The Bluffs Food & Vine

Event Report: Oregon Wine Country Dinner

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



Presidents Comments

)ear Members,

I hope that you have enjoyed another year of food and wine with our branch. Suzanne and I think it was a great year with wonderful events.

When we first joined the branch there were 27 members and there were 8 to 10 events a year. Thanks to the leadership of David Tritsch and Patti Hipple along with the board we have improved the frequency and quality of our events over the past 7 years. We are now at over 55 members and holding 12 events a year, have a website, publish a monthly newsletter, and our cellar has over 400 bottles of 90+ point wines. I think our new mission statement (on the back cover of the Gazette) explains who we are and why we have grown so quickly in the past few years.

During the last two years we have had events that included a one man play, learned about pairing wine and cheese, held a tutored tawny port tasting, enjoyed Irish dancing and learned about wine scoring. We also held events that featured food and wine from around the world thanks to the creativity and effort of our members who hosted these events. I am not sure there is a branch in IWFS who have held such a diverse group of events with such great wine and food.

It would not be possible for our branch to function without the help and guidance of our board. The board meets once a month to review past events and plan future events. Members of our board also manage our cellar, handle all of our finances, edit and publish our monthly newsletter along with our website. We constantly look at ways we can improve your experience as a member. I would like to thank the current board members below for their efforts during my 2 years serving as President. • **Dr. John Fischer** – Cellar Master and wine columnist for our newsletter. John was a founding member of our branch and the first president.

• Diane & Gary Forristall – Diane is our Membership Chairman and Treasurer of our branch. Diane and Gary were founding members of our branch.

• Steve & Patti Hipple – Patti is a Past President and current Cellar Master. Steve serves on the IWFS Board of Governors of the America's.

• Bob & Suzanne Kossow – Suzanne was Secretary of our club for 4 years and along with being President I manage the branch's website on IWFS.org.

• Todd Lemke – Publisher of our Gazette and has served as secretary the past 2 years.

• Stacie Matz – Board member since 2013. Stacie will be serving as our Vice President in 2016.

• Tom Murnan – Vice President and Editor of our Gazette. Tom will be our branch President in 2016.

• Jill Panzer – Our newest board member. Jill co-hosted 3 different events this past year.

• David & Deb Tritsch – David, a Past President, is assistant Treasurer. Deb is a past Secretary. Dave and Deb were founding members of our branch.

There is a lot of experience on the board and that has helped to successfully guide the branch. I would like to congratulate Steve Hipple for being honored with the IWFS André Simon Bronze Medal. It is well deserved for all of his work on the America's board and his service to our branch.

I would also like to thank the board and the members of our branch for honoring me with the IWFS Americas Silver Medal for my work with the branch. It has been a fun couple of years and I am excited about the future of our branch. I will continue to host events and manage the website.

Tom Murnan will be our branch President in 2016. He has worked hard for the branch in the past and I look forward to next year to see what Tom has planned. He has already scheduled events into June 2016.

Finally I would like to thank my wife Suzanne for her help and support over the last few years. She has been my partner in life and in this adventure into wine and food.

Enjoy, *Bob Kossow*



"When you cook for people, they feel cared for." —Ruth Reichl, chef and food writer in her book *My Kitchen Year*







Editor's Corner

hen I finally end my series on Mary and my trip Madeira, I will start another on our trip out to the northwest, to Oregon. We were headed to the International Pinot Noir Celebration in McMinnville. I was so impressed with this breadbasket of America. It is a bountiful land. No wonder the pioneers flocked there after the '49 gold rush. Instead of going to California, these folks headed to the fertile promised land in the Willamette Valley. Although it had not rained for more than 45 days when we arrived on July 22nd, and all the grass was brown, you could tell that in due season they get plenty of rain: the street signs all have moss on one side. The wines were fabulous. Just about all the major varieties are grown there, and there are reds, whites, rosés and sparkling wines available. But the area is now known for its Pinot Noir. I thought this would make a great themed event for the Branch, so I hosted an Oregon Wine Country event on 11-8-15. Read all about it under the Event Report title.

