

SEPTEMBER 2018

The Bluffs **Food & Wine** *gazette*

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on the Lake

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



PRESIDENT'S COMMENTS

Hello Everyone,
Not a lot to report on this month. Things seem to be running smoothly, and the events continue to get better every month.

In an effort to keep everyone informed, I would like to share with you what the board has decided regarding our branch's membership process. We have unanimously agreed to follow this process moving forward.

As everyone knows our membership is currently capped at 70 members.

The process for potential new members has been changed to the following: Once, an individual, or couple has attended two events and would like to submit their name to be considered for membership, that individual or couple must email and inform their host that they are seeking membership.

That member must then forward the email to Diane Forristall, Membership Chairman, who will maintain a list of people seeking membership to our club. Depending on non-renewing members, IWFS Council Bluffs branch membership applications will be sent out to the list submitted to Diane, in December.

New membership applications will then be reviewed by the board and voted on in January, keeping in mind the membership cap. The board makes the final decision on who is selected.

It is our hope that this makes the process easier for the board, and the membership.

If anyone has any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me. I am more than happy to discuss at anytime.

I look forward to seeing everyone soon. Cheers, 🍷

Joe Goldstein

"I'VE NEVER OWNED A VINEYARD, BUT I'M PRETTY SURE I'VE DRANK AN ENTIRE ONE BY NOW."

- Anonymous

Cover photo: AJA Symons from the book AJA Symons His Life and Speculations by his brother Julian Symons

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Ronnie Leadbetter, Stephanie Crist, Kelsea Lyons, Chef Jeremy Buthe, Joe Kiaaina, Svann Bilsten, Will Ryan

EDITOR'S

CORNER

Whenever we have an event at the Council Bluffs Country Club, I smile and automatically think: I'm signing up for that. Chef Jeremy Buthe has yet to disappoint. Our theme was A Country Club on the Lake. Everything was delicious, and, as always, very generous portions were served. Take home boxes was the order of the evening. I know I had a great lunch the next day.

Our series on the New York Great Weekend concludes with Wayne Markus' account of Day 3, with a dinner at the University Club finale. Many thanks to Wayne for volunteering to write Day 1 and 3 stories. Wayne was also the primary photographer for the NY Great Weekend. You can see his photos on the IWFS web site.

I don't know if you noticed, but Wayne's photo of the Statue of Liberty graced the cover of *Wine Food & Friends* Summer 2018 issue. That's pretty hard to get a photo on the cover of WFF, and to my knowledge has only been done once before by someone from our Branch. He was also second runner up for the Shutterbug Contest in the Spring 2018 issue. A recent retiree, he had better watch out or he may find himself the principal Branch photographer for all events!



Our series on the history of the International Wine and Food Society, or the Wine and Food Society as it was known in 1933, continues for this 85th birthday countdown. Last month, we began with Co-founder André Simon. This month we pick up the lesser known Co-founder, **A.J.A Symons**. Yes, the Society had two founders, who both worked tirelessly to make the Society a success right during the Great Depression. Things were tough in Britain, as well as in the United States and Europe, but these two men got the Society on a winning track that has endured for 85 years.

In Part 3 of our series on the history of Madeira we touch on **Madeira Grape Varieties**. I am trying to get us all up to speed to prepare for the sit down Madeira tasting at Le Bouillon on November 18th for the 85th Birthday party. Be sure to put this event on your calendars now to avoid conflicts later. You won't want to miss it. We will taste a 1932 Madeira. 🍷

Tom Murnan



ALTHOUGH HIS TASTES WERE SIMPLE, IT WAS THAT SIMPLICITY THAT IS ONLY SATISFIED BASED ON GOOD THINGS."

