



September 2015

The Bluffs *Food & Wine* *gazette*



Event Report:

Italian Dinner at the Council Bluffs Country Club

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President's Comments

Dear Members,

One of the perks of being a board member of our branch is a chance to have Syrah-Braised Short Ribs at Johnny's. After finding this *Kendall-Jackson Vintners Reserve 2012 Syrah* I knew I needed to find a recipe for Short Ribs. This recipe is from Wine and Food.com and while it takes a fair amount of preparation, it is worth it.

Kendall-Jackson began when Jess Jackson, an attorney from San Francisco, purchased an 80 acre pear and walnut orchard to start his vineyard in 1974. At first it was just a weekend escape. He was forced into winemaking when his grapes were turned back by a large winery in 1980. Jess was stuck with a bumper crop of unused grapes: from this the first bottle of Kendall-Jackson was produced. Kendall-Jackson has grown to be one of the largest producers in California with over 15,000 acres of vineyards.

This wine is a 2014 Wine Enthusiast editor's choice wine rated at 91pts. It is from KJ Santa Barbara vineyards and is aged one year in French and American oak barrels. Winemakers notes: "Richly layered with flavors of plum, jammy blackberry, cola and just the right amount of spice followed by velvety, lingering tannins."

Enjoy this wine along with the short ribs and you won't be disappointed. The wine is available at Hy-Vee for under \$20.

Enjoy!

Bob Kossow

Syrah-Braised Short Ribs

Ingredients

- 8 flanken-style beef short ribs, cut 1 inch thick (5 pounds)
- Salt and freshly ground pepper
- 1/2 tablespoon each of chopped parsley, oregano and rosemary
- 1 tablespoon vegetable oil
- 1/2 pound sliced bacon, chopped
- 1 large onion, finely chopped
- 1 carrot, finely chopped
- 1 celery rib, finely chopped
- 1 1/2 cups Syrah or other dry red wine
- 1 cup beef broth

Directions

1. Preheat the oven to 325°. Season the ribs with salt and pepper and sprinkle with the herbs.

2. In a large skillet, heat the vegetable oil. Add the bacon and cook over moderate heat until crisp, about 6 minutes. Using a slotted spoon, transfer the bacon to a medium nonreactive roasting pan. Working in two batches, add the ribs to the skillet and cook over moderately high heat, turning a few times, until richly browned, about 6 minutes per batch. Transfer the ribs to the roasting pan.

