

DECEMBER 2020



The Bluffs
Food & Wine
gazette

EVENT REPORT: HERE COMES FALL! SPENCER'S FOR STEAKS & CHOPS

WINERY PROFILE: WOODWARD CANYON

STEPHEN HIPPLE ELECTED TO CHAIRMAN IWFS AMERICAS, INC.

PRESIDENT'S COMMENTS



Greetings to all;

Our November event was hosted by Tom and Mary Murnan at Spezia's. A comparison of California and Oregon Pinot Noir's was a fabulous way to start the evening. Chef Brian Reilly delighted attendees with a variety of fall inspired courses with paired wines. The wood grilled tenderloin with mushroom ravioli and mushroom sauce was a favorite. Such a fun evening! Thank you to Tom and Mary.

As 2020 nears to a close, I want to thank your IWFS Council Bluffs Branch Board members for their time and efforts in offering a variety of monthly events. It has been challenging and very time consuming process to host monthly events in light of current health concerns.

Your IWFS Council Bluffs Board of Directors:

Diane and Gary Forristall
Jill and Joe Goldstein
Steve and Patti Hipple
Bob and Suzanne Kossow
John Mathews and Amanda Harrington
Gary and Connie Martin
Tom Murnan
Dave and Tabitha Thrasher
Mike and Rhonda Wilke

Thank you for your dedication and commitment to the IWFS Council Bluffs Branch.

We wish you all a Merry Christmas and the happiest of New Years.
Be safe and be well. 🍷

Connie Martin

Cover Photo: Sunrise in Western Nebraska, Sand Hills country. Photo by Steve Murnan, Tom's twin brother 11/17/2020.

Back Cover Photo Sunset in Western Nebraska, Sand Hills country.
Photo by Steve Murnan, Tom's twin brother 11/18/2020.

***“They say marriages are made in Heaven.
But so is thunder and lightning.”
— Clint Eastwood***

EDITOR'S

CORNER

We had a nice, cozy room which we filled out nicely for our Here Comes Fall themed dinner at Spencer's for Steaks and Chops. I always enjoy Spencer's food. **Chef Glen Wheeler** usually has some innovation up his sleeve to make the dinner interesting. **Gary Hagebush** helped **Bob & Suzanne Kossow** by being the maître des vins and selecting our wine list. It was also nice that the Hilton Hotel, where Spencer's is located, offered free parking. However, several went down instead of up on first arrival. I discovered last year that's a dead end. But they quickly became log jammed as others had the same idea. Then they were caught in mini deadlock as it was difficult to go back with cars behind. Once above, you sometimes feel you need a shoehorn to get your car in a stall. But that had nothing to do with the fine wine and food selection. Take a peek at the event report which explains all.



**I STARTED
OUT WITH
NOTHING...I
STILL HAVE
MOST OF IT."**

One of our wines was a Woodward Canyon with the Artists Series label. Like Château Mouton Rothschild, they have commission a different artist ever since the series started. This was label 23. When you visit the winery, you can see all the labels in their museum. Founded in 1981, Woodward Canyon is a small winery near Walla Walla Washington dedicated to crafting some of the finest Cabernet Sauvignon in the state. Check out the Winery Profile.

Stephen Hipple has ascended the IWFS Americas. Inc corporate ladder and is now our Chairman, following the end of term of Mike Donohoe. This means we will be hearing from Steve four times a year in Wine Food & Friends as he takes the pulse of the Branches in the Americas! You don't just stumble into this kind of position. Steve worked hard at one of the most difficult jobs at IWFS Americas Inc: Festivals & Event Chairman. Kinda like having to put on all the events for our Branch for the whole year, except they are all out of town. Congratulations, Steve!

Some members have had trouble reading the Gazette on issuu.com, Or, they don't want to sign in, which means you can't even read the Gazette at all. They prefer a PDF since all you have to do is click it open. We have decided to offer it in both formats. In your email, a PDF will be sent along with the issuu.com link. The advantage of issuu.com is that you can see both right and left pages, like a paper magazine. Our PDF only lets you view one page at a time.

