

The Bluffs Food & Wine

August 2014 *gazette*

Event Report Taita

Also Inside

Tom & Mary Murnan
Portuguese Wine Vacation
Vol. 13, June 2012.
On the Way to Madeira



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

President's Comments



Dear Members,

When Suzanne and I first started our wine adventure we fell in love with Pinot Noir. As our adventure progressed we have found many other wines from around the world to enjoy; each with its own story. Some of the ways we find new wines are by our travels but most often it is through our friends who introduce us to new varieties.

One varietal that David Tritsch has always been a fan of is Grenache. Grenache thrives in arid and hot conditions. It is believed to have originated in Spain but it is found over many parts of the world including France's southern Rhone region.

Here is a Grenache from Spain that Suzanne and I had grilling with friends the other evening. It has plenty of fruit on the palate and sweet tannins. The vineyard is located in Terra Alta not yet a well-known region - tucked away in the southeastern corner of Catalonia.

Herencia Altes Garnatxa Negra 2012

"A joint venture between Eric Solomon and proprietor Nuria Altes, this is an unreal value made from 100% Grenache from vines planted nearly 100 years ago. Its deep ruby/purple color is followed by a flowery perfume revealing aromas of forest floor, underbrush, sweet black cherries, raspberries and strawberries. Medium-bodied, ethereal as well as sublime, this finesse-styled Grenache possesses a delicacy that is difficult to believe for such intensity. Consume it over the next 3-4 years."

Rated 91 points from The Wine Advocate.

So if you are grilling out and want a light and fruity wine give this Grenache a try. The wine is available from HyVee for less than \$12 a bottle

Enjoy,

Bob Kossow
President

**"A waltz and a glass of wine
invite an encore." — Johann Strauss**

Editor's Corner



Dear Members,

Among the top tier events of this year has to be Taita, Benson's Peruvian inspired seafood restaurant. It was a hot and muggy Sunday, but that did not deter our group of gourmets from an unique dinner. I, for one, have never had Peruvian cuisine before, and **Chef Jose Dionicio** and his staff did a wonderful job. It is not every day that one can have beef heart, but it was my highlight course of the evening. Jill Panzer and Patti Hipple did a wonderful job of organizing. Read all about it inside.

If you have been following the serialized account of Mary and my wine vacation to Portugal, we had been in Portugal proper visiting Port producers. But this chapter, we are preparing to go to the main reason why I signed up for this tour: to see Madeira. Madeira is a unique wine that defies most of the usual rules about wine. It does not have to be stored in a cool cellar, oxygen does not rapidly deteriorate it like almost any other wine, and it can be stored opened in a partially drunk bottle for 9 months. It is the world's most long-lived wine. I had an 1802 Oscar Acciaioi Terrantez for my fiftieth birthday and it was stunning: the first wine I would rate 100 points and a benchmark for other wines to measure up to. It still had 50 years of life left in it! All this from a wine made when Thomas Jefferson was president. For a quick summary of Madeira's history and styles of wine, read below.



Photo courtesy of hugel.com

Enjoy!

Tom Murnan



EscOFFIER Inspired One Man
One Act Play and Dinner

Have you read the summer issue of our national publication "Wine Food & Friends" yet?

If not you should take a few minutes and do so. The Chairman's Letter mentions our March Event hosted by Tom Murnan.

The issue also has a full page article, Auguste Escoffier: the founder of Modern Cuisine, written by Tom. The article highlights Escoffier's life as well as details of our event. IWFS has also posted a number of Tom's other articles on the Americas website in the extended articles sections of Wine Food & Friends.

Tom's vision and efforts brought a unique and fun event to our club and now recognition from the Chairman of the Board of Governors of the Americas.

Congratulations, Tom!

Bob Kossow

President

Event Report

Taita's Peruvian Dinner

by Tom Murnan



I know I was excited about going, for the first time, to a Peruvian restaurant. The Omaha World Herald touted **Taita** in its 4-18-14 Living Section, giving Taita a second review. And I knew all the wines were from South America, with two wines to compare at two of the courses. I was not disappointed. We had a strong attendance of 28 people, 9 of which were guests. **Howard & Carole Hahn, Ron Palagi & Vicky Anzalone**, and V. Mertz's general manager and sommelier, **Matt Brown** were all the guests of David Hayes. Guests of the Hipples were **Nate and Liz Farmer**, and **Scott & Samantha Ohle** were my guests.