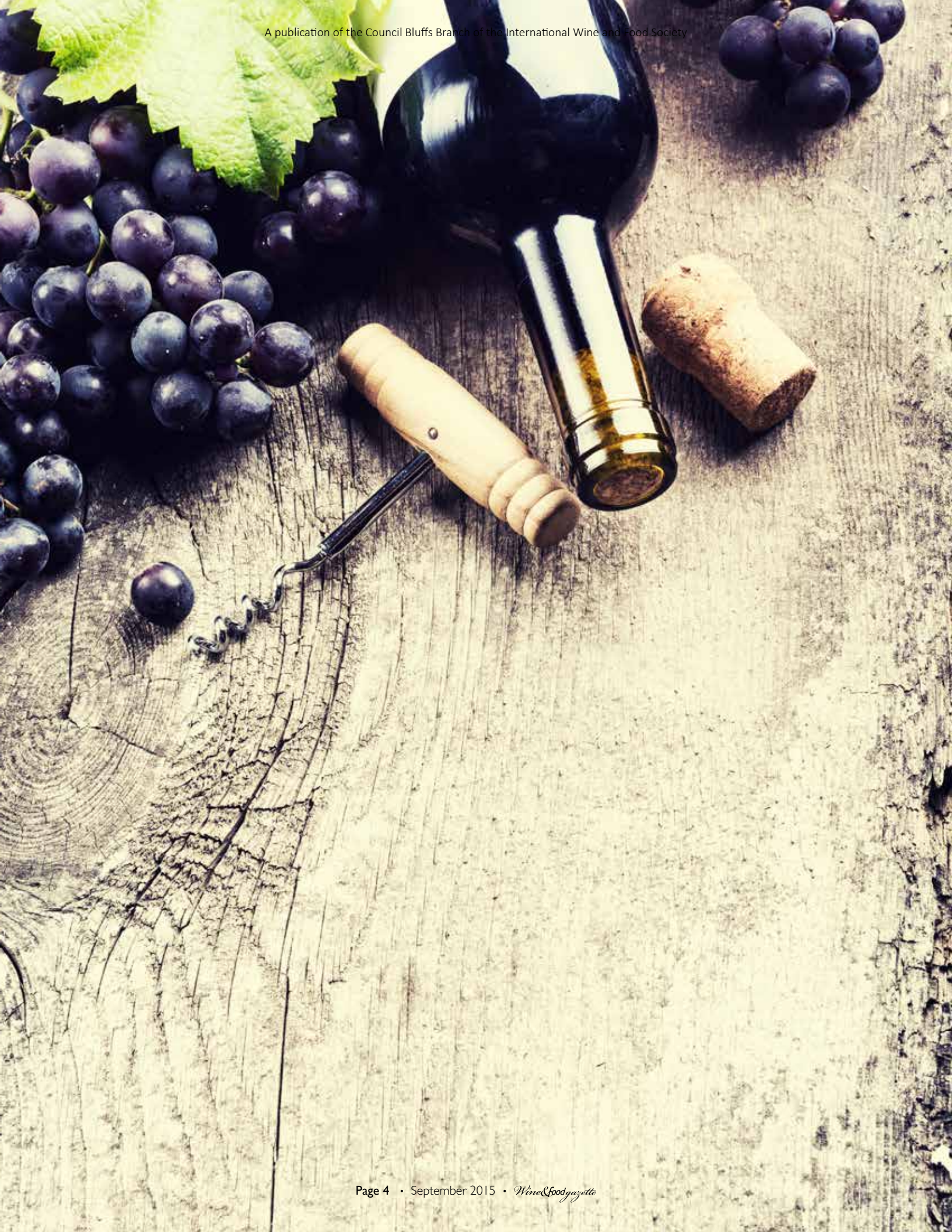
3. Add the onion, carrot and celery to the skillet and cook over moderately high heat, stirring occasionally, until lightly browned, about 5 minutes. Add the wine and beef broth and boil, scraping up the browned bits from the bottom of the skillet. Pour the liquid and vegetables over the ribs. Cover and braise in the oven for about 4 hours, turning the ribs once, until the meat is very tender.

4. Transfer the ribs to a deep platter. Strain the braising liquid into a medium saucepan. Skim off the fat and boil the sauce over high heat until reduced to 2 cups, about 3 minutes. Season with salt and pepper, pour the sauce over the ribs and serve.



Wine Enthusiast 91pts

"Deep in color, it has mouth coating fruit and rich tannins, with minty notes adding to the deep, dark cherry and blackberry flavors. Full-bodied and full-flavored, it relies on fruit concentration rather than overt oak for personality and is smooth in texture. It may come out of its dense phase and be even better by 2016."



Editor's Corner



Chef Jeremy Buthe cooked like an Italian at the authentic event we experienced over at the Council Bluffs Country Club. The dinner was organized just as the Italians do, with Antipasto, Primo and Secundo courses, Insalata and Formaggi courses before the final Dolce. With a name like Buthe, which doesn't sound too Italian, I asked him if he had any Italian blood in those veins. He told me his mother was Italian. Our feast certainly was *delizioso*, and no one went away hungry! There were a lot of members requesting a box for home, especially after the Osso Bucco. The wines were carefully selected, with a surprise or two throw in for good measure (Italian Chardonnay?). It was certainly a "grande sforzo" or great effort.

Most people have heard of one of America's premier restaurants, *The French Laundry*. But how many of you have actually experienced it? Getting in is a challenge in itself as the small number of tables sells out almost immediately two months in advance. You can't call any earlier than that. Mary and I went 18 years ago, but we have a more recent update from *Jill Panzer*, where she and *Jon* went with friends Tom & Lynn Brown. You had better really want that bottle of wine you brought from home because the corkage fee is a cool \$150.00 per bottle. But, even after the 18 years since I was there, the Laundry remains one of the most sought after sittings in the United States. That speaks volumes about its quality of food and service. Don't skip this story.

This month, *John Fischer's* article addresses the color of red wine. Many people don't pay much attention to the wine's color, but like reading a Sherlock Holmes story, there are clues to be gleaned from this simple exercise: the kind of grape used, the age of the wine, etc. Read John's article for more clues!

Salut!

