across to Georgia, his Union troops were based in Memphis." I then went on to say that the actual wine in the bottle was made from grapes that were picked that very year, and it was probably bottled in 1865, the year Lincoln was assassinated. Every guest, reverently, sipped a bit of history.

I think, really, I had saved the occasion because had I not gone to Memphis to handle the jeroboam, somebody else less qualified would have drawn the cork, dismissing it as undrinkable. It could have ruined the evening.

In 1971 Heubleins third auction took place in San Francisco, a city I love. At that time, it was what I call 'The Age of Innocence': Americans were really starting in earnest to learn about wine and flocked to the big pre-auction tastings. There were usually about 400 people to taste a lot of wine, mainly those sold by Heubleins. But on the top table was a range of 14 or 15 rare wines. Sandy and I, at intervals, took it in turns to draw a cork, 'nose', taste and talk about each wine. On this occasion—1971 - André Tchelistchef, who was the doyen of the California wine producers, sauntered in. Sandy asked him if he would like to open a rare bottle and talk about it? He said ves and we handed him a bottle of 1898 Lafite. He drew the cork, carefully decanted it, and poured a little into his glass. After a pause he



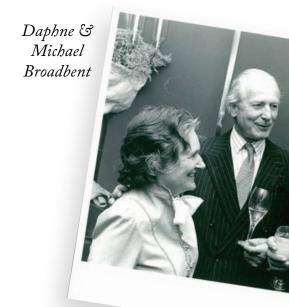
Wine Consultant André Tchelistchef

said, in an accent, a mixture of white Russian, French and American: "Appreciating old wine is like making love to an old lady." As you can imagine the whole room went into a shocked silence. He went on, "It is possible"—sniff,





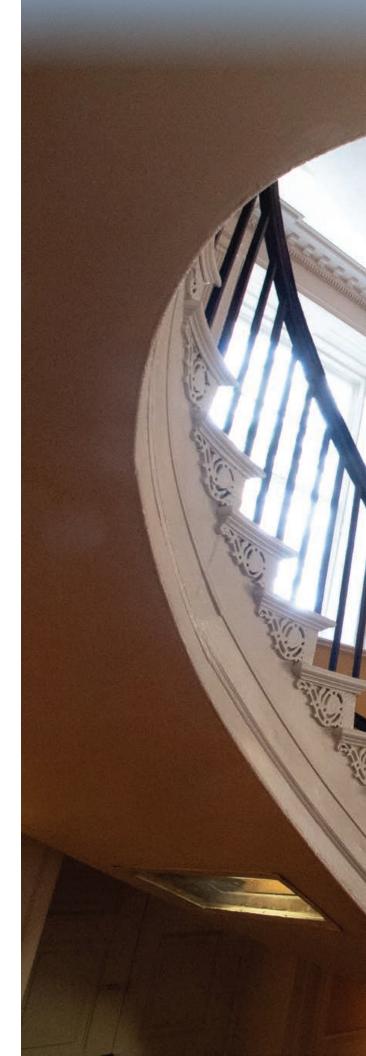
sniff—"it can even be enjoyable"—pause—"but it requires a leetle bit of imagination." [raucous laughter]. Seriously, if you have been drinking ordinary wine or even fairly decent claret and are suddenly faced with a very, very old wine it is a different ball game. You have to re-adjust and need to be quite experienced—so André Tchelistchef was quite right.



# IWFS GREAT WEEKEND IN CHARLESTON SOUTH CAROLINA

Part 2 Thursday 10/17/2019

STORY & PHOTOS
BY WAYNE MARKUS





hursday morning our group toured the Nathaniel Russell House, and the other group the Aiken-Rhett House. Nathaniel Russell was a wealthy merchant and slave trader. The house was built in 1808 and is one of America's finest neoclassical federal style buildings and is a National Historic Landmark. It features a cantilevered spiral staircase that ascends to the third floor.

The Aiken-Rhett antebellum house was built in about 1820 by merchant John Robinson and purchased in 1827 by William Aiken, a lending merchant. It remained in the family for 142 years. Their son William Aiken, Jr. and his wife lived in the house while he was Governor of South Carolina. It is furnished by fine art and furnishings obtained during their European travels. Their daughter Henrietta and her husband Major A. B. Rhett raised their family in the house. It is now part of the National Park Service.