We filled the small restaurant ourselves on this hot and humid Sunday afternoon. We mingled with a glass of sparkling wine from Argentina, a **NV Brut Reginato**. It was unusual because it included Torrontes in with the Chardonnay. A **Nikkei Roll** accompanied the bubbly, which included two kinds of trout, avocado, cucumber and Tiger's Milk, a nice match. Tiger's milk is a Peruvian term for the citrus-based marinade that cures the seafood in a ceviche. This leftover fish runoff usually contains lime juice, sliced onion, chiles, salt, and pepper — along with a bit of fish juice.

We were all assigned to one of the four tables, and a spokesperson was designated to represent the table for their assigned wine. **Taita Ceviche** was our first course. This featured Japanese Sea Bream fish with Shaved Onion, Cilantro, Lime, Ginger and Cognac, as well as the Tiger's Milk again. Not mentioned on the menu was the fact that Corn Nuts were also included. These kernels of corn were sun dried, soaked in water, then toasted. **Chef Jose Dionicio** came out after each course to provide a brief explanation. This ceviche was a traditional Peruvian dish. The Tiger's Milk wakes you up and is a cure for hangovers he informed us.

Ed Jelinek represented his table and spoke of the **2011 Tabali Talinay Sauvignon Blanc** from Chile. By itself, the wine was flowery and fruity and highly acidic, but changed its profile when drunk with the ceviche. It was a perfect match to all the strong lime and cilantro flavors, which cancelled out the strong acid taste so noticeable without food. »



« We moved to the next course, **Serrano Ham Wrapped Scorpion Fish**. Each piece of fish was smartly wrapped in prosciutto-thin pieces of the Spanish ham, Serrano. It sat in a bed of roasted fava beans and corn on a pool of sweet corn puréed with cream. A hint of mint was noticeable, while the ham added an earthy component to the taste of the sea.

This was our first course with two wines, both reds. The **2010 Leyda Las Brisas Pinot Noir** (Chile) tasted earthy with a slightly oxidized taste, perhaps from charred oak barrels. There was a bit of bottle variation in the companion **2011 Montesco Passionate Wines Punta Negra** (Argentina). The Punta Negra is a single vineyard Pinot Noir located at 1,500 meters at the foot of the Andes. My table's first Punta Negra had brown tones and was definitely oxidized, a bad bottle. A second wine was light ruby and fresh, without the oxidization. **Steve Hipple** and **Matt Brown** represented Steve's table, where they thought the Punta had a clean and fruity nose with lighter fruit flavors and was preferable to the Leyda, with its campfire, toasty notes. Matt's advice on Argentinean wines: buy from the **Patagonia** area [not from one of the two wines in the pairing].

The **Anticuchos** was a real treat and perhaps my personal favorite: thin slices of Grilled Majinola Beef Heart. This earthy, organ meat was nicely charred on a skewer and sitting on sliced roasted potatoes with a dab of spicy sauce. **David Tritsch**

represented his table and compared filet mignon, which is a soft meat, to the much heartier heart, saying this muscle works the hardest of all the muscles in the body and has more flavor. The **2010 Vina Ventisquero Cabernet Sauvignon Grey Single Block Vineyard** from Chile went quite well with the grilled heart. In my humble opinion, it was a fabulous dish. **Chef Dionicio** said it was another example of very common street food.

