

AUGUST 2017

The Bluffs
Food & Wine
gazette

Event Report:
Baby Back Barbeque Picnic

Inside

The Grape Crusher

Introduction to the IWFS 2017
Sonoma Festival

IWFS Americas Inc.

2017 Sonoma Festival
Opening Night Welcome Dinner
Tuesday 5/2/2017

Martinelli Winery & Vineyards

Upcoming Council Bluffs
Branch Events



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



President's Comments

OUR BABY BACK BARBEQUE Picnic was the type of relaxed, informal event that everyone seems to enjoy. This was a collaborative effort. Thanks to our hosts, Nate and Liz Farmer, who offered up their house, Lowell Wilhite who arranged for the BBQ caterer, and Patti Hipple who ferreted out the wines. I was glad it was inside, in the air conditioning, as it was a bit hot. Steve and Patti invited King and Ping Lee as guests. King has taken on himself the yeoman's job of photographing a number of IWFS International Festivals (we are talking a few thousand photos here), and took some for this event as well. If you attended, King made a DVD for you. Ask me for your copy if you didn't get it at one of the upcoming events.

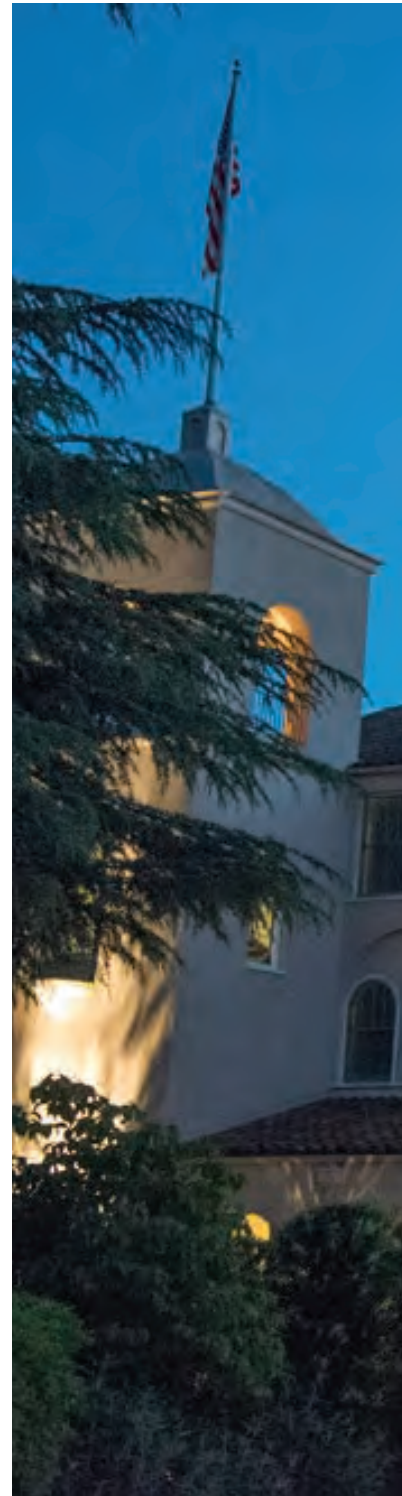
The IWFS Sonoma Festival had so many great wines, food and history given to us that I decided to break it down into parts over the next several months and put it into the Gazette. The series begins with this issue. Most of the photos come from Ping Lee, but Wayne Markus also took quite a number, as well as your editor. If you have never been to an IWFS Festival, perhaps reading about it will inspire you to join the fun sometime. If you did go, the series will be a great aide memoire to help you to recall all the information that came at you during the festival. Thanks to **Connie Martin** who volunteered to help write some of the articles. Connie and husband Gary are the newest members on the Council Bluffs Executive Board.

Enjoy!

