

The Bluffs Food & Wine September 2012 *gazette*

Johnny's
Cafe



Also inside

Humidity in the **Cellar**

Tom and **Mary Murnan** 2012

Wine Vacation Vol. 1

18th Century **Gin Crisis**



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



Photo courtesy of hugel.com

Editor's Corner

Our latest outing was at one of Omaha's iconic steak houses: **Johnny's Cafe**. Julie Hruban and Todd Lemke teamed up to try some southern hemisphere wine that were continents apart: Australia and Argentina. Johnny's was remodeled in 1971-2. Tom asked Kari Kawa Harding about some of the architectural features we find in the restaurant today. There also is an article on **Humidity In The Cellar**. Whether you have a commercial wine cooler, or just an air conditioner like I have, you still need to know where to set your humidity level and why. Finally, I would like to encourage everyone to submit me your **vacation photos**, and

a few paragraphs explaining your trip. As long as the topic is on wine, or food, we would love to publish it. Send me your photos, and a narrative, so we can share it with the other members. I have done so with Mary and my trip to Portugal and Madeira to give you an example of what I am talking about. In our case, the trip is too large for one article, since the whole thing was one big wine and food extravaganza, so I will be breaking it up into parts to share with you.

Tom Murnan



Event Report August 23, 2012 Johnny's Cafe by Tom Murnan



On Thursday evening, August 23rd, we had our monthly event in one of Omaha's iconic steakhouses: **Johnny's Cafe**, in the heart of South Omaha. The International Wine & Food Society, Council Bluffs Branch, moved their Executive Committee to Johnny's this spring, so Co-host Todd Lemke thought it would be appropriate to ask Johnny's to provide our venue. Through the massive bronze front doors we walked, and gathered in the restaurant's bar, which is filled with cattle, cowboy and South Omaha memorabilia.



For example, the bar has saddles, instead of a stool, to sit on. The restaurant also sports a temperature-controlled wine cellar with stained glass windows so patrons can peer



inside. Two guests were present: Casey Lemke, Todd and Sandy's daughter who lives in Denver (she assured me she was 21 years old!), and Shonna Tritz, daughter of David and Debbie Tritz. Shonna works at J Coco's. In the dark atmosphere typical of a bar, some of our photos came out a bit dark.



Casey and Sandy Lemke



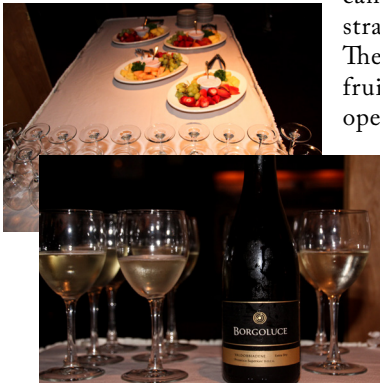
Debbie and Shonna Tritz

Todd had collaborated with fellow member Julie Hruban to get a wine wholesaler's perspective on what wines we might pair with our dinner courses. Julie came with two importers. Ian Gutierrez works for Paul Hobbs Imports, and Aaron Meeker represents Vine Street Imports. They were here to inform us about their wines.



Julie Hruban, Ian Gutierrez and Aaron Meeker

For our quaffing, fresh fruit appetizers of peach, pineapple, cantaloupe, grapes and strawberries were served. They emphasized the fruitiness and freshness of our opening wine, a Borgoluce Prosecco extra dry from Italy's Prosecco area Valdobbiadene.



After quaffing, we sat down to our **First Course** Mango Relish on Toast Points. Two slices of toast were covered with a very refreshing chopped mango and sweet red pepper pieces atop a bed of goat cheese. I tried to get the chef to depart with the recipe, but he demurred, so there will be no recipe from Johnny's. There was some confusion in the printed menu (besides not having any vintage dates on the wine) as it had this very summery dish paired with a Cabernet and a Chardonnay. "Chardonnay, yes. Cabernet NO" was going through my mind until this was very quickly corrected to a comparison of two Chardonnays. That was more like it! Our first comparison of the night contrasted the 2011 Boxhead Chardonnay from the Barossa Valley, Australia



to the 2009 Viña Cobos Felino Chardonnay from Mendoza, Argentina. Both wines were southern hemisphere wines, but they were about 3000 miles apart.

