

# The Bluffs Food & Wine

October 2013 *gazette*

Event Report:  
**BBQ at Big Sandy**

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**Lesser Known French Appellations Part 2**

**Château Latour**

**New Officers** selected

**Vol. 9 Tom & Mary Murnan**

**Wine Vacation June 2012**



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

## President's Comments

### 2009 Antinori Villa Antinori Toscana Red



Many grape varietals make up this wine, sangiovese, cabernet sauvignon, merlot and syrah. The characteristic are black currents, violets and spice flavors. Just because this is an Italian wine doesn't mean to pair it only with spaghetti with a red sauce. Try it with Osso Bucco, beef dishes or chicken with brown sauces. This is a nice wine for \$23.99. Wine Spectator scores it 90 points and suggests drinking it now through 2018. You can purchase this wine at Whole Foods. Remember if you buy six or more you receive a 10% discount.

Best of wine, food & friends,

*Patti Hipple*  
President

## Editor's Corner

Dean Dougherty again opened his delightful cabin on Big Sandy Lake again for a barbeque. Just north of Ashland, NE, it is always worth the drive to get out in the country and experience some great wine and food. He hired a caterer to provide us with some very tasty BBQ. Read about it inside. We conclude our two part series on lesser known French Appellations d'origine Contrôlée, or AOC to better prepare you for the French dinner we have planned for October 18th. French wines are perceived as being frightfully expensive, but bargains do abound if you get away from the big name labels and AOCs. This time we discuss the Côtes du Roussillon, Crozes Hermitage, and Beauges-de-Venise. I hope you are planning on joining us 10-18-2013 for a very interesting event. John Fischer began a mini-series on the First Growths of Bordeaux in the last Gazette when he wrote about Château

Lafite Rothschild. This month, John discusses Château Latour. The official rank was created in 1855, but the quality of the estate preceded its exalted rank. Read about it inside. New officers have been selected for the Branch for next year. Check this out, and find out who the past presidents were. Finally, installment number 9 of Mary and my wine vacation to Portugal continues with a visit to the Quinta do Panascal, one of the named vineyard properties that goes into world acclaimed Fonseca Port, one of the first growths of the vintage port firmament.

Enjoy!

*Tom Murnan*



Photo courtesy of hugel.com

### Cover photo

Versace Rosenthal Medusa crystal wine stopper, backlit by candlelight. Medusa was one of the Gorgons in Greek mythology. Gazing directly upon her would turn onlookers to stone. She was beheaded by the hero Persus. Seemed like just the thing for Halloween. Photo by Tom Murnan



## Event Report

September 29, 2013

# Barbeque at the Big Sandy

story and photos by Tom Murnan

Twenty five members made the long drive out to the Ashland, NE area to Dean Dougherty's wonderful lakeside cabin on Big Sandy Lake. It was one of the nicest days of the year for temperature and abundant sunshine. We had a real treat awaiting us: barbeque and nicely paired wines that enhanced the western style feast. Dean had hired Tim's Wild West B-B-Q. Tim started cooking our meats the night before in his mobile cookers fired by hardwood. Smoked Turkey, Baby Back Ribs, Beef Brisket and sausage were all finishing their cooking when we arrived.

We started with a nice appetizer plate that included salmon, thinly sliced Serrano ham, a type of salami, blue cheese, Parmesan cheese, two kinds of olives, strawberries and cashews. Our quaffing wines were Las Rocas Garnacha 2009 and 2011 Rio Madre Rioja. This was unusual in that it contained 100% Graciano, which usually is a blending grape, not a featured grape. It was soft, immediately approachable and quite nice. The Las Rocas had more stuffing, as one might expect with Grenache.

Some of the group went on a pontoon ride piloted by Duke Matz while the others relaxed on the patio. Dinner began when the boat returned. Tim brought the meats directly from the smokers and began slicing them for us. These were accompanied by BBQ Baked Beans, Garlic mashed potatoes topped with melted cheese, and baked green beans. Wines were not assigned to any particular pairing and included 2010 Catena Malbec, 2009 Clancy's, a Shiraz, Cabernet Merlot blend from Australia, 2010 Lapostolle Canto de Apalta, 2011 Seghasio Zinfandel, and a 2010 Las Altos Malbec. All proved to be good matches to the BBQ. We finished with an assortment of pies, including an apple caramel, a blackberry one layer above and a lemon layer on the bottom, topped with meringue, and a chocolate.