Tom Murnan



**"If you want something done, ask a busy person.
The more things you do, the more you can do."
—Lucille Ball**





Event Report: Spectacular Five Course Italian Dinner with Nine World Class Italian Wines

by Tom Murnan

It is always a pleasure to savor **Chef Jeremy Buthe's** cuisine, so when the invite came out for an Italian dinner I could not refuse. Even wife Mary, who initially said no to coming, when she discovered that Jeremy was going to be the chef, changed her mind! The casual country club attire was just the thing on this hot and humid Iowa day. Forty people attended, of which there were six guests.

We started with rated quaffing wines, one of which, the Casamatta, means crazy house in Italian! It was a nice pour, not crazy at all. Chef Jeremy himself brought out our tray of **Antipasto**. It was laden with about eight different hams and salami, four kinds of olives, including pitted Italian ones, tomatoes and mozzarella topped with a streak of basil pesto, hot peppers and sweet red peppers. Another bowl contained cold mushrooms and artichokes in a vinegar sauce. A very Italian beginning. I noticed that two of the hams seemed to have been soaked in a fennel marinade as they had that tell tale licorice flavor.

We sat down to our **Primo** course, one that I was anticipating with delight, the **Bucatini Lobster Carbonara**. Moist spaghetti pasta replete with peas and pancetta in an egg based cream sauce (the carbonara) was presented with loads of red lobster meat. My plate had more than four claw tips, the most tender portion. The red color of the lobster made for a nice presentation against the white pasta. The pasta was cooked just a bit more than al dente, but was not soft or flabby. Moist and delicious, it was a great first course.

We had two wines with which to compare the dish. We compared the **2013 Jermann Pinot Grigio** to a **2013 Frescobaldi "Castello di Pomino" Chardonnay**. One does not usually think of Italy as a producer of Chardonnay, but this unoaked version was quite nice. If I hadn't been told it was Italian I would never have suspected it was so. I thought the Pinot Grigio was a bit better match and a bit more forceful. **Steve Hipple** asked for a show of hands. 14 of 40 preferred the Chardonnay.

The **Secondo** course arrived at table and everyone marveled at the amount of food on the plate and the great presentation. **The Osso Buco Alla Milanese with Grilled Polenta** had arrived! A rather large piece of veal and bone sat atop a polenta square, all topped by **Wild Mushroom Ragu**. The polenta was crisp on the outside and moist and soft inside. The veal was nicely braised and very tender. The ragu was a delicious way to finish the dish, with good mushroom intensity. There were several kinds of fungi to be found, including some small, enoki sized 'shrooms.

But which wine would go better with our main course? We had a **2010 Felsina Chianti Classico Reserva** to compare to a **2012 La Massa "La Massa" Toscana**, a Super Tuscan. Super Tuscan means they add French varieties to the blend, in this case Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot and Alicante to 60% Sangiovese. The Chianti was earthy and tannic while the La Massa was more elegant and soft.

John Fischer got up and spoke about both wines, and when Steve asked for a show of hands, most liked the La Massa. We then went table by table for a vote. Being the spokesman for our table, I told all those La Massa lovers they were wrong (!) because we minorities thought the Chianti was more structured and that



the tannins and acidity helped cut through the food's richness. Only one other table preferred the Chianti, and spokesperson **Jill Panzer** eloquently stated her case as well: "Whatever Tom said." Smart lady! Our arguments did not sway the majority, however, so, hopelessly outvoted, the Super Tuscan got the nod from the group.

There were a lot of take home boxes ordered at the end of the course, too good not to be savored later.

Moving onto some lighter courses, we were served the **Insalata**. Here we had a **Panzanella Salad** which included herbed Focaccia croutons, vine ripe red and yellow tomatoes, olives, capers, anchovies, sweet peppers and arugula. The dressing was oil and vinegar, which softened the croutons and made them even more delicious. I didn't spot an anchovy, but I know that anchovies enhance the flavors of most things they're added to. Vinegar is typically the enemy of wine, but this 2012 Pieropan Soave Classico Calvarino did a good job of standing up to the vinegar. John spoke again and confirmed this. Tart wines do well with salad as long as you keep the tartness in the wine higher than in the salad. This wine had citrus and notes of almond in the taste. In his experience, most Soave's, made from the Garganega and Trebbiano grapes, are not that good. This was an exception.