Co-host Julie introduced our two importers, who told us the story of their wines. We were going to taste two different styles of Chardonnay: one oaked, and one un-oaked. Aaron came up and introduced the wine he was representing from the Box Head winery in Barossa, Australia. I've noticed that Australian wines often have very colorful labels and names. Boxhead is no exception. It seems that both the English and the Germans settled in this area. The English are not particularly adept at growing things, and they noticed that the Germans seemed to be doing better at growing grapes. They started calling the Germans box heads due to their squared off heads and jaws. [My wife Mary's father used to call Germans square heads, so this must be somewhat common everywhere.] There was even a box head bar in the middle of Barossa. The **2011 Box Head Chardonnay** we tasted, 70% of the grapes came from a single vineyard in the Eden Valley, which is a bit east of Barossa, but still technically a part of Barossa, and 30% from the Barossa Valley. The wine saw absolutely no oak during fermentation or aging.



Then Ian got up and presented his wine, the Viña Cobos "Felino" Chardonnay from the Mendoza area of Argentina. Viña Cobos is a cooperative effort of American Paul Hobbs and two Argentinean partners, Andrea Marchiori and Luis Barraud, who have an European perspective on winemaking. There are a lot of Italian and German immigrants in the Mendoza who give their influence to the winemaking in the area. Paul Hobbs has worked in such Californian wineries as

Mondavi, but he was intrigued at the potential of Argentina for winemaking. Viña Cobos' inaugural vintage was 2002. Ian told us that the word Felino on the label meant cat in Spanish. The vineyards are about 3500 feet elevation, with a lot of schist in the soil. Thirty percent of the grapes were fermented in oak barrels, while 70% was raised and aged in stainless steel. One immediately noticed the oaky nose, and oaky flavors in the wine. Pear and apples were also evident on the palate.

Our **Second Course** consisted of **Barbeque Pork Slider on a Fresh-Baked Roll**. This was paired with just one wine, the **2010 Boxhead Shiraz** from McLaren Vale. Personally, this was my favorite Boxhead wine. Coming from three vineyards, this wine was fermented with 20% whole berry clusters, which give it some tannin, and aged in 25% new oak barrels and 75% stainless steel. Aaron further



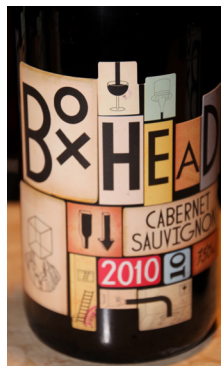
told us that the vintage was ripe, but not overly ripe. It was very similar to the 2005, which was a very good vintage. It had an impenetrable purple color. I detected moderate tannins, and sweet (i.e., ripe) blackberry and cassis on the palate. Pleasing now, but barely ready to drink, it could benefit from 4 or 5 years of aging.

The **Third Course** found us with **Pepper Beef with Rice** on our plates. Beef slow cooked, in its own sauce, accompanied green peppers and tomato wedges over



jasmine rice. Quite tasty. We returned to our comparison of a pairs—this time, Cabernets. To me, the **2010 Boxhead Cabernet** was an impenetrable black-purple color where you literally could not see your hand through the glass. Tannic, with somewhat raw berry flavors and very full-bodied, the wine needed four to five years to tame down a bit. Aaron explained that most of the wine (75%) was stainless steel fermented, with the remainder barrel fermented. Three vineyards were sourced

south of Adelaide in McLaren Vale. On the plains and at the bottom of the Vale, they get warm days and warm nights [like Nebraska], but in the hills, they get warmer days and cooler nights than below. To me, the wine was well balanced between fruit and acidity, but I did think overall the wine was a bit rough. No doubt, aging will help. But in my opinion, this will never be an elegant wine.