Many lingered after the meal. Dean fired up the gas fire pit, and we admired the glorious Nebraska sunset before we returned to our vehicles to make the trek back home. Many thanks to Dean Dougherty for hosting this event, to John Fischer who selected the wines, and to Mary Kay Young, Alicia Fischer, and Stacy Matz for helping and cleanup.

The Bluffs  
Food & Wine  
gazette



*More photos of this event on the following page »*



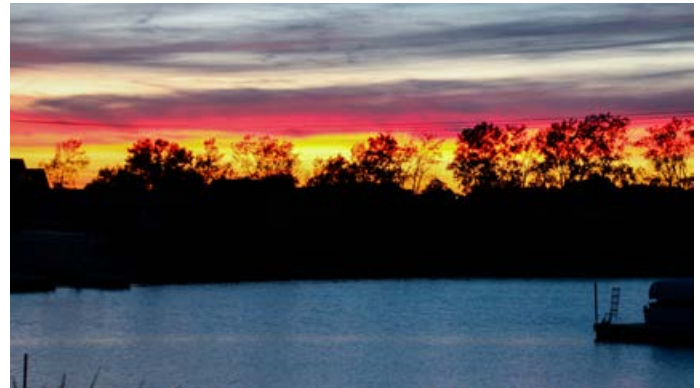


*More photos of this event on the following page »*









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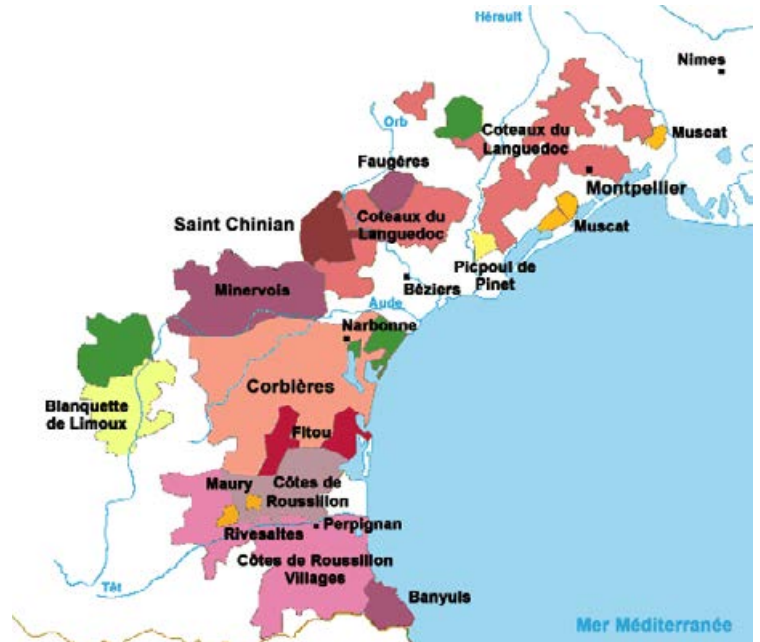
You do not need a parachute  
to skydive. You only need a  
parachute to skydive twice.

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# Lesser Known French Appellations:

## Thumbnail Sketches Part 2 of 2

by Tom Murnan



Concluding our two part series on lesser known French Appellations d'origine Contrôlée, we now move to the Côtes du Roussillon, Crozes Hermitage, and Beauges-de-Venise. Knowing something about the wines and the areas they come from will improve your appreciation of our October 18th all French event. Wines from these areas can be bargains, but you have to choose carefully as there are a lot of mediocre wines made in these appellations.