The **Piatto Formaggi** was brought out next. **Stracchino Cheese with Grilled Peaches** with a red and green half grape proved to be a rich undertaking. Chef Buthe explained where the cheese gets its name. Derived from the word "stracch," or tired, it

was discovered that cows coming down from their Alpine pastures in autumn had richer, more acidic milk. This was reflected in the cheese. It is eaten quite young, has no rind and is soft in texture and mild in flavor. The peaches carried the flavor of the grille. Just one wine with the salad: **a NV Nino Franco Rustico Prosecco** sparkler. Sparkling wines can cut through the richness of a dish, which it did here.

Our **Dolce** was **Pana Cotta with Baked Figs and Pistachio Brittle**. The Pana Cotta was given a dusting of fresh vanilla bean seeds at the top and bottom and gave the custard, which can be fairly neutral in flavor, a bit of a vanilla taste. The figs were sauced with a strawberry glaze made from a combination of honey, cinnamon, cloves, grape and apple juice, citrus and of course strawberries. The brittle was like peanut brittle except pistachios had been substituted.

We had an unusual final wine for the dessert: a Vermouth. It only partially succeeded. The bitterness and medicinal flavors overwhelmed most of the dessert except the figs and glaze. Usually put in with another medium, trying a Vermouth on its own was a unusual experience. Sweet yet astringent it was not a good match for the pana cotta or brittle.

Many thanks to event producers **Tom & Jeanette Schierbrock**, and **Patti Hipple** who chose the wines. And thanks to our CBCC crew as well: Chef Jeremy Buthe, Jamie Fiefenhold, assistant chef, Will Ryan cook, chief of staff Roni Ledbetter, Stephanie Crisp and Lisa Schanackel.













Evaluating the Color of Red Wine

by John Fischer



There is much information that can be gleaned by evaluating the color of wine, such as wine quality, wine's age, and alcohol content. As you well know, wine is a product of fruit. As any fruit ripens its skin takes on increasing amounts of pigment. It is by evaluating this pigment that we will focus our attention. In this article we will limit our consideration only to red wines.

As the grape continues to ripen, its skin thickens and takes on increasing amounts of pigment; the grape becomes sweeter, richer, more flavorful, and less tart. All of these qualities transfer directly into wine made from these grapes. It is obvious that the sugar content of the grape increases with ripening. Through the process of fermentation, this sugar is converted to alcohol (it is completely converted to alcohol in dry wines) and additional flavorful compounds.

It is the alcohol in wine that is chiefly responsible for creating its body. We can thus conclude that the more pigmented in wine, the riper the berry, the higher the alcohol and the greater will be its body. You would also expect that wines made from fully ripe grapes will be richer and more flavorful.

It is the skin of the grape that is primarily responsible for the tannin content in most wines—the thicker the skin, the more tannins it will contain, and the more astringent the wine is likely to be. (Other sources of tannins are pips, stems, and oak

from the barrel it is aged in.) Nevertheless, you must keep in mind that as a wine ages its depth of color and its tannin content both decrease. This takes us to the next scenario.

Wine's pigment undergoes a hue change with age. If you inspect the upper outer edge of a tilted glass of wine (the meniscus), you will see brown tones developing. These brown tones increase and extend into the bowl of the glass with aging. By judging the extent of these tones, you can get a rough idea of the wine's age. There is one caveat: wines made from overripe or sun baked grapes can have brown tones at their inception.

Thinly colored wines are likely to be tart; however, all bets are off in judging the tartness of richly pigmented wines as the winemaker has the option of adding a dose of tartaric acid to invigorate the wine (In regions where allowed.)

Considering the above scenario, you can conclude that deeper pigmented wines are likely to be more flavorful, fuller bodied, richer, and of greater quality. When evaluating a wine's color, you must stay within the restraints of the wines variety or type. For example, you cannot compare the color of a Cabernet Sauvignon with that of a Pinot Noir or a Burgundy with Bordeaux.

The next time you drink a red wine, challenge yourself and pay close attention to its color. It's an important part of the tasting experience.





