

JULY 2017

The Bluffs Food & Wine gazette



Event Report:

A Day at the Races

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Overcooked, a Terra Cotta

By Robert Arneson

A Note from the Board:
Fine Dining on the
Equator and in the Andes



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President's Comments

MAY IS THE MONTH for the Kentucky Derby, so **Joe & Jill Goldstein**, and **Jenny & Nagi Ayoub** came up with a great theme: A Day at the races. They approached Happy Hollow Club's chef, Jason Hughes about the theme, and he was enthusiastic. Jason comes from the South, so every course had something to do with Kentucky, the Derby, or Southern cuisine. The fun part was most all the guests got into the theme of things and dressed up. The ladies wore large hats, and the men donned Derby attire. Yours truly came dressed as a jockey. It was all great fun. The chef had some culinary innovations, such as smoked house made marshmallow, where the smoke was captured and brought to the table.

A word about our cover and end piece photos. I spotted this terra cotta piece named *Overcooked* in the Crocker Art Museum in Sacramento last September. I thought it would be enlightening to show the same work of art from the front and the rear on our Gazette. Read about the artist, Robert Arneson, inside.

Although not on the Board, **Wayne Markus** agreed to share his trip to the **Galápagos Islands** and then **Ecuador**. The food was not gourmet on the ship which visited the islands, but he and Karen had a good meal at 9000 feet in Quito, Ecuador at a restaurant called **ZAzú**. I'm not sure if you can ever call yourself a gourmet omnivore if you haven't tried Guinea Pig, but Wayne did. He asked for, and received the recipe, but I might imagine getting Guinea Pig in Omaha / Council Bluffs might be a bit of a problem unless you go to a pet store. Can't say I've ever seen it at Hy-Vee or Whole Foods.

Next month we will begin a series on the **2017 IWFS Sonoma Festival**. Connie Martin is helping me describe the events of this very successful Festival which drew members from Asia, Europe and North America.

Finally, a bit of bad news. **Biaggi's Ristorante Italiano** is about to implement a \$15.00 corkage fee per bottle. Currently, they will waive this if they know you, but most likely will fully implement the policy in 2018. They were one of the few places that waived corkage on wines customers brought themselves. This leads **Bravo Cucina Italiana** in Village Point who still allows free corkage. I have asked manager Chelsea Powell to pass on an email I wrote about the subject to the owner, but as of publication time of this Gazette, I have heard nothing. If she is working while you visit, and you take advantage of their generosity, thank Chelsea for their present corkage policy.

Cheers!

Tom Murnan

*All you need is love. But a little chocolate
Now and then doesn't hurt.*

-Charles M. Schultz, American cartoonist (1922-2000)

Front & Back Cover: Overcooked by Robert Arneson

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EVENT REPORT:

A Day at
—The Races—

by Tom Murnan

Sometimes we just have too much fun at our events. A Day at the Races featuring the cuisine of Happy Hollow Club's chef Jason Hughes was one of those evenings. Joe Goldstein claims he originated the idea. At first the theme was going to be "All About the Letter J" (Jill and Jen). Appropriately, it was just one day after the Preakness, even though the ladies were wearing their best Kentucky Derby millinery. All the ladies wore hats, and many of the gents something quirky. Maybe there is something about dressing up over our usual fashion that creates a bit of excitement. There was going to be a prize for the best hat (and later for the best male getup). In order to encourage members to sit with someone outside their usual circle, couples or singles selected a colored ribbon in a sack and sat at the corresponding color on the table. I liked that idea. Sometimes we get a bit cliquy or predictable, and this shakes things up. **Dee Meyers** used her shop, **Arrange This and That**, to provide cut roses centerpieces crowned with a horse figurine. During a busy graduation season, 33 people, all members, managed to attend.

Passed hors d'oeuvres consisted of **Pimento Cheese Crostini with Benton's Country Ham and Fried Pickles**, as well as **Mini Fried Green Tomato "BLT"** and **Mint Julep Chicken Satay**. Our quaffing wines consisted of the ever reliable 2015 Charles Smith Kung Fu Girl Riesling and a Beaujolais: 2015 Château Thivin Brouilly Reverdon.

We were called to table by chimes. The Amuse Bouche - **Southern Belle Deviled Egg** course consisted of two halves of an egg. But this was not your ordinary deviled egg. Besides being a **Plum Creek Farm egg**, the yolk contained **Wild Dungeness Crab**, and was topped with **Osetra Caviar** and chives. Quite tasty. But what wine to serve with deviled egg? As we learned from last month's All Champagne dinner, and **John Fischer's** two articles, a sparkling wine was perfect. **2013 Schramsberg Blanc de Blancs** (Schramsberg was the wine Nixon brought to China) was an excellent substitute for French Champagne. John taught us that Champagne loves creamy food, hence the deviled yolk paired quite well with bubbles of this vin mousseux. The acid of the wine cut through the richness of the yolk, and the bubble stream lightened the whole dish. Great wine choice for a course that would otherwise be a bit tough to match wine-wise. Chef Jason came out and started his routine of speaking about every course. He is originally from the South and jumped at the chance to do a Kentucky Derby themed meal. President Tom Murnan likewise spoke about each course's wine(s).