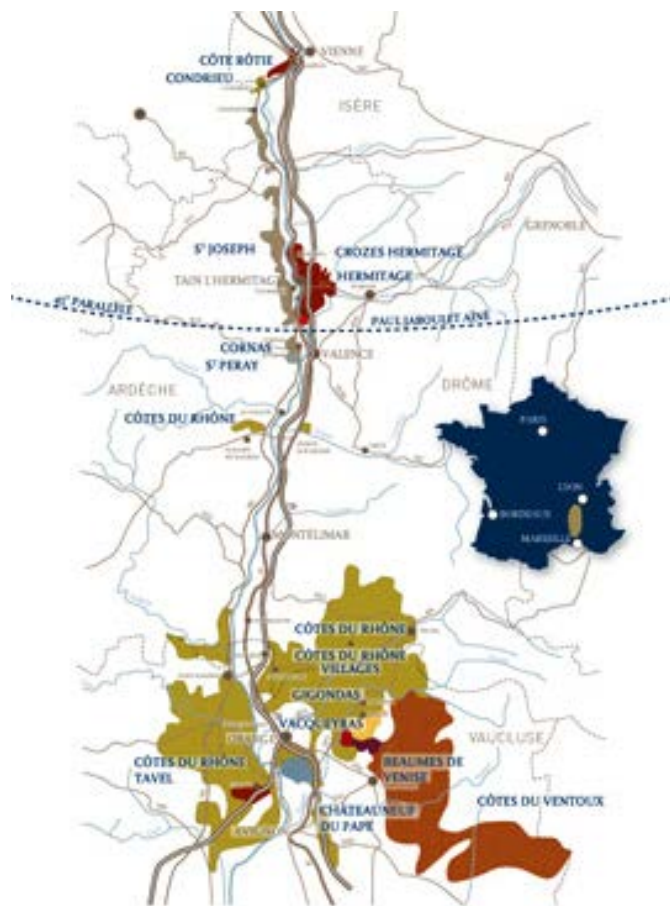
The Côtes de Roussillon AOC used to be classified under a large area called the Midi, then more recently was paired together with the Languedoc, known as Languedoc-Roussillon. In the 1980s, the region began to break away from being known for unremarkable vin ordinaire and strived to bring awareness to its own name. Located south and west of the AOC of Costières de Nîmes, which we spoke about last month, and the Rhône River, bordered on the south by the Mediterranean Sea, and bordering Spain and the Pyrenees Mountains to the west, its climate is similar to Spain. It is the sunniest wine region in France. It produces warm weather wines and vin doux naturels (sweet) wines. In fact, the AOC just to the south, Banyuls, is known for its fortified, near roasted ripeness sweet Grenache wines. White, rosé and red wines are all made in the Côte du Roussillon. Carignan is the most grown red varietal, but also Syrah, Mouvèdre and Grenache are used in better bottlings. They are known for making full to medium bodied, soft red wines. They are often said to taste of the garrigue, wild fragrant plants that grow in the Mediterranean climate, like rosemary, juniper, lavender and thyme. White wines are unoaked and contain Picpoul and Grenache Blanc. Our red event wine was selected based on a comment from Robert Parker that it "was a '\$12 Côte Rôtie of the south,' although \$12 Côte Rôties went out of

existence about 50 years ago." Along with Hermitage, Côte Rôtie is one of the greatest and most important Syrah based wines in the northern Rhône. It is quite expensive nowadays, starting at about \$60.00 a bottle and going to over \$500.00. It sounded intriguing.

### Crozes-Hermitage AOC

The largest appellation of the northern Rhône, it is named after the village of Crozes. Some marketing genius had the idea of linking the village, and the surrounding area, to the famous Hermitage wines. After all, Hermitage was just a few miles away. The Hermitage granite hill lies just to the south of Crozes, near Tain l'Hermitage, on a bend in the Rhône River. This bend increases the exposure of the afternoon sun, and together with its relatively poor soil, makes for a perfect microclimate: the vines have to struggle, they get plenty of sunlight, and the result is that it makes world class wine. Hermitage was so famous, that Bordeaux wines used to add Hermitage (Syrah) to their anemic blends of Cab, Merlot, Cab Franc and Petit Verdot in poor years. But the Crozes wine had a problem. The soil was just too rich, the vines did not have to struggle, the land was mostly flat and the wine was not as good as neighboring Hermitage. Due to a contest where a few vineyards near Crozes were selected as belonging to the Hermitage AOC, someone came up with an idea of linking the exalted name of Hermitage with their village. Surely being linked to all this fame would help sell





their wine. So Crozes successfully petitioned the winemakers of Hermitage to tack on their famous name after the village name of Crozes. This rather large area later became its own AOC in 1935. On maps now, you see Crozes-Hermitage, not just Crozes. The AOC surrounds the Hermitage AOC to the north and south.