The **2009 Viña Cobos “Felino” Cabernet Sauvignon** was poured simultaneously with the Boxhead, allowing for quick comparison. Ian told us this was a 100% Cabernet wine which was cluster sorted, an expensive, labor-intensive operation. It is a very serious wine. It is 100% barrel fermented, and spent 13 months in the barrel before bottling. This was the wine of the evening for me. Dark garnet, it had an earthy, oaky nose. Very elegant, I detected a lot of berry flavors. It will only improve with time.

The **Fourth Course** found us with a plate with **Blackened Salmon**, unaccompanied with anything else, even a garnish, which made it seem a bit stark. The fish was pretty tasty, however, and the blackening helped it with the wine pairings. This time the pairing was between two different wines, but from the same winery: a Merlot and a Malbec.



2011 Viña Cobos “Felino” Malbec showed a deep red color, a berry nose, and plum and raspberry flavors. It was well balanced with firm tannins. The **2009 Viña Cobos “Felino” Merlot** was aged in French and American oak for 8 months. Some cedar and spice was detected in the nose and sports jammy flavors on the palate. It is ready to drink now.

Our final course found a small plate of **Apple Crisp with Caramel Sauce and Chocolate Drizzle**. It was paired with two red wines. Hailing from Barossa, the **First Drop Mother’s Milk Shiraz** I thought was fairly fruity. Somewhat thick, but not really sweet, it was soft, very fruity, and easy to drink, if you like this style. The other wine comes from the same winery: **First Drop Mother’s Ruin Cabernet** but from McLaren Vale rather than Barossa.

With a label that reminded me of a Hogarth print from the 18th Century, the back label confirmed my first impression. The name Mother’s Ruin refers to the fact that the Brits in the 1730’s used to drink an average of 14 gallons of Mother’s Ruin (Gin) every year. [See below for the historic background information. I am not sure why First Drop is using this reference to gin except as a marketing device.] Gin was an easy-going kind of tippie, and that is how they made this wine. Aaron



described it as classic Claret (Bordeaux) meets California Cab. I thought it was dry, had ripe fruit, tannin, texture and easy drinkability. In my mind, neither of these two wines went especially well with the dessert as they were much too dry.



Photo courtesy of firstdropwines.com

So there you have it. The food was very good, with a somewhat simple and stark presentation, but not gourmet, as one might expect from an Omaha steak house. I thought the plating, although small, was about the right size: by the time you finished

the meal you were full. The wines were all very affordable. In the \$20.00 plus range retail for the most part. Many thanks to Julie Hruban, her importers Ian and Aaron, as well as Todd Lemke for putting on this event. It was interesting to have the wholesaler's reps here to give their take on the wines. Aaron and Ian were going to be at the Riverfront festival the next day at Stinson Park in Aksarben Village, pouring their wares.



Co-Owner Kari Kawa Harding (L) and server Suzette Rush



Event Report Extra

August 23, 2012

Johnny's Cafe

by Tom Murnan



From the menu, this brief history of Johnny's appears. Kari told me that the original Johnny's did not have electricity!



In 1922, Frank Kawa, a Polish immigrant, purchased a 10-seat saloon named Johnny's Cafe. As the establishment became a success & the stockyards began to boom, Frank made a few changes: guns were banned, electricity was added and the restaurant was expanded. Frank focused on offering quality food and professional service. During the 'Stockyards' peak Johnny's Cafe was open from 6am until 1am every day with the Coffee Shop and dining rooms open for lunch and dinner. During

