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EVENT REPORT: A Tour of Napa Valley at Pitch West

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IWFS SONOMA FESTIVAL THURSDAY MAY 4, 2017

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President's Comments

IF YOU HAVE BEEN FOLLOWING the reports on the IWFS Sonoma Festival, or better yet, you went to the festival, you might have been wondering what was going on the other side of those various mountain ranges, in Napa Valley. All you had to do is to sign up for the Tour of Napa Valley event held at Pitch Pizzeria West and you could have taken a mini tour of nine wineries by tasting the wines that were served that night. This was a great event. We were alfresco on the roof top at the restaurant experiencing perfect evening weather. First time producers **Dave & Tabitha Thrasher**, along with **John & Shelli Klemke** (with veteran producers **Patti & Steve Hipple** in the background) came up with an impressive, organized event. Read about it within.

It is the third day of the **IWFS Sonoma Festival**, and we moved to the heart of the old city for a nice lunch at **The Hotel Restaurant**, just off the old town square. Originally built in the 1870's as a hotel near the train depot, which provided rail service to San Francisco, the hotel has been changed to an Italian villa theme complete with a small pool and fountain. **Connie Martin** writes of her impressions of this luncheon

Ever heard of **Agoston Haraszthy**? I hadn't, and I dare say most IWFS members hadn't either. This was an incredible individual, a pioneer of the wine industry in California. A born entrepreneur, he emigrated from Hungary in 1842 and settled first in Wisconsin. The Wisconsin winters were not kind to his vineyard, so he moved on to California in 1849. His first love and passion was wine. He was multi-talented, started a great number of businesses, and in 1857 founded the first premium winery in California: Buena Vista right outside of the town of Sonoma. His life had stellar highs and abysmal lows, with a good lashing of bad luck. Phylloxera in your vineyard, anyone? He always was behind in his mortgages, but lack of money never deterred him.

When we arrived at **Buena Vista Winery** for dinner, we were greeted by two actors in period costume and hats who told us their names were **Attila** and **Arpad Haraszthy**, sons of Agoston. Then I read snippets of his life inside the winery, saw a great oil painting of him, and read about his sudden and unexpected demise at the age of 57. Intrigued, I researched his life but found contradictory information. So I bought the definitive book on Agoston, titled **Strong Wine The Life And Legend of Agoston Haraszthy** written by his great-great-grandson, Brian McGinty.

Buena Vista has been purchased by the French Burgundy House of **Boisette Family Estates**. It is being run by real French Count and family member, **Jean-Charles Boisset**. Jean-Charles has lavished great sums of money to restore the winery and improve the wines. He was quite the flamboyant host and the winery has a number of unique areas, like the Bubble Lounge, the Cave of Curiosity, and the Historic Tool Room. It's a must read.

I hope you enjoy the tour as much as Connie and I did.

Cheers!

Tom Murnan

Cover photo by Wayne Markus: bronze plaque of Agoston Haraszthy on the grounds of Buena Vista Winery.



EVENT REPORT

A TOUR OF NAPA VALLEY AT PITCH VALLEY

Written By Tom Murnan | Photos by Tom Murnan



THE WEATHER WAS ALMOST like Napa Valley: great in the shade but hot in the sun, with tolerable humidity. This was fortuitous because we were about to have our **Tour of Napa Valley** event on the roof of Pitch Pizzeria West Omaha. This was my first time encounter with this two year old facility, and it's rooftop was nicely appointed for events outside, complete with rain protection should you need it. A bar was conveniently located at one end. Host **Dave Thrasher** told us he and his co-hosts picked the Napa Valley theme because that was what they knew best. This event turned out to be a blast. Everyone had a great time, it was well organized and we were provided with lots of wine and food education. The chef was excited to spread his culinary wings and wow us: there was a lot more than just pizza going on here. Of the 40 people who signed up, there was one guest and two no-shows.