Sandy Lemke reports on three area chefs being inducted into the Omaha Hospitality Hall of Fame. One, Chef Glenn Wheeler, will be our host for the January 23rd event at Spencer's For Steaks And Chops. Many of you are familiar with the other two chefs as well. Sandy also mentions how well our students from the Culinary Institute did in a recent competition in Orlando, FL. Don't skip this section.

Continuing my series on Madeira, in this issue we arrive at the single richest sources of ancient Madeiras on the island, the firm of **Pereira D'Oliveira Lta**. If it is 19th or early 20th century fortified wines that you want, D'Oliveira has more than any of the other five primary lodges. Prices are fairly reasonable considering their great age. The oldest stock bottle currently available at this lodge, and indeed the entire island, is 1850. And who was President of the United States in 1850? I had to look that one up myself. Millard Fillmore, our 13th President. Don't forget, Madeira was the favored wine in the colonies and later the United States. The Declaration of Independence was toasted with Madeira. Without a doubt, Madeira is the longest lived wine in the world. I tried the 1850. It was stunning. I'm just glad Madeira is out of fashion, otherwise all these old bottles would be long gone!

Finally, John Fischer nicely sums up on how to become an accomplished wine taster. Wine is a form of art, just like painting or music. But it has one advantage these other disciplines do not: they appeal to multiple senses in the taster. Enjoy this extremely well written explanation of what makes a good wine.

Cheers!

Tom Murnan

"Seize the moment! Remember all those women on the Titanic who waved off the dessert cart." —Erma Bombeck

Event Report: Oregon Wine Country Dinner

by Tom Murnan

ell, I tried to re-create a little bit of Oregon for our 11-8-2015 event at Spezia. Mary and I attended the International Pinot Noir Celebration (IPNC) in McMinnville, OR at the end of July of this year. I was so impressed with Oregon that I tried to duplicate a bit of it for you here at home. One of the highlights of our weekend at the IPNC was the traditional salmon bake dinner. Where the festival usually had about 800 for their meals, for the salmon feed they sold 1000 tickets. About 650 pounds of salmon were contracted with the native Americans to supply the meal, along with Alder wood sticks and firewood. I used the photo of the cooking fish on the invite and menu. Knowing that Omaha's Spezia Italian Restaurant routinely does wood grilling on salmon and steaks, I approached Chef Brian Reilly. He was eager to go beyond the usual Italian menu to accommodate our dinner. One of the things we had at the IPNC was a peach upside-down cake, so I wanted to recreate that.





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There were 31 reservations, of this there were two guests and two no shows. One of the Wittler's two guests was Allan Gossman. Allan went to high school with our own Steve Hipple. They were on the gymnastics team together in Lincoln, NE. Allan hoped to meet Steve again after many, many years, but alas, the Hipples were in Australia. However, Allen assured us he could supply some high school dirt on Steve for the asking!

Part of my aim for the event was to show the bounty of Oregon. This is the 50th anniversary that Pinot Noir was introduced to the Willamette Valley by David Lett of Eyrie Vineyards. So we had a great representative sampling of various kinds of wine: sparkling, white, rosé, and of course, Pinot Noir.

We commenced the quaffing phase with a glass of **2011** Argyle Brut, a remarkably good sparkling wine. From one of the coolest vintage on record for the Willamette, this wine consists of 60% Pinot Noir and 40% Chardonnay. It was raised in 20% neutral oak and 80% stainless steel. It is a steal at \$19.99 plus freight. All the other quaffers were Pinot Noir except one Pinot Gris. Chef Reilly started us out with smoked salmon canapés and two kinds of pizza-esque flatbreads: Margherita (tomato slices topped with mozzarella, surrounded by cheese and basil) and Sausage & Pepper. The salmon





went superbly with the sparkler, and the flat bread crust was less filling than your typical pizza crust.