You can also access the Branch Recipe file by clicking:
https://issuu.com/omahapublications/docs/iwfs_cb_council_bluffs_recipes 

Tom Murnan

Event Report:

Here Comes Fall! Spencer's for Steaks & Chops

STORY & PHOTOS BY TOM MURNAN

IT was a gorgeous Autumn evening for our theme of Fall arriving. I for one love the cooler weather and the multicolored variety of the trees. Spencer's and Chef Glenn Wheeler has always been a great spot for our Branch. As usual, we had our own private room, which we filled up nicely. 32 members signed up with 3 no shows. I've noticed every restaurant seems to do the COVID procedures a bit differently. At Spencer's, we took off our mask when we sat down, and they brought the appetizers and two poured quaffing wines to our table. All the wines came from the Branch cellar except the Cambria Chardonnay and the dessert sparkling Shiraz. First time (maybe second) host Gary Hagebush selected the evening wines.

We enjoyed a **JBC Number 69 Brut Rosé Cremant de Bourgogne NV** and a **Storm 'Vrede' Hemelen-Aarde Valley, South Africa 2015**. The first hails from Burgundy, France. The initials JCB stand for Jean-Charles Boisset, a French Count who besides having many wine ventures in France, also has them in America. His most noteworthy property is Buena Vista, the oldest winery in California. We went there for the Sonoma Festival in 2017. A sparkling rosé, I found it bright with raspberry flavors and a nice acid balance. Our Pinot Noir was made by Hannes Storm in the 5 acre Vrede vineyard, two miles from the Atlantic Ocean and False Bay. It was number 51 of the Top 100 Wine Enthusiast wines in 2019. Cherry and plum flavors, to my palate it was dominated by

high acidity and was a bit on the lean side. It is a wine needing food, which fortunately was at hand in our appetizers. There was one per person of the following: a bruschetta which to me was more like a homemade pizza, with thick crust and topped with tomato and cheese and a slice of charcuterie. More abundantly, there was also pitted olives, slices of Mozzarella with a drizzle of balsamic vinegar, and roasted slices of red pepper. Executive Chef Glen Wheeler then came out and explained what was coming on the menu.

Our **First Course** was **Sweet Corn Chowder with Crispy Cornbread Croutons**. Yukon Gold potatoes were added to the chowder and tended to sink towards the bottom of the bowl. Served a bit tepid, the corn was wonderfully sweet. I had visions of the kitchen staff cutting the corn off the cob that afternoon to get the freshest, most delicious corn available. Generous portion in a large bowl, I liked the idea of the nicely creamed chowder being topped by an unusual touch: cornbread croutons. These soaked up the liquid and added to their flavor. Our **Cambria Estate Winery 'Katherine's Vineyard' Chardonnay Santa Maria Valley 2018** was a spot on match. A powerful Chardonnay with lively acidity and a touch of sweetness that married well with the chowder, it had apple, peach and a small amount of buttery flavors. I thought it was best as a food wine rather than a sipping wine. ▶















◀ The **Second Course** found us with **Risotto of Tomato & Fennel broth, Shrimp, Crab and Langoustine**. Chef Glenn told us it was in the style of a French bouillabaisse. **Bouillabaisse** is a fish stock-based broth with chopped tomatoes and saffron added to its base. Saffron is one of the most expensive spices in the world, made from the stigma and stiles of the saffron crocus, which must be harvested by hand. Each crocus yields just a few threads of saffron. Bouillabaisse also is not just fish boiled in plain water. Rather a previously prepared broth is used that starts with fish bones and is enhanced with leeks, tomatoes, garlic, fragrant olive oil, and herbs such as thyme, fennel and saffron. The saffron is what gives the orange color to our risotto. This was a fantastic essence of shell fish, somewhat heavy as risotto always is, and topped with fennel fronds, which intensified the liquorice flavor of fennel. The Arborio rice was perfectly served al dente. My favorite wine of the evening accompanied the risotto: **Domaine Serene Evenstad Reserve Pinot Noir 2014**. Domaine Serene is owned by the Evenstad family. Gary told me he decanted the wine an hour before, but it could have benefitted with an even longer breathing time. Who would know that ahead of time? Rich, ripe, generous and a touch sweet, it was a wonderful example of an Oregon Pinot Noir.