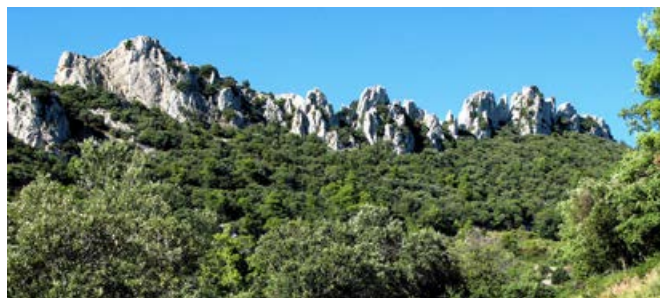
Unfortunately, just tacking a name on the end of your village does not mean you are getting Hermitage quality. But with modern winemaking, some very good bottlings do occasionally emerge from an area that is best known for good but not stellar wines. Most of the wines are red, and can only be made from Syrah. The only exception is that two white grapes (up to 15%) can be added to the red for aromatic complexity: Marsanne and Rousanne. The wines are not as complex as Hermitage. A small amount of white Crozes-Hermitage are made from the afore mentioned white grapes. Careful selection is the key to getting a good bottle of wine.

Source *The Wines of the Rhône Valley and Provence* by Robert M. Parker, Jr.; [Chapoutier.com/crozes-hermitage](http://Chapoutier.com/crozes-hermitage);

### Beaumes-de-Venise

One of the secrets of the dessert wine genre is Muscat de Beaumes-de-Venise. I am willing to wage most of our members have never tried one, but they are delicious! Granted appellation status in 1945, this is a southern Rhône

appellation that has been making wine since the 14th century. In fact, our event wine, Domaine de Durban, was the site of a Roman spa, and shards of pottery and other Roman debris can easily be found at the winery today. Beaumes-de-Venise is situated near better known Gigondas and Vacqueyras. The best vineyards are grown on the slopes of the foothills of a locally renown mountain, the Dentelles de Montmirail, have a good southern exposure to the sun and limestone soil. The Dentelles (means lace in French) provides shelter from the strong Mistral winds. The Mistral blows both north and south. In the summer, hot winds from Africa blow in from the south. In the winter, cold winds drop in from the north. The Dentelles block the Mistral from either direction. Both



red and sweet white grapes are raised, but the sweet wines are by far the most famous. Known as the Sauternes of the Rhône, the grape variety is Muscat Blanc a Petits Grains. These small, yellow skinned grapes are one of the oldest grape varieties known, used by both the Greeks and Romans. The winemaking technique is known as vin doux naturel where fermentation is stopped prematurely by the addition of alcohol. This prevents the yeast from converting the sugar into alcohol, preserving the natural sweetness of the wine. Alcohol levels are about 15%. The wines pair nicely with figs, peaches, grapes and other fruits.

Sources: *Wikipedia*; [www.wine-searcher.com/regions-muscat+de+beaumes-de-venise](http://www.wine-searcher.com/regions-muscat+de+beaumes-de-venise) ; [www.domainedurban.com/en/](http://www.domainedurban.com/en/)





# Chateau Latour

by Dr. John Fischer



Photo courtesy of thewinecellarinsider.com

It was the Tor à St-Lambert that gave its name to Latour. Unfortunately, this famous tower was raised to the ground and nothing of it remains. Nevertheless there is an ostentatious dovecot (enclosure for domestic pigeons) that overlooks the vines that is commonly mistaken for the tower after which Latour is named.