We moved to table for the rest of the evening. Starting out with a Honeycrisp Apple Salad with Dried Cranberry and Goat Cheese with Raspberry Vinaigrette, we paired that with a rosé and a Pinot Gris. The salad was crisp and cold, with nice apple slices and a wine friendly Raspberry Vinaigrette that was just a tad sweet. Cranberries and goat cheese added interest. Delicious. Our two wines were the 2013 Eyrie Vineyards Dundee Pinot Gris and a 2014 Ponzi Willamette Valley Rosé of Pinot Noir. After a show of hands, 75% preferred the rosé, which to me matched the red fruits in the salad better than the Pinot Gris.

Our Second Course was the Wood Grilled British Columbia Salmon with Herb Risotto and Toasted Tomato. This was soooo good. King Salmon was specially brought in for our event from a specialty fishmonger. Nicely done with a slight bit of crust on top, it had great salmon taste. The risotto complimented nicely and provided a starch and a willing companion. But the tomatoes were the surprise. They provided a nice contrast of acidity and earthiness which enlivened the dish. They seemed more concentrated as if they were dried and re-hydrated, with deep tomato flavor. Better than usual tomatoes. The 2012 Ponzi Willamette Valley Pinot Noir was rich, complex and earthy but nicely balanced. It was a bit softer and shorter in finish than the 2012 Adelsheim Willamette Valley Pinot Noir. The bottle at my table was corked, the only bottle that night so tainted. A replacement was sound. I thought it not as complex as the Ponzi and a bit off balance due to higher acidity, but others preferred it to the Ponzi.

A **Blood Orange Sorbet** was our intermission course and palate cleanser. Refreshing and intense, with deep orange flavor, it is not every day that we enjoy a good Blood Orange.

Our Third Course was Wood Grilled Beef Tenderloin with Red Wine Demi Glace, Potato Hash with Caramelized Brussels Sprouts and Fennel. Cooked medium, my steak was tender with prominent hatch marks from the wood grill. The demi glace sauce promoted the steak with its rich beef and wine flavors. The hash was more like just quarters of small potatoes, rather than what one usually thinks of a hash. The sprouts had an almost cabbage like nose, but went well with the medley.

Our duo of Pinot Noirs this time were both from 2012: the **Cristom "Louise Vineyard"** from the Eola-Amity Hills area, and the **Roco "Clawson Creek Vineyard"** from the Yamhill-Carlton area. My notes say that the Roco had a strong, prominent



nose, sweet fruit but acid driven body. It was seamless and wonderful with the steak. The Cristom was more closed in nose, more acidic and tightly tannic. The Roco was the preferred wine after a vote.

We finished with a **Peach Upside-down** cake. Nice vanilla and peach flavors, the cake portion was just a tad dry. The 2013 Andrew Rich Gewurztraminer Ice Wine Celio Vineyard was our paired wine. It was the only wine not from the Willamette Valley, hailing instead from the Columbia Gorge, not all that far away. The inspiration for the upside-down cake came from one of our outside dinners at IPNC. Chef Reilly practiced this dish with a sampling of the wine well before the event. It went perfectly, not too strong to obliterate the features of the wine.

The story behind the ice wine is interesting. Andrew Rich worked for Randall Grahm of Bonny Doon Vineyards in his younger days. At that time, Graham was producing **cyro extracted wines**. Instead of relying on the vagaries of unreliable nature, Grahm froze the fruit himself, separating the sweet juice from the water for an intensely sweet wine. Flash forward to the present, and Andrew is using the same techniques today. Since there was no professional rating on the wine, and I sensed it would be fabulous, I ordered a sample for the Board to approve before the event (and the chef to practice with). We gave it a 95 rating. Rich, dessert wine sweet, with intense spicy flavors (the gewurtz in gewürztraminer), it was a unusual treat.