When I say that there was a lot more than pizza going on, I do not want to disparage the pizza we had for the **Reception**. It was absolutely scrumptious with high end ingredients: **Cold Smoked Salmon with Thyme Cream, Mozzarella, Red Onions, Capers Tomatoes, Basil and Lemon Garlic**. It was incredible. The capers added a bit of piquancy to liven things up. The chosen quaffer, a **2015 Ladera Napa Valley Sauvignon Blanc** was a spot on choice for the salmon. Not so tart and grassy, I appreciated its restrained style. The other pizza was a **House Made Lamb Bolognese with Comte Cheese and Fresh Arugula**. A good Bolognese sauce cooks slowly for hours, highlighting the meat, with the sauce not dominating but rather in the background. Having lamb as our meat was quite different for a pizza, and the results were outstanding. Again, the quaffing wine was nicely selected. We had a **2014 Girard Napa**

Valley Old Vine Zinfandel. The richness of the zin went nicely with the lamb, while sweetness of the zin fruit went well with the sweetness in the tomato meat sauce.

We moved to our assigned seating at table. Dave Thrasher explained the order of the evening would be to provide an educational component for the wine, how the wines were chosen, what the different wine critics had to say, and see which ones paired well with the food. As a nice touch, a map of Napa Valley along with its AVAs (wine districts) was provided on the back on the menu.

An **Amuse Bouche** was presented that was not on the printed menu. **Matt Wymore**, the general manager was our tie to the kitchen. He presented a **Peppadew Sorbet**. Peppadew is a sweet pepper with a fruit profile. A salmon roe was mixed in and the sorbet was topped with a wild pansy flower. This was presented on an Asian style porcelain spoon. You get herbal notes from the flower, spice from the peppadew, and saltiness from the roe. A few years ago you couldn't get peppadew in Omaha, but it has become available now.

First Course. Shelli Klemke presented the two white wines for our **U-2 Shrimp** course. She took the plunge here. Not only was this her first night as a member but she was a co-host now presenting two wines to 38 people. These were traditional Napa Valley Chardonnays, both 2015. We compared a **Trefethen Estate Chardonnay** with a **Rombauer Chardonnay**. Usually, Chardonnay pairs well with shell fish. The big difference between our two chosen wines, Trefethen and the Rombauer, is malolactic fermentation. The Trefethen has little malolactic, only 4%, while the Rombauer has 100%. **Malolactic fermentation** turns the wine from tart malic acid to softer tasting lactic acid. So the Rombauer has a creamy buttery taste that Rombauer is well known

for, while the Trefethen will be sharper.

The **U-2 Shrimp** course was brought out. It was the most massive shrimp I'd ever seen. The smaller the number behind the U, the larger the fish. The number 2 means there two to a pound. Tempura style, it had a shaved salad of carrot and celery with Plum Aioli. Matt suggested we tear off the head and suck the juice since this is considered a delicacy throughout most of the world. The shrimp were put through a traditional Asian tempura batter then flash fried for 20 seconds to crisp it up. Besides the carrots and celery, the salad had a chewy beet and local organic heirloom carrots as well. The sauce was a **Plum and Cherry Pepper Aioli**. This plum sauce is similar to Hoisin Sauce (a pungent Chinese sauce).

So how did the two wines pair? My impression: the malic Trefethen cut through the tempura better, but the lactic Rombauer was better when you finally made it to the main flesh of the shrimp. A 50 / 50 split in voters highlighted personal preference. No right or wrong answers here.

Onward we went to the **Second Course: Maple Leaf Farm's Duck Breast** with Grilled Peaches, Summer Salad, Carrot Puree and Port Wine Reduction Sauce. Dave Thrasher spoke of the wine selection. He wanted to pick some unique varietals that would showcase Napa. He chose the **2013 Frank Family Vineyards Petite Sirah** and a **2013 Prisoner Wine Company Thorn Merlot**. He was now thinking that maybe a Pinot Noir would have been better with the duck, but he still wanted to see how the more forceful Petite Sirah would work. You don't usually think of Petite Sirah when you think of Napa, a wine that is big and powerful. How would it stand up to the duck? He was also excited about the Prisoner Merlot. Wilfred Wong, in wine.com, called this an American Merlot that is far away from the old world style.

The duck was sourced from **Maple Wood Farms** from Leewood, Indiana. Carrots were heirloom: yellow purple and golden orange. A summer salad was topped with carrot puree, grilled peach, and finished off with a geranium flower. Baby sirachas, looking like tiny watermelons, added color as well. They had no heat and were crunchy like cucumber. The **Port Reduction** sauce added sweetness, which united with the duck quite well. This was a colorful dish with great presentation and table appeal.