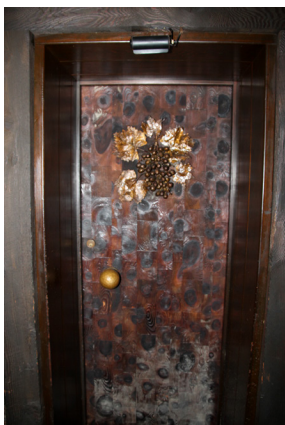
the early 1960's, Frank passed away leaving his sons Tom & Jack in control of

daily operation of the restaurant. The early 1970's brought a major remodeling of Johnny's Cafe as carpet was laid and the second floor removed, the kitchen was relocated, the



interior redecorated and the front doors were commissioned. The 1970's also saw many changes in South Omaha. The construction of the Kennedy Freeway began and many longstanding businesses such as Phillips Department Store and the South Omaha Fruit Market left the area.

The 1980's brought with it a need to create a healthier menu. Johnny's Cafe added many chicken and fish specialties to the menu. In the 1990's, Kari & Sally Kawa joined the restaurant as the third generation of Kawa's continue to run Johnny's Cafe as it was from the beginning. In 2001 Johnny's Cafe was a location shoot for the movie "About Schmidt" starring Jack Nicholson.



In its heyday, Johnny's Cafe attracted a lot of people to dine within its walls. About 1971 and 1972, the present location was completely remodeled. The kitchen was moved and just about everything else.



Did you notice the fabulous **bronze doors** with the beef theme as you entered? These must be the finest restaurant doors in Omaha. Kari told me that the doors were designed the artist, Bruce Fink, of Woodstock CT. The doors were delivered by Bruce and family on top of his VW bus in 1972. The doors weigh ½ a ton.

The wine cellar, visible to all from the lobby, was also constructed at that time. It now is temperature controlled, and has a curved bay window front with stained glass windows. It too has a bronze door, with lock and key I might add.



The bar area is filled with interesting photos of South Omaha (yes, it was a separate city back then) and the stockyards.

I asked Kari what the prices were like in the 1920's—Filet Mignon 95¢, Club Steak, Club Steak 60¢, French fries 10¢, bottled beer 15¢, beer on tap 15¢. Ah, the good old days!

The Bluffs
Food & Wine
gazette



Humidity in the Cellar

by Tom Murnan

Continuing Steve Hipple's theme about proper cellar conditions, one important factor that many forget is humidity. I think it was about 1992 that the Wine Spectator ran a story about some 1961 Bordeaux classified growths that were being stored in a cellar in California, where temperatures get pretty hot. To cool things down to about 55 degrees, the owner installed an air conditioner. The wines were doing beautifully for their 10th and 20th anniversaries, but when they were to showcase a 30 year old party, just about all of them were tasting tired and oxidized and the corks were dry and crumbling. They were all stored lying on their sides, and the temperature was correct, but one important aspect of a proper cellar had been ignored: humidity. An air conditioner's job is two fold: cool things down and remove excessive humidity. So for years, the air conditioner was doing its job. However, the humidity level was way too low for wine storage, as the air conditioner turned the humidity into condensate, which was then being drained out of the cellar towards the outside. Air conditioners are set for the human comfort zone, not optimal wine storage conditions.

The wine in the bottle keeps that end of the cork moist, but arid air in the cellar environment begins to dry out the other end. As the cork dries, it begins to shrink and lose elasticity. This results in the vapor pressure outside the bottle to be lower than the inside, causing the wine inside the cork to be pulled around the shrinking, drying cork into the atmosphere, and humidifying the cellar. Air takes the place of the exiting,

migrating wine inside the bottle, causing ullaging and the nemesis of most wines: oxidation. The moral of the story? If you use an air conditioner, you must add humidity back into the cellar. Most commercial wine coolers do just this. Instead of removing the condensate, it recycles it back into the room. But a commercial unit is a lot more expensive than an air conditioner, which is why wine collectors use air conditioners. But just because you have a commercial cellar-cooling unit, you could still have incorrect humidity settings.