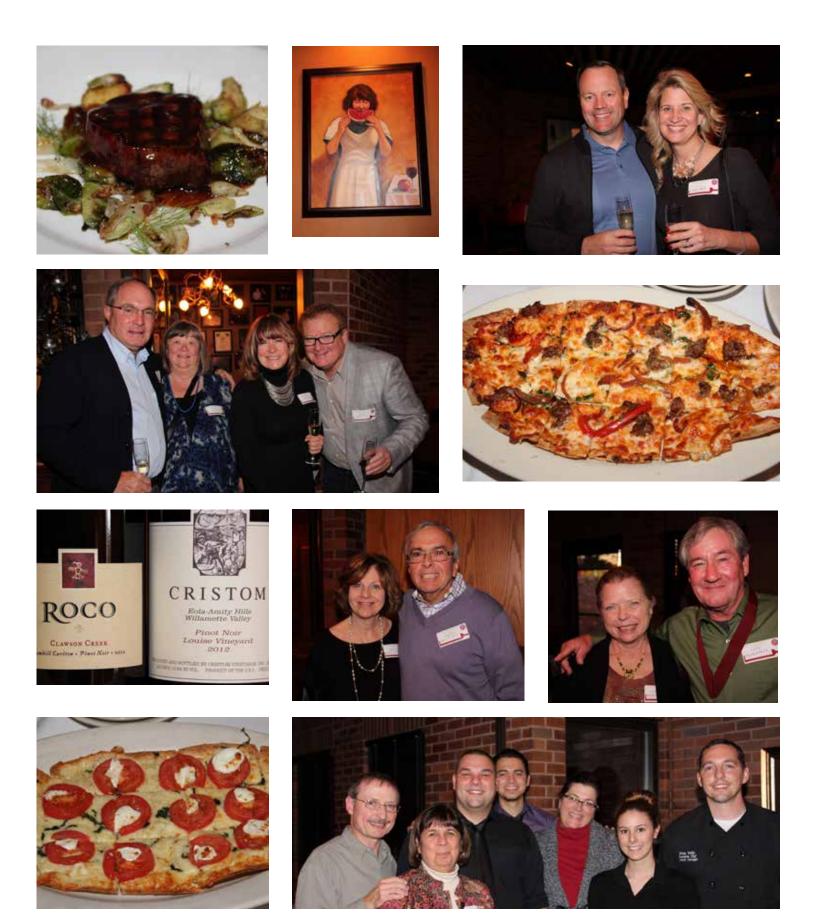
Many thanks to **Chef Brian Reilly** and his staff who carried this all out: Roldan Diaz and Anthony Gawthrop who also did our wine service; Hannah Garrett, and director of events Wendy Becker. I hope we have more events with an emphasis on a particular area that we seldom explore.























ANDREW RI







Omaha Hospitality Hall of Fame Inducts Three

by Sandy Lemke

all of Fame on October 18 at the Institute for Culinary Arts at Metropolitan Community College. It was a gala evening catered by the national championship award-winning students of the college. The Hall of Fame award dates back to 1993. It annually awards those who have made lifetime achievements to the Omaha restaurant industry either as a chef, restaurateur of a purveyor.

Inducted was **Cedric Fichepain** CEC, owner of Le Voltaire French restaurant in Omaha. He also owns two French bakeries, Le Petit Paris, one in Omaha and one in Papillion. A Certified Executive Chef, he is a past president and founder of the Independent Dining Establishment Association and a recipient of the Wine Spectator Wine Award.

Also honored was **John Ursick**, Executive Chef and operating partner in Stokes Grill and Bar with two locations, and the Twisted Fork. He has received the Wine Spectator Award of Excellence and donated his time and talent to many fundraisers throughout the years.

Also included in the honorees was Executive Chef **Glenn Wheeler** of Spencer's For Steaks And Chops. IWFS members have enjoyed his meals at favorite restaurants such as Passport, Omaha Prime, Maxine's and Bomba Dia. He has also been named Restaurateur of the Year by the Omaha Restaurant Association.