The 1st Course - "**Shrimp and Grits Y'all**" was next. **Sautéed Florida Key West Shrimp, Fried Grit Cake, Lemon Caper Beurre Blanc and Smoked Tomato Coulis** awaited us. Nicely presented, three large shrimp adorned the plate, with one atop what looked at first glance like puff pastry but in reality was the fried Grit cake. The other two shrimp flanked either side of the plate. The shrimp were perfectly cooked, not chewy or having an iodine off taste like you get at lesser restaurants. Then there was the Grit Cake. This was as good as grits, which can be very bland on their own, ever get, with a crisp exterior but with an ever so creamy and rich inside. Dots of orange colored Smoked Tomato Coulis sauce added a Southern touch, a tart contrast to the rich beurre blanc sauce that the shrimp sat on. Quite nice. A **2014 Grossot Mont de Milieu** was our chosen wine. Although I told the group this was a White Burgundy, when I returned to the table I realized it was a Chablis. Most wine writers consider Chablis a part of Burgundy,

so I was not wrong. Both use the Chardonnay grape. The dry, mineral style and white stone fruits flavors perfectly suited the dish.

Our 2nd Course - "**Kenducky**" **Hot Brown**, was described as **Toasted Le Quartier Biroche, Duck Confit, Roasted Duck Breast, Crisp Bacon, Blistered Cherry Tomatoes and Mornay Sauce**.

Chef Hughes told us this was Kentucky's most iconic dish, invented in the Brown Hotel in Louisville. It usually consists of turkey, not duck. But since this was a nice wine dinner, he did duck two ways: duck confit shredded a bit and thin sliced duck breast. Sliced tomatoes, Mornay Sauce and Gruyere Cheese with cooked Cherry Tomatoes with a piece of crisp bacon on top completed the dish. The bread underneath was brioche. The Mornay sauce amplified the dish's richness I thought the bacon was too strong for this delicate dish, but some of my table mates liked it as presented.

Two interesting wines were selected. Would a Pinot Noir, the classic accompaniment to duck, be better, or a Tempranillo? A **2013 Escarpment Pinot Noir Martinborough** from New Zealand had a mighty 95 rating from James Suckling. The contender was a **La Rioja Alta 2004 Vina Ardanza Reserva Rioja**. The wine hails from the Basque region of Spain, up by the French border. **Rioja Alta** indicates higher elevations than most of Rioja. **Reserva** means the wine was aged for at least three years, of which at least one year is in oak. This wine had 80% Tempranillo and 20% Garnacha.

When asked for a show of hands on who preferred which wine, a few more voted for the Rioja. My opinion was that the Escarpment, despite its lofty rating, was just not ready. A bit tannic, closed in and standoffish, it needed more aging time. The Rioja, on the other hand, was quite a bit older. It was softer, more fruit forward and went better with the delicate flavors of the duck.

The 3rd Course - "**Winner's Circle**" was a **Charbroiled Wagyu Hanging Tenderloin, Fingerling Potatoes and Wild Mushroom Ragout, with Woodford Reserve Bourbon Barbeque Sauce**. Chef Jason told us that the beef came from Imperial Farms, Blair NE. And you can't have a Kentucky dinner without having some Bourbon, which he put in the BBQ sauce. The Wagyu sat atop wild mushrooms, some vegetables like green beans, and spinach, and small fingerling potatoes. The meat was expertly cooked, very moist, with melt in your mouth beefy goodness. The BBQ sauce helped place this dish in the South. Again, we had two red wines to compare. A **2010 Beaulieu Vineyard Tapestry** from Napa confronted a **2014 Château Puech-Haut** from France's Coteaux de Languedoc region south of the Rhône Valley. While the BV was mostly a Bordeaux blend except for some Malbec, the Puech consisted of 55% Grenache and 45%

Syrah, both traditional Rhône work horse grapes. The BV was rich and earthy, and a bit tannic, while the Puech was softer, forward, with black berry and plum flavors. Both were good matches.

