

APRIL 2019

The Bluffs Food & Wine *gazette*



EVENT REPORT:

PASTA AMORE ITALIAN DINNER

INSIDE

IWFS Québec Great Weekend Saturday, 9-29-2018, Day 4: Black Tie Historical Dinner at the Jacques-Cartier Room at Hotel Château Frontenac • 85th IWFS Anniversary Competition: The Winner Please



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



PRESIDENT'S COMMENTS

Hello All,
Since the last newsletter the club has had two great events that need to be mentioned.

The February event was at **Pasta Amore**, and was hosted by the Wilkes, and Hipple. Special thanks to new members **Mike and Rhonda Wilke** who jumped right in and helped host an event when we needed help. The event featured Italian wines, some of which were from our cellar. Chef Leo Fascinella prepared a fabulous menu that highlighted his food, and the wine perfectly.

The March event was hosted by the Lemkes and the Hipple at **Kith and Kin** in Dundee. This event featured some excellent southern cuisine, and a nice array of wines mostly from our cellar. What an outstanding venue for an event, and the staff did a wonderful job keeping everyone's wine glasses full.

Thanks to the membership, we have been able to use more wine out of our own cellar. We now have close to 1000 bottles, some of which have been properly aged, and are now able to drink. This has allowed the club to serve most of the wine from out of our own cellar at the three events so far this year.

Two very unique events are coming up in the next two months that shouldn't be missed. I am hopeful attendance will pick up for these events.

On **April 6** the Goldsteins, Hipple and Wilke will be hosting an all Pinot Noir dinner at the historic **Kutak Rock building**. We will be exploring Pinot from eight different countries, and will be able to tour one of Omaha's oldest and most historic buildings. The former Omaha National Bank was built in the 1890's and was restored recently by Kutak Rock. Free garage parking will be available at the building.

On **May 23rd**, the Klemke's and the Martin's will be hosting an event at **Blue Sushi**. The event will include a Sake tasting to go along with many wines.

Let's get out and support these events. A lot of time and planning have gone into making these unique experiences that haven't been done by the club before.

See everyone at an event soon.

Cheers! 🍷

Joe Goldstein

"I'VE NEVER OWNED A VINEYARD, BUT I'M PRETTY SURE I'VE DRANK AN ENTIRE ONE BY NOW."—ANONYMOUS

Cover Photo: Event Producers for the Pasta Amore Italian Dinner, Mike & Rhonda Wilke, Patti & Steve Hipple and President Joe Goldstein hamming it up, with Chef Leo Fascinella wearing his toque and medal from the Honorable Order of the Golden Toque. Photo by Tom Murnan

EDITOR'S

CORNER

It has been a very looong winter with record amounts of snow. In the aftermath of one of the largest snows in many a winter, we found respite with our Italian feast at **Pasta Amore**. I was grateful that we could get around fairly well, and that the parking lot was pretty well cleared in Rockbrook Village. I don't recall ever having a Branch event at Pasta Amore, but new members Mike and Rhonda Wilke personally know Chef Leo Fascianella, who crafted us a fabulous Sicilian dinner. Read about it within.

The winner of the international competition for the best IWFS 85th Anniversary event was decided on March 8th, just prior to the New Zealand Festival. The Council Bluffs Branch was in competition with 17 other branches across the three zones of the Society. Check out the story for the winner.

We conclude our tag team series on the Québec Great Weekend with Wayne Markus' account of the final black tie gala dinner. The wines and food sounded top notch, with many fantastic French labels. The food theme was historical courses from the Hotel Frontenac menus back to 1908. I was sorry I was not in attendance, but we can all read about it here. Thanks also to Connie & Gary Martin for their earlier contributions to the story.

I hope you are enjoying the gazette in our new format, issuu.com. The size of the photos and print is greater, and this is how e-magazines are sent now days. Thank you Todd Lemke for the upgrade. Again, if you want to print all or parts of the gazette out, first make an account, which is free. Then you can download to your computer or device and print.

If you want to examine the photos of an event before it comes out in the Gazette, go to our web site at IWFS.org, and click on The Bluffs Food & Wine Gazette & Photos. And yes, you can download photos from the site.