The culinary arts students were enthusiastic and fresh back from celebrating a win at the national competition. Five members of the Metropolitan Community College Institute of Culinary Arts team won the top prize in Orlando in August with the award presented by the president of the American Culinary Federation.



Cedric Fichepain



John Ursick



Glenn Wheeler



Le Petit Paris



Stokes Grill and Bar



Twisted Fork



Spencer's For Steaks And Chops

Tom & Mary Murnan Portuguese Wine Vacation Vol. 19 June 8, 2012 Lunch at Atlantic Restaurant

by Tom Murnan

une 8th was turning out to be quite the day to taste Madeiras. First we went to the Madeira Wine Company in the morning, with its wonderful and photogenic old wine lodge, and, after lunch, to D'Oliveira's. We were supposed to first stop by D'Oliveira's neighbor, **Barros e Sousa Lta.**, literally next door, but somehow that arrangement fell through.

Without a doubt, if it ancient Madeiras that trip your trigger, then **Pereira D'Oliveira (Vinhos) Lta.** is an absolute trove of treasures. No other lodge comes close to having such a stunning selection of old wines from the 19th and early 20th centuries. Easy to obtain today, these irreplaceable wines will someday be a rarity. It helps that Madeira is an out-offashion wine because, although not cheap, they are an absolute bargain compared to an old but fashionable first growth Bordeaux. They even have a wine for sale from their founding year, the 1850 Verdelho.

Established in 1850, by Joao Pereira D'Oliveira, for about 120 years the firm was a **partidista**, which means they sold their wines to other shippers rather than market it themselves. Some famous wines were sold to the Madeira Wine Company, but they also purchased wines from other



sources to be raised and sold later. The company today is owned by three brothers and is still a small sized family business. The old wines are still kept in barrel, where they will improve.



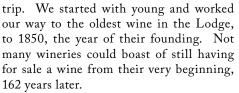


So we found ourselves at Rua dos Ferreiros 107, in the heart of old Funchal, not far from the marvelous cathedral. Our tour guide was Luis D'Oliveria, a direct descendant of the founder and one of the aforementioned brothers. We started with a tour of the aging chai, where the wines are gently aged by the **canterio** method which uses the ambient subtropical air (as opposed to the much quicker and cheaper estufagem method where the wine is heated by hot water contained in serpentine coils inserted into the wine). We spotted casks tagged for aging under POSEI regulations, where the barrel is sealed with sealing wax for a specific period. No tasting is permitted.

We then moved into a tasting room where we were treated to twenty, count 'em, 20 different Madeiras. This would prove to be the most extensive tasting of the entire







Starting off in the 21st century, we tried a 10 year old dry, a 15 year old dry, and a 10 year old sweet, all bottled in 2012. Then there were two 15 year old sweets bottled in 2008 and later. Moving to the 20th century, a 1994 Verdelho was number 5, then a Malvasia 1990. Malvasia (or Malmsey, as the English call it) are always very sweet. This was bottled in 2009. We learned that the Lodge bottles from the wood mostly as they need it, shortly before the wine is offered for sale.

Moving backward in time, we tried a 1989 Cohlheita Sercial which was sharply acidic and dry, as is that style. Next was a 1984 Boal, whose style is medium sweet, followed by a 1973 Verdelho, which is medium dry in style. This particular fellow was a bit high in acidity.

The wines were all tasted in **chimney** glasses, whose production has been discontinued. They are criticized for not getting the high notes of a wine, but you certainly get the lower notes. Personally, I think they do a pretty good job. We were also provided with various snacks: small











Ritz crackers, Pepperridge Farm goldfish, Ruffles potato chips, **Bolo de Mel** (honey cake) and cinnamon cookies.

