

# The Bluffs Food & Wine gazette

*Omaha*  
**PRIME**  
*America's Best Steak*

*Open Daily*  
MON - SAT. @ 5:00 PM

415

*Event Report*  
**SPRING AT THE MARKET,  
A VISIT TO OMAHA PRIME**



**ALSO INSIDE** • Spring Valley Vineyard • IWFS Great Weekend in Charleston South Carolina Part 3 Friday 10/18/2019 a.m. until lunch



courtesy of hugel.com

# PRESIDENT'S COMMENTS

## Greetings to all;

Our June event featured Rosé, a perfect option for a summer event. The evening began with a Rosé tasting of Rosé s from four different countries followed by a wonderful multi-course dinner at Pitch in Dundee. Thank you to John Matthews and Amanda Harrington for a great evening.

Just yesterday, I received the newest publication from the International Wine & Food Society entitled "Guide to Enjoying Fine Wine 2020." Written by Stuart Leaf and Joseph J. D'Ambrosio from the IWFS Hudson Valley Branch, this publication is an outstanding wine guide offering a candid and refreshing review of the world of wine. This publication offers insights in the areas of different wine regions, popular grapes, best age to drink wine, best storage of wine, wine serving recommendations, and wine pairing. Consider adding this publication to your summer reading list. I am sure it will readily move to one of your favorite wine references.

We are always looking for new venues, ideas for a food or wine to highlight at a future event. If you have an idea or suggestion, please let myself or one of the board members know. If you would like to get involved in planning an event, we need you! Event planning is a fun and informative process. As a part of the event planning, you work with a board member (s) and local chef to bring your idea to life. Consider volunteering to help out today.

Be safe and be well. 🍷

*Connie Martin*

**Cover Photo:** Leaving Omaha Prime, Patti Hipple and Susan Koesters. Photo by Tom Murnan.

*Just a thought:*

**“Drink wine: it isn’t good to keep things bottled up.”**

# EDITOR'S

## CORNER

**I**t was great to get back into the saddle again and have an event! When you realize our last event was a Valentine's day theme at Railcar Modern American Kitchen, that was about three months ago...way too long to get together. On May 29th, the Old Market was starting to come back to life, but with the 50% rule in effect, many restaurants had not reopened yet. We had a nice event at Omaha Prime, which overlooks the Passageway on one side. The best part was getting back to meeting our friends who love wine and food.



We finally assembled all the recipes mentioned in the Bluffs Gazette in one, easy to find, area. An email went out on 6/9/2020 with the issue address: [https://issuu.com/omahapublications/docs/iwfs\\_cb\\_council\\_bluffs\\_recipes](https://issuu.com/omahapublications/docs/iwfs_cb_council_bluffs_recipes). We will add to them when we can get a chef to give us a new recipe. These will also be on the IWFS web site to make it easy to find. Just to let you know, some of these recipes were hard fought to obtain. The night of the event the Chef usually says yes, he or she will give us the recipe. But then it takes hounding to actually get it as the print deadline approaches. Mary and I have made the cornbread numerous times...the best cornbread ever. The Short rib Crostini is great as is the Bruschetta Cheese Bread. The average chef can execute all the recipes, you don't have to be Thomas Keller of the French Laundry who has a cookbook of complex recipes.

During our Spring at the Market event, we tried three red wines blind. I was quite impressed with the 2013 Spring Valley Uriah Walla Walla Bordeaux Blend and thought we should all know a little more about this winery. Take a few minutes to read about Spring Valley Vineyard. It has an interesting story as well as location.

We continue with Part 3 of Wayne Markus' narrative on the Charleston Great Weekend. This account focuses on the morning activities, which include a visit to a World War II aircraft carrier, and stopping by to see the historic Fort Sumter, where the first battle of the Civil War was fought on April 12, 1861.

The new dates for International and Americas events have been revised due to COVID-19. The new dates are: Paris and Bordeaux - April 15 - 24, 2021; San Antonio Great Weekend - October 26 - 30 2021; and Willamette Valley - May 17-22, 2022.