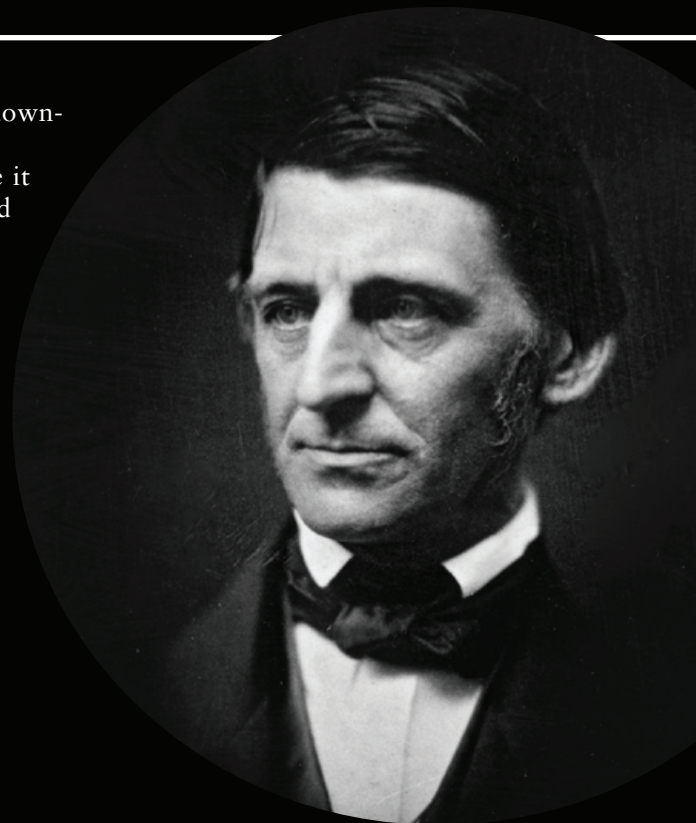
Bon Appétit! 🍷

Tom Murnan



**“A MAN WILL BE MORE
ELOQUENT IF YOU GIVE HIM
GOOD WINE.”**

— RALPH WALDO EMERSON



Event Report:

PASTA AMORE ITALIAN DINNER 2/24/19

Written By Tom Murnan / Photos by Tom Murnan



The worst blizzard Omaha had in years was over, but the aftermath of snow packed roads and drifts were everywhere to be seen. As luck would have it, my snow thrower took that morning to die! But a little snow did not stop the hale and hearty from attending a superlative Italian dinner that Sunday evening, when the restaurant was usually closed. We had 37 attendees including 3 guests. Producers **Mike and Rhonda Wilke** knew what they were doing having chef / owner **Leo Fascianella** craft us one of the finest Sicilian restaurant dinners I have ever had. I had to add restaurant dinner because wife Mary would take umbrage if I got too carried away and cut me off from her Sicilian cooking!

Leo was born in Sicily in 1956, but moved to Little Italy in Omaha with his parents in 1972. He started out washing dishes for The Golden Apple, where the chef took him under his wing. Eventually he worked under many great chefs in New York and Chicago. He established **Pasta Amore** in 1986. The Fascianellas have a small local farm where they raise chickens and vegetables. Leo returns to Sicily

yearly, where he makes his own olive oil for the restaurant. In 2016 he was awarded the **Golden Toque** award. The Honorable Order of the Golden Toque is a prestigious culinary organization that aims to educate young chefs and pursue excellence within the field. Only 100 chefs are allowed into this prestigious group. When one chef dies, his/her replacement is voted on by the remaining 99. Jim Trebbien, retired dean of Metropolitan Community College's Culinary Institute, is another Golden Toque member. He and two other chefs nominated Fascianella. I knew we were in for a veritable feast with all Italian wines.

The **antipasto course** was large and filling, just like Sicilian hospitality. I had to make a conscious effort to limit myself to leave room for the rest of the meal. One favorite was the deep fried **Parmesan Breaded Calamari** with house made marinara sauce. But the **Triple Layered Antipasto** of marinated artichokes, olives and peppers also beckoned as did the **Salami Cheese**, which consisted of sopressta salami and smoked provolone. Finally there was Brushetta: a grilled baguette with fresh tomatoes, olives and basil tossed in olive oil. This all was washed down with either a sparkling 2017 Cantina Paltrinieri L'Eclisse Lambrusco di Sorbara and/or the red 2015 Antinori Guado al Tasso Il Bruciato. We did a pretty good job of wiping these two out.