Which wine was best? My preference was the Merlot. Unless you get wild duck that has been eating god-knows-what off the bottom of the Missouri River, a domesticated duck has delicate flesh, without wildness, that



craves fruit and sweetness. The Petite Sirah was a bit sharp and too powerful, while the Merlot was rounded and balanced. To answer Dave's question, yes, Pinot Noir would have been a wonderful choice. Maybe next time.

Moving on to our **Third Course**, we had **Wild Boar Tenderloin Au Poivre** with Rosemary Potato Confit and Béarnaise Sauce.

Dave introduced the wines. He chose the two biggest wines to pair with the boar. The first one was **2013 Emblem Cabernet**. Afraid he had committed infanticide, Dave was a bit nervous because Parker said it could be cellared for 20 years. The other was young as well, a **2013 Bootleg Red Blend**. So he had both wines decanted at 6:00 o'clock. The breathing helped them open up. Emblem is made by the Michael Mondavi family. The Bootleg Blend was our highest rated wine. It has a blend of grape varietals well associated with Napa Valley.

Wild boar in Nebraska? Matt came out to speak of the course. "Yes, the boar was wild and taken from western Nebraska. The pork flavor will have some game flavors behind it. Au Poivre is a French style of cooking. You coat tenderloin, red meat or even chicken in black pepper. Our chef prefers pink peppercorns better, so pink was used here. Pan seared, the pork was finished in Pitch's coal fired oven, so you may get some mesquite flavors there. The potatoes were poached in olive oil soaked with rosemary sprigs from the Pitch garden." Béarnaise sauce, with its tarragon flavors, was spread over the meat. Matt's favorite part was the marigold on top. **Marigold is a new spice.** It is not like the flowers you plant in your garden. Basil farmers are moving towards this new spice, which has a lemon pepper flavor.

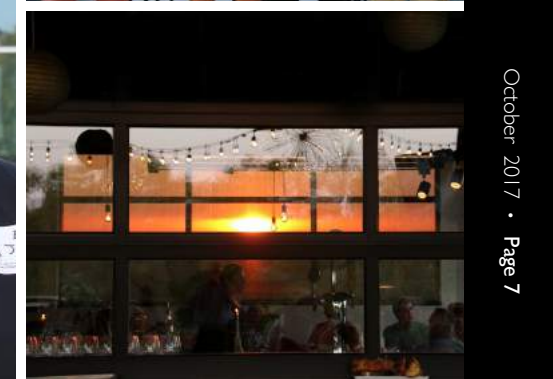
The boar was quite tender. Once the tarragon flavors from the Béarnaise Sauce passed, you could detect some gaminess in the meat, but overall it pretty much tasted just like pork. My wine impressions? The Emblem was powerful and acidic but not too tannic. It cut right through the char on the meat. The Bootleg was smooth, integrated, not too tannic, and harmonious with the dish. I liked them both.

Berry Chill Cake was our dessert. Raspberry, strawberry, blackberry, lady fingers and marshmallow cream made up the other components. A **2008 Beringer Nightingale Semillon-Sauvignon Blanc** was our sticky wine. **John Klemke** presented the wine notes. Confusing everyone, John kept talking about Sudanese wine until we discovered he was having trouble pronouncing the

word Sauternes. The wine was named after **Myron Nightingale** who served as Beringer Vineyards winemaker from 1971 to 1984 and had spent three decades developing the techniques used to make this wine in the style of classic French Sauternes. Sauternes uses grapes affected with botrytis, or noble rot, that dries the grapes into near raisins and concentrates the sugar. Botrytised fruit has a characteristic honey like flavor.

The dessert was the essence of raspberries, light and refreshing. The wine was quite French like, with notes of honey, and quite sweet. A good match.

Many thanks to our four co-hosts: **Dave & Tabitha Thrasher**, and John & Shelli Klemke. Their passion for this event showed through in its planning and preparation, from the wine selection, written pre-researched wine notes, down to the map of Napa and its various AVA's. I greatly enjoyed the educational aspect of both the wines and food. **Patti Hipple** helped to search out affordable Napa wines. Thanks as well to our wait staff Brian, Kelsey, Catherine, Dustin, general manager **Matt Wymore** and the camera shy **Executive Chef Manny Cariño**.