Tom Murnan



Cover Photo: Old 1,180 gallon cask at the Martinelli visitor center. Originally used for zinfandel from the Jackass Vineyard, the tank dates from 1890. Leon Martinelli, the youngest of his siblings, had the job of climbing inside the small opening to clean the tank. Photo by Tom Murnan



**EVENT
REPORT**
MORE IMAGES
— ON THE —
NEXT PAGE





EVENT REPORT:

BABY BACK BARBEQUE PICNIC

Written By Tom Murnan
Photos by Tom Murnan and King Lee

IT WAS ALMOST SUMMER, which was just a few weeks away, but the 91 degree temperature made it feel like summer. What better, then, to have a barbeque? Liz and Nate Farmer generously allowed the use of their house, **Lowell Wilhite** arranged for **Baby Back BBQ**, an award winning establishment that has been in business 18 years. **Leonard and Julie Hawkins** produced some pretty awesome grub. **Patti Hipple** selected the high end wines. Forty-seven people pretty much filled the Farmer's basement. Of this number, we had 10 guests, including **Ping and King Lee**. King is well known on the IWFS international festivals circuit for taking thousands of high quality pictures, and he brought DVD gifts of his May 2017 Sonoma Festival photos for those who attended. Your humble reporter, however, was having camera issues that night, with the main flash bleaching everything out. Pardon some of the darker than usual photos. King helped me out on some of the photos.

Things started off with two kinds of appetizers. The **Jalapeno Poppers** had just enough spice to them to be interesting, and not too much to be sending me crying to the hills. Very tasty. We also had **BBQ Shrimp**. About 6 shrimp were skewered on bamboo and nicely grilled. Most of the BBQ sauce had fallen off onto the bottom of the pan. With this we had two whites from New Zealand, a **2015 Dog Point Vineyard Sauvignon Blanc**, and a **2014 Craggy Range Sauvignon Blanc Te Muna Road Vineyard**. A rosé was also offered: the **2016 Whispering Angel** from **Caves D'Esclans** in Provence, France. The

Red was a Beaujolais: **Fleurie Les Moriers from Domaine Chignard**. This was a nice, broad selection that all went well with BBQ.

After dinner was called and we all went downstairs, President Tom Murnan introduced the guests, brought up our future events, had Steve Hipple speak about the BBQ, and presented **Jamie and Christa Otto** with their framed IWFS certificates for joining the Society. Steve also informed us that it was the 55th anniversary of Ping and King Lee that day.

Dinner found us sitting around six tables. Everything was informal with our one Main Course being served cafeteria style. We had our choice of **Baby Back Ribs, Brisket, and Chicken**. Sides included **Corn Confetti Salad, BBQ Peach Beans and Corn Bread & Butter**. We had our choice of two different BBQ sauces. I asked the Hawkins what the difference was. The **Mild** was a sweet, tomato based sauce, while the **Competition** sauce was "sweet with heat" or a bit of spice. Both were tremendous.

Our wines of discovery were pre-poured and waiting for us. We had a **2015 Bonnhoff Riesling Spätlese Norheimer Kirschheck** from the Nahe in Germany. We then had three reds to compare: a **2015 Hartford "Old Vines" Russian River Zinfandel**, a **2013 Catena Alta Malbec**, and a **2015 Hentley Farm Shiraz Barosso Valley**.



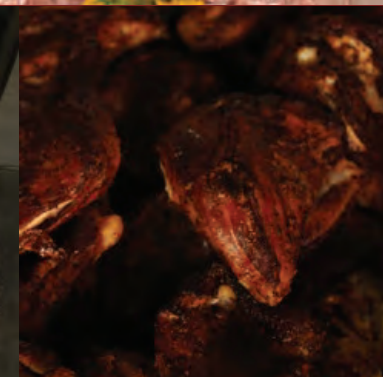
The brisket was incredibly tender. I don't think I have ever had such tender, moist, and melt in your mouth brisket. I didn't think it even needed BBQ sauce so good was it on its own since the sauce tended to obliterate the delicate brisket flavors. The ribs, smoky when just eaten plain, jump started alive with the sauce. They were delicious as well. The chicken was scrumptious also. As for the wine combinations, they were all good. For me, the Riesling went best with the chicken, while I thought the Zin had a slight edge over the Shiraz. The Malbec came in third for me. The Zin was just a bit more rounded and had fewer sharp edges compared to the Shiraz and Malbec, which I thought just a touch sharp and acidic compared to the Zin. These were just quibbles, however, and they were all very good.