We then went on a **Palmetto horse-drawn** carriage ride through historic Charleston admiring the architecture, history and many interesting facts. We split into two groups for a Lowcountry lunch, one group to The Macintosh and the other to Stella's, then on Friday the reverse.

The Macintosh chef partner Jeremiah Bacon is a graduate of the Culinary Institute of America in Hyde Park and a five-time James Beard semifinalist. He utilizes locally sourced ingredients from the Lowcountry farms and waterways. The menu is rooted in the South. We were served a very colorful delicious radish appetizer and another of toasted bread and a tasty soft white cheese dip. Then came a clam and chorizo quiche with mixed green salad served with Beronia Rueda Blanco (100% Verdejo) from Spain. The next course was confit pork shoulder with

sorghum glaze cassoulet and fennel marmalade with **Beronia Rioja Reserva**, (95% Tempranillo, 4% Graciano, 1% Mazuelo) also from Spain. The delicious cassoulet contained three types of beans: butter bean, Sea Island Red beans, and Sea Island Rice beans. Desert was Hummingbird Cake with Caramel Drizzle.

The afternoon was free time. Some went to the Charleston City Market. Some shopped. Some went to the King's Leaf Cigar Lounge near the Bennett Hotel. Some napped. **Charleston City Market**, a 1,280-foot-long market is famous for the **Gullah seagrass** baskets, Gullah art, jewelry, bags of rice, beans, and spices and all sorts of things expected in an historic market. It is well worth seeing.

We split into two groups for dinner Thursday and Friday. Our group went to the High Cotton on Thursday and to Halls Signature Events on Friday. Each of the dinners featured a winery and guest speaker from the winery.

The **High Cotton** reception consisted of passed hors d'oeuvres and Veuve Cliquot Champagne 2008. The wines of Trefethen Family Vineyards were featured. Janet Trefethen ably and enthusiastically represented the family and their wines. The Trefethen wine estate dates to 1968 when Eugene Trefethan retired as an executive for Kaiser Industries where he helped construct the San Francisco - Oakland Bay Bridge. Eugene and Catherine loved wine, moved to Napa Valley, and purchased six small farms and the Eschol winery. There were fewer than 20 wineries in Napa Valley at the time. Eugene and Catherine were content to grow grapes and sell them to other wine makers.

Their son John studied at the Stanford University Graduate School of Business. He started making small batches of wine. John and his wife Janet made their first

commercial wine in 1973. John spends his time in the winery and Janet with marketing. Their children Loren and Hailey are now involved in the winery.

They are very proud to be farmers and for 40 years have grown every grape for their wines selling about one third of their grapes to other wine makers. Janet's enthusiasm and charisma had the effect of the food complementing the wine rather than the reverse.

Trefethen Dry Riesling 2017 from the Oak Knoll District of Napa Valley was served with a chilled lobster salad with citrus, plaza Hackleback caviar, avocado, mango, crème Fraîche, and herb bouquet.

Trefethen Chardonnay 2017 from the Oak Knoll district of Napa Valley was served with caramelized New Bedford scallops, white grape butter, roasted spaghetti squash, orange blossom honey and tendrils. This was an excellent combination.