-AJA Symons,
*The Quest for Corvo:
An Experiment in Biography*



EVENT REPORT:

THE COUNTRY CLUB ON THE LAKE

Written By Tom Murnan / Photos by Tom Murnan

Whenever we have an event at the Council Bluffs Country Club, you know you are in for a treat...and you may need a box to take home, so generous are the portions. Our Bastille Day (July 14th) event was no exception. Twenty-nine attended, which included six guests.

We began our quaffing with **Shrimp & Hummus Pita Toasts and Vegetable Fritto Misto** with **Sweet & Spicy Dipping Sauce**. I loved the Fritto Misto. A medley of vegetables, including mushrooms, asparagus, red and green peppers, cauliflower, green beans and pickles were breaded and lightly deep fat fried, and served while still warm. The sweet and spicy sauce added a bit of piquancy to make things interesting. I especially enjoyed the pickle, again a bit of sharpness to add interest. I was expecting the usual brown hummus, but it came with a reddish hue and seemed to have a bit of a spice bite. House made pita chips and cooked shrimp completed the dish. Our wines were a **2016 Joh. Jos. Prum Riesling** from Germany, a **2013 Château de Paraza** from France's Languedoc, and a **2016 Nicole et Romain Chanrion Domaine de la Voûte de Crozes a Beaujolais** from the Côte de Brouilly. All went well with the appetizers.

Our **1st Course** was **Cucumber Melon Salad**. A Mexican / Latin inspired dish, it was perfect for a hot summer's evening. Other ingredients included **arugula, pepita** (roasted pumpkin seeds), **salted, blackberry, fresh queso fresco cheese crumbles** and a **Champagne Fresno Chile Lime Vinaigrette**. Fresh, skinned, seeded chilies were roasted then pureed with the Champagne and lime. This dressing was sweet at first, but then hit you with its spice in the back of the throat. Ribbons of thinly sliced zucchini wound their way around the cantaloupe melon balls and were sprinkled with pine nuts. There was a persistent burn coming from the chilies, but it never turned into a conflagration. Our chosen wine, a **2014 Dog Point Sauvignon Blanc** from Marlborough, New Zealand was dry, somewhat minerally with citrus fruits and no grassy tones. I enjoyed it quite a bit because grass in Sauvignon Blanc has never tripped my trigger. However, I notice that the wine was unable to extinguish the spice. Perhaps if we would have substituted the Joh. Jos Prum Riesling, the fire might have been doused. Sweet wines can control spice burn. But with only the Dog Town (or water) at hand, I had to turn to what really works: bread. Luckily there was a roll at hand. Bread and butter works even better than just bread.

MADE FROM GRENACHE AND ROUSSANNE, BOUBOULENC AND CLAIRETTE WERE ALSO ADDED. DRY AND MINERALLY, IT ALSO TASTED OF PEACH, WHITE STONE FRUITS WITH A BIT OF CITRUS FINISH. A GOOD MATCH.

Brotte Châteauneuf-du-Pape "Les Hauts de Barville" white 2016.
www.Brotte.com



The **2nd Course** was a **Seared Pink Snapper with Miso Butter Broth, Baby Bok Choy, Ginger Citrus Sauce and Fried Rice Noodles**. This was outstanding. The snapper was nicely grilled and not overcooked. A Miso was made out of red miso paste and butter. Miso is a Japanese soy bean paste. From trimmings of the fish, a broth was made to put the miso in. Fried rice noodles was used for crunch. It made for a spectacular presentation. The accompanying wine was, to me, a special treat: a white Châteauneuf du Pape. Only 6% of CduP production is white wine. We had a **Brotte 2015 Les Haut de Barville**.

Made from Grenache and Roussanne, Bouboulenc and Clairette were also added. Dry and minerally, it also tasted of peach, white stone fruits with a bit of citrus finish. A good match. This was my favorite course of the evening.