Dessert - "**Land Between the Lakes Campfire Torte** was Chef Jason's version of a S'more on a campout: **Dark Chocolate Ganache Torte, Toasted Meringue, Graham Cracker Crumbs, and Smoked House Made Marshmallows**. The latter was placed in a mason jar to preserve the smoke. I was up on the next level discussing the last course's wines when people began opening their canisters. I thought I was back at Boy Scout camp with all the wood smoke wafting my way. Impressive. The torte was the essence of dark chocolate: dense and decadent. Not detailed on the menu was a triangle of a purple crisp that reminded one faintly of peanut brittle only much thinner. Our wine had to have assertive flavors to overcome the sweetness of the ganache and the very aggressive smokiness. The **2008 Fonseca Late Bottled Port (LBV)** fit that bill. LBV's are a cheaper alternative to regular vintage port (VP), that takes years to mature. VP only ages 2 years in the barrel and then is bottled. It is designed to age in your cellar for years. On the other hand, LBV ages between 4 and 6 years in the barrel to speed up the aging process and is immediately accessible.

As is his wont, Joe Goldstein proceeded to give us some trivia about the event, in this case, the Kentucky Derby. There were 127,000 mint juleps served this year; 40,000 Oak Lilies (vodka, cranberry and triple sec), 13,000 glasses of Champagne; 522,000 beers; 475,000 pounds of shaved ice for the mint juleps; 2250 pounds of mint, and over 5,000 liters of Bourbon.

The judges decided upon the winners of the contests. **Susan Koesters** won best hat. Her large brimmed, floppy white hat was crowned by a miniature Merry-Go-Round that lit up and could be wound, while still on her head, to provide animation and music! Susan had a millinery contact who helped her assemble this unusual hat. **Todd Lemke** won the quirky attire award with his green pants embroidered with race horses. Both the glorious winners won a bottle of Bourbon.

Many thanks to our hosts, **Jill & Joe Goldstein** and **Jenny and Nagi Ayoub** for planning and executing this fun event. This was the Ayoub's first event as producers. Thanks as well to **Patti Hipple** who guided our hosts in their wine selection. Finally, thanks to **Chef Jason Hughes, Yao Amegandji**, assistant Clubhouse Mgr. and the entire staff who worked so hard to bring us a memorable dinner.















OVERCOOKED,

A TERRA COTTA BY ROBERT ARNESON





Robert Arneson (1930-1992) is the artist of this bust of a quirky chef. Arneson was a professor of ceramics at UC Davis for four decades. The museum detail card stated "Throughout the 1960's, Arneson's subjects became increasingly personal. These evolved into a series of monumental self-portraits. Humor was of the utmost importance in these caricatures, which are defined by preposterous dramatic and comedic expressions. For *Overcooked* the artist emphasizes the goods he bakes by rendering a kiln in the back."

Arneson was one of several ceramic artist who used everyday objects to confront the viewer and to sometimes make offensive statements. He began the Ceramic Funk movement. He would use humor to attract the viewer in, but there usually was a another message being given as well. I have not included these photos since they don't relate to food or wine and they are confrontational. Among his most famous pieces are the Egghead series for the campus of UC Davis, San Francisco Embarcadero and elsewhere.



Egghead on UC Davis' Campus (1994)
Eye on Mrak (Fatal Laff)
By Robert Arneson
Medium: White Earthenware



Smorgi-Bob, The Cook (1971)
By Robert Arneson
Medium: White Earthenware

A Note from the Board:
**FINE DINING ON
THE EQUATOR
& IN THE ANDES**

BY WAYNE MARKUS

In November 2016 **Suzanne and Bob Kossow, Karen and I** satisfied an item on our bucket lists, the **Galápagos Islands**. The islands are on the equator in the Pacific Ocean 563 miles west of Ecuador. Despite the tropical latitude the weather is rather moderate. The ocean water temperature is 69-74 degrees F, very similar to Hawaii.

We were on a National Geographic tour on board **the Endeavour**, a ship with capacity for 96 tourists. As might be expected the participants were largely ecologically minded and nature loving people. We met many interesting people, mostly at the dinner table.

The food on the Endeavour was good, but it was not a foodie's or oenophile's dream trip. That said the food was very good and the wine very acceptable. There were usually three choices for the

main course: fish, meat, and vegetarian. We ordered our dinner meal ahead to reduce food waste, which seeming fitting. The fish were from sustainable fisheries. Shrimp was not on the menu because of the harm to fragile mangrove seashores by the shrimping industry. Breakfast was always ample including the usual pancakes, eggs, sausage, bacon, and several tropical fruit juices, including **guanabana juice** and tree tomato juice. **Tree tomato juice** tastes a little like tomato juice. There were a variety of wines, largely Chilean and Argentinean. The wait staff was excellent, as good as in any high-end restaurant.

We tried our best to have Ecuadorian wine on this trip, but never found it. There is a small production of wine, but we were told it is not the same quality as Chilean or Argentinean wine.

After the cruise we took the two hour flight from sea level to Quito, Ecuador at 9000 feet altitude in the Andes. Suzanne contacted Jill Panzer who had earlier guided us on a trip through Munich, Bavaria and Prague. Jill researched restaurants in Quito and came up with the **ZAzú**. We hopped in a taxi and the driver actually knew where it was. We went through a restaurant and nightlife area then into a residential area to the restaurant.