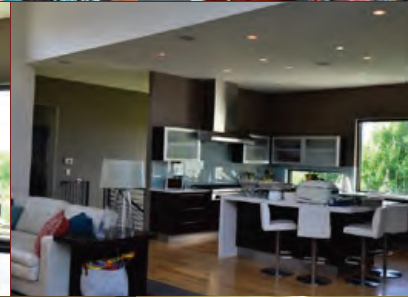


Dessert found us with **Home Made Pear Pie**, which was not too sweet and had a kind of sugar crumble on top. Interestingly enough, I thought the **2012 Pacific Rim Vin de Glacière Riesling** had a bit of a pear flavor as well, but with the added sharp acidity of Riesling, making it a great match. As sweet as a Sauternes, it did not have to fear the dessert being sweeter than the wine.



Many thanks to all who put this event on: The **Farmers** for offering their house, the **Wilhites** who selected the caterer, and the **Hipples** who selected the wines.









THE GRAPE CRUSHER

Story & Photos by Tom Murnan

Traveling to the Sonoma Festival, from Sacramento to wine country, I took I80 west to Highway 29, where I turned northward to the gateway to Napa Valley and Sonoma County. Just before a large estuary, atop Vista Hill, I spotted a large bronze statue of a pioneer looking man in broad brimmed hat, working to crush grapes in a hand crusher. You could see him for miles along the highway. What a great introduction to wine country. On my return home, I stopped by to get a closer look. Unfortunately, there wasn't a single plaque to identify the name of the statue or the artist.

When I got home I discovered **The Grape Crusher** was made by **Gino Miles**, a locally known artist, in 1986. He wanted to create a work to honor California viniculture workers in the Napa Valley over the last 200 years. The statue stands on a 10 foot base and is 16 feet tall itself. Made of 135 pieces of bronze, the art work is hollow. It took a year to complete. A casting facility in New Mexico, the Shidoni Foundry, separated the artwork into pieces, assembled them and shipped the work to Napa in one piece. It was accepted by the city of Napa in 1987, erected and dedicated at its present position thirty years ago.

"Gino Miles has been an artist since the 1970's. After attending the University of Northern Colorado, he spend many years in Europe studying art and art history, and founding Italart, an art school for American and German students in the Chianti region outside Florence. For many years he taught design and sculpture classes while presenting his original pastels and sculptures as well. Gino and his wife now live in Santa Fe, New Mexico, and are the owners of Sculpture 619, a gallery in the heart of Santa Fe's Art District."

If you'd like more information on the artist who created Napa's iconic Grape Crusher, click <http://www.sculpture619.com/about/>

Even though this statue was erected by the City of Napa for Napa Valley, it is nevertheless a striking introduction at the gates of two of the most important wine growing areas in California: Napa and Sonoma.

Source:
<http://winewitandwisdomswe.com/2013/08/02/napas-grape-crusher/>





Introduction to the IWFS 2017 SONOMA FESTIVAL

Photos by King Lee • Story by Tom Murnan

I am starting a series on the IWFS Sonoma Festival for our Gazette readers since most of our members were unable to attend. The Festival went from May 2nd to May 6th, 2017.

We all met at the **Fairmont Sonoma Mission Inn and Spa** and from there would take trips to our various destinations. The Festival was planned by our own **Stephen Hipple**, Chairman of Festivals & Events Committee. This time he had the assistance of **Steve Greenwald** from the Washington DC Branch.