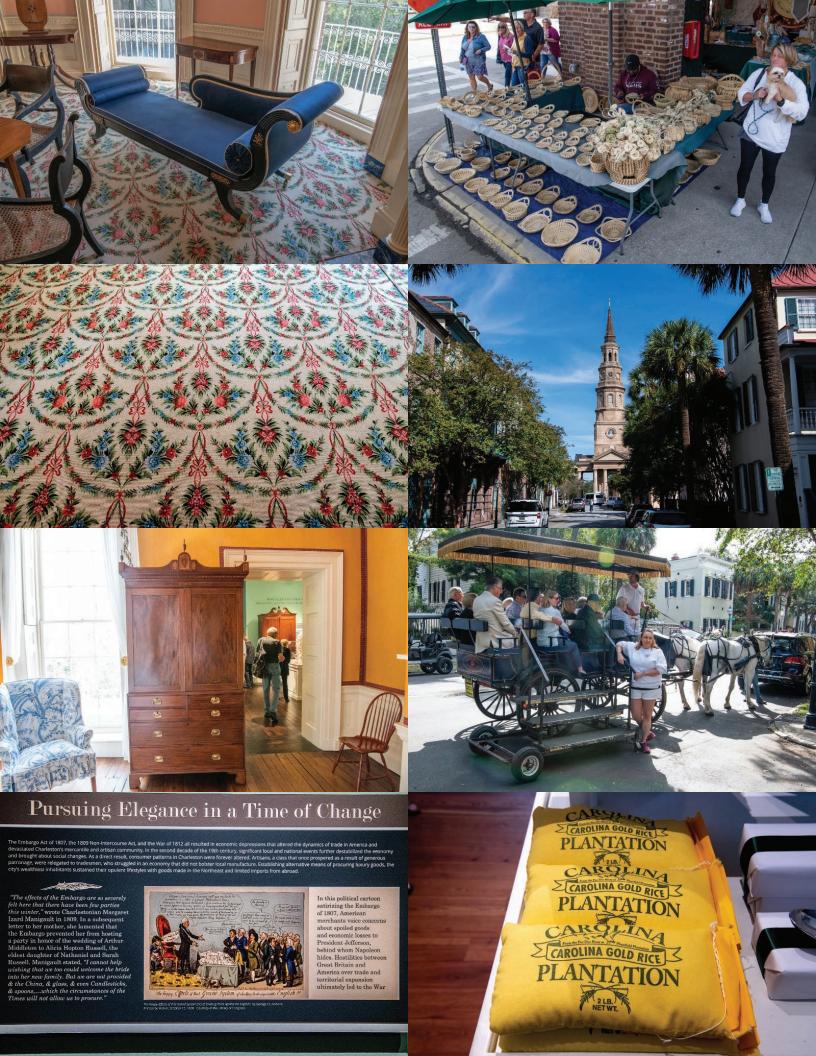
Next were the **Trefethen "HāLo" Cabernet Sauvignon 2015** from the Oak Knoll District of Napa and the **Trefethen Cabernet Sauvignon 2016** also from the Oak Knoll District. The food course was roasted palmetto squab breast, creamy parsnips, morel mushrooms, bacon lardon, confit, and black truffle foie gras emulsion. "HāLo" is 100% Cabernet Sauvignon and named after their children Hailey and Lorenzo. The 2016 Cabernet is 84% Cabernet Sauvignon, 5% Malbec, 4% Merlot, 4% Cabernet Franc, and 3% Petit Verdot.

The dessert course wine was **Trefethen** Late Harvest Riesling 2013 from Napa. This is a Botryzed wine with noble rot that went well with the apple tart tartan which was roasted apples and cardamom ice cream.

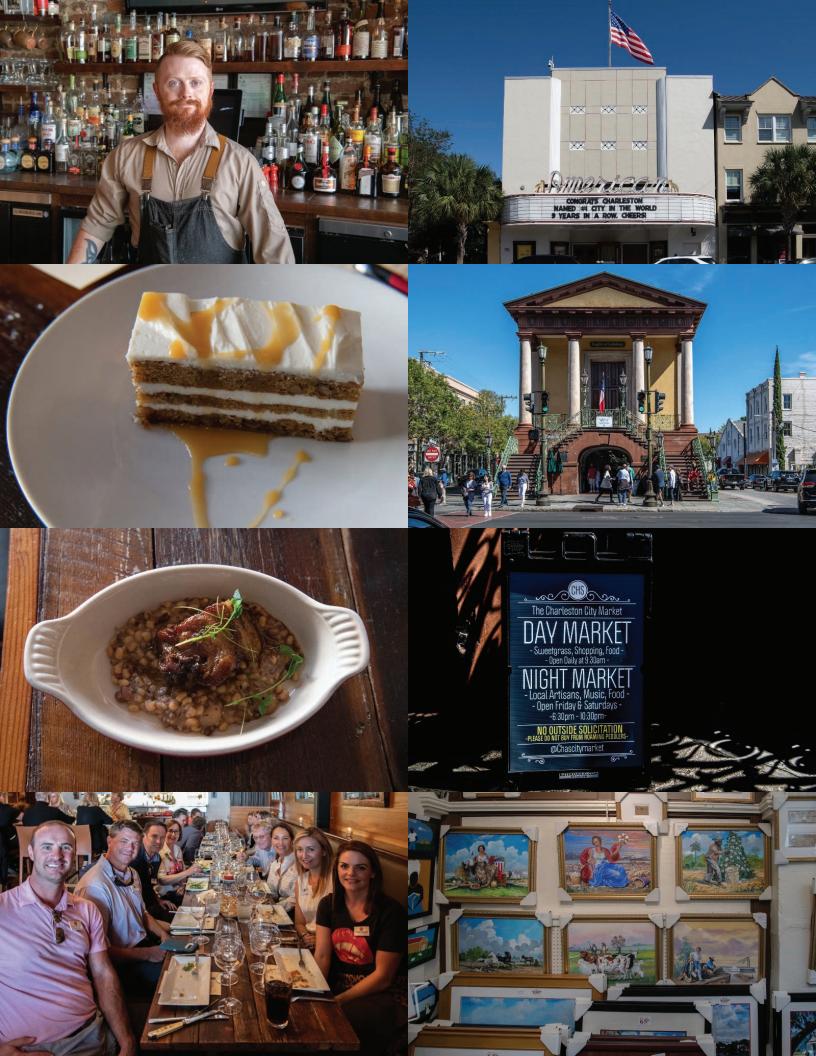
Next time: Friday's activities.