Our **3rd Course** was **Chilled Beet Gazpacho**. Horseradish Sour Cream, Apple Avocado and dill completed the dish. Beets were roasted and pureed, but a few batons of beet strips were left for some crunch. A relish of apples and avocado, was added along with a bit of a bite with horseradish in sour cream for a bit of fat. A few fronds of fresh dill added flavor. It all married quite well for a good summertime soup that was mild and smooth. **2014 Graywacke Pinot Noir** was the chosen wine. It too

was smooth, soft with low tannins and fruity with the taste of red fruits. The wine went quite well with the soup.

The **4th Course** was a **Saba Marinated Ribeye Cap with Roasted Brussels Sprouts, Bacon Lardon and Wild Mushroom Risotto**. Ribeye Cap is the outer shell of the Ribeye. That was marinated in Saba, which is reduced grape juice imported from Italy, comparable to a top shelf balsamic vinegar. Lots of sweet in there. The meat was marinated a bit more than 24 hours before the event. Chef then made a nice crust on the meat during cooking. Wild mushrooms were brought in for the risotto. Roasted Brussels sprouts added a bitter note.

Two very different kinds of wine were paired, one from North America and one from South. **2014 Seghesio Zinfandel Sonoma** was compared to **2011 Casarina Jamillas Vineyard Malbec** from Argentina. Interestingly, the two wines complimented different parts of the dish. The Zin, with its rounded, sweet fruit, did better with the sweet marinated meat, while the Malbec, which was dryer, darker, and had denser dark fruits, did better with the risotto and mushrooms. A very interesting dueling pairing.

We finished with the **5th Course**, a **Summerberry Charlotte. Vanilla Mascarpone Cream, Lady Fingers, Fresh Seasonal Berries and Mint Leaves** comprised the ingredients. Raspberries and

Blackberries were soaked in a sweet Sangria with orange juice, sugar, and reserved berries. Then the lady fingers were soaked in the juice then molded in a circular shape. Finally, the mascarpone was piped inside. Mascarpone is a type of Italian cream cheese. This was not going to be an easy dish to match with wine. **John Fischer** was sourced to aid in the wine selection. John chose a sparkling Syrah: The N.V. **Chook Sparkling Syrah** from Australia. The dessert was just mildly sweet, but it was topped with tart blackberries and raspberries. The wine was superb with the fruits, but not so much with the lady fingers and mascarpone. This was a similar situation with the beef and risotto, except there we had two wines instead of one. A very sweet wine like a Sauternes would not have done as well as this Syrah, in my opinion, as it might not have matched anything, whereas the sparkler matched the fruits.

Many thanks to **Chef Jeremy Buthe** for an imaginative meal, all the kitchen staff who worked all day on our meal, and **Ronnie Leadbetter & her staff** for great service. Thanks as well to our event producers **David and Deb Tritsch**, and **Tom & Jeanette Schierbrock**. We all went home with miniature decanters filled with chocolates compliments of Debby. Finally thanks to **Patti Hipple** for the wine selection (and **John Fischer** who solved the thorny desert wine pick). 🍷







IWFS NEW YORK GREAT WEEKEND

GABRIEL KREUTHER

Written By Wayne Markus / Photos by Wayne Markus

Gabriel Kreuther is of Alsatian heritage and had classic French training. He has cooked in Michelin-starred kitchens throughout Germany, France and Switzerland. In the United States he has been chef at La Caravelle & Restaurant Jean-George Central Park, was Executive Chef at Atelier in the Ritz-Carlton as well as at The Modern. He received a 2009 James Beard Foundation award for “Best Chef: New York City.” He opened the Alsatian-inspired Gabriel Kreuther in 2015 and rapidly developed it into a first line restaurant. He received the AAA 5 Diamond Award, Best New Restaurant of the Year by New York’s Village Voice, 3 Stars from the NY Times, one Michelin Star, as well as being a member of the prestigious Relais & Châteaux. The Robb Report named Gabriel Kreuther as one of “The 9 best new restaurants in The World, 2016”.