Dîner at The French Laundry

by Jill Panzer & Tom Murnan

Jon and Jill Panzer took a trip to Napa Valley and met up with their good friends Tom and Lynn Brown. They had the good fortune to have the right connections to get into one of Napa Valley's, if indeed not the whole United States', top restaurants: The French Laundry. The building at 6440 Washington Street in Yountville has a colorful history. Built in 1900 as the Eagle Saloon, owner Pierre Guillaume sold the building to John and Madeline Lande in 1907 due to a local prohibition law (no alcohol within 1.5 miles of the Veterans Home). The Landes installed equipment for a French steam laundry and named their business The French Laundry. In addition, over the years it was a brothel, another saloon, a private residence, and finally in 1978 a restaurant run by Don and Sally Schmitt keeping the name of the laundry. The building came up for sale to Thomas Keller in 1994 who began selling American food with French influences on July 6th. By September 11th, the restaurant was rated by the San Francisco Chronicle and given 4 stars. They have never looked back.

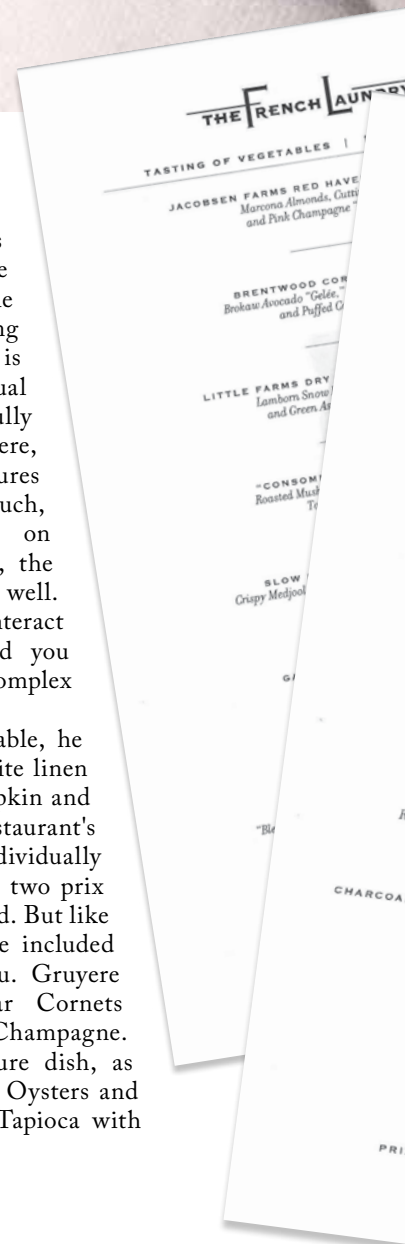
This rustic two-story stone house is surrounded by a country garden planted with vintage roses, perennials and seasonal herbs. The French Laundry Restaurant has an intimate dining room with just 17 tables. Reservations are only taken two months in advance, and sell out incredibly quickly. Diners usually spend between three and four hours. The Laundry had just recently added a new kitchen addition. While you are waiting in the trellised courtyard area, you can watch the kitchen activities. The kitchen is immaculately clean, organized and calm.

Renown chef Thomas Keller presides. Every care is taken to present the diner with an outstanding culinary experience. His guiding principle is that the palate tires quickly, so he presents many small courses rather than fewer larger portions. Two fixed price menus are presented (vegetarian and Chef's Tasting Menu) which changes frequently. Only the finest ingredients are used, chosen from a selected group of purveyors. Keller takes no shortcuts in preparing his food. Everything is prepared with

careful attention to detail.

The experience is designed to immerse the diner in the inexhaustible universe of food. Engaging his or her senses, the diner is stimulated to pleasing visual presentation in a wonderfully intimate atmosphere, incredible aromas, textures to engage your sense of touch, the explosions of taste on the palate, and of course, the sixth sense of umami as well. Add the finest wines to interact with the finest food and you have a captivating and complex gastronomic experience.

When one moves to table, he or she is struck by the white linen tablecloth with a white napkin and clothes pin with the restaurant's logo. One does not order individually off the menu. Instead, the two prix fixe programs are presented. But like in France, little extras are included that are not on the menu. Gruyere cheese puffs and Caviar Cornets appeared with their Krug Champagne. The cornets are a signature dish, as was the starting course of Oysters and Pearls: Sabayon of Pearl Tapioca with



Island Creek Oysters and White Sturgeon Caviar.

The large wine list is presented on an iPad, making it easier for the Laundry to update. Prices are not inexpensive, but should you wish to bring your own, there is a \$150.00 corkage fee. Tom Brown did just that when he brought a 1969 Chambertin Clos de Bèze Burgundy by Moillard, the year of Jon's birth.