This was a very educational Festival with much to learn about Sonoma and its history and current preeminence, along with Napa Valley, of the Californian wine scene. We learned of its pioneers, their struggles, successes and failures. Families such as the **Martinelli's** and **Haraszthy's** started on virgin grassland and hills to establish wineries without the aid of modern mechanized equipment, electricity or computers. The wineries selected were at the top of their game and didn't shy away from, for example, serving a 100 point wine...for lunch! The food ranged from very good to stunning to spectacular. The reason you join an organization such as the IWFS is that it can open doors of opportunity for you that you would probably



This was a very educational Festival with much to learn about Sonoma and its history and current preeminence, along with Napa Valley, of the Californian wine scene.



be unable to open on your own. **The Jackson Family Winery (JFW)** with its **Spire Collection** is at the apex of Sonoma wine production. They provided us with a lunch and a dinner. We had an evening at the JFW where 120 people dined al fresco on one long table, surrounded by the JFW gardens. At that same previously mentioned luncheon where we were served such stunning reds, the JFW vegetables took center stage for their freshness and deliciousness. We went to the oldest premium winery in California, Buena Vista Winery, built in 1857, and learned about the life and fate of its founder, **Agoston Haraszthy**, a real American entrepreneur who immigrated from Hungary. We learned about much

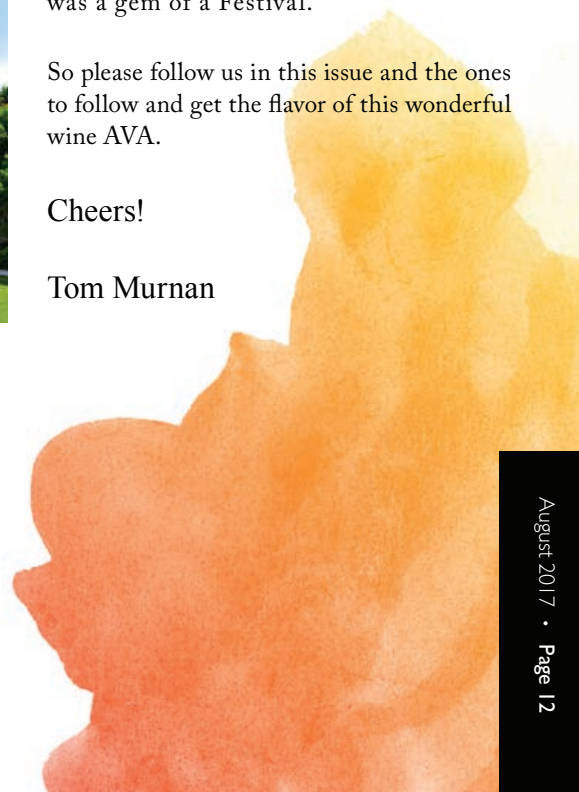


younger wineries, such as **Kosta Browne**, and their relentless drive to continuously improve their product. In a nutshell, this was a gem of a Festival.

So please follow us in this issue and the ones to follow and get the flavor of this wonderful wine AVA.

Cheers!

Tom Murnan





IWFS AMERICAS INC. 2017 Sonoma Festival

OPENING NIGHT WELCOME DINNER TUESDAY 5/2/2017

by *Connie Martin* | Photos by *King Lee & Wayne Markus*

On May 2, 2017, the IWFS Sonoma Festival kicked off with an Opening Night Welcome Dinner with 120 IWFS members representing over 10 countries. The Council Bluffs/Omaha IWFS branches were well represented with 21 members in attendance. The evening started with a "Champagne" reception of **Harvest Moon Sparkling Gewurztraminer** and passed Hors d'Oeuvres. Hand-passed canapés were distributed while we were outside on the patio: **Caramelized Onion & Gruyère Tarts; Sea Salt Baked Baby New Potato, Herbs, Olive Oil, Shallots and Fromage Blanc; and Ahi Tuna Tartare in a Cucumber Cup with American Caviar.** The Sparkling Gewurztraminer paired well with the canapés and served as a refreshing start to the coming courses.