In the early part of the 18th century, Latour had already established a reputation for making very fine wines. Around this time Alexandre de Segur gained control of the property and added it to his extensive holdings, which also included Chateau Lafite. The Segur family remained a shareholder to the property for the majority of its early years.

In the mid '18th century, viticultural practices improved in spite of several setbacks related to vine pests and diseases such as Phylloxera and downy mildew. Nevertheless, the wines garnered a superior reputation and the estate was classified as a first growth in the 1855 classification. At the dawn of the '19th century, Phylloxera again devastated the vineyard, which was ultimately salvaged by grafting of their vines to resistant rootstocks. In spite of these upheavals, the superior quality of their wine maintained the lofty reputation of the estate.

Latour has a reputation for taking tens of years to develop, so if you are a person of many years and purchase the wine, you are taking a risk of never experiencing its full splendor. Nevertheless, in more recent vintages, the wine appears to be developing at a little faster pace.

Latour is the darkest in color, highest in tannin, and fullest in body of all of the great first growths, yet in mature great vintages, it has the most complex and refined bouquet, and the most silky and opulent texture of the lot.

The nub of the flavor profile consists of savors of blackcurrants, minerals, fresh walnuts, cedar, and leather. You will undoubtedly find at least some of these flavors (especially blackcurrants) in every bottle of high quality wine. The wine is characteristically 80% Cabernet Sauvignon and 20 % Merlot with smidgens of Petit Verdot and Cabernet Frank. The Bluffs Food & Wine Gazette



John Fischer is a member and two-time president of the Omaha Branch of the IW&FS, past director of the Nebraska Chapter of LADV, and founding member of the Council Bluffs Branch of the IWFS. He teaches a course on wine and matching wine with food at the Institute for the Culinary Arts in Omaha, NE and is author of two books: *The Evaluation of Wine* and *Wine and Food - 101*.

## New President & Officers elected for the Council Bluffs Branch



In case you are new to the Council Bluffs Branch of the International Wine & Food Society, officers are nominated and selected by the Executive Board. These individuals guide the activities of the branch, organize and execute all events and handle everyday business. They volunteer their time to promote the Branch. The quality level of the Branch has steadily increased since its founding in 2003. We now have events once a month at the best venues in the area, be it a private home or a restaurant. The level of wines drunk at events has improved greatly over the beginning years. We are currently trying to upgrade the wines in the Branch cellar. Anyone interested in joining the Board need only ask the President for inclusion. The president will bring your name before the board, who then votes to approve the nominee. The Executive Board meets every third Thursday of the month at Johnny's Cafe. We ask that a Board Member attend at least 6 meetings a year. Be willing to donate your time, labor, and expertise.

The new Board's term of office begins January 1st, 2014. Members serve a two year term. Bob Kossow will be our new President. He is currently our Vice President. The Vice President elect is Tom Murnan. Todd and Sandy Lemke will together be our Secretary. Diane Forristall will continue as our Treasurer and Membership Chair. John Fischer, along with Patti Hipple, will be our Wine Chair. Bob Kossow will continue to be the Web Master. Tom Murnan will continue to be the editor of the Gazette.

Past, present and future Presidents of the Council Bluffs Branch are as follows:

- 2003 John Fischer - Founding President
- 2004 Morris Caudle
- 2005-6 Rich Henry
- 2007 Lou Morton
- 2008 Ed Shada
- 2009 Joe Shada
- 2010-11 David Tritsch
- 2012-13 Patti Hipple
- 2014-15 Bob Kossow



## Tom and Mary Murnan's Wine Vacation

## Quinta do Panascal

June 2012: Vol 9

by Tom Murnan



In our last installment, we had just boarded our bus and left the Quinta do Tedo, stuffed with a great Portuguese lunch. We were headed to the north side of the Douro River, to the Tavora River Valley, to a Fonseca property: the **Quinta do Panascal**. Fonseca is world famous for its vintage port. Panascal is one of three single quintas that make up the majority of **Fonseca-Guimaraens** ports. (The other two are Cruzeiro and Santo António.) In vintage years, which are only declared about three or four times a decade, the wine goes into the highest possible category: Fonseca Vintage Port. In non-declared years, it goes into vineyard named vintage port like 2004 Panascal, or in a brand name, like Fonseca Bin 27. Although the first vintage was in 1840, it has had several owners. Today it is owned by The Fladgate Partnership which was formed in 1978 and is a combination of three well known brands: Taylor Fladgate, Croft and Fonseca-Guimaraens.