Once at table, the **1st Course** was brought out: **Manicotti**. Egg pasta was

stuffed with ricotta cheese and spinach, topped with a white sauce and chopped fresh basil for a green garnish. The dish was very delicate and elegant. The pasta just melted in your mouth, and the ricotta stuffing added richness. These mild flavors were contrasted with the red salsa, or as the Omaha/Sicilian dialect says it, sasa (tomato sauce), which added some sharpness and acidity. Our chosen wine, the **2016 Tramin Unterebner Pinot Grigio** was from the most northeastern part of Italy. Sounding Germanic, I thought the wine reminded me of a Alsatian Pinot Gris. Moderately dry and minerally, unlike many Pinot Grigios, it was crisp and substantial. A delicious match.

The **2nd Course** was **Lamb Chop**. A single rack of lamb flavored with salt and rosemary, olive oil and garlic sat next to Italian Rissotto. White Arborio rice was flecked with color from green pepper, red pepper, chopped asparagus, mushrooms and sautéed onion. Expertly grilled, I immediately noticed the smoky grilled flavors which enhanced the meat. The **2013 Petrolo Boggina Sangiovese** from Tuscany was very well balanced, ripe, full bodied, smooth and berry like. Quite nice. Sangiovese is the grape of Chianti.

Our **3rd** and main course was **Beef Tenderloin**. Herb crusted tenderloin was served with a nicely presented spear of asparagus wrapped by yellow squash, red pepper and slid through opaque rings of cooked onion which held the vegetable ensemble together. ▶







Event Report:

◀ The beef was spot on delicious and grilled the way I like it: intense heat and crust-like on the outside, with a pink center. The meat was sitting atop a pool of cognac mushroom sauce, deep with flavor. Magnificent. We had two different kinds of Italian wines to compare: a 2016 Tentua San Guido Guidalberto Toscana and a 2015 Campagnolo Amarone della Volpolicello. The Tuscan wine (Toscano) was made from French varietals, 60% Cabernet Sauvignon and 40% Merlot. Well developed nose, mildly tannic but bright with black fruits and spicy flavors, it is a much cheaper alternative to a Super Tuscan. Super Tuscans, however, usually have some Italian varietals, like Sangiovese, in them, where this did not. Amarone is a special wine where dried Corvina grapes give it greater power and potency. These grapes are allowed to desiccate which concentrates the sugar, color and flavors. This wine was dry, but bottles marked Recioto are sweeter. So we were in for quite a contrast to the Toscana. I noted a hint of raisin in the taste along with dark plums and blackberry. Very nice.

Our Dolce course was Tiramisu with Fresh Fruit Compote. Quite moist, the house made tiramisu was one of the best I've ever had. The compote was comprised of fresh oranges, cloves, strawberries, black berries, blue berries, blood oranges, apple, mint and pear. The 2015 Pantelleria Donna Fugata Ben Ryé Muscat had noticeable high alcohol but was soft, sweet and pleasing as Muscat always is. A nice match.

Many thanks to the Pasta Amore staff, who worked on their day off. This included Leo's son, John Fascianella, Megan Weyant and Robin Davis. Chef Leo came out for a final bow wearing his toque and Honor of the Golden Toque medal. This was an impressive Italian meal, and we thank the entire staff and producers Rhonda & Mike Wilke and Patti & Steve Hipple for organizing and selecting the wines for this event. Most of the wines came from the Branch cellar, and were selected by Patti Hipple. Our Valentine event was the perfect time to share the Amore! 🍷







IWFS QUÉBEC GREAT WEEKEND SATURDAY 9-29-2018 DAY 4:

Black Tie Historical Dinner at the Jacques-Cartier Room at Hotel Château Frontenac

Story & Photos by Wayne Markus

Saturday was a free day preceding the Black-Tie Dinner. A small group of us drove to the Île d'Orléans, visited a winery, had lunch and drove around the island. There are several fruit stands and vacation homes and the trees were beginning to change to their fall colors.