The event featured Château Lynch-Bages from the Pauillac (“poy yack”) Region of Bordeaux. Pauillac is in the middle of the left bank (left as one is floating downstream to the Atlantic Ocean) in the Haut-Medoc region of the Gironde River valley. This area has deep heavy

OUR DINNER INCLUDED A CHATEAU LYNCH-BAGES, WHICH IS CLASSIFIED AS ONE OF EIGHTEEN CINQUIÈMES CRUS (FIFTH GROWTHS) IN THE BORDEAUX WINE OFFICIAL CLASSIFICATION OF 1855.

gravel soil, mixed with sand, limestone and iron in certain spots. The gravel forces the roots to grow deep. Three of the five first growth wines, Château Mouton-Rothschild, Château Latour, and Château Lafite-Rothschild are from Pauillac. Pauillac is the home of Cabernet Sauvignon based wines with lesser amounts of Cabernet Franc, Merlot and Petite Verdot. They also produce white wines, but they are labeled AOC Bordeaux Blanc because the classification for Pauillac does not include white wine grapes.

Our dinner included a Château Lynch-Bages, which is classified as one of eighteen Cinquièmes Crus (Fifth Growths) in the Bordeaux Wine Official Classification of 1855. The first through fourth categories comprise forty-one wines. Today it would probably be ranked higher.

The namesake for the wine is Thomas Lynch who was a descendant of the Tribes of Galway. His father John emigrated in 1691 from Galway, Ireland to Bordeaux. Thomas inherited an estate in the village of Bages through his wife, Elizabeth, in 1749. Who said the Irish don’t know how to make wine?

A bottle of 1975 Lynch-Bages was the first wine in space. In 1985 a French astronaut on a joint American/French space flight took it!

The Lynch-Bages wines, including a 1996 Impériale (3 liters or double magnum), were from the cellar of Steve Greenberg of the Washington DC Branch so the provenance and storage were not in question. They were double decanted between five and six o’clock before transporting to the restaurant. One bottle was off and not served. A couple had soft corks, but the wines were in perfect condition.

Bordeaux is not the wine usually paired with Alsatian food. But then the meal was inspired by, but was not entirely Alsatian. Bordeaux paired well with the squab and beef courses.

The evening started with a Champaign reception in the Essex House Art Deco Room. We then went by bus to Gabriel Kreuther for dinner. Several members of the New York Branch met us for dinner.

The first course had a superb presentation of diced Yellowfin Tuna Tartare mixed with a few diced scallops tartare on thinly sliced medallions of zucchini squash topped with farm raised sturgeon caviar and brilliant green stripes of sauce on either side.

The 2016 Blanc de Lynch-Bages served with the first course was a blend of 52% Sauvignon Blanc, 30% Sémillon and 18% Muscadelle. The citrus notes from the Sauvignon Blanc, floral nose of the Sémillon, and mild sweetness of the blend went nicely with the tuna and scallops. Tuna is a meaty fish, “a cow that swims.” It is usually paired with a white wine or a light red wine, often pinot noir. Acidic wines tend to complement the fatty tuna. Tannic wines are generally avoided. The Sémillon and Muscadelle reduced the acidity and added sweetness that went well with the tartare preparation.

The second course was Pennsylvania Squab, coco beans, and housemade duck sausage on kohlrabi choucroute. Squab is a young domestic pigeon, typically under four weeks old. Once you get past the bones and the idea that it is pigeon it is quite tasty. It is easily eaten with your fingers although most use a knife and fork. Kohlrabi choucroute is a tribute to the national dish of Alsace, a version of German cabbage sauerkraut. In Alsace the choucroute is cooked in white wine, beer or cider and seasoned with juniper berries and black peppercorns. It is often served with sausage.

The wines paired with the second course were the 1985 and 1989 Château Lynch-Bages. Both are 95 point wines by Robert Parker’s Wine Advocate. They were a perfect match for the food. There was discussion and a show of hands to pick the favorite. The older 1985 was thought to be fully mature and received less votes than the 1989 that has some life yet. The 1989 had a wonderful nose.