The subject of humidity is complex and way beyond the scope of this article. Basically, there is **absolute humidity** (the amount of water vapor in the air) and **relative humidity**, the amount of vapor the air can hold, depending on the temperature of the ambient air. Warm air holds more humidity than cool air. For our purposes, ideal home cellar temperature is between 50 and 60 degrees Fahrenheit (F), with 55 F being a good target temperature. You don't want the cellar too cold (say 45 degrees) because then you are aging your wines for your grandchildren! The ideal relative humidity is between 50 to 80 percent. Lower than 50% is getting too dry. Anything above 80% you are risking ruining your labels. At 90%, for example, your labels will turn to mold food and either loosen the glue and fall off, turn white, or become illegible. Black mold is the worst and indicates over 90% humidity. By then, you have other problems, because mold will be all over your wood racks, cardboard boxes, on the walls and the like. Many people are allergic to mold, and now days you have to disclose



Note low fill levels (ullage) on some bottles



Top shoulder ullage left bottle

moldy conditions to your real estate agent if you ever go to sell your house. So it is as important not to have excessive humidity as it is to have too little. In practice, a **target relative humidity should be 55% to 75%**, but anything between 50% and 80% is OK. So, whether you have an air conditioner or a commercial wine-cooling unit, **pick your target temperature first, and then adjust the humidity level to that temperature.**

My cellar started out life as a passive space (no external cooling unit), which is great if your cellar has 10 feet of dirt above the ceiling. This is not practical in the typical home. Since it needed to be under ground more than it is, it would warm up in the summer. In a word, passive wasn't keeping the cellar cold enough. I cut a hole in the heavily insulated wall, and added a small air conditioner from Nebraska Furniture Mart. I had a heating and air conditioning technician add a thermostat. Knock on wood, but that little unit is more than 25 years old now and working beautifully. The advantage, of course, is that this is a lot cheaper than buying a commercial cooler. The disadvantage is that I must add humidity to the cellar.

Humidity is added back into the room by an ultrasonic electric humidifier. You must be vigilant to make sure you keep it topped up with water. In the winter, the air conditioner rarely comes on, so it may take a month for the humidifier to go through a tank of water. But during the height of the summer, the AC might come on every two or three hours. More water must be added to the humidifier during hot weather. I also have to change the filter regularly as it becomes encrusted with hard water lime and salts. To prevent the growth of mold in the reservoir, add a bacterio-static algae treatment available at hardware stores.



An extreme example of mold

In Steve's article, he mentioned how he had wild humidity fluctuations in his old cellar. This was probably due to a lack of vapor barriers. In the summer, with outside hot air able to carry a lot of humidity, the humidity passed right into the cellar, making for excessively damp conditions. He had to install a de-humidifier. Likewise, in cooler weather, the humidity in the cellar migrated away from the cellar to the outside. Then he had to buy a humidifier to add humidity back into the cellar. The point is, he could not maintain proper humidity cellar conditions because there was not a vapor barrier in the room. In short, besides the cooling/humidifying unit in your home cellar supplying the cool air and the humidity, vapor barriers are an important factor in controlling humidity. If the cellar already exists, it may be difficult or unsightly to retrofit sheets of plastic, but if you are building a cellar, proper vapor barriers are essential in controlling humidity. I highly recommend a little book named *How and Why To Build a Wine Cellar* by Richard M. Gold, Ph.D., now in its 4th printing and available on Amazon. This is an amazing book and covers virtually everything you need to know about the construction of a cellar, whether you do the work yourself or not. If you plan on having a contractor bid building a cellar, it behooves you to know proper cellar construction, if for no other reason, to make sure the contractor is doing things correctly. The vapor barrier goes on different sides of the wall depending on whether it is an outside wall or an interior wall.