The final **Black-Tie Dinner** was in the **Jacques-Cartier Room** of the **Fairmont Le Château Frontenac**. The theme was historical courses from hotel menus back to 1908. The courses were presented by chef François Bouffard. Zsomer Mezey, beverage manager, discussed the wines.

The reception featured **Drappier Charles de Gaulle Brut**, 80% Pinot Noir and 20% Chardonnay, the favorite of de Gaulle. An amuse-bouche from the **1908 New Year's Eve menu** included Malpec Bay oysters, and from the **November 2, 1955 menu** hazelnut bread toast, foie gras ganache, and smoked duck breast.

The first course from the **January 11, 1950 menu** was truffle royal custard, lobster, butter and herb crumble. The presentation was very nice, and one wonders how it was presented in 1950. Chef François stated that lobster was not popular until the mid 19th century. The Native Americans used lobster for fertilizer and fish bait. They baked them with seaweed over hot rocks thus starting the New England clambake tradition. Lobster was plentiful, cheap and nutritious, so it was fed to ser-

vants and prisoners. When the railroads started to spread, passengers did not know what lobster was, so it was presented as rare and exotic, and passengers loved it. The **Roux Père & Fils Chassagne Montrachet Les Morichpots** was a fine match. This is a French white Burgundy from the Côte de Beaune where most white wines are entirely Chardonnay although a small percentage of Pinot Blanc is allowed.

From the **1964 Christmas menu** was a Jerez-Xérès Sherry Beef Double Consommé poured over Riopelle de L'Isle cheese-stuffed profiteroles (puff pastry). The **2016 Gérard La Sauvageonne Blanc** is from the Languedoc (Languedoc-Roussillon) the Mediterranean southern coastal area of France. It is an interesting blend of Grenache Blanc, Vermentino and Viognier.

Broth vs. bouillon vs. stock vs. consommé? Broth or bouillon is the liquid that remains after meat, seafood, or vegetables have been cooked in water. Bouillon also refers to the powdered or condensed-cube forms of broth. Stock is more intense than broth, having been cooked slowly to extract as much flavor as possible from meat or fish bones and aromatics. Consommé is a clear liquid that results from clarifying homemade stock, usually with egg whites. Consommé is often served by itself, often at the beginning of a meal. (Definitions Borrowed from Martha Stewart)

From the **October 1960 menu** came Lamb Rack, Gratin Dauphinoise (potatoes baked in milk from the Dauphiné region in south-east France), morels and asparagus

with St. Jean-Port-Joli Virgin Sunflower Oil. The **2011 M. Chapoutier Côte-Rôtie La Mordorée** was a classic pairing.

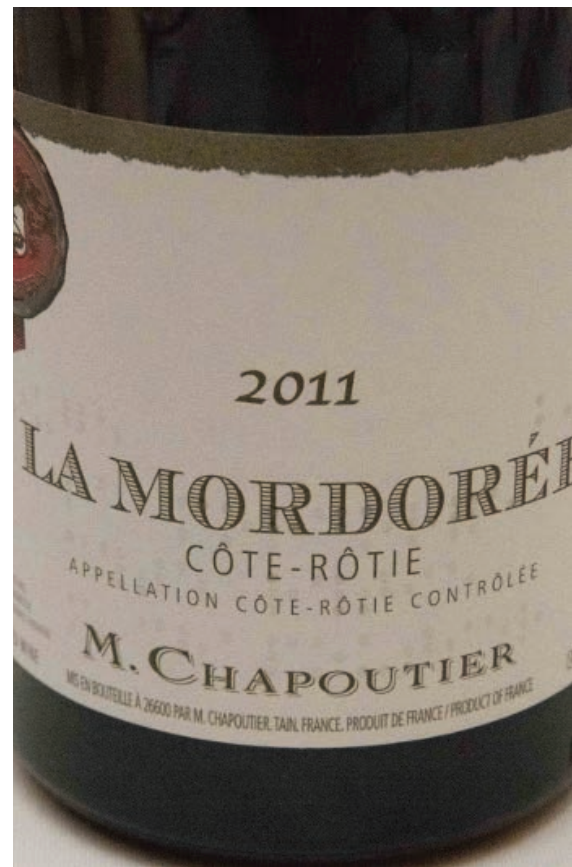
Next came goat cheese mouse, Canotier cheese pastry, and cracked old cheddar with a **2000 Churchill's Vintage Port**. It is reported that Québec produces more cheese than France and the hotel has the greatest variety in Québec.