The third course was an Angus Beef Duo of grilled tenderloin and cabernet

braised cheeks, hen of the wood mushroom, and potato dumpling. The presentation was simple, but elegant with the tenderloin on the dumpling and the braised cheeks and mushroom off to the side.

The Angus course was served with 1996 Château Lynch-Bages (Impériale) and 2000 Château Lynch-Bages, 2000. Beef is a classic pairing with Bordeaux wines and these two are no exception. Robert Parker’s Wine Advocate scored the 1996 at 91 points and the 2000 at 97 points. Andrew Jones discussed these wines and opined that the 2000 is very different than the other wines and attributes this to modern winemaking techniques. The summary of participants is that these wines are still young with a long life ahead. The large format will be slower to mature than 750 mL bottles. Both benefited from swirling in the glass.

The dessert course was an exotic Fruit Carpaccio and a ten flavor sorbet. The dish was colorful and very tasty.

A 1989 Château Suduiraut Sauternes was chosen for the desert wine. The grapes are Sauvignon Blanc, Sémillon and sometimes Muscadelle. The distinguishing feature of Sauternes is infection with Botrytis Cineria or noble rot resulting in shrinking of the grapes, concentration of sugar, and the characteristic nose often described as apricot and honey. Botrytis requires certain moist climatic conditions often along a river or foggy area that are present in the areas Sauterne is produced. The Bordeaux Wine Official Classification of 1855 has three categories for Sauternes. Premier Cru Supérieur including only Chateaux d’Yquem, Premier Crus including Suduiraut, and Deuxiemes Crus. The 1855 classification is outdated due to changes in quality, mergers, some being no longer produced, and newer unclassified wines simply labeled as Sauternes. Andrew Jones said that 1988, 1989, and 1990 were great years for Sauternes.

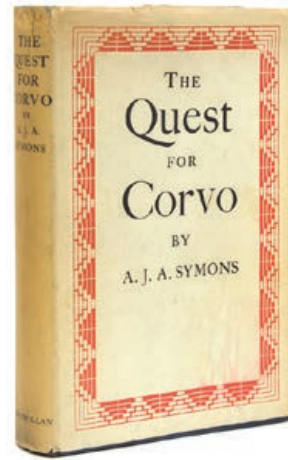
After this fantastic meal, wine, and bus trip back to the Essex House, Joe Goldstein got a hankering for New York pizza. Soon, thereafter, there was another event in the hotel lobby attended by several members of the Council Bluffs Branch and one couple from the Washington DC Branch featuring Ray’s Pizza. The pizza was very good and would go well with a cold beer or Diet Coke. A good night was had by all.





A.J.A. SYMONS: THE SOCIETY'S OTHER FOUNDER

Written By Philip Clark, Executive Director



whose best-known work, *Hadrian the Seventh*, is a fantasy based on its author's failure to become a Roman Catholic priest.

The word "dilettante" might have been coined to describe AJ, who was a dandy, bibliophile, calligrapher, gambler, and compulsive collector of such items as musical boxes and Victorian card cases. His father was an auctioneer, whose brief period of prosperity came to an abrupt halt in 1921. AJ, who left school at 14, and served a three-year apprenticeship to a firm of fur traders (a period he subsequently likened to Dickens' time working in a blacking factory) went on to assist his father, but when the auction rooms had to be sold AJ needed to find new employment.

The tall and elegant young man went on to start the **First Edition Club**. He had a series of financial backers, who at one time included the Foyle brothers, owners of the famous bookshop in Charing Cross Road.

Early in 1924, Symons married Gladys Weeks. AJ was an inveterate founder and joiner of clubs and societies, and in his mid twenties he found himself a member of a distinguished dining club called Ye Sette of Odd Volumes. There he met Maurice Healy, the Irish barrister and author of *Stay Me with Flagons*, one of the greatest of all wine books. Healy in turn introduced the young bibliophile to André Simon, by that time a successful wine merchant, author and acknowledged expert on gastronomy.