Wine number ten was a **1971 Terrantez**. Terrantez is now days a rare grape, hard to raise, that is experiencing a bit of a comeback. It is typically a bit more bitter than the other varietals. This was an unusual treat. The **1969 Sercial** followed, then a **1968 Boal** which received a gold medal. This was the best so far, kept 40 years in the wood with amazing balance, lively acidity and long finish. It sold for $87 \in$ (\$114.00). A **1937 Sercial** followed. That one was too acidic for me. **1932 Verdelho** was next. Only 2000 bottles remained of this 80 year old. A 1912 Verdelho from the year the Titanic sunk was next. When the Titanic parties were going on in Omaha, I opened one from my cellar and it was much better, primarily because I had breathed that wine over 48 hours. Our tasting wine had not been breathing that long. Very old Madeiras need several days breathing to taste at their best. It takes that long to release the wine held prisoner in the bottle all those years. They take on weight and complexity with generous breathing that was missing in this sample. $260 \in (\$340.60 \text{ in } 2012, \$525 \text{ in } 2015)$. I gave it a 95/100.

Starting our countdown to the final five was a **1908 Boal**. Being a partidista company, this wine had been previously sold to the Madeira Wine Company, who put it under their Cossart Gordon Label as well. Darker than the 1912, it was sweet but not cloying and sported a green meniscus. Incredibly rich. This was For Love of Port tour organizer **Roy Hersh's** favorite. Luis described it as a round shape with ginger and molasses.

A 1907 Malvasia we had next I found sweet but too acidic. Number 18 was an 1880 Terrantez. Roy adores good Terrantez, and he bowed in homage to this one! I think his favorite just changed from the 1908. One of the greatest wines they make, brown with green tones throughout. Mahogany nose. Complex. Fabulous. I gave it a 96-97/100. $660 \in (\$864.60)$.









The countdown to the oldest wine continued. Number 19 was an **1875 Moscatel**. It was bottled in 1970 and is a very rare varietal. There is no more Moscatel being made today. Round, sweet, rich and complex, the acidity is present but not noticeable so well balanced is the wine. Green meniscus or rim in the glass, a sure sign of a fine Madeira. I gave this one a $97/100.640 \in (\$838.40)$.

Finally, with palate fatigue setting in on these fortified wines, wine number 20 was the **1850 Verdelho**. This was bottled in the mid 1970s. Medium dark brown with green tones. Mahogany and caramel nose. Nicely balanced with good acidity. Ginger and apricot notes. Not too sweet. Another $97/100.\ 700 \in (\$917.00).$

What a marathon! I definitely needed a break. We all headed down to the shop where I loaded my Winecruzer with a few selected examples of 19th century wonderment. You can't get these babies at Costco! One has to do one's homework before plunging into the shop and its treasures, however. Many very old items were cheaper in the USA, (at the Rare Wine Company) especially since the airlines charge \$75.00 for an extra piece of luggage.

Next time: Restaurant do Forte





On Becoming an Accomplished Wine Taster by John Fischer



hat is it that separates a good bottle of wine from a great bottle of wine, or for that matter, a fair bottle from a good bottle? It all comes down to artistry, a great bottle of wine is a work of art.

Like any work of art, you experience wine with your senses. You can see its pristine color; you can smell its captivating aroma and bouquet; you can taste its array of complex and concentrated flavors, and you can feel its soft round texture or its refreshing bite of clean, fresh acidity. You experience a wine and food with more senses than any other work of art.

With an oil painting, you value its artistry only with the sense of vision. With a great musical composition, you can luxuriate in the harmony of its notes. With a sculpture, you see and can feel its contours. However wine is a more complex art form than any of these; you experience it with a near full complement of sensual experiences: sight, smell, taste, and feel.

Let's be a little more specific. What are the characteristics that make a wine great? There are many, but we will concentrate on three stand-out elements: balance, complexity, and finish. Of course, you must first like the flavors that you taste. Scents or flavors of barnyard, burnt rubber, mold and the like will obviously totally destroy a wine.

Balance is one of the least understood terms in a wine taster's vocabulary. It is an ideal sought for in all artistic creations and can be found in abundance throughout nature. The painter strives for balance in color and composition, the architect for balance in design, and the composer for symmetry, harmony and balance in his musical composition.