If you want to examine the photos of an event before it comes out in the Gazette, go to our web site at IWFS.org, and click on The Bluffs Food & Wine Gazette & Photos. And yes, you can download photos from the site. And now you can get event recipes as well.

Salut! 🍷

*Tom Murnan*



**LIFE IS LIKE RIDING  
A BICYCLE. TO KEEP  
YOUR BALANCE, YOU  
MUST KEEP MOVING."**

— ALBERT EINSTEIN

# Spring Valley Vineyard

BY TOM MURNAN

Spring Valley Vineyard was one of three red wines we compared at our Spring at the Market event at Omaha Prime on May 29th. Having never had their wines before, I was impressed with the quality. Hailing from the **Walla Walla** appellation of Washington State, the land has been in the Corkrum, Derby and Elvin families since 1897. Patriarch Uriah Corkrum was born in 1865 after his parents left Illinois by wagon train for the Walla Walla Valley in the then Washington Territory. Uriah married, but his wife died in 1893 during childbirth. The same year his wheat harvest was wiped out by unusually heavy rains. But Uriah persevered and by 1897 was able to purchase the Spring Valley Ranch. The family grew wheat until 1993, when grapes were planted for the first time by descendants **Dean and Shari Derby**. Before his foray into the wine business, in 1956, Dean was drafted into the NFL and played cornerback for the Los Angeles Rams, the Pittsburgh Steelers

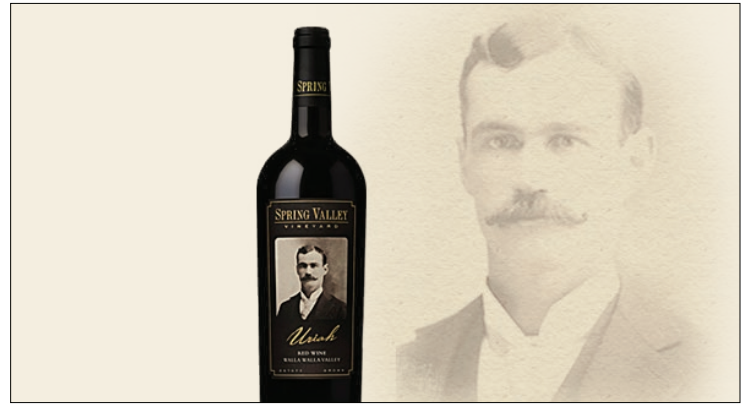


*Spring Valley Winemaker Serge Laville*

**BEFORE HIS FORAY INTO THE WINE BUSINESS, IN 1956, DEAN WAS DRAFTED INTO THE NFL AND PLAYED CORNERBACK FOR THE LOS ANGELES RAMS, THE PITTSBURGH STEELERS AND THE MINNESOTA VIKINGS. THE FIRST WINE WAS PRODUCED IN 1999, A MERLOT BASED RED BLEND WHICH DEBUTED IN 2001.**

and the Minnesota Vikings. The first wine was produced in 1999, a Merlot based red blend which debuted in 2001.

Today, Spring Valley produces Bordeaux blend grapes ( Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Cabernet Franc, Petit Verdot and Malbec) as well as Syrah and Viognier. The winery hired **Serge Laville**, whose grandpère in France gave him sips of great wines while he was under 10 years old. Through his grandfather's influence, he became an



enologist with a background in chemistry and biology, and studied with famous wine consultant Marie Laure Sylvestre, and did consulting in various wine areas of France. He stumbled on Spring Valley when he took time off and became a wine tourist in the USA. He was photographing Walla Walla and met the son of Dean, Devin Corkrum Derby, who was the founding winemaker at the estate. He decided to join on as the assistant winemaker and remained in that capacity until Devin was killed in a vehicle accident. He became the 2nd head winemaker and has used his knowledge to craft great wines. He has stated that he learned how to make wine in France, but learned to make Washington wine from Devin Derby.

