

The Bluffs
Food & Wine

November 2012 *gazette*

A Cozy Night at
Happy Hollow

Also inside

Understanding **Tannins**

Tapas A Spanish Tradition

Tom and Mary Murnan 2012

Wine Vacation Vol. 3



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

President's Comments

Two outstanding Valued Wines

I have a couple of wine suggestions to try. The first one is an Australian red by Peter Lehmann. **Clancy's 2009** is a blend of 39% Shiraz, 38% Cabernet Sauvignon and 23% Merlot. This \$16.99 wine is well balanced and smooth with flavors of cherry, plum, pepper and spice. Try this wine with pepper steak. Here is a simple recipe for a pepper steak marinade: ½ cup olive oil, ¼ cup soy sauce, 4 tsp. Montreal Steak seasoning. Marinate for 30 minutes.

The second wine is a 2010 \$11.99 Riesling from Columbia Valley Washington. This **Milbrandt Vineyards** wine is well balanced with aromas and flavors of ripe apricots, peaches

and grapefruit. It offers subtle sweetness with a hint of spice followed by a crisp refreshing finish. Try this wine with slow cooked pork chops and Sauer Kraut.

Both wines are ready to drink now and score 90 points by the Wine Spectator. They can be purchased at Whole Foods in Omaha, NE. When you purchase six bottles or more you will receive a 10% discount.

Your president,

Patti Hipple



Editor's Corner

October found us traveling way past 72nd Street to the Happy Hollow Country Club, where we were treated to a Fall Feast. Take in the details in the Event Report section of the Gazette. John Fischer demystifies the subject of tannins, something that preserves a wine but can also be an annoyance if too prominent. Next, read the primer about what Tapas are, and what they are not. I encourage everyone to come to the Tapas and Spanish wine event that Suzanne and Bob Kossow are hosting on November 2nd. We conclude with Part 3 of the Murnans' wine tour in Portugal: Restaurant O Papparico. Finally, a good restaurant!

Enjoy!

Tom Murnan



Photo courtesy of hugel.com

Event Report

October 19, 2012

A Fall Feast at the Happy Hollow Country Club

by Tom Murnan



Servers Sumer and Kodjo, President Patti Hipple, Chef Mark Oswald, and Co-hosts Stacie Matz and John Fischer

October 19th 2012 found the Council Bluffs Branch of the International Wine & Food Society at a busy Happy Hollow Country Club which was juggling multiple parties. Our group of sixteen diners were assigned to the cozy library, which, along with a few books, had a gas fireplace burning nicely, enhancing the relaxing atmosphere. The tables were smartly set with a Fall theme, replete with orange napkins crisply folded into a fan shape. Our Hosts John Fischer and daughter Stacie Matz had planned a delicious autumn repast. Sixteen branch members attended.



After being presented with a glass of non vintage Schramsberg Mirabelle Brut Rose, we started with passed hors d'Oeuvres: **Smoked Salmon with Dill Cream Cheese on a round of dark rye.** This proved to be a good match, with the smoky salmon complementing the dry styled bubbly. There was wine and appetizers in abundance.

We then sat down at one of two tables available. Later, the two groups would compare notes on the wine and food matches. Stacie got up and addressed the group, telling us she aimed towards a Fall theme.



Pumpkin Bisque with Smoked Bacon and Wild Mushrooms began the main portion of the meal. This was artfully presented in a square shaped bowl with an under plate beneath it. A nicely orange soup surrounded an island of wild mushrooms and thick cut smoked bacon.

Hidden under all this was a soup besotted round of slightly sweet pumpkin bread which I thought was a wonderful surprise. Atop all, crème fraîche was drizzled for additional flavor and dramatic effect. We had two very different wines to compare and see how they matched



up to the pronounced flavors of the pumpkin and bacon. A French Chablis, the **Simonnet Febvre 2009** competed with the **Dierberg 2009 Chardonnay** from the Santa Maria Valley, California. As one might expect of a French white, the Chablis was more austere and minerally than the California Chardonnay, which sported an oaky nose, fat oaky flavors with a bit of sweetness and a heavy body.



My table, which I will call the Council Bluffs table, since six of the eight diners were from CB, was asked by host John Fischer which wine they thought was better. Five out of eight



thought the Chablis was best, while Table One unanimously thought the Dierberg was best. I had to agree with Table One because the Dierberg, with its oak, matched the weight of the food.