Everyone was given assigned seating once we proceeded to table. Introductions to event organizers and **Andrew Jones**, Director of IWFS Americas Inc. were made. **George Rnjak**, President of the Napa Valley / Sonoma County Branch was awarded the IWFS Silver Medallion for his help in organizing the festival.

The evening's food and wine highlighted the best that Sonoma offers. Spring time, farm to table food offerings were paired with wines from the **Martinelli Vineyards**. Scheduled fourth generation Regina Martinelli was unable to attend, so with short notice, her

sister **Julianna** attended in her place and shared a bit of the Martinelli Vineyard history and stories. Martinelli Vineyards have been growing grapes in the Sonoma Valley since the 1880's when Giuseppe and Luisa Martinelli planted their first vineyard on a 60-degree slope starting with Zinfandel and Muscat Alexander vines. This vineyard became known as **Jackass Hill vineyard** and even today remains the steepest non-terraced vineyard in Sonoma County. Over the years, a range of crops have been grown including apples, cherries, pears, prunes, hops, berries, walnuts, potatoes, green beans and most importantly, wine grapes in the 19 vineyards now owned and operated by the Martinelli family. Perhaps more importantly, the 4th generation of Martinelli's is growing up in the vineyards learning to work and play as a family in the agricultural business of the Martinelli Vineyards.

Dinner consisted of three courses beginning with **Pan-Seared Sea Bass, Spring Vegetables, Polenta and Basil Emulsion** paired with the **2014 Zio Tony Ranch Chardonnay**. The second course was **Seared Scallops with Sebastopol Organic Mushrooms, Corn and Pancetta Ragout**. Second course wines provided an opportunity to compare the **2014 Three Sisters Vineyard Pinot Noir** versus the **2014 Moonshine Ranch Pinot Noir. Colorado Rack of Lamb with a Chickpea Puree, Fennel Fondue and Muhammara Sauce** served as the third dinner course with a zinfandel wine comparison. The **2015 Giuseppe & Luisa Zinfandel** was posed versus the **2012 Vellutini Ranch Zinfandel**.





The dessert course finale presented the **Marin French Triple Cream Brie Friand with Fig Marmalade**. The two Zinfandels from the third dinner course continued with dessert. A lovely way to finish a wonderful evening of renewing friendships and making new friends, especially our newest friend, Julianna Martinelli, marketing and public relations director of Martinelli Vineyards. Thank you'd to **Chef Bruno Tyson**, Fairmont Sonoma Mission Inn; **Andrew Jones**, Director/Chairman IWFS Americas Inc.; **Steve Hipple**, Director/Chairman IWFS Festivals & Events and **Steve Greenwald**, Director/ Vice-Chairman IWFS Festivals & Events.

Submitted by Connie Council Bluffs/Omaha IWFS members







Martinelli Winery & Vineyards

STORY & PHOTOS BY TOM MURNAN

A good friend of mine has been serving Martinelli wines at his house for years, so I was excited that Martinelli was pouring their wines at our IWFS Sonoma Festival Opening Night Welcome Dinner. Later in the week, after our opening event, I had the opportunity to stop by the winery Tasting Room to try their current offerings.

I did not realize that the Martinellis only grew grapes, apples and other fruits and vegetables for around a hundred years before they first made commercial wine in the late 1980's. Founders **Giuseppe and Luisa Martinelli**, ages 19 and 16, left Tuscany for California in the 1880s. After planting a vineyard for a farmer in Forestville, Giuseppe had enough money to buy land. He planted their first vineyard on a 60-degree slope starting with Zinfandel and Muscat Alexander vines. This vineyard eventually became known as **Jackass Hill vineyard**, so named by their son Leno's second wife, since only a jackass would farm a hill that steep. Even today it remains the steepest non-terraced vineyard in Sonoma County. Giuseppe died young in 1918, leaving Luisa to raise four children. The youngest,

Leno, who was twelve at the time, was chosen to tend the vines with horse and plow on the treacherous hill until the 1950's. When Leno retired at the age of 89, his son **Lee Sr.** took the keys to the tractor and is still tending the vineyard at the time of this writing. This southeasterly facing vineyard has a long waiting list of patrons trying to buy a bottle or two from the mailing list.