LUNCH AT THE DEPOT HOTEL RESTAURANT

THURSDAY, MAY 4, 2017

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

JUST STEPS AWAY from the Sonoma's main square is the **Depot Hotel Restaurant and Garden**. Originally built in 1870, the hotel served passengers arriving on the train from San Francisco. The original owners also opened an Italian restaurant and saloon. In the 1920's, the original Depot Hotel and restaurant closed to become a private home. In 1985, Chef Michael Ghilarducci and his wife, Gia purchased the building, opening the Depot Hotel restaurant. In addition to the restaurant, Chef Michael also offered cooking classes. In 2008, Chef Antonio Ghilarducci, son of Chef Michael and Gia, joined the team at the Depot Hotel, taking the reins as head chef at the restaurant in 2014.

The Depot Hotel restaurant featured a charming Italian country inn style décor and Mediterranean style garden with a reflection pool, fountain, outdoor fireplace and flower filled pergola. Our lunch was comprised of three courses and wines. The **First Course** was a **Roasted Beet Salad** with fresh beets from the Restaurant's own gardens along with Laurel Chenel goat cheese, arugula and balsamico. The wine paired with the first course was the **2012 Carneros Hills "Chardenet" Coteau Blanc** (WE -93). "Chardenet" is the original spelling for the Chardonnay grape from France, first used in 1849. Today, the Carneros Hills Vineyard produces limited amounts of this wine, one from the Coteau Blanc blocks located in the Vineyard. The Carneros Hills Vineyard spans the southern ends of Napa and Sonoma counties. This Vineyard is exposed to the moist, chilly winds from the San Francisco bay keeping the temperatures in the vineyard in the moderate range. Apricot and tangerine are the first aromas that you perceive which paired well with the beet salad. Other aroma hints noticed are saffron, crème fraîche and brown sugar. The "Chardenet" offered a long seamless finish.

Chicken Veneziana was the star of the **Main Course** and encompassed a grilled chicken with Venetian-style green pea and mushroom risotto. Complementing our chicken entrée was the **2013 Merry Edwards Meredith Estate Pinot**



Noir (RP-94; WS-92). This Pinot Noir offered a supple and smooth start on the palate which built to a rich, full, extended finish. Classic blue and red fruits seem to be the prominent tastes although there is a spiciness which develops at the finish. From the Russian River Valley in Sonoma County, this Pinot Noir complemented the richness of the chicken and risotto. The Merry Edwards Winery is viewed as one of the finest producers in Sonoma County's Russian River Valley, focusing on producing some of the best Pinot Noirs.

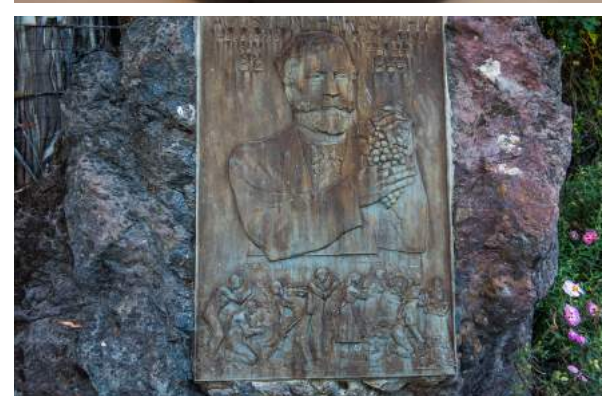
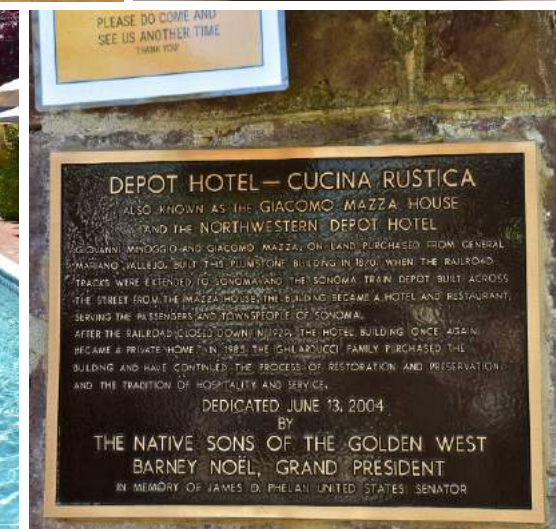
Our **dessert** was a **Sour Cream Cheesecake** with mango sauce and a **2012 Arrowood Late Harvest Riesling, Saralee's Vineyard** (WE-94). This Riesling offered complex aromas of honey, apricot, peach and orange beginning with noticeable sweetness and ending with a crisp acidity. It was agreed that this Riesling paired well with the rich creaminess of the cheesecake and mango sauce. As we learned when we went to Richard's Grove, a number of wineries have sourced their fruit from the Saralee's Vineyard. Started by Saralee Kunde,

fruit was sold to Joseph Swan, La Crema and Arrowood. Jackson Family Wines bought the property in 2012. Saralee's vineyard is in the Russian River Valley of Sonoma County. Gia Ghilarducci recommended to offer this Riesling with peaches, pumpkin, apples, pears and even over ice cream.