In the meantime AJ achieved his ambition of turning the First Edition Club into a limited company, and moved to grand new premises at 17 Bedford Square, with a flat for the Secretary, in the heart of literary London. With a typical Symons flourish, the new premises

were opened in May 1928 by ex-king Manoel of Portugal. The Club spawned a magazine called *The Book-Collector's Quarterly*, which was a joint venture with the publishing house of Cassell.

Symons' self-composed epitaph was that "No one so poor has lived so well." It is unlikely that the First Edition Club, which never achieved its target of 600 members needed to break even, would ever have been a financial success. However, its decline was accelerated by the Depression, which began in the USA in 1929. The limited company was wound up, involving significant losses to its backers, one of whom was André Simon. Such was AJ's charm, however, that this setback resulted in the loss of few friends, and he remained on good terms with many of the foremost writers of his day.

SYMONS' SELF-COMPOSED EPITAPH WAS THAT "NO ONE SO POOR HAS LIVED SO WELL."

At this stage in his career, AJ turned his hand to biography. His first attempt, a life of the explorer HM Stanley, was little more than a potboiler, but he had become interested in Frederick Rolfe as a result of being lent a collection of his letters, written from Venice in the "weird baron's" last years. *The Quest for Corvo* is a highly original tour de force, in which the detective work involved in tracking down its subject is skillfully interwoven with the biography itself.

The precursor of the Wine & Food Society was the **Saintsbury Club**, whose origins have been frequently chronicled. It started with a lunch that included

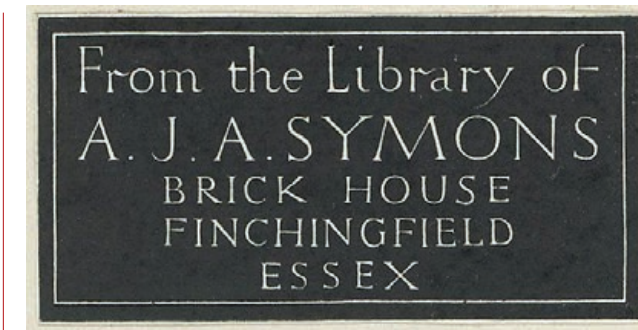
AJ, André Simon, Maurice Healy and the poet and critic JC (later Sir John) Squire. At the lunch, Squire lamented the reduced circumstances of Professor George Saintsbury, author of the classic *Notes on a Cellar Book*, then living in retirement in Bath. It was agreed to give him a dinner. The founders of the **Saintsbury Club** were undaunted by the old professor's refusal to have anything to do with them. AJ became the Secretary, and the first dinner was held on October 23, 1931. The **Saintsbury Club** still flourishes today.

The financial depression of the early Thirties had already resulted in a severe setback for AJ. Soon afterwards André Simon also suffered from its ramifications, in his case partly because of the collapse of sterling against the French franc. On November 30, 1932, André lost his job as sole UK agent for **Pommery Champagne** after more than 30 years' service.

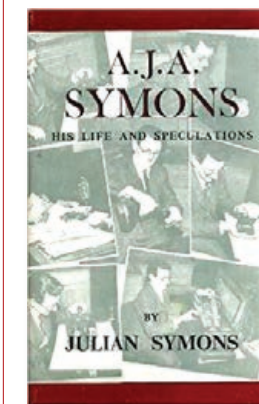
Like Symons, André had to look for a change of career. He had long cherished the idea of starting a wine magazine, and sought the advice of one of his many acquaintances, JL Garvin, Editor of *The Observer*. Garvin could see that, in those uncertain times, such a magazine was unlikely to be profitable in its own right. Instead, he suggested the idea of a society, on the lines of the **First Edition Club**, whose members would pay a subscription and receive a magazine as one of the benefits of membership.