The family prospered and raised Zinfandel, Syrah, Pinot Noir, Chardonnay, and Gewürztraminer, and has picked up important vineyard parcels over the years. But it was an informal, over the fence discussion between **Lee Sr.** and his wife **Carolyn** with their neighbor **Helen Turley** and her husband **John Wetlaufer** that jumpstarted the Martinellis' wine business. Turley was having a picnic on her side of the fence and Martinelli introduced himself as the new owner of the property on his side, which he bought for hunting. Turley talked the Martinellis into turning the land into a vineyard, and in 1993 she crafted Pinot Noir from the Blue Slide Ridge Vineyard for her own Marcassin label and the Martinelli label. The wine is made in one of the Martinelli barns. A long term relationship developed and



Turley was the Martinelli winemaker. Along with Wetlaufer, a vineyard specialist, Helen has identified and developed many vineyards on Martinelli property. Helen Turley is a Pinot Noir specialist favoring a Burgundian style. She has consulted with Pahlmeyer, Colgin and Bryant Family and other cult and high end wineries. Under Turley and Wetlaufer, yields were cut in half to improve the wine with new cellar and viticultural practices. Most of the fruit still is sold to others, and a small fraction is made into wine. Lee also bought his uncle Tony's property, and it is marketed as **Zio Tony's Vineyard**. Helen Turley consulted with Martinelli until 2010.

There are **19 vineyard labels** for Pinot Noir, Syrah, Chardonnay and Zinfandel. Here are a few of them: the afore mentioned Zio Tony "Grace Nicole", Seven Mules, Giuseppe and Luisa, Vellutini Ranch, Jackass Hill, Moonshine Ranch, Three Sisters "Sea Ridge Meadow", Wild Thyme, Bondi Home Ranch "Water Trough Vineyard" and Blue Slide Ridge. Bondi and Blue Slide are Pinot Noirs sold both under the Marcassin and Martinelli labels.

The tasting room, right off River Road by Windsor, CA, is a turn of the century hop barn where the old hop bailer is still on view. While you are tasting or shopping the gift store, you can watch a continuous video loop of Lee Martinelli Sr. driving his tractor on the treacherous Jackass hill slope. It shows him taking out a hundred year old plus vine or two as the tractor was losing the battle with gravity at that particular point. Over the years, Lee Sr. has rolled the tractor two times. Not for the faint of heart! Even a track vehicle has trouble on this slope.

The 4th generation is now in place, occupying many of the key positions, such as wine maker and marketing. From what I can tell, we consumers are in excellent hands.

Sources: <http://www.martinelliwinery.com/vineyards/>; <http://www.foodandwine.com/articles/juiced-about-martinelli>



UPCOMING COUNCIL BLUFFS BRANCH EVENTS

Mark Your Calendars!

**AUG.
17**



PITCH PIZZERIA WEST

Theme: Farm to Table theme with Napa Valley Wines
Producers: Thrashers, Klemkes and Hipples

**NOV.
17**



*NOTE DATE CHANGE

COUNCIL BLUFFS COUNTRY CLUB

Iowa Farm to Table Dinner
Producers: Schierbrocks and Forristalls

**SEP.
24**



MARTIN CABIN

Theme: Comfort Food, bonfire, S'mores & More
Producers: Connie & Gary Martin

**DEC.
10**



LE BOUILLON

French theme
Producers: Tom & Mary Murnan

**OCT.
22**



CHEZ PANZER

South African Wines with Chef Nathan of Attitude on Food | Ostrich, South African cheeses, Butterfish, Koeksisters
Producer: Jill Panzer

**JAN.
—**



TO BE DETERMINED

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

**FEB.
11**



—
Mardi Gras theme
Producers: Jill Panzer



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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
Cellar Master: John Fischer & Patti Hipple
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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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