The **Pan Seared Chilean Sea Bass** served with **Forbidden Rice, Bok Choy Papaya and Red Curry** was next. Laying on a bed of deep brown, small grained Forbidden rice, the Sea Bass was topped with fruity papaya relish. A red curry sauce surrounded the rice and fish. A small stalk of bok choy, sliced lengthwise, made for a nice garnishment, looking like

an oversized cooked green onion. The fish was perfectly cook, retaining its moist, flaky texture. We again had two wines to compare and contrast. First, we had a **Neil Ellis 2010 Sauvignon Blanc Groenekloof** from South Africa and then a **Tora Bay 2010 Sauvignon Blanc Martinborough Single Vineyard** from New Zealand's north island. How would these two wines match up to the tropical flavors of the papaya? The Tora Bay had a very slight straw color barely more tintured than water. It had a grassy nose and flavors, with grapefruit and high, crisp acidity. The South African wine had none of the grassy flavors, but possessed high acid. Lemon and grapefruit were detected as well. Personally, I don't like grassy Sauvignon Blancs, so I liked the Tora Bay. But others thought the Neil Ellis was a better match.

Our meat course came next. **Braised Beef Short Ribs with House-made Demi-glace, served with Parsnip Puree, Spinach and Mustard** was served on a long, rectangular white plate. Three short ribs were laying separately in puddles of parsnip puree topped by spinach. Heavy cream was added to the puree, while the spinach was sautéed in garlic and



olive oil. A defatted veal stock was reduced and made the base of the sauce, then a grainy mustard was added. It was hearty, rich and filling, and a great background for the two red wines. The **Beringer Knights Valley Cabernet Sauvignon 2009** was surprisingly ready to drink, and sported an oaky nose, resolved tannins and had no rough spots. It showed great affinity to the ribs. With the beef, the wine was even richer, softer, big and bold. The comparison wine was the **Laughing Magpie Shiraz, Viognier 2008** from McLaren Vale, Australia. As in France's northern Rhône Valley, white Viognier grapes was added to the red Shiraz to increase the wine's aromatics. This wine was a very dark, impenetrable ruby color. I couldn't see the white plate behind the wineglass. Like the Beringer, the tannins were fully resolved when taken with the short ribs. It was a bit less rich than the cab, but more elegant. John returned to get our table's opinion on the two wines. Of the eight, three preferred the Shiraz, and five liked the cabernet best. The Omaha table unanimously preferred the Shiraz.

We ended our Fall Feast with **Kentucky Bourbon Cake Shot Glass Dessert**. Elegant in its own glass, whipped pumpkin flavored mousse surrounded cake.



Chef Mark Oswald came out to meet the diners, who all gave him a round of applause. Banquet Chef Patrick Gaughn was actually in charge of our meal, but had gone home by the time we were concluding. My biggest criticism was that all the heated courses arrived only lukewarm, including the soup. But the flavors were all top notch, and the presentation was impeccable.

Our hearty thanks to Stacie Matz and John Fischer for planning and selecting the wines for this event. *The Bluffs Food & Wine gazette*

More photos of this event on the following page »





Understanding Tannins

by John Fischer

Of all the components of wine, tannins are the most difficult to understand. They are a bugaboo to many wine tasters, even the most experienced. Many enthusiastic wine tasters haven't the foggiest idea what tannins are, how they affect wine, or even how to experience them.

The chemistry of tannins is difficult and incompletely understood. There is much research ongoing in this field, all of which is ultimately directed at helping winemakers produce a better bottle of wine. Fear not! I will spare you with much of this arcane material. Instead, I will focus on the classic and most practical aspects of tannins.

Tannins are found only in red wines. Indeed, besides wine color, they are the dominant substances that separate red wine from white. Tannins are not just one substance, but a whole family of chemically related substances. They are very reactive and grab on to one another to form large polymers (long chains of molecules). They also grab onto wine's pigments to form pigment-tannin complexes. A wine's sediment consists of pigment-tannin complexes that are too big to stay in solution. What's more, they can grab onto food substances such as proteins—an important effect in regard to wine food pairing (cuts the weight of foods).

In order to experience tannins, place some wine in your mouth and swirl it around before you swallow. You will notice that your mouth becomes very dry. This is because tannins reacted with the mucoproteins (saliva) that lubricated your mouth. Moreover, tannins suck out water from the lining of the mouth, which further dries out your tissues. This sensation is called astringency.