The **First Edition Club** still existed in a much reduced form, although it had given up its grand premises in Bedford Square and returned to Little Russell Street. André invited AJ to lunch, and the eventual result of their meeting was the founding of the **Wine & Food Society** on October 20, 1933, with André Simon as its President and AJ Symons as its Secretary. Thus the Society's first premises were also those of the **First Edition Club**. Within a month the **Wine & Food Society** had 230 members, and 1000 within a year.

The Society's **Journal**, originally *Wine and Food*, first appeared in 1934. André acted as Editor, with AJ responsible for production and advertising as well as writing occasional articles. Following the repeal of Prohibition



immediately after the foundation of the Society, the partners decided that André should visit the USA as a kind of gastro-economic recruiting sergeant. During his absence, AJ was left in sole control of the



time for AJ. He had already rented a fine Georgian house in **Finchingfield, Essex**, which was his weekend retreat. His revived finances enabled him to indulge his taste for expensive suits (made by the **Prince of Wales' tailor**). He dined out almost every night and during the week his wife saw little of him. This was a contributory factor in their divorce in 1936. But there were those who regretted that he had not shown greater single-mindedness in pursuing the literary career that had begun with such promise.

In 1939, the **Second World War** broke out. Food rationing began, and Symons published *The Unration Book*, a parody of an official publication. Suddenly, in November, he was taken seriously ill. It appeared at first that he had had a stroke. He retired to **Finchingfield** in the hope of recovery. André Simon, meanwhile, had to take on the whole of the day-to-day running of the Society. Unaware of the seriousness of his partner's illness, he resented the fact that AJ was no longer pulling his weight. AJ rallied briefly, but

died of a brain haemorrhage on August 26, 1941.

"We who knew him best mourn him most," wrote André Simon, "but he will be greatly missed by all. His place can never be filled: there will never be anyone like him." The Society was not, entirely, "André's wonderful invention", but instead

the result of a collaboration between two brilliant but very different individuals. Without AJA Symons, it is possible that the **International Wine & Food Society** would never have been founded, or if it had, it might have taken a very different form. Today's members of the **IWFS**, to whom he has passed the torch, owe it to the Society's other founder that his memory is not forgotten.

These first three Meetings, as we called our functions, were entirely my own work, not too bad work, you may think, but I can tell you without any false modesty that what my friend and partner did was ever so much better. He had good friends in Fleet Street, youngish men of about his own age.... AJA Symons, not the Society, invited his friends, sat with them at table, talked to them intelligently and amusingly, and the next morning the Society had the most wonderful free publicity...

From *In The Twilight* by

Andre L. Simon
Source: IWFS.org, Americas, About us; History

Picture Sources:

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WHY MADEIRA?

MADEIRA GRAPE VARIETIES

Written By Tom Murnan



This is the third part in our continuing series of educational articles on Madeira to prepare you for the November 18th 85th Birthday of the IWFS event, which will highlight the 1932 D'Oliveiras Verdelho Madeira, harvested a year before the founding of the Wine & Food Society in London.

The noble grape varieties of Madeira were brought to the island by Prince Henry the Navigator after 1420. Besides being the grape variety, the grape name also indicates the style of the wine. They range, in order of sweetness: **Sercial**, **Verdelho**, **Bual** (aka **Boal**) and **Malvasia** (aka **Malvasia**, or Anglicized to **Malmsey**). **Moscato**, **Bastardo**, and **Terrantez**.

are increasingly rare and virtually extinct on the island. Lesser varieties include the **Tinta Negra Mole** and **Complexa**. They are all white grapes except **Tinta Negra Mole** and **Bastardo**. The sweeter wines are grown near sea level, and the drier varieties up higher in the mountains. The island has high rainfall, so to prevent botrytis (rot), the vineyards are planted in low trellises that raise the leaf canopy off the ground in order to promote air circulation. Vineyards tend to be small and steep, mostly cut into the sides of mountains. Harvesting is done by hand due to the steepness of the vineyards.