ZAzú has a Peruvian cuisine and is very modern. It is now owned by a German, Jan Niedrau, who is married to an Ecuadorian. ZAzú is one of five Z restaurants: Z Food, Zuni, Z(inc), ZAO, and ZAzú. It is now part of the Relais & Chateaux association.

The lounge is very attractive with back-lit bottles on the shelves. It had comfortable couches and appeared to be a waiting area for customers. The wine cellar is round, twenty-five feet tall, with ladder access to the wines. Interestingly there was only one wine from the states, **Bogle**. It has earned a Wine Spectator Award of Excellence. We had a **Morande Gran Reserva Pinot Noir** from the Valle de Casablanca in Chile.

We started dinner with a **Pisco Sour cocktail**. The presentation was nice with a decorative design in the foam. Pisco is brandy distilled from specified fermented grapes and never aged in wood. Pisco is the national drink of Peru and Chile. There are differences in its production and the grapes used in the two countries. The oldest known reference to Pasco Sour is in a 1903 Peruvian cookbook. The recipe in the cookbook is an egg white, a glass of Pisco, a teaspoon of fine sugar, and a few drops of lime as desired. Up to three glasses can be made with one egg white and a heaping teaspoon of fine sugar, adding the remainder of the ingredients as needed. Pisco Sour is beginning to be found in high-end cocktail bars in the States.

The wait staff was very attentive and English speaking. They feature a **Tasting Menu Seven**, or for lesser appetites, a **Tasting Menu Five**. The seven course menu included **1.** a ceviche of black clam, lemon, craft beer, and plantain; **2.** Andean grains and vegetables, including lupine beans, heart of palm, yellow pepper sauce, and cilantro; **3.** stone crab with avocado; **4.** casuela of prawn, banana, peanut 'salprietá', and shrimp-plantain pot au feu; **5.** empanada of guinea pig confit, maize and aji; **6.** pork cheek with barley, potato llapingacho, and jus; **7.** and 'helada de paila' containing black berries, strawberries, hazelnut crumble and meringue. **Helada de paila** is a traditional Ecuadorian handmade ice cream made in a copper bowl in this case at the table. Our appetites were modest so none of us opted for either tasting menu. The items were available separately on the menu as well other courses.

The empanada interested us because it contained **Guinea Pig**. Guinea Pig is eaten on special occasions on Peru, much like turkey for Thanksgiving in the States. Once you get past the idea of eating Guinea Pig it is tasty. We asked for the recipe and a while later it was brought to us on rolled up fancy paper and tied with a ribbon. How often does that happen?

Empanadas are a turnover or hot pocket. In Latin America they are empanadas, in Italy calzones, and in India samozas. In Ecuador they are fried. Bolivians and Chileans bake them. The maize (corn), known as morocho, is soaked in water for several days before making into dough and cooking. Typically they are filled with rice and ground beef.

We asked the Chef for the recipe for the empanada we had. It includes a bottom layer of "**Moto Sucio**" ("**dirty corn**") or corn puree mixed with excess fat from cooking the Guinea Pig. The next layer is crispy maize holding the suckling Guinea Pig, an onion and tomato salad. At the top is **chichi foam**, a traditional beverage from the Amazon region and made by fermenting maize.

Executive Chef Darwin Almeida invited us to the kitchen and posed for a photograph with the kitchen staff. They are rightly very proud of their restaurant.

These were two very different dining experiences, both on the equator, one at sea level and the other high in the Andes. Now on to another item on the bucket list!

Buen provecho, buon vino, and buenos amigos!



guinea pig empanadas



zacha mocca



amuse bouche



pisco sour



UPCOMING COUNCIL BLUFFS BRANCH EVENTS

Mark Your Calendars!

**JULY
15**



**COUNCIL BLUFFS
COUNTRY CLUB**

Wines and cuisine of Argentina
Producers: Kossows and Tritschs

**OCT.
22**



VENUE TBD

South African Wines
Producer: Jill Panzer

**AUG.
17**



PITCH PIZZERIA WEST

Theme: TBD
Producers: Thrashers, Klemkes
and Hipplis

**NOV.
10**



**COUNCIL BLUFFS
COUNTRY CLUB**

Italian
Producers: Schierbrocks
and Forristalls

**SEP.
24**



MARTIN CABIN

Theme: TBD
Producers: Connie & Gary Martin

**DEC.
10**



LE BOUILLON

French theme
Producers: Tom &
Mary Murnan

HOSTING AN EVENT?

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bit about what's going on!
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event on the calendar!
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The International Wine & Food Society of London, England **Council Bluffs, Iowa Branch - Executive Committee**

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Vice President: Joe Goldstein
Treasurer/Membership: Diane Forristall
Secretary: Jill Goldstein
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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

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