After a rather long wait, **Chorizo Stuffed Pig**



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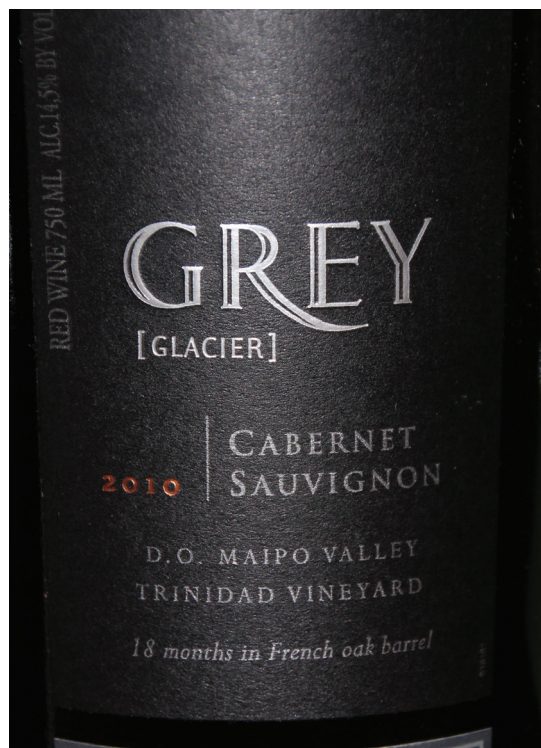
« **Trotter** was the final entrée. Two kinds of pork were served: pork cheeks and pig's feet. These were cooked in an **Adobo Sauce** (red wine, paprika, salt, garlic, and vinegar) with tomatoes, onions and oregano. The meat sat on a **parsnip** base, which provided an sweet/earthy foundation to the pork and had a nice color contrast in its presentation.

Yours truly represented his table with wine commentary. I felt that the **2010 Luca Syrah Laborde Double Select** (Argentina) went better with the heartier (and tougher) pig's trotters, and the more delicate **2012 Chakana Estate Selection Malbec** was the better match to the fall-apart-melt-in-your-mouth pig's cheeks. Noticeably oaky with sweet tannins, the Malbec was easy to drink but still complex. The syrah had peppery, espresso and chocolate tones. That is what is amazing about comparing different grape varietals side by side. You really learn how certain wines match different foods.

Dessert was a **Dark Chocolate Pave** that was paired to a most unusual Port like wine: a NV **Vinedo de los Vientos Alcyone Late Harvest Tanat Dessert Wine** from Uruguay. **Matt Brown** spoke about the wine, and said Tanat, a French grape, was like a Mouvedre. It was really quite nice, if not exactly like a Vintage Port.

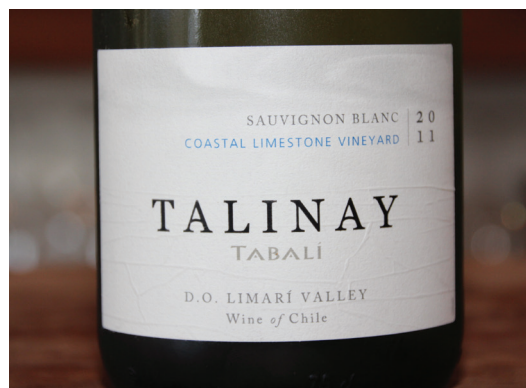
Many thanks for all the people who put this event together. Thanks to **Jill and Jon Panzer**, who conceived the idea, to Jill and Patti Hipple who

spent hours on the internet scrounging out unusual and high scoring wines only from South America, and to **Chef Jose Dionicio**, who together with his staff, gave up their Sunday off to bring us such a wonderful event.



Cover photo and this photo from Omaha-based artist **Gerard Pefung**

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Murnan Portuguese Wine Vacation

Vol. 13, June 2012: : Madeira, a Thumbnail History

by Tom Murnan

After leaving the world famous **Qunita do Noval** at about 3:30 pm, the rest of Wednesday June 6th was spent returning to Oporto to get to the airport. We would be in Madeira by 10:00 pm! We spent a few hours by the beach where the mouth of the Douro River empties into the Atlantic Ocean and enjoyed an informal beach inspired dinner of French fries and a hamburger at Restaurant Bar Fuzelhas before heading to the airport.

This would be one of the most eagerly anticipated legs of our trip for me. Known as **the Hawaii of the Atlantic**, Madeira is a subtropical island discovered by the Portuguese explorer Zarco in **1419**. It lies 600 miles southeast of Gibraltar, 200 miles north of the Canaries Islands, and 700 miles south of Portugal.

While on the plane, I reviewed my facts about Madeira. The name Madeira means **Wood** in

Portuguese. When discovered, the island was covered in dense **Laurel forests**. The climate is moderate like Hawaii, with a mean temperature of 66°F, rarely getting over 85° F. The island is very mountainous, and level ground is rare. Like Hawaii, there are no natural sandy beaches. It's primary industry is flowers. Wine comes in about fourth for the national economy. Besides the Portuguese, Italian and English immigrants helped establish the island. Like in Portugal itself, where they had a **Factory House** for Port, the British in particular established a "**Madeira Factory**", or kind of chamber of commerce, to promote the wine.