Laville feels Spring Valley has a unique terroir. Situated 12 miles northeast of Walla Walla in southeastern Washington, the vineyard sits nestled in wheat country. The vineyard is not in the flat valley lands, but in the hills, and that is a big difference for the area. The vineyards are oriented towards the southwest, so it gets sunlight most of the day, more than most vineyards in the area. The property gets continuous wind from the south, so the vineyard is healthy, with no diseases or mildew. The

vineyards follow the north/south slope of the hill, which allows for full air infiltration and sun exposure. The property get 12 to 15 inches of rainfall a year, mostly in the spring. By May or June, the rainfall stops until October. Since the vineyard is elevated, it is cooler in the summer, delaying the harvest until the end of September. This is two weeks later than the rest of the valley vineyards, resulting in longer hang time and lower sugar content. In the vineyard, every vine is tended by hand throughout the growing season. This includes canopy thinning green harvest (crop thinning), and harvesting. Before the winter, the canes are buried by hand to protect them from the harsh southeastern Washington cold.

Some of the great successes have come from the Uriah bottling, which is mostly Cabernet Franc and Merlot. The Wine Spectator ranked the 2000 vintage of the



*Spring Branch as it was known then, in 1893*

Uriah bottling as #17 in their Top 100 list, and the 2001 Uriah as #13 the next year. The 2003 was #25. Other labels are Mule Skinner Merlot, Sharilee Petit Verdot, Katherine Corkrum Cabernet Franc, Viognier, Frederick Estate Red (Bordeaux blend) and Rosé of Cabernet Franc. 🍷

**Source:**

<https://www.springvalleyvineyard.com/>

# EVENT REPORT:

## SPRING AT THE MARKET

Story By Tom Murnan & Photos by Tom Murnan and Wayne Markus

It was so nice to get back together with all our oenophile friends and renew acquaintances again. The Old Market was busy but not crowded. Parking on the streets was still free until June 1st, but a lot of restaurants had not opened up yet due to COVID-19 restrictions. We picked the right day, because one day later, there was a protest and a shooting at 12th and Harney, about a block away, and a 8:00 pm curfew was imposed on the city. But back to the current restrictions. The 50%-full rule really hurts the restaurant business. Most can't survive with that kind of protocol. Mo Tajvar runs this New York style chop house and did a nice job for our group of 38 attendees, of which there were 7 guests.

We started off with a nice spread of appetizers. We had a cheese platter that featured Jarlsberg, a hard cheese, Brie as our soft cheese, and Chevre balls, with shelled walnuts in the center of the plate and crackers to the side. Baby potatoes were sliced into flat rounds which were covered by Crème Fraiche, a few chopped onions, a sprinkle of parsley, and topped with black caviar. I have not had this in a long time, but the other ingredients seemed to obscure the taste of the caviar. My hands down favorite was the Foie Gras with Lingonberry Preserves on Toast Points. The unctuousness of the goose liver was so umami and pleasing that it was clearly the focal point of the appetizer, overshadowing the unusual lingonberry jam. We had two quaffing wines to choose from: a **Roederer Brut Rose NV** and a **Cristom Estate Eola Amity Pinot Noir 2014**. Of the two, I thought the sparkler was outstanding and went with the hors d'oeuvres better than the Pinot Noir. The Roederer was powerful and attention getting, brusque and refreshing, it was the better starter to me.

We sat down to **Spring Mix with Quail Egg, Hearts of Palm with Champagne Vinaigrette**. Cranberries and fresh onion slices enlivened the salad of red and green lettuce and cherry tomatoes. I had two cute quail eggs, which had a touch of the wild taste in their yolks. The Champagne vinaigrette was quite wine friendly and did not fight our **Château Lespault-Martillac Blanc 2015**. Hailing from south of the city of Bordeaux in the Pessac-Léognan appellation, which makes pretty good Sauvignon Blanc wines, the wine was dry, acid forward, lean and mineral. It was a good match to the salad. Pessac-Léognan is a newer appellation which represents the better areas of the older, larger Graves appellation.