So, be mindful of your humidity. Moderation is the key in cellars, as in life itself. Shoot for relative humidity between 55 and 75 percent. Even if you do not plan to age your wines 30 or more years, this is the zone experts say is optimal for humidity and control of mold. The Bluffs **Food & Wine** September 2012 gazette



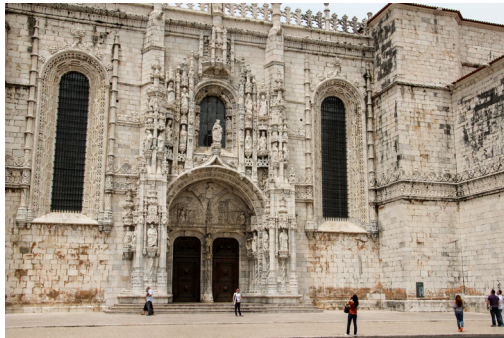
There's no labels left with this amount of mold!

Tom and Mary Murnan 2012 Wine Vacation Vol. 1: Porto, Portugal

by Tom Murnan

This will be part of a multi part breakdown of our Portuguese vacation. I encourage other members to send me their wine and/or food related adventures (hopefully with pictures) for inclusion in our Bluffs Gazette.

I met the proprietor of the online wine newsletter **For The Love Of Port (FTLOP)**, Roy Hersh, at a San Francisco Rare Wine Company event where we paired the wines of the founder of the Barbeito Madeira Lodge with food. Entitled Homage



Mosteiro dos Jerónimos

to Mario Barbeito, it was held at Quince, a high end Italian restaurant, where the food was matched to Mario's personal cellar. Wines such as the 1910 Sercial, a 1914 Boal, an 1834 Malvasia, and a 1882 Terrantez were served on March 19th, 2010. I was hooked, and wanted to know more about Madeira. Roy was in attendance, writing for his newsletter, but I figured he would write about the wines only. I was right. I sent him an article, which he published about how the Madeiras interacted with the food. I had a burning desire to see the island of Madeira. Roy offers three trips to Portugal a year, but only one includes Madeira. After the trip being cancelled in 2011 due to the economy (not enough participants), Mary and I found ourselves winging our way from Newark, NJ to Lisbon, arriving June 1st, 2012. Lisbon is a fun city with a number of things to see, including the famous 1502 Mosteiro dos Jerónimos de Belém (Hieronymite Monastery of Belém), built with money from the spice trade. We also toured the fort built on the highest defensive position in the city. The fort was built in the 9th Century by the Moors who had conquered the Iberian Peninsula.



Tomb of Vasco da Gama

Another highlight was visiting the Calouste Gulbenkian

museum. Gulbenkian was an Armenian entrepreneur who became incredibly wealthy in the oil business in the 1890's. He lived in Paris and filled his house with fabulous 18th century French Arts décoratifs and paintings. He later moved to Lisbon, and finding the city so delightful, bequeathed his art collection to the city. After 2 ½ days in Lisboa, we took a bus, first to Fatima, which was the halfway point, and then to Porto, to meet up with our tour on June 4th.



Cloisters in Manueline style architecture unique to Portugal

Porto is at the mouth of the Douro River, which starts in Spain (and is a wine growing area as well called the Ribera de Douro) and flows into Portugal. In the old days, and this is starting to change just recently, the Port Lodges would move their Ports



View from the 9th Century Moorish Fort

down the river. They used to use barcos (small wooden boats with one sail) to age the wine in warehouses in Porto, since it was a bit cooler there than the rugged and

arid hills along the Douro. The fortified Port wines get their name from Porto.

The city of Porto is quite hilly, and is on the north side of the river. Across the river on other side is the city of Villa Nova de Gaia, where the Port Lodges actually keep their warehouses. There are about five spectacular bridges that span the river near the center of town. We stayed in the heart of the historic center, at the Hotel Carris Porto Ribeira, a newly remodeled place that connected five old buildings into one hotel. It was very modern and luxurious. But who had time to devote to the hotel? There was a city to explore, and very little time until we all assembled to start the tour.