In a flawlessly balanced wine at maturity, all parts (acids, tannins, alcohol, flavors) of the wine are in perfect harmony. Look at these parts like the members of a barber shop quartet; each member's voices contribute to the whole to produce but one melodious sound. No one voice stands out. In a perfectly balanced wine no one part of the wine stands out. The parts completely support each other without excess or deficiency.

There is one caveat: young and immature wines can be tart, tannic, and have undeveloped scents and flavors. These young wines are not synchronized and can feel rough, disjointed, and aggressive. Nevertheless, the wine can still be deemed balanced if in the mind of the taster it will blossom at some time in the future when it has matured. You can think of such a wine as in a bud stage. If a rose has a big firm bud, you can expect a big and beautiful flower. As a wine matures, acids (tartness) and tannins (astringency) decrease and flavors increase. It takes experience to determine if a wine will flourish with time, or will just fizzle out.

Complexity is another hallmark of a great wine. By complexity, we mean a myriad of scents and flavors. A young wine is typically dominated by fruity scents and flavors: apples, lemons, pears, flowers etc. in white wines, and currants, cherries, berries, plumbs, etc. in red wines. As a wine matures, other non-fruity scents and flavors develop: mushrooms, truffles, smoky tobacco, leather, minerals, earth, licorice, and the list goes on—the more flavors the better.

In a good bottle of wine, the flavor profile will change as the wine aerates. You may experience black currants, cherries, and plumbs in the first glass, but by the time of the third glass, some of these savors dissipate, and new ones, such as truffles, eucalyptus, chocolate, and smoky tobacco may appear. Don't think that it's your imagination—the alcohol hasn't gone to your head. The flavor profile has actually changed; it has evolved.

The finish of a wine is the explosion of flavors that occurs after you have swallowed it. You do not have to be an expert to be able to experience a wine's finish—you will know it immediately, and the longer it lingers, the better the quality of the wine. The finish of a wine is what gives it stature. In a poor wine, the aftertaste will suddenly drop off into the pit of insipidity.

Of all the attributes of a wine, the conclusion is the best indicator of quality, because to have a good finish, all of the other attributes have to be in sync. The wine must be complex, balanced, and free from obvious defects to have a pleasing, savory, and sybaritic aftertaste. Wines that are too short in their finish are also short in their pleasure.

There you have it! The next time you taste a wine put a little concentrated effort into looking for these three attributes of quality: balance, complexity, and finish. You will be surprised at how your newly gained knowledge has sharpened your wine-tasting acumen.



Upcoming Council Bluffs Branch Events

Mark Your Calendars!

January 23, 2016

f L Spencer's For Steaks And Chops in the Hilton Garden Inn with cuisine by Chef Glenn Wheeler. Chef Wheeler was recently inducted into Omaha Hospitality Hall of Fame. The Theme is California wines with California cuisine. Producer: Michelle & Hasan Hyder and Debbie and David Tritsch

February 5, 2016

 $oldsymbol{1}$ Field Club. Valentine's day dinner and dance with DA the DJ spinning records. Wine theme: Breaking all the old wine rules. Producers: Tom & Mary Murnan, Jill Panzer

March 12, 2016

Jackson Street Tavern in the Old Market. Theme: To Be Announced Producer: Todd Lemke

April 17, 2016 V. Mertz.

95 Points or Better for all wines! Producers: Patti & Steve Hipple

🗍 May 13, 2016

🗴 Happy Hollow Club Lucky Friday the 13th. Producers: Stacie Matz and Jill Goldstein





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The mission of the Council Bluffs Branch of the International Wine and Food Society is to develop a profound understanding and appreciation of both wine and the culinary arts and to enjoy this experience in the camaraderie of friends. Our task is to educate our membership about wine and to develop the skill of matching wine with food. We strive to drink high quality wines and to experience an eclectic array of foods prepared by the area's top chefs.

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

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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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