Our 2nd course was **Coquille St. Jacques**. This is a classic old school French recipe for cooking scallops. There are different ways to do this, but it always involves cooking scallops in white wine. But not all recipes include adding cream. Ours was done without cream, which reduced the richness, but was probably a bit healthier for you. The scallop and wine mixture was put in a ramekin and topped with mashed potatoes, slid under a broiler to crisp up the spuds, and topped off with a slice of twisted lemon for a visually attractive presentation. I enjoyed the dish, but wife Mary would have preferred a cream based version. Our **Tablas Creek Cotes de Tablas Blanc 2017** comes from Paso Robles, CA. Tablas is a Rhone wine specialist, half owned by the Châteauneuf-du-Pape superstar Château Beaucastel. The grape varieties here are Grenache Blanc, which adds citrus & mineral flavors in addition to acidity, and Viognier, which yields peach and melon flavors as well as richness. It was dry and intense, a great seafood pairing.

The 3rd course was a **Duet of Duckling and 6 oz Filet with Roasted or Sautéed Baby Vegetables & Truffle Baby Potatoes**. This was a lot of food, more than I could eat. Each protein had its own sauce. The duckling consisted of a leg and trimmed thigh. It was nicely grilled and sported a Orange Grand Marnier Sauce. Orange always compliments duck, and the Grand Marnier added sweetness. The filet was cooked medium rare and had intense beefy flavor. Its sauce was a Peppercorn Sauce with a deep brown color and rich essence of beef stock with pepper. Green beans, 4 roasted new potatoes, a few leafy greens and a twisted slice of orange finished the plate.

Our three entrée wines were served blind. Our mission was to determine which wine was the **Château Barde Haut 2009**, a Saint Émilion Grand Cru from Bordeaux; which was the **Rustenberg John X Merriman Proprietary Red Stellenbosch 2011** from South Africa; and which was the **Spring Valley Uriah Walla Walla Bordeaux Blend 2013** from Washington. I thought the first poured was the Barde and tasted like the Bordeaux, but I had it backwards. The **Spring Valley** was the first poured. I found it structured, tannic, dry (not lush) and taut with black cherry flavors. The Bordeaux blend was 45% Merlot, Cabernet Franc 34%, Petit Verdot 8%, Malbec 8% and Cabernet Sauvignon 5%.

The **Stellenbosch** I got right. It was much softer with slight tannins. It too had Bordeaux varietals of 55% Cabernet Sauvignon and 37% Merlot, which probably accounts for its relative softness, and the remaining grapes were Petit Verdot, Cabernet Franc and Malbec. ▶



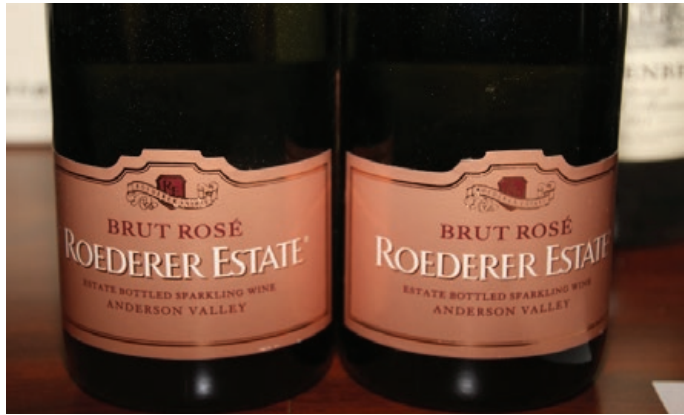














◀ Finally, the **Barde-Haut** had 90% Merlot and 10% Cabernet Franc. I found it sharp with acidity, mildly tannic, jammy, with some kirsch flavors. Had I realized the Barde was a Saint Émilion (clue, clue) and that appellation uses primarily Merlot, it would have made me reassess my guess. Oh well. Like Master Somm candidate Matt Brown always said, he makes a ton of mistakes too. But that is how you learn. It was a good exercise, like a sit down tasting except we had food.