The primary function of tannins is to protect wine during bottle age. This is a major reason that most red wines last considerably longer than white wines. Tannins preserve wine by two main mechanisms: their antibacterial and antioxidant effect. Tannins grab on to oxygen (a prime spoiler of wines), which slowly leaks into all sealed bottles of wine.

As wine ages, tannin levels fall. In a young wine, there are many single, free molecules of tannin and numerous short chain polymers, all of which are very astringent. With time, the chains of polymers increase in length which makes the wine less tannic. Large polymers are less astringent, and of course, those tannins that precipitated out as sediment no longer have any effect on the wine.

One of the effects of tannins is their ability to cover over flavor. Therefore, it is not advisable to serve red wines with delicately flavored dishes as the subtle nuances in the food will be essentially snuffed out. The more flavors that a dish has, the more tannins it can tolerate.

An important effect of tannin's reactivity is its ability to reduce the weight of big full-bodied dishes. Ponderously rich dishes can be cloyingly heavy. Prime rib served with rich, hearty gravy can have its weight reduced by serving it with tannic wines like Cabernet Sauvignon or Zinfandel. In a well balanced wine at maturity (when flavors peak), wine will have just enough tannins to give a little sparkle to the wine.

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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*.

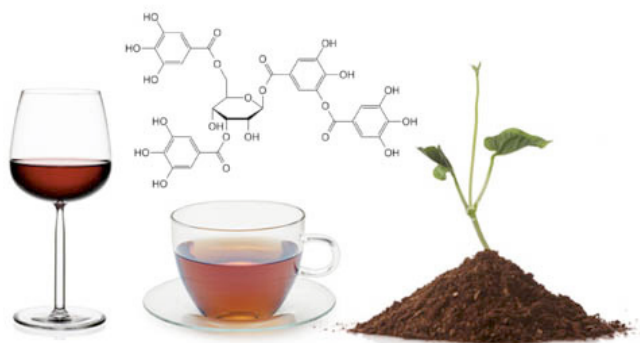


Photo courtesy of barrelroomsf.blogspot.com/2012/07/dispelling-sulfite-myth-truth-about-red.html

“Always do sober what you said you'd do drunk... That will teach you to keep your mouth shut.”

—Ernest Hemingway

Tapas a Spanish Tradition

by Tom Murnan



Photo courtesy of José Porras, wikipedia.org

In 2009, Mary and I took a cruise from Venice to Barcelona. When we were in Barcelona, the Paris of Spain, we went to a restaurant called Tapas Tapas. It was geared towards the tourist trade in this very touristy town, but it had several pages of Tapas. The nice thing, besides the English translation, was that they had photos of what you were going to get. The food was OK, but I found myself wishing we had gone to a more local and less touristy venue.

Tapas are smaller sized portions of a wide variety of food that goes well with Sherry or other wine. It is always used in the plural form, hence the “s” at the end of the word. Literally, it means “to cover.” There are many versions of how Tapas got started. One version says that pieces of bread were used to cover sherry glasses to keep the fruit flies out. Another variation of legend says Alphonso X, who was too ill to drink wine without food, had these small plates with his wine between meals. He recovered, and ordered that taverns had to serve these small meals with their wine. Another story credits King Alphonso XIII who stopped by a beach side tavern outside Cadiz and ordered a glass of wine. The waiter brought the glass out covered by a piece of ham to protect the glass from blowing beach sand. The king liked the ensemble so well that he ordered another glass “with the cover.” Still another story credits Felipe III with ordering tavern food to be served with wine to curb drunken, disorderly behavior. Whatever the reality, tapas are tremendously popular in Spain today. Recall that the Spanish do not eat dinner until

9:00 pm at the earliest, and many start at 11:00 pm, so Tapas would be a way to relax after work with a glass of wine and have a bit of food to tide you over until dinner.

Maybe we should also add what Tapas are NOT. Tapas are not starters, like Hors d’Oeuvres or appetizers. In Spain, you start with Tapas and eat them until you are done. Tapas are not a certain kind of food. It can be anything. It can be ham, bread, cheese, seafood, rice paella, kebabs, anything as long as it is served as part of a drink. It is also not a collection of small dishes brought out all at once for the entree, which the Spanish call Tabla.

Many people “Go Out for Tapas” in Spain, which means they essentially bar hop, having one Tapas with a drink, then moving onto another bar. Conversation is encouraged with the small sized plate of food with drink. Standing while eating Tapas and barhopping is very common.