Our Entrée course was **Slow Roasted Certified Angus Beef Prime Striploin with Local Mushrooms, Red Wine Ragout, Confit Potato, and Swiss Chard**. Three slices of medium rare striploin beef were served over the red wine ragout and accompanied by a white-skinned potato, and mushrooms, which added a savory, earthy flavor, and was a bit peppery. As an unusual touch, instead of the more ubiquitous spinach, we had Swiss chard. It was powerful, salty with a hint of garlic, and a total contrast to the other ingredients. A palate cleanser as a side on the plate. We had a duo of wines to compare on this third course. The

Woodward Canyon Artist Series #23 Columbia Valley Cabernet Sauvignon 2014 was compared to a **Casa Lapostolle Le Petit Clos 'Clos Apalta' Valle de Alpata Chile 2016**. This was a Bordeaux blend of 95% Cabernet Sauvignon, 4% Merlot and 1% Carmenère. The Woodward Canyon's Artist Series began in 1992 and has become their flagship wine to promote their Cabernet Sauvignon. It is composed of 92% Cab Sauvignon, 6% Cabernet Franc, and 2% Petit Verdot that spent 22 months in 60% new French oak. It was richly flavorful and powerful, with black fruits flavors, nicely balanced and still tannic, while the Clos Apalta was much lighter in body and a touch acidic and a bit angular.

Dessert was a **Chocolate Torte with Merlot Infused Cherries and Cream Cheese Ice Cream**. The torte was the essence of chocolate. The restaurant made its own ice cream out of cream cheese, which made for a really nice ice cream on its own, but how do you pair a wine with it? Chocolates can pair with red wine, but ice cream always seems a bit of a chore for a wine match. However, in this case, in an unusual touch, tart cherries were marinated in Merlot. That acted as a bridge to pair our dessert with **The Chook Sparkling Shiraz NV from Australia**. The bubbles in the wine cut through the richness of the dessert, and the dark fruits and blueberry flavors went well with the cherries. The dessert was sweeter than the wine, which you usually want the other way around. Not a bad match on the whole, but it needed all the mentioned components to work.

Thanks so much to **Executive Chef Glenn Wheeler** for an imaginative dinner with many Autumn themed touches. The staff provided attentive service throughout the evening. More thanks are directed towards our hosts: **Suzanne & Bob Kossow**, and **Jane & Gary Hagebush**. Gary did a fine job in selecting the wine. 🍷

WINERY PROFILE: *Woodward Canyon*

BY TOM MURNAN



Rick Small and his wife Darcy Fugman-Small founded Woodward Canyon in 1981 in the Walla Walla area of Washington. Walla Walla is wheat country, and the primary agricultural activities are growing wheat and raising cattle. Small's family on his father's side has been in the area for three generations, and on his mother's side, five. The name Woodward Canyon came from the school bus route that Small took as a child. They would go by the canyon, who was named after agricultural pioneer A.P. Woodward, who the canyon was named after. The area was slow to move towards wine. Italian immigrants were planting vineyards generations ago, but they were using Mediterranean grape varieties that would get frozen out during the harsh winters. In the 1950s, temperatures in Walla Walla might go from 70° to -30° below zero in

the space of several days. If it could freeze the sap in pine trees and make limbs fall off, it certainly would kill those Mediterranean vines. When Rick joined the Army Reserves he met Gary Figgins. Together with Gary and other Reservists, they began making wine. In 1977, Figgins started the first commercial winery in the Walla Walla area: Leonetti Cellars. Small was not far behind, establishing Woodward Canyon in 1981, the second winery near Walla Walla. The land was all given over to wheat farming then. Plus he had no electricity or water rights and had to carry water uphill to water the vines. People thought he was crazy. The switch to French varieties helped survival rates in the Washington winters, and lately climate change towards a warmer temperature has helped bring success to Woodward Canyon.