**Dessert** found us with a Filled Crêpe with Chambord Soaked Fresh Raspberries and Chocolate Truffles. Chambord, of course, is a black raspberry flavored liqueur that distills the essence of raspberries into its liquor. Since the crêpe stuffing was raspberries, it was just the right liqueur to use. Also with the dish was a ball of whipped cream, and two dark chocolate truffles drizzled with chocolate sauce. I found the crêpe skin too tough to cut with the edge of a fork and asked for a knife. The chocolate balls were decadent, the essence of chocolate, and simply melted in your mouth without chewing.

The dessert wine was a **Taylor Fladgate Quinta de Vargellas 2012** port. Taylor Fladgate is a world famous vintage port, but their Quinta de Vargellas is just one of several vineyards that goes into the main Taylor bottling in a declared year. Only about 2 to 3 years per decade are declared vintages (although with “global warming” that has increased). In the off years, the vineyards will make a port of their own single vineyards. 2012 was generally not declared for the main labels, but it still can make a very nice single quinta wine. The style is a vintage port, which means it is from a single year (not blended years) then bottled after two years aging in the barrel. Still youthful, with some noticeable tannin, it lacks the power of a vintage Taylor, but nevertheless was quite enjoyable young, sporting blackberry and raspberry flavors. A good match.

Many thanks to **David & Diane Hayes**, and **Patti & Steve Hipple** for organizing this event. I was so glad it did not get cancelled due to COVID (or riots). Thanks also to **Mo Tajvar** and his mask clad staff who provided us with attentive service. It is not easy to do all that running around, bringing courses and wine, clearing dishes and the like, while wearing face masks. We appreciate your efforts! 🍷





# IWFS GREAT WEEKEND IN CHARLESTON SOUTH CAROLINA

*Part 3 // Friday 10/18/2019  
a.m. until lunch*

**STORY & PHOTOS  
BY WAYNE MARKUS**





**F**riday October 18, we went to **Patriot Point** and toured the **USS Yorktown**. A small group of us had a private guide in Steve Ellefson who served on the USS Ranger, one of four Forrestal-class super carriers.

The USS Yorktown is one of 24 Essex-class aircraft carriers. Originally named the USS Bon Homme Richard she was commissioned as USS Yorktown (CV-10) on April 15th, 1943. The first Yorktown carrier was sunk at the Battle of Midway in 1942. She had 150,000 shaft horsepower output providing a maximum speed of 33 knots an operational range of approximately 20,000 nautical miles.

In WWII she participated in strikes and air cover in the Pacific against Japanese positions at Marcus Island, Wake Island, Abemama, Makin, Tarawa, Truk Atoll, Saipan and partook in the Battle of Philippine Sea, the invasion of Okinawa and in raids on the Japanese mainland, including Tokyo. Yorktown comprised a portion of the Allies' "show of strength" entering Tokyo Bay on September 16, 1945.

The vessel was modernized with new weaponry, an angled deck, and jet aircraft to become a "CVA" attack carrier. She did not partake in combat service during the Korean Conflict. In September of 1957, she was reclassified as an Anti-Submarine Warfare (ASW) carrier. In 1964, she was deployed for service in the Vietnam War providing ASW as well as general support and took part in rescues of downed airmen. Her final tour in the conflict was on June 16, 1968.

The USS Yorktown was in the motion picture "Tora! Tora! Tora!" She was the recovery vessel for the Apollo 8 space capsule. USS Yorktown was decommissioned on June 27th, 1970 and donated to the Patriot's Point Development Authority of Charleston, South Carolina as a floating museum. In 1986, she received a National Historic Landmark status.