Some popular Tapas include: olives, sardines, boiled potatoes, salted cod, calamari (squid), meat or vegetable turnovers, scallops, pork, prawns. Formally, Tapas are called “small plates.” As you can see, almost anything that can be placed on a plate that accompanies your wine or Sherry can be called a Tapas.

My mouth is salivating just anticipating our event.

The Bluffs
Food & Wine
November 2012 gazette

Sources: Wikipedia, Tapas Definition from About.com

Tom and Mary Murnan 2012 Wine Vacation

Vol. 3: Dining at O Papparico in Porto

by Tom Murnan

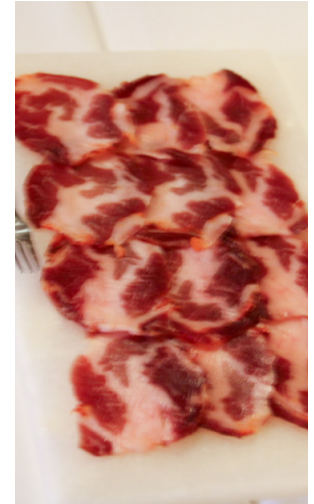


Mary and I were excited about finally going to a great restaurant in Portugal. I confess, I didn't do my homework before arriving in Lisbon. I figured that the hotel could direct us to a good place. That didn't work so well. Probably the best cafe we tried was a restaurant specializing in that Portuguese favorite, Cod, or bacalhau, recommended by a taxi driver. We had a learning curve because at all the restaurants, they ask if you want some bread and cheese. Later, when you get the bill, you

see a charge for "couvert." That was the starter, and it was not complimentary! At this particular restaurant, there was no place for a tip on the bill, so I figured it was included.

God knows, it was expensive enough at 62.65 €. When I got back to the hotel I asked them about it, and they said

the tip was not included, that it was up to me. So I went back and gave the waiter 10 €. Still later, I was told that the tip was mostly included, but that you could leave a few Euro if you were pleased. It definitely is not the same as France. So it was a relief to have all the meals on the wine portion of the trip planned and paid for from this point on, and to experience the best food the country had to offer.



We arrived at Restaurant O Papparico at about 7:30 pm, early by Portuguese standards.

Usually closed on Sunday, the restaurant opened just for us, but then asked some locals, making it pretty full. Owner Sergio Cambas has been getting accolades for his cuisine. We had the Chef's Menu, which was designed around wines from the Douro, the area we would visit the next day. A rustic ambiance prevailed, with stone walls and antiques throughout. Presentation was outstanding for all the courses. For example, they used flat slabs of rectangular marble for the appetizers. We started with a sparkling wine, Vertice Millesime 2005 from, where else, the Douro. We had cold starters, then warm. The cold included Azeitão Creamy Cheese, Veal Terrine with Port Sauce, Codfish Creviche with corn bread, onions and parsley, Octopus Ceviche with mint, Black Pork Prosciutto and Smoked Sausage. The warm appetizer was Hand Dived Scallops with Coral Butter and Chorizo Vinaigrette.

Our sea food entree included Grilled Octopus with Cherry Tomato and Onions in Port Wine. Our second entree



was from the farm: Grilled Veal with Mushroom and Port Sauce. Both entrees were paired with two red wines: the 2009 Meandro do Vale Meão and the Quinta do Crasto Old Vines Reserva 2009. I have seen Quinta do Crasto for sale in Omaha, and we would in fact go to the estate the next day. It definitely is worth trying a bottle.

We then enjoyed a Pré Dessert with a Krohn 1998 Colheita Tawny Port. Finally, we had our choice of Hazelnut Tart with Lemon Ice Cream, or Tangerine Sorbet with Vodka Premium Ultimat, or Wild Berries Cheesecake, or Crème Brûlée. Coffee or Tea with Petit-Fours ended the repast. Believe me, no one went away hungry! What a wonderful way to kick off our wine and food filled adventure in Portugal. The Bluffs Food & Wine

Next time: Taking the train up the Douro to the Port growing area.





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Upcoming Council Bluffs Branch Events! Mark Your Calendars!

November 2 • Bob & Suzanne Kasso will present a meal of Spanish tapas at Elaine Fenner's house.

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

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

Hosting an event?

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

We would love to include YOUR event on the calendar!
email details to: stephenhipple@hotmail.com

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

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



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PUBLISHER: Todd Lemke
EDITOR: Tom Murnan

GRAPHIC DESIGNER: Katie Anderson

KEEPING In Touch!

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

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

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