Sercial is grown at high elevations (600 to 700 meters) and fermented until

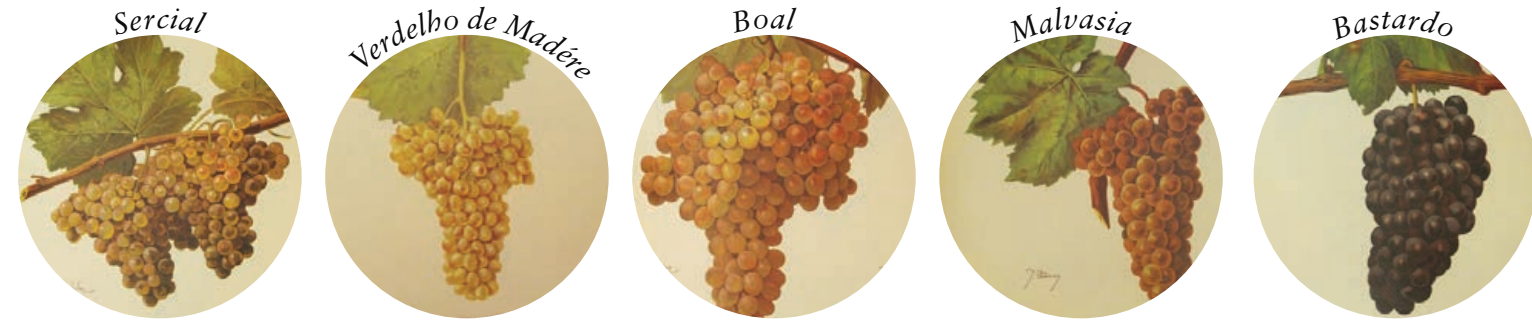
part 3

almost completely dry (less than 1.5% sugar on the Baumé scale). It is a high acid wine that takes a long time in the barrel to tame the harsh acidity. Its nickname is “dog strangler” due to its astringent acidity. When older, it makes a good aperitif, is good after Champagne, and cleanses the palate after dinner. It has a citrus nose of lemons and oranges. The palest of Madeiras, it has a color range of orange gold to tawny. It can have a nutty taste. It is the only 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.

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 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. Although it is starting to come back, it is still a rarity today.

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.

Moscato 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.

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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.

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.”

Next Time: The Madeira Party 🍷

Images from The Madeira Wine Guide, *Traité Général de Viticulture—Ampelographie 1910*. Article Sources: The Rare Wine Co., Sonoma, CA; Wikipedia; *Madeira* by Alex Liddell; *Madeira the Island Vineyard* by Noël Cossart.



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The International Wine & Food Society of London, England

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UPCOMING COUNCIL BLUFFS BRANCH EVENTS

Mark Your Calendars!

AUG.
23

 **COUNCIL BLUFFS COUNTRY CLUB**
Theme: The Language of Wine
How do you describe that wine you just tasted?
Grey Plume Producers:
Thrashers and Lemkes


SEPT.
07

 **AYOUB HOME**
Theme: Summer white party (dress in all white) Featuring all great summer wines
Chef Benjamin Maides from Au Courant
Producers: Ayoub, Kossows & Hipple

OCT.
07


 **J. COCO 52ND AND LEAVENWORTH**
Theme: #HerWine:
Women wine makers
Producers: Jill Goldstein and Jill Panzer

NOV.
18

 **LE BOUILLON**
Theme: An 85th Birthday Party
Madeira Sit Down Wine Tasting
featuring a 1932 Verdelho
Producers: Tom & Mary Murnan



DEC.
09

 **V. MERTZ**
Theme: President's Holiday Dinner
Producers: Joe & Jill Goldstein

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**