Rick's first vineyard was planted in 1976, before the winery started. Rick planted the first of forty-one acres on his family's dry land wheat ranch, about 15 miles from Walla Walla. The elevation goes from 750 to 850 feet above sea level. The hillside vineyard now includes cabernet sauvignon, merlot, cabernet franc, sauvignon blanc and chardonnay as well as several experimental Italian and Rhone varieties. The winery also purchases grapes from select growers and is a partner in Champoux Vineyard which lies above the Columbia River in the Horse Heaven Hills appellation, and Sagemore Vineyard, near Pasco, WA, also above the Columbia River. Both vineyards were established in 1972 by other owners, and are key components to the Old Vine Cabernet line. ▶



Woodward Canyon "Old Vines" Cabernet Sauvignon

◀ The two most prestigious offerings are the Artist's Series and the Old Vines. Both are Cabernet Sauvignon based bottlings, and both have original labels that change yearly. The Old Vines has now settled on a picture of A.P. Woodward.

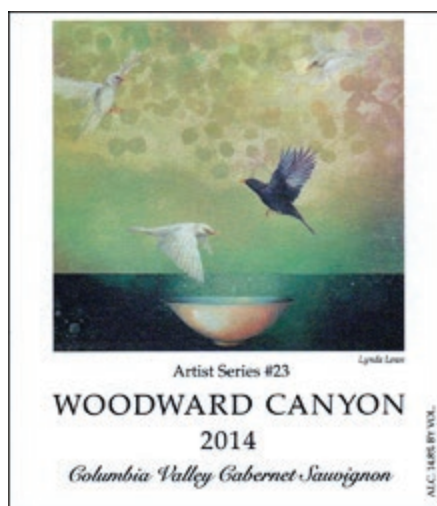
The **Woodward Canyon "Artist Series"** began in 1992 with the intent to showcase the finest of Washington State cabernet sauvignon. The vineyards used in the "Artist Series" are some of the oldest and most well-respected in the state of Washington. The label changes every year with work from a different artist. This wine is a heavier-bodied cabernet, typically aging 10+ years from the vintage.

In the Tasting Room can be found the original artwork on display of the current "Artist Series" label as well as additional pieces from the featured artist. Previous "Artist Series" originals can be found throughout the Reserve House.

The **"Old Vines" Cabernet** originally began as the "Dedication Series" with the start of the winery in 1981. For the first twenty-five years, the label featured a different pioneer of the Walla Walla Valley each year. Subsequently, it has featured A. P. Woodward, who Woodward Canyon is named after. The wine is sourced primarily from Champoux and Sagemoor Vineyards, which are home to some of the oldest cabernet blocks in Washington. This is a heavier-bodied cabernet and will typically age well with proper cellar conditions, 15+ years from vintage.

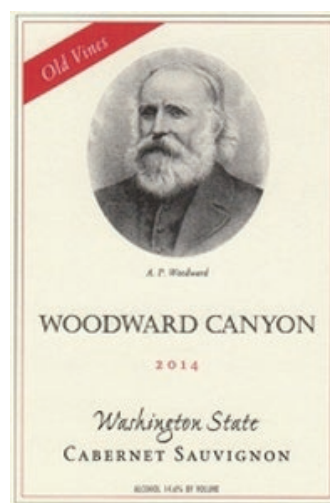
Woodward Canyon has had its share of accolades. The Wine Spectator has named multiple years and varieties as part of their Top 100.