We will not get into detail on every course. The menu has been provided for your perusal. But there were many delightful touches that contributed to the flawless presentation. The butter was shaped like a small bee hive. There was a salt terrine. All the plates were positioned perfectly, with the wait staff bringing the entire table's next course out simultaneously. The wait staff brought a calm, business as usual professionalism to the table.

There was a big presentation of chocolate truffles in a gorgeous wooden box. The diner was offered a choice of various

truffles: sea salt, raspberry, pistachio, double chocolate and strawberry.

As for the service, the wait staff was virtually flawless. If a diner left the table for the restroom, the wait staff laid a new napkin on the table. They didn't re-fold the old one. Someone was always watching in case service was needed, yet diners never felt that the staff hovered, perhaps because the wait staff rotated around the dining floor. Diners never felt rushed or unattended.

A parting bag was given to every couple. It contained copies of the two menus, a 42 page booklet detailing the purveyors of specialty foods used that evening, a dessert offering of a tin of four shortbreads and the iconic wooden laundry pin used on the napkins.

The penultimate dining experience doesn't come cheap. The Prix Fixe menu alone costs \$295.00, and diners can add supplements (such as Royal Ossetra Caviar) for \$75.00. Not for the faint of purse, this dining total came to \$2341.00 for four, which included the purchase of one wine, corkage for another wine, and four glasses of Champagne, along with tax and tip.

Interestingly enough, when I was researching the Laundry, I came across the menu when Mary and I were guests. On April 1, 1997 the Prix Fixe was \$75.00! And that was a lot of money then. But I still remember how incredible our dining experience was 18 years ago, and that is what the penultimate dining experience is all about.



THE FRENCH LAUNDRY	
CHEF'S TASTING MENU 10 JUNE 2015	
"OYSTERS AND PEARLS" "Sabayon" of Pearl Tapioca with Island Creek Oysters and White Sturgeon Caviar	
ROYAL OSSETRA CAVIAR Maine Lobster "en Gelée," Compressed Persian Cucumbers and Preserved Horseradish (75.00 supplement)	
HAWAIIAN HEARTS OF PEACH PALM Garden Radishes, Cauliflower, Nasturtium Leaves and Crispy Lavash	
HUDSON VALLEY MOULDED DUCK FOIE GRAS "TERRINE" Poached Brooks Cherries, Celery Salad and Roasted Pistachio Butter (40.00 supplement)	
SAUTÉED FILLET OF PACIFIC YELLOWTAIL Lamborn Snow Peas, Genovese Basil Purée and Green Strawberry "Mostarda"	
SWEET BUTTER POACHED ALASKAN KING CRAB Romaine Lettuce, Tomato Confit and Creamed Brentwood Corn	
WOLFE RANCH WHITE QUAIL Royal Blenheim Apricots, Chanterelle Mushrooms, Marcona Almonds and Sherry Vinegar-Brown Butter	
GRILLED SNAKE RIVER FARMS "CALOTTE DE BŒUF" Caramelized Cabbage Dumpling, Chantenay Carrots, Savoy Cabbage Purée and Caraway Essence	
ANDANTE DAIRY "CROTTIN" Stewed K&J Orchards Blueberries, Toasted Hazelnuts and Garden Sorrel	
ASSORTMENT OF DESSERTS Fruit, Ice Cream, Chocolate and Candies	
PRIX FIXE 295.00 SERVICE INCLUDED	

198259

DATE: June 10, 2015

TIME: 8:00 PM

FOOD 125.00

WINE 39.00

WINE SERVICE 150.00

TAX 144.48

Thank You!
Service Included

TOTAL 1950.48

198259 THE FRENCH LAUNDRY
FOUNTAIN, CALIFORNIA (707) 845-8200



Upcoming Council Bluffs Branch Events

Mark Your Calendars!



October 11, 2015

A Halloween themed Walk-around at the homes of the Hipple, Panzers and Farmers.
Producers: Patti Hipple, Jill Panzer and Liz Farmer



November 8, 2015

Oregon Wine Country Dinner at Spezia's 3125 S. 72nd St, Omaha
All wines come from Oregon or Washington
Producers: Tom & Mary Murnan



December 5, 2015

President's Holiday Event at Le Bouillon in the Old Market.
Producer: President Bob Kossow

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



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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.

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and understand and to be an information exchange for the membership of
The International Wine & Food Society in the Americas.*

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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