Thank you to Gia Ghilarducci, owner of the Depot Hotel Restaurant for sharing food and wine insights, and Chef Antonio Ghilarducci for a fabulous luncheon. All agreed that it was such a lovely event.

We were back to the hotel, where a wine tasting event had been set up with various wineries and an importer. Host wineries included La Rochelle, Ledson, Deerfield Ranch, Fort Ross and Château St. Jean. Seaview Imports brought Wilson, Mazzocco, Pezi King, Creek Valley, Matrix and DeLorimer Estate. The Olive Press brought olive oil and vinegar to taste.

Submitted by Gary and Connie Martin, Council Bluffs/Omaha IWFS members.





AGOSTON HARASZTHY, AMERICAN ENTREPRENEUR & FOUNDER OF CALIFORNIA'S OLDEST PREMIUM WINERY: BUENA VISTA

Written by Tom Murnan

AGOSTON HARASZTHY DE MOKESA was a Hungarian of noble lineage who was dubbed "Count" by German immigrants in Wisconsin. He has been called the "**Father of California Viticulture**" or the "**Father of Modern Winemaking in California**." He grew up in Hungary amidst vineyards and orchards the family owned for centuries and received a classical education. He spoke Hungarian, French, German, English and Spanish. Agoston was a very charismatic and colorful individual, a true visionary, who came to the United States in 1840 from his native Hungary. Two years later he returned to Hungary to bring back his wife Eleonora and children. They eventually had six children together. Agoston was a polymath, entrepreneur and capitalist who held an incredible number of different jobs in his life. In Wisconsin, discovered a spot, which he called Szeptaj (Beautiful View) and founded a town there named Haraszthy Town, which eventually became present day Sauk City. He also established a steam ferry to cross the Mississippi River, started a brick business, sawmill gristmill, farmed hops, corn and other grain, and established the second oldest winery in the United States near the present day Wollersheim Winery. Unfortunately, the winters in Wisconsin were too harsh to pursue his first love, growing fine wine grapes.

Ever the restless soul, he left Wisconsin for California in March of 1849, right after the

discovery of gold. The family traveled by wagon and he was elected captain of the wagon train. His aim was not to find gold but to settle and plant a vineyard. He landed in San Diego in December, 1849 where he launched a number of business and agricultural projects, such as a stagecoach line, a livery service, fruit orchards and butcher shop. He planted a vineyard just outside San Diego, and was elected Sheriff of that town.

In 1851 he was elected to the California State Assembly. There he met the former General Mariano Vallejo. In 1852 he began buying land and planted a vineyard near San Francisco, but the weather was too foggy to grow grapes. He tried again in San Mateo County, but again the climate was too foggy for viticulture. He formed a partnership with some Hungarian metallurgists to refine gold coming in from the gold rush. When the US Mint opened in San Francisco, he became **the first U.S assayer** in California. In 1857 he was accused of embezzling \$151,500, but was later exonerated. But his ultimate goal was to find "purple Gold." It was in this time period that he moved to Sonoma to start another winery.

Representative Mariano Vallejo invited Agoston to Sonoma to try his wines. Impressed, in 1856 Agoston bought a small winery and named it **Buena Vista** (Beautiful View). Today it is considered the first premium winery in California. It seemed to have everything he

wanted: terroir, great sun exposure and perfect weather. It took him until 1857 to open the winery. First, he bored tunnels, using Chinese labor, into the side of a mountain, and eventually, around 1862, built two stone buildings at their entrances. The tunnels became aging chais and kept the wine at a steady 60°F. The winery was the first gravity flow winery in California. He had the latest wine equipment and hired Charles Krug as winemaker. He also built a villa for himself on the property. His first vintage in 1857 yielded 5,000 gallons. He was constantly experimenting with viticultural practices, wine blends, and dry-farmed hillside plantings. He promoted using redwood for barrels, which was plentiful and cheap at the time. He founded the California Viticultural Society and wrote a monograph titled Report on Grapes and Wine in California.