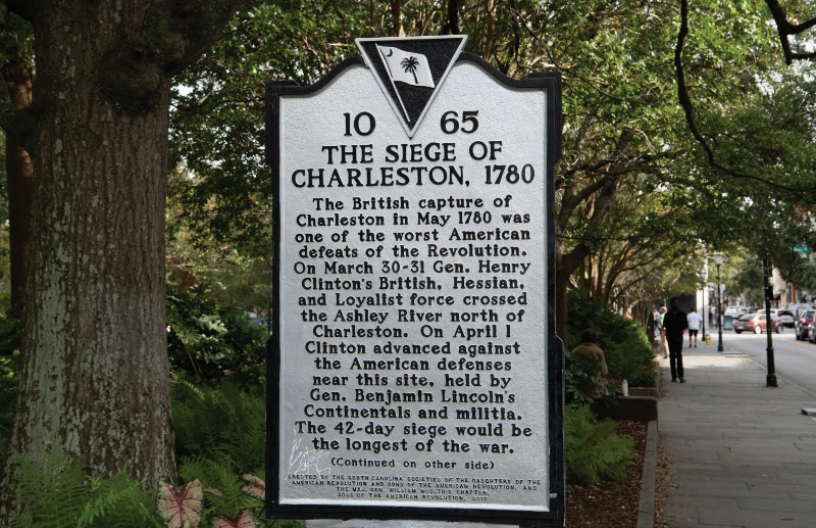
**Fort Sumter National Historic Park** is on an island in Charleston Harbor. The boat ride from Patriot Point provided a unique view under the bow of the USS Yorktown. The temperature at sea was at least 10 degrees cooler than on shore and a windbreaker was useful. Fort Sumter is a sea fort planned after the War of 1812 and constructed in 1829 to protect Charleston. It was named after Revolutionary War hero General Thomas Sumter who was from Charleston. On April 12, 1861 it was attacked by the Confederate artillery under General P. G. T. Beauregard in the first Battle of Fort Sumter, beginning the American Civil War. On September 8, 1863 Union Rear Admiral John Dahlgren unsuccessfully attempted to retake the fort in the Second Battle of Fort Sumter, but was unexpectedly met by over 300 Confederate infantry. Union forces on nearby Morris Island continued bombarding Fort Sumter, but the Confederates maintained control until February 1865 when Union General William T. Sherman captured Charleston and the Confederates evacuated. Fort Sumter was rebuilt and used as a coastal defense through WWII. In 1948 it was turned over to the National Park Service as a National Historic Site. Park Service

employees were very informative. There was an interesting display and discussion of cannons by a Park Service employee. Park Service employees were stationed around the Fort telling interesting stories.

Lunch at **Stella** in the **Warren Room** was very Southern and Lowcountry. There was an antipasto, cheese, and charcuterie plate on arrival. The initial three table bites included: Southern Tomato Pies comprised of slow-roasted plum tomatoes, caramelized onion and cheddar cheese in a phyllo tart; Fried Green Tomatoes with sweet red onion bacon jam; and Buttermilk Biscuits with apple butter or whipped cream. There was an interesting discussion among the ladies from Texas about the authenticity of the biscuits, apparently regional differences. Next came a Lowcountry salad of chopped romaine, mixed greens, carrots, tomatoes, bacon, and toasted almonds with green goddess dressing. The main course was mosaic shrimp and grits made of stone ground grits topped with Andouille sausage, garlic, onions, peppers and shrimp topped with smoked gouda cream sauce. It also included a tasty Maque Choux which is a southern Louisiana amalgam of French Creole and Native American browned and slow cooked corn-based dish with other vegetables, in this case okra, shishito peppers, and bacon lardons. Also served was Southern fried collard greens with seasoned ham. Dessert was a chocolate pecan pie tart with whipped cream. The wines were a French **Henry Fessy Gamay Noir 2016** and **Washington State Eroica Riesling 2017**.

The afternoon was free time. Some went to The Citadel Dress Parade. 🍷





# UPCOMING COUNCIL BLUFFS BRANCH EVENTS

*Mark Your Calendars!*

JULY  
**18**

## WINE, BEER & SPIRITS

Barbie on the Outback

Producers:

Patti & Steve Hipple

AUG.  
**16**

## STOKIN' GOAT

Sit down Weeknight wine  
tasting followed by Weekend  
wines for dinner

Producers:

Tabitha & Dave Thrasher

SEPT.  
**TBA**



## 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](mailto: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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### **KEEP IN TOUCH!**

Please notify Club Membership Chairman Diane Forristall at [DIANE@FORRISTALL.US](mailto: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](http://www.iwfs.org/americas/council-bluffs)

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