Madeira was a natural nautical crossroads for European ships going to the East Indies or the New World. Vineyards were laboriously carved into the slopes of the mountainous terrain and terraced, like along the Douro in Portugal. There are no large vineyards on Madeira. Instead, hundreds of small growers bring their grapes into seven Madeira Lodges, all that remains of the producers today. Originally, they made just table wine. But by a serendipitous accident around 1730, it was discovered that some casks that had been meant to be delivered to the Americas had been forgotten and returned to Madeira in the ships hold. It was discovered that sloshing about in the sweltering hold (about 110°F) improved the wine. The second thing that changed the character of Madeira wine was **fortification**. Like Port, grape brandy (**aguardente**) was added to the wine to stabilize it. This fortified the wine against deterioration during shipping.

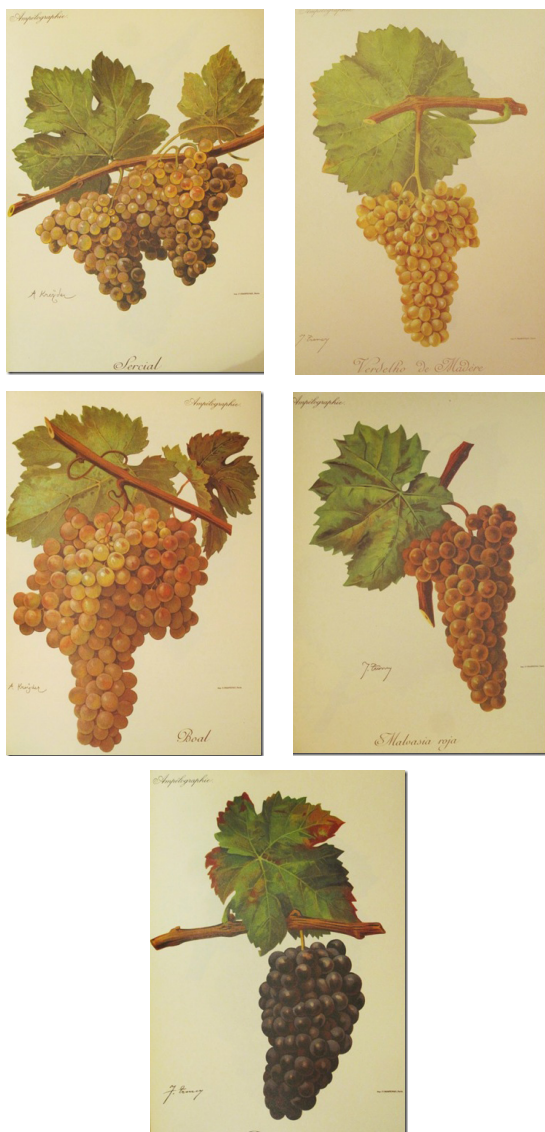
A method named **Estufagem** (Portuguese for stove or hothouse) was devised to simulate the long sea voyage in a ship's hot hold. The wine is placed in wood casks in 122°F rooms for six months to a year. The second method is the **Canterio** method, where **vintage Madeira** is placed in rooms **gently heated** by the sun at temperatures between 70°F and 90°F for a minimum of 20 years. This method is used for quality wines. Today, Estufagem cannot be used for vintage Madeira, but is used for lesser wines.

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Four main grape varieties are used, and roughly proceeds from dry to sweet. **Sercial** is the driest. It's nickname is "**dog strangler**" because of its astringent acidity. It is grown high in the mountains, at about 600-700 meters. It is fermented to near dryness, less than 1.5% on the

Baumé scale. It is the only Madeira wine that can be considered a dinner wine as well as an aperitif wine. It can be a palate cleanser at the end of a meal. It has a citrus nose of lemons and oranges.

Verdelho is a medium dry grape and style, grown at 400 meters, which has about 2.5% sugar. It has a nose of honey, chocolate, coffee and dried fruits. Its color is similar to Sercial only a bit darker. It has a slightly nutty flavor. A great Verdelho is rich and powerful, but also elegant. Some of the greatest vintage Madeiras from the 19th Century have been Verdelhos.