In 1861, Agoston was appointed by Governor John G. Downey to explore the best way to promote the grape vine in California, provided that the officeholder did not ask or receive any pay. Agoston interpreted this as he could ask for his expenses to be reimbursed, but would not receive a salary. He wanted to expand the diversity of wine grapes in California, find the best varieties of rootstock and encourage winemakers to experiment. He joined his son **Arpad**, who was studying at Maison de Venoge in Champagne, and toured France, Italy, Germany, Spain and more, bringing



Marino Vallejo with his daughters



Buena Vista Winery circa 1865



Arpad Haraszthy



1865 Harvest at Buena Vista

back 350 grape varieties and 100,000 cuttings to Buena Vista. He had borne all the expense, but the legislature would not reimburse him at all. This was a huge financial blow. He had to take out three large 5 year mortgages.

Agoston wanted to keep improving Buena Vista, so in 1863 he converted it to an agricultural corporation with stockholders. 6,000 shares were offered at \$100.00 a share. It was named the Buena Vista Viticultural Society (BVVS). Agoston owned 43%. The money was used to make improvements: a 50 horse stable; more tunnels to age wine; a small railroad to run grapes up the side of the hill to the second story of the press house; pipes, pumps and machinery for a distillery and a champagne house. Arpad was the champagne maker.

In 1863, **the marriage of the century** (at least for Sonoma County) took place when two of Agoston's sons married two of **Mariano Vallejo's** daughters. Vallejo was the general in charge of upper Mexico when he was surprised and deposed during the Bear Flag Revolt on June 14, 1846. But with his large land holdings given to him by the Mexican government, he and Agoston were the richest men (on paper) in Sonoma County. **Natalia Veneranda Vallejo** married **Arpad Haraszthy** on the same day, on June 1, 1863.

Then a series of financial reversals occurred. Arpad's first champagne vintage did not sparkle and the board fired him. In 1864 a drought lowered production. The price of wine went down. But most devastatingly, phylloxera began to infect the vineyards of Sonoma in 1866. It took a long time to identify just what the cause was as the louse would move on when the vine died and there was no evidence to see. This had not been seen before in Sonoma, but the infestation went on to ravage the vineyards in America, France and Europe.



Buena Vista in 1865



Inlaws Marino Vallejo (L) and Agoston Haraszthy (R)



The Villa on Count Haraszthy's "Buena Vista Rancho and Vineyard"

During all this time, Agoston took out loan after loan, using the only security he had, his BVVS stock. When he simply had no more stock, he filed bankruptcy in 1867 and left for Nicaragua. This time his plan was to raise sugar cane and distill rum to sell in the USA and make enormous profits.

Obtaining new capital, and getting exclusive rights from the Nicaraguan government to distill for 20 years, he began building facilities. On July 6, 1869, at the age of 57, he had climbed up on a tree limb over a river and fell into an alligator infested river. He was never seen again. Besides his many venture capitalist efforts, his first love was wine. He was an author of several books and pamphlets on grape growing and life in the United States. He was an indefatigable entrepreneur and constantly in pursuit of the American dream. But his first love was for purple gold.

Sources: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Agoston_Haraszthy; <https://www.buenavistawinery.com/about-us/the-entire-story>; <http://www.inn-california.com/articles/biographic/haraszthybio.html>; **Strong Wine The Life And Legend Of Agoston Haraszthy** by Brian McGinty Stanfrd University Press 1998

DINNER AND RECEPTION AT BUENA VISTA WINERY

5-4-2017

Written by Tom Murnan | Photos by King Lee & Wayne Markus

OUR THREE BUS CARAVAN descended on the historic Buena Vista Winery (BVW). Founded in 1857 by **Agoston Haraszthy** near the Mayacamas Mountains, this is the oldest premium winery in California. Haraszthy owned BVW until 1863, when he was forced to recapitalize by taking on stockholders. The new name was called the Buena Vista Viticultural Society. Eventually his debts caused him to declare bankruptcy and he left the USA in 1868. In addition, phylloxera, the root louse had infected the vineyards. BVWS continued on and made good wine until 1878, when the winery finally succumbed to debt and infestation. The property was purchased by Robert & Kate Johnson, who were not interested in wine and used the property to construct a mansion. It would not be reborn until the 1940's, after Prohibition devastated the wine industry in California.