#10, Top 100 of 1990, 1987 "Dedication Series #7" Cabernet Sauvignon;



#56, Top 100 of 1992, 1989 "Dedications Series #9" Cabernet Sauvignon, Columbia Valley;

#19, Top 100 of 1992, 1988 Charbonneau Red; #22, Top 100 of 1995, 1991 "Dedications Series #11" Cabernet Sauvignon, Columbia Valley;



Woodward Canyon Artist Series

#35, Top 100 of 1998, 1995 "Artist Series #4" Cabernet Sauvignon.

The Wine Enthusiast also has included them in their Top 100. 🍷

Sources: woodwardcanyon.com; travelandleisure.com/food-drink/wine/walla-walla-washington-wine-region.

STEPHEN HIPPLE ELECTED TO CHAIRMAN IWFS AMERICAS, INC.

STORY BY TOM MURNAN

PHOTOS BY WAYNE MARKUS AND RON POLICKY



*9/29/2018 Stephen Hipple receives
the André Simon Silver Medal at the
Quebec Great Weekend*

Our own Steve Hipple was elected to the highest position in the Americas, Inc. section of the International Wine and Food Society. Only the International Council of Management based in London is a higher group. His new duties will include supervision of Americas Inc. only a part of which includes Treasury, Secretary, Directors, Membership, Wine Food & Friends, Festival & Events, Administration and working with the Council of Management. But Steve still remains an active member of our Council Bluffs Branch, working the local trenches, producing events, being a Board Member and having pretty much perfect attendance at attending meetings and attending virtually all of the events our Branch puts on every year.

As are all members of the IWFS, Steve is a volunteer, even at the national level. But that just means the expenses and the donation of time expand exponentially. Hipple was Elected to the Board of Directors (Board of Governors of the Americas as it was called then) in **September of 2007**. By **2011**, Steve moved into what I would consider one of the most difficult jobs in Americas, Inc., the **Festivals & Events (F&E)** section since Dave Felton was moving up to take the Chairman of the BGA. He has always had help, and Steve is not one to brag and make it seem like he did this all himself, but eventually he became chairman of F&E. At the time he assumed F&E, there was only one festival every three years. ▶

◀ Steve expanded that to between two or three events a year, which included at least one Festival and one Great Weekend per year. Check out the chart of events the Society has put on since 2010. With that came a large increase of work. On **September 14, 2015**, he was awarded the **André Simon Bronze Medal** for his efforts. The increase in work load meant that he had to develop a festival or weekend at different cities or countries, make all the arrangements for hotel selection, schedule wineries to visit, restaurants to host wine dinners, transportation, and on and on. Arrangements might be made only to have them unravel as providers backed out or altered the plan. He had to react quickly to fill in the gap.

Making these arrangements meant traveling months if not a year ahead of time to the site, staying at the hotels, trying the restaurants and the like, all at considerable personal expense. But he troopered on, producing events not only in the Americas (Sonoma, Quebec, Baltimore, Charleston) but also Europe. Some of the most exciting events the IWFS ever produced were at destinations such as the Douro, the Rhône, the Danube and Spain. We are still waiting for the 2020 Bordeaux Festival, delayed because of the corona virus. These were first class events, where virtually everything was included while on the tour except perhaps the lunch on the free afternoon off. By 2017, Steve was getting help from Steve Greenwald, training him in the art of planning and executing events. On **September 29, 2018** Steve was awarded the **André Simon Silver Medal** from the International Council of Management. Very few IWFS members ever achieve this level of medal. In October 2020, he was elected to Chairman IWFS Americas, Inc. as the zone is now called.

Even though he has reached the pinnacle of the Americas, Inc. zone, Steve still has the common touch. His focus has always been on quality events. He has seen membership and attendance dwindle in our Council Bluffs Branch when the focus was on economy and low cost events, and worked to reverse that to where we are today. Quality always attracts those who want to experience the best. That is why people continue to join our Branch. They are looking for the best in food and wine, and that is where Steve's focus is.