One of the things I found fascinating was that the Hotel Carris was directly across the street from the famous Factory House. In the history of Port, the growers could be divided into two camps: the British and the native Portuguese. The British pretty much stuck together, and they developed a trade association, or Factory, while away from home. In some more remote and dangerous places, like India, the Factory was like a fort and protected the colonists. In the case of Porto, an elegant 18th century building was finished in 1790. To be a member of the Factory House, you must be from a Port Lodge. The house boasts one dining room for dinner, and one for the partaking of Port after dinner. It also has a ballroom. In the old days, members would come to the



Fatima Basilica

house to read the latest English paper for all the news at home. Occasionally today, if you are invited, you can attend an elegant dinner there. In 2010, FTLOP managed to have a dinner at the Factory House for its tour members. Unfortunately, this was not to be on our trip. So close, yet so far! Ah well, at least I did not have to lug a suit around for the remainder of the trip.



The Factory House

After meeting and greeting, we decided to walk across the closest bridge to go to our first event: a tasting of Coheita and Tawny Ports at Krone and Weiss, a company you do not hear much about in the USA, but one that specializes in Tawny Ports. The denizens of Porto use their river area well, with festivals and other activities on the banks of the Douro. It was wonderful to see all the Port Lodges. Well known ones,



Plaza on the Douro River

like Taylor, Sandeman and Fonseca, but also Calem, Dalvos, Vasconcellos, and Burmeister. I jumped at the opportunity to buy a bottle of the famous white Port, the 1952 Dalvos. It was finally becoming so rare that they have begun to raise the price. In a short time, we reached our destination and the tasting of a lifetime at Krone and Weiss.

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September 2012



Pont Luis I



Port wines used to be transported from the wineries on the Douro to Porto by Barco



Warre's and Ramos Pintos Lodges



View of Porto from Villa Nova de Gaia



Dalvos sales room

18th Century Gin Crisis

brought to you by Tom Murnan

source: wikipedia.org



Beer Street and Gin Lane are two prints issued in 1751 by English artist William Hogarth in support of what would become the Gin Act. Designed to be viewed alongside each other, they depict the evils of the consumption of gin as a contrast to the merits of drinking beer. On the simplest level, Hogarth portrays the inhabitants of Beer Street as happy and healthy, nourished by the native English ale, and those who live in Gin Lane as destroyed by their addiction to the foreign spirit of gin; but, as with so many of Hogarth's works, closer inspection uncovers other targets of his satire, and reveals that the poverty of Gin Lane and the prosperity of Beer Street are more intimately connected than they at first appear. *Gin Lane* shows shocking scenes of infanticide, starvation, madness, decay and suicide, while *Beer Street* depicts industry, health, bonhomie and thriving commerce, but there are contrasts and subtle details that some critics believe allude to the prosperity of Beer Street as the cause of the misery found in Gin Lane. Gin, though, was blamed for various social problems, and it may have been a factor in the higher death rates which stabilized London's previously growing population, although there is no evidence for this and it is merely conjecture. This negative reputation survives today in the English language, in terms like "gin mills" or the American phrase "gin joints" to describe disreputable bars or "gin-soaked"

to refer to drunks, and in the phrase "mother's ruin", a common British name for gin.

The gin crisis was genuinely severe. From 1689 onward, the English government had encouraged the industry of distilling, as it helped prop up grain prices, which were then low, and increase trade, particularly with colonial possessions. Imports of French wine and spirits were banned to encourage the industry at home. In the heyday of the industry there was no quality control what so ever (gin was frequently mixed with turpentine), and licenses for distilling required only the application. When it became apparent that copious gin consumption was causing social problems, efforts were made to control the production of the spirit. The Gin Act 1736 imposed high taxes on sales of gin, forbade the sale of the spirit in quantities of less than two gallons, and required an annual payment of £50 for a retail license. It had little effect beyond increasing smuggling and driving the distilling trade underground. Various loopholes were exploited to avoid the taxes, including selling gin under pseudonyms such as "Ladies' Delight", "Bob", "Cuckold's Delight" and the none-too-subtle "Parliament gin". The prohibitive duty was gradually reduced and finally abolished in 1743. Francis Place later wrote that

enjoyments for the poor of this time were limited: they had often had only two, “sexual intercourse and drinking”, and that “drunkenness is by far the most desired” as it was cheaper and its effects more enduring. By 1750, over a quarter of all residences in St Giles parish in London were gin shops, and most of these also operated as receivers of stolen goods and coordinating spots for prostitution .