In 1943 the property was purchased, sight unseen, by **Frank & Antonio Bartholomew**, not realizing at first that they had purchased the old BVW property. Once informed, they began to replant the vineyard and renovate the old buildings. When Frank, who was a vice president and reporter for United Press, returned from the Pacific theater of World War II, he brought his friend and renowned winemaker **André Tchelistcheff** to work at BVW. André was a brilliant winemaker, trained in French methods, and immediately brought BVW to the forefront of the California wine industry. He introduced cold fermentation and aging in small French barrels. Their first vintage was 1949. So BVW was in the forefront of the rebirth of the California wine industry. After a series of change of ownership, in 2011 BVW was purchased by the **Boisset Family Estates (BFE)** whose historical roots are in Burgundy, France. BFE is led in the USA by Jean-Charles Boisset, who has invested heavily in Buena Vista, restoring the historic buildings and vineyards.

Little did we realize that we were in for an evening of history, drama and theater. Our first clue for drama was the **Walk of History**, where

cut out photos of historical figures, looking quite three dimensional, lined the walkway to the winery. The theme was the history of wine, the discovery of the new world, heroes in politics and science, and the settling of the American West. Once in the court yard, we were greeted by two actors in 1860's attire (top hats, tail coats) who announced that they were **Attila** and **Arpad**, the sons of founder Agoston Haraszthy. They detailed some of their family history. Arpad was trained in winemaking at Champagne house De Venoge, and made Sparkling wine at BVW. Arpad also worked at the winery. Hors d'oeuvres were passed out rather haphazardly. My wife Mary never received any, making her growly and way more tipsy at the end of the evening.

We were taken into the old **Press House** which has been transformed into a modern tasting room, Bubble Lounge and Tool Museum. The flamboyant owner, **Jean-Charles Boisset**, sporting leopard skin shoes, greeted us on the staircase, gave us a little of his family's history, and then invited all 120 people to the **Bubble Lounge**. This room was a fusion of Lady Gaga, James Bond, Madonna and kitsch, a room celebrating sparkling wine with many unusual pop touches, such as mannequins in quirky attire, a framed area of mannequin hands holding different scarves, and the like. From there we were invited to explore the **Cave of Curiosity**, where you could do such things as experience different wine aromas. About 8:30 we moved upstairs to the **Historic Tool Museum** where we began dinner.

The museum walls were devoted to the tools needed to manage a vineyard in the 19th and early 20th century: pruning knives, shears, barrel making tools, and the like. This was the history of wines as seen through its tools brought from France. In the center of the room was a long table with mannequins, representing the **Wedding of the Century**, when Arpad and Attila married two daughters of the former Mexican Military Commander, Mariano Vallejo on the same day, June 1, 1863 in a double ceremony.



THE BEIGNET WAS DEEP FRIED AND SPRINKLED WITH SUGAR. IT HAD LIGHTLY ORANGE AND LEMON FLAVORS WITH A VANILLA BACKGROUND. IT WENT QUITE WELL WITH A **2008 BUENA VISTA TOKAJI**. TOKAJI IS A NOD TO FOUNDER HARASZTHY'S HUNGARIAN ORIGIN WHERE THE WINE IS MADE THE SAME WAY AS IT IS IN HUNGARY.

The **Boisset Family Estates (BFE)** has holdings in France, including Domaine de la Vougeraie, Bouchard Aîné & Fils, J. Moreau & Fils, Mommessin, Ropiteau and others in Europe. In the United States, BFE owns Raymond Vineyards, DeLoach Vineyards, Buena Vista, Lockwood, Lyeth, and JBC by Jean-Charles Boisset. Jean-Charles spoke of the wines served with dinner, and we had French wines to compare to Californian for three courses.

Our **Amuse Bouche** course consisted of **Raymond Estate Carrot Salad**. Carrot fronds, friend carrot and curry Dijon dressing composed the dish. This was a bit pungent and was topped with chive florets and was served at room temperature. The **2014 Buena Vista Eleonora's Selection Chardonnay** was compared to the **2014 Domaine de la Vougeraie Savigny Blanc**, which hails from Beaune, France. Both whites were good matches.