Steve told me that "From the bottom of his heart, I am all in for IWFS." Congratulations Steve! 🍷



*Steve & Patti Hipple.
Beside every good man is
a good woman!*



Festivals

YEAR	DATE	DAYS	FESTIVALS/CRUISES	LOCATION	ORGANIZER
2010	1/31-2/7	7	Caribbean Cruise on Celebrity Solstice	Fort Lauderdale	Hipple
2010	4/21-4/23	3	New York Weekend (James Beard House)	New York	Knott
2011	8/18-8/20	3	Pre-Cruise Barcelona Tour-Hotel Casa Fuster	Barcelona	Hipple
2011	8/21-8/28	7	Mediterranean Cruise Holland Am. Nieuw Amsterdam	Barcelona	Hipple
2012	9/11-9/15	5	Fairmont Pacific Rim Hotel	Vancouver	Felton
2013	2/25-2/28	3	Miami Culinary Adventure-Biltmore Hotel	Miami	Hipple
2013	2/28-3/3	4	Caribbean Cruise on Celebrity Constellation	Miami	Hipple
2013	11/17-11/21	5	Casamagna Puerto Vallarta Resort & Spa	Puerto Vallarta	Knott
2014	6/5-6/7	3	Pre-Cruise Lyon Tour - Hilton Lyon Hotel	Lyon	Hipple
2014	6/8-6/15	7	Rhone River Cruise on Uniworld SS Catherine	Lyon	Hipple
2015	3/5-3/8	3	New Orleans Great Weekend - Windsor Court Hotel	New Orleans	Kubelman
2015	6/4-6/6	3	Miami Grand Wine Tasting - W Hotel	Miami	Hipple
2015	9/24-9/27	3	Washington DC Great Weekend/AGM - Ritz-Carlton	Washington, D.C.	Greenwald
2016	6/2-6/4	3	Pre-Cruise Budapest Tour - Kempinski Hotel	Budapest	Hipple
2016	6/5-6/12	7	Danube River Cruise on Uniworld River Beatrice	Budapest	Hipple
2016	10/13-10/15	3	Niagara Great Weekend/AGM - Queens Landing	Niagara	Findlay
2017	5/2-5/6	5	Sonoma Wine Festival	Sonoma	Hipple/Greenwald
2017	10/11-10/14	3	Baltimore Great Wine Weekend	Baltimore	Hipple/Greenwald/Springer/Jones
2018	4/12-4/14	3	New York City Great Weekend	New York	Jones
2018	9/26-9/29	4	Quebec Great Weekend	Quebec	Hipple/Greenwald
2019	6/6-6/8	3	Pre-cruise Tour Lisbon	Lisbon	Hipple/Greenwald
2019	6/9-6/16	7	Douro River Cruise	Porto	Hipple/Greenwald
2019	10/16-10/20	5	Great Weekend in Charleston	Charleston	Greenwald/Hipple



**UPCOMING
COUNCIL BLUFFS
BRANCH EVENTS**
Mark Your Calendars!

**DEC.
6**

**BIAGGI'S RISTORANTE
ITALIANO**

President's Holiday Celebration
Producers: Connie and Gary Martin

**JAN.
20**

DANTE'S PIZZERIA

Truffle theme
Producers:
Amanda Harrington & John Matthews

FEBRUARY TBD

Producers: Wilkes

MARCH TBD

Producers: Thrashers / Wilkes

APRIL TBD

Producers: Wilkes / Tharashers

MAY TBD

Producers: Goldsteins / Koesters

HOSTING AN EVENT?

Let us know when, where and a little bit about what's going on! We would love to include YOUR event on the calendar! **Email details to: iwfs.councilbluffs@yahoo.com**



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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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Vice President: Dave Thrasher

Treasurer/Membership: Diane Forristall

Secretary: Tabitha Thrasher

Cellar Master: John Fischer & Patti Hipple

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KEEP IN TOUCH!

Please notify Club
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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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