Last was a real sensory treat from the **September 13, 1973 menu—Baked Alaska!** The table was wheeled into the room for the flambé. Members gathered around with cameras and cell phone video as the chef heated and ignited the maple whisky in a pan. The flaming whisky was poured into shallow troughs of each log of Baked Alaska and blue flames spectacularly traveled along the length of each. And it was delicious.

During the Black-Tie Dinner **André Simon Silver Medals** were presented to **Dwight Catherwood** and **Stephen Hipple**. Chairman **Ian Nicol** was presented the **André Simon Gold Medal**, the 29th ever presented, the most recent to David Felton in 2016. The medals recognize contributions to the International Wine & Food Society and its members. Congratulations and gratitude to Steve!

We then we moved to another room for **Rémy Martin Louis XIII cognac** ("Louis treize"), **Inniskillin Riesling Icewine 40th Anniversary**, and **The Macallan Reflexion single malt Scotch**. This was the last event for mingling of members and the beginning of looking forward to the many upcoming IWFS events. 🍷











85TH IWFS ANNIVERSARY COMPETITION: THE WINNER PLEASE

By Tom Murnan

*A*s you know, earlier last year, the International Council of Management announced a contest to see which branch could come up with the best event to celebrate the Society's 85th Anniversary. The prize was £500. Seventeen branches from all three zones entered the competition: Americas, Asian and Europe/Africa. The winner was announced on March 8th. I received this email from Andrea Warren:

*Dear Tom,
I am writing to advise that the IWFS International Council of Management this afternoon adjudicated upon the 85th Anniversary competition. The award was given to the Boston Branch. It was a very difficult decision as many of the entrants, and in particular Council Bluffs, put in a tremendous amount of effort to host a superb and memorable event. Unfortunately there could only be one winner and the attention to detail of the winning event was most impressive with their brief skit about the beginnings of the Society really standing out. I would like to take this opportunity on behalf of Council to thank you, and*

those who worked with you, for marking the 85th Anniversary with a special event and entering the competition.

*Kind regards,
Andrea*

Boston included the Society's first three events (Madeira tasting, Alsatian lunch and wine from the Continent). But their pièce de résistance was a comic skit about how the founders decided to establish a Wine & Food Society.

I wrote back and asked Andrea if Boston took a video of the skit:

*Hello Tom—yes they did. I think we are looking at putting it on the website. I have to say that your event looked absolutely superb too—it was very close. Best wishes,
Andrea*

We had a long list of special touches for our event, a special brochure and a recording of André Simon's voice made in 1967 on his 90th birthday. And all our pictures were taken in black and white, since color photos would not be invented for another two years. If we have any consolation for our contest loss, it would be that a photo taken that night won the IWFS Americas

Inc. 2018 Shutterbug Contest. During André Simon's message, I went around taking photos of our attendees listening, many times for the first time, to the sound of his French accented English, and following along in the brochure. Nick Moore from the Omaha Branch was a guest of mine that night. Having been a contender many times in the Shutterbug contests, but never in the winners' circle, I thought the photo taken of him might be a strong contender. It was given first place. I saw no special announcement, but you can check out the other contenders at: www.iwfs.org/americas/news/2018-shutterbug-winners

Grand Prize Winner:

Tom Murnan

(Omaha & Council Bluffs)

"Hearing the sound of André Simon for the first time and following along with the printed word"

So we did a lot of things right, including getting the best picture in the Shutterbug contest, but we could not overcome that skit. But I have to say, the Council Bluffs Branch was an International Player and a strong contender! 🍷

UPCOMING COUNCIL BLUFFS BRANCH EVENTS

Mark Your Calendars!

**APR.
06**



KUTAK ROCK BUILDING

Theme: Kutak Rocks the Pinot!
Producers: Jill Goldstein, Rhonda Wilke, Patti & Steve Hipple

**MAY
23**



BLUE SUSHI

Theme: Asian Theme
Tutored Sake Tasting with a Sake Educator from California
Producers: Klemkes and Martins



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: ivfs.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

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Treasurer/Membership: Diane Forristall

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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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