The **First Course** was **Spring Vegetable Gnocchi** with wild leeks, English peas and kale pesto. The gnocchi had a nice brown crust and sat on a bed of pureed peas. The served wines are only offered at the winery. A **2014 Buena Vista Ida's Selection Pinot Noir** was offered in contrast to the French **2013 Jean-Claude Boisset Chambolle-Musigny**. Jean-Claude is Jean-Charles' father who started the family wine business in 1960. Their Chambolle-Musigny could be a Grand Cru, except that when the vineyard lines were drawn, it was placed adjacent to the Grand Cru 50 meters away. The vineyard was first planted in 1217 by the Ursulines. BFE owns 8 rows of vines which produces 2400 bottles. Although classified as a village wine, it could be a Grand Cru by pedigree. The Buena Vista developed a great

nose in the glass and was rich, generous, well balanced and not too tannic. The Chambolle-Musigny was more restrained and so very elegant. Both great matches.

The **Second Course** was **Tolenas Farm Quail** with charred radicchio, morel mushrooms and cherry onion jus. Different grape varieties figured into this pairing. A **2014 Buena Vista Private Reserve Zinfandel** was compared to a 2013 **Bouchard Beaune "Clos du Roi"** Burgundy (Pinot Noir).

Jean-Charles spoke of **Agoston Haraszthy**, who, when he came to California, found the Mission Grape everywhere. This was brought in from Spain by the Franciscans so the church would have altar wine. The Mission Grape made a bitter, poor colored wine since it did not have much sugar. Haraszthy knew the great wines of Europe and brought back 350 varieties to California. He is credited for bringing the Zinfandel grape to the USA. In 1970, research discovered it came from the Dalmatian Coast, which is near his native Hungary. Our **2014 BVW Zinfandel** came from 35 year old vines and is an award winning wine.

Bouchard was the leading house in Burgundy in the 1750's. The **Sun King Louis XIV** was told by his physician that he should drink Pinot Noir, so Louis identified 14 clones that he liked, and Beaune was one of them. So they made a vineyard for the king in the same area that the Romans had selected centuries earlier, the **Clos du Roi**. The quail was perfectly cooked and moist, and had a slightly sweetish sauce. This, along with the sweet flesh of the quail seemed to favor the Zinfandel over the Clos du Roi.

Our **Third** and final course was a **Citrus Panna Cotta** with lavender beignet. The beignet was deep fried and sprinkled with sugar. It had lightly orange and lemon flavors with a vanilla background. It went quite well with a **2008 Buena Vista Tokaji**. Tokaji is a nod to founder Haraszthy's Hungarian origin where the wine is made the same way as it is in Hungary. The Furmint grape was brought over and planted in California. Sweet but acidic, it cut through the richness of the dessert.

This was a long event, filled with history and other facts that have not been detailed here. It was glitzy, as if Disneyland had come to Sonoma. Jean-Charles is quite the showman, and very passionate about his wine. Recall that I told you Mary did not get any appetizers? Well, the combination of an empty stomach and bubbles in the sparkling wine did their work and Mary led our bus in singing **Broadway Show Tunes** on the way back to the Fairmont!





Buena Vista Winery
HISTORIC WINE
TOOL MUSEUM






UPCOMING COUNCIL BLUFFS BRANCH EVENTS

Mark Your Calendars!


OCT.
22

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

FEB.
11

 **BLOCK 16**
Mardi Gras theme
Producers: Jill Panzer & Michelle Hyder


NOV.
17

 **COUNCIL BLUFFS COUNTRY CLUB**
Fall Harvest Dinner
Producers: Schierbrocks and Forristalls


MAR.
—

 **TO BE DETERMINED**

DEC.
10

 **LE BOUILLON**
French theme
Producers: Tom & Mary Murnan

APRIL
30

 **V. MERTZ**
Producers: Patti & Steve Hipple

JAN.
—

 **TO BE DETERMINED**

HOSTING AN EVENT?

Let us know when, where and a little bit about what's going on!

We would love to include YOUR event on the calendar!

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KEEP IN TOUCH!

Please notify Club Membership Chairman Diane Forristall at DIANE@FORRISTALL.US to let her know if you are interested in hosting an IWFS event.

To access past Gazettes and other features about our Branch, go to the international website following this link:

www.iwfs.org/americas/council-bluffs

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