We were met by our host, Robert Bower as we completed our half hour bus ride. Panascal was not a unified property until the 20th century. In the 19th century, it was owned by five smaller estates, but

these were in disarray after the ravages of Phylloxera (root louse disease) in the 1870s. The site has been known to be especially valuable because of its west and southwest angle, giving it more sunlight in a day. Humidity from the Tavora is trapped in the steep and rugged valley. The vineyard is 400 meters above sea level, and catches the cooling breezes. In the old days, it was famous for table wines to the Portuguese royal family.

Robert treated us to a glass of white port to revive the travelers. Traditionally, a glass of white port was offered to refresh the palate. Most white ports are sweet, but **Fonseca Siroco** is dry and cleanses the palate. It was named after the dry winds of the Sahara. I asked Robert what he thought of the phrase "It is the duty of every port to be red." He thought port was a matter of taste preference, but life would be awfully short if we stuck to rules.




We also asked Robert how to pronounce the name **Guimaraens**. The name appears on all Fonseca bottling, and the family is in its eight generation of managing the business. Currently, David Guimaraens, 46, was in charge. So, for your trivia of the day, Guimaraens is pronounced GEE MA RAINGE.

After a brief tour of the vineyard and winery, and discussions of field blends vs. block plantings we settled into our tasting. All ports are blends of different grape varieties. The old timers would plant many varieties in one vineyard: Tinta Amarela, Touriga Fransesca, Tinta Roriz, Touriga Nacional, Tinto Cão, Tinta Barroca and the like. The modern approach is to just plant one variety in a block and vinify it separately, so you can better control things like the aromatics. Otherwise you get flavors and aromatics you cannot fix or remove. You add the separate batches together in the final blend.

Our tour guide, Roy Hersch, brought a 1977 Taylors VP (vintage port) from home as a special treat, but Robert also poured a 2007 Fonseca LBV (late bottled vintage), a 2000 Fonseca VP, and a 2004 Quinta do Panascal VP, a 2009 Fonseca VP. Then we moved on to the Tawnies, sampling 10, 20 and 40 year olds. Tawnies have seen a lot of wood aging, especially the last category, 40 years old, where they take on a mahogany color. I don't think the 2009 Fonseca VP was out on the market in 2012, but it is now. The Wine Spectator gave it a 95 rating. Dark purple with tooth coating tannins, powerful with high acid, it is what one expects of a

young Fonseca VP. The secret of the best 2009s is when they picked. Fonseca picked early and now has a tremendous wine. I bought two for €134 to lug home. By the time I paid the visa fee and airline fee for extra baggage they cost \$91.00 each, almost not worth the trouble.

We bid our goodbyes to Robert, boarded our bus, and headed to dinner. 



*Next time: the Douro In*





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## Upcoming Council Bluffs Branch Events! Mark Your Calendars!

**October 18** • A Taste of France in the Heart of Little Italy. Tom & Mary Murnan host a French meal at Chef Hattam Catering in the old Café de Paris, 1228 S 6th St., Omaha not far from the Old Market.

**November 1** • The Kossows team up with the Fenners for another event at the Fenner house. If you didn't go last year, be sure to make it this time. Northern and southern Italy as well as Sicily will be the focus.

**December 8** • President's Event at the Omaha Press Club

**January 17** • Tom Murnan will host a tutored Tawny Port tasting at España Tapas Bar in Benson. Due to the expense of the Ports, this event will be limited to 25 persons. A Tapas dinner will follow the tasting. Plan now on attending.

### 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](mailto:stephenhipple@hotmail.com)

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

President.....	Patti Hipple	<a href="mailto:stephenhipple@hotmail.com">stephenhipple@hotmail.com</a>
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### **KEEPING In Touch!**

Please notify Club Membership Chairman Diane Forristall at [Diane@Forristall.us](mailto: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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