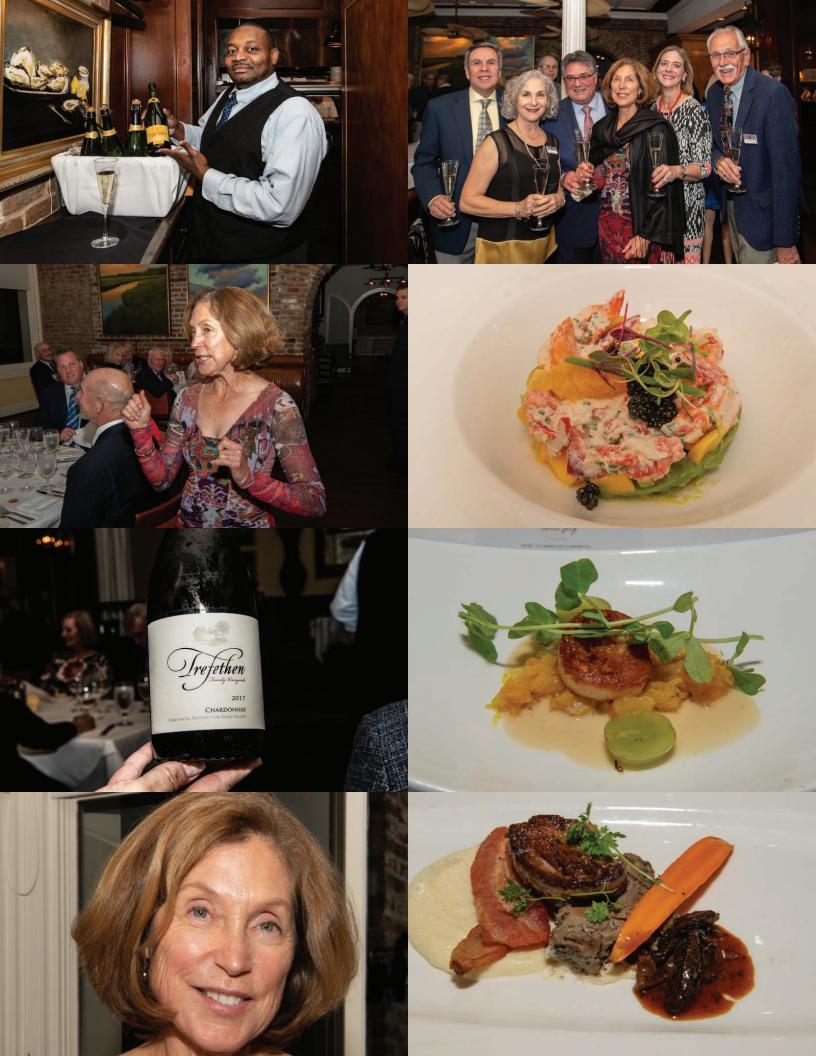


















Mark Your Calendars!

**28** 

#### **PITCH DUNDEE**

Rosé the Day Away. Sit down Rosé tasting **Producers:** Amanda Harrington & John Matthews **JULY** 

JILL & JOE GOLDSTEIN

**AUGUST** 

TABITHA & DAVE



SEPT. **18** 

FARMERS AT THEIR HOUSE

**Producers:** Liz & Nate Farmer

#### **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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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

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