Boal or Bual wines are grown at 100 to 300 meters and are medium sweet with good acidity. Residual sweetness is in the 3.5% range, but this is balanced by great acidity. Bouquet includes fragrances of caramel, dried fruits, and coffee. It frequently is the darkest of the noble varieties. Very old Boals are dark mahogany in color. Many connoisseurs consider this the perfect Madeira. With proper age, the wine becomes silky and elegant. Boal vines have limited production, so there never was much bottled.

Malvasia, or Malmsey, is the sweetest style, with sugars ranging from 3.5 to 6.5% Baumé. It is grown at 150 to 200 meters above sea level. Not quite as dark as Boal, Malvasias are golden brown in color. Toffee, vanilla, caramel and raisins characterize its nose and palate. It is the richest and most unctuous of the noble varieties. Now nearing the edge of extinction due to sea level vineyards being converted to banana plantations and housing, top quality Malmsey has always been very rare. Good Malvasia is never cloying and can be drunk as by itself as a dessert at the end of a meal. Its full name is Malvasia Cândida and originally came from Greece.

Terrantez was virtually extinct since it is hard to grow and gives low yields. After the Oidium and Phylloxera outbreaks in the 19th century, growers

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« just did not attempt to revive the variety. It can be rich and sweet, or dry. It is characterized by a whiplash acid backbone, and a slightly bitter farewell in the taste. Nutty, caramel, molasses and dried fruits display on the palate. It is a true rarity today. A few purists have planted more.

Bastardo, like Terrantez, is virtually extinct. Originally from the Douro, it is used in the making of Port. Usually, it is vinified in a sweet style, although it can be found as a dry wine. Production today is not commercially viable.

Moscatel comes from the Muscat grape is almost never made anymore because the growers can get three times the money when it is sold as table grapes. It is high in sugar, but low in acidity.

Tinta Negra Mole (TNM) is a red, one of the few Madeiran grapes that are not white. It is not considered a noble variety, although some vintners today feel it is unfairly disparaged. It is a chameleon of a wine, as it can mimic the other noble varieties when raised in the same elevations and vinified like those varieties. Most of the lower grade Madeiras made today come from TNM. It

is easy to grow, and neutral when added to other varieties. It can, however, reach gustatory heights when properly raised and cared for. Noël Cossart writes that the grape itself is a cross of Burgundian Pinot Noir and Grenache. After Phylloxera, most of the noble Madeira varieties were greatly reduced by the louse. The vineyards were replanted with American rootstock as the base with the other varieties grafted on top. I asked Mannie Berk, owner of the Rare Wine Co., what was going into the bottles after 1870 since there was so much less of the noble varieties left. He wrote that “Noble varieties were in fact grown, though in diminished amounts. There were surely ‘mongrel’ blends but there were also bottlings that were pure (or at least relatively so). Unfortunately, details of many of the old wines will never be known; we have to go on typicity and, when we’re lucky, what we can learn.”

We landed on Funchal’s tarmac, one of the shortest in Europe. If the pilot misjudges, into the Atlantic you go! By the time we got through customs and into our seaside hotel, it was about 11:30 pm. Tomorrow we explore the island!



Upcoming Council Bluffs Branch Events

Mark Your Calendars!

August 16, 2014

Lobstahfest!

Enjoy Maine lobster flown in fresh that morning (or Iowa “lobsters,” rib eye steak) along with all the fixins.

At the home of John & Valerie Ware in rural Glenwood, IA.

September 21, 2014

Lamb dinner at the home of Jerry & Mary Sorensen in Harlan IA.

October 3, 2014

Hosts: Lorrie Burdeny & Patti Hipple

Wild game dinner on fine china at the home of Lorrie and Derek Burdeny.

Walla Walla Washington Wines

Catered by Chef John Benker.

November 2014 TBA

December 7, 2014

President’s dinner at the Omaha Press Club.

President Bob Kossow and Todd Lemke host.

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: dmatz@darland.com



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Please notify Club Membership Chairman
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in hosting an IWFS event.

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and understand and to be an information exchange for the membership of
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