Set in the parish of St Giles, a notorious slum district which Hogarth used in several of his works around this time, *Gin Lane* depicts the squalor and despair of a community raised on gin. Desperation, death and decay pervade the scene. The only businesses that flourish are those which serve the gin industry: gin sellers; distillers (the aptly named Kilman); the pawnbroker where the avaricious Mr. Gripe greedily takes the vital possessions (the carpenter offers his saw and the housewife her cooking utensils) of the alcoholic residents of the street in return for a few pennies to feed their habit; and the undertaker, for whom Hogarth implies at least a handful of new customers from this scene alone. Most shockingly, the focus of the picture is a woman in the foreground, who, addled by gin and driven to prostitution by her habit—as evidenced by the syphilitic sores on her legs—lets her baby slip unheeded from her arms and plunge to its death in the stairwell of the gin cellar below. Half naked, she has no concern for anything other than a pinch of snuff. The gin cellar, “Gin Royal”, below advertises its wares with the slogan:

Drunk for a penny

Dead drunk for two pence

Clean straw for nothing

Beer Street

In comparison to the sickly hopeless denizens of Gin Lane, the happy people of Beer Street sparkle with robust health and bonhomie. “Here is all is joyous and thriving. Industry and jollity go hand in hand”. The only business that is in trouble is the pawnbroker.

The inhabitants of both Beer Street and Gin Lane are drinking rather than working, but in Beer Street the workers are resting after their labours—all those depicted are in their place of work or have their wares or the tools of their trade about them-while in Gin Lane the people drink instead of working.

The picture serves as a counterpoint to the more powerful *Gin Lane*—Hogarth intended *Beer Street* to be viewed first to make *Gin Lane* more shocking—but it is also a celebration of Englishness and depicts of the benefits of being nourished by the native beer. No foreign influences pollute what is a fiercely nationalistic image. Source: Wikipedia. For more information go to http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Beer_Street_and_Gin_Lane



Photo courtesy of wikimedia.org



Photo courtesy of firstdropwines.com



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Upcoming Council Bluffs Branch Events! Mark Your Calendars!

- September 23** • The Sorensons will host the event at their home in Harlan, Iowa. Lamb dinner. Limited to 20 people.
- October 19** • John Fischer and Stacie Matz are planning an event at Happy Hollow Country Club in Omaha.
- November 2** • Bob & Suzanne Kassow will present a meal of Spanish tapas at Elaine Fenner's house.

December 1 • Will be the President's Event again at the Omaha Press Club. Mark this one on your calendars now. You know how hectic the Christmas season becomes.

February 25 - March 4, 2013 • Steve Hipple asks that we join him for an 8 day wine and food extravaganza, featuring a 3 night/3 day Miami culinary adventure followed by a quiet and relaxing Caribbean Cruise. You may choose one or both. If you didn't get an email, already, contact Steve.

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: stephenhipple@hotmail.com

The International Wine & Food Society of London, England Council Bluffs, Iowa Branch - Executive Committee

President.....	Patti Hipple	stephenhipple@hotmail.com
Vice President.....	Bob Kossow	bob.kossow@cox.net
Treasurer/Membership	Diane Forristall	Diane@Forristall.us
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Cellar Master.....	John Fischer	jrudyf@cox.net



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KEEPING 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.

PURPOSE: To meet communication and service needs, to broaden participation and understand and to be an information exchange for the membership of The International Wine & Food Society in the Americas.

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