

WINTER 2026



Wine, Food & Friends

THE JUDGEMENT IN PARIS: PART 1

ALSO INSIDE:

- 2024 Vintage Reports
- Mendocino Wine Country
- IWFS Sonoma Trip

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CHAIRMAN'S LETTER

By Chris Ankner, *Chairman, IWFS Americas Inc.*

Introduction

Over the past three months, the Society has been on a tear that culminated with our Members' Annual General Meeting in mid-October, and the Board of Directors meeting in Chicago a week later. We have rolled out our exciting Ask André app and held some of our best attended and most informative Virtual Tastings yet. You approved amendments to the Bylaws and the Articles of Incorporation giving the membership the direct responsibility of electing the Directors of the Corporation. I have complimented our Corporate Secretary, Lisa White previously, but forgive me if I repeat myself. This was a much larger project than I thought it would be and Lisa brought it home.

Responsibility now falls on the Board to give you more information to make informed decisions. You will start hearing more about this after the new year.

In Chicago, the Board greenlit three festivals for 2026. As you know, we are going to Paris and Bordeaux on May 14. We will close the list on December 31. This is designed to be the trip of your lifetime. I urge everybody to consider it. In Early January, you will get an invitation to our next festival in Walla Walla, Washington next June. Steve Hipple has really been putting in the elbow grease on this trip. Steve has led great trips for us time and again. For Walla Walla, he is as giddy as a schoolgirl. In the Fall, we plan to go to Mexico City.

I hope you have been using our wine pairing app Ask André. You can download it off the IWFS website. I think, like most of you, when I first got the prototype, I tried to break it. I asked what was the proper pairing for Chicago style hot dogs? What about Hawaiian pizza? Not all that long afterwards, I used Ask André in the field. I was at a restaurant for brunch and ordered Eggs Benedict. The pairing was fine. If you're curious what it was, I'd urge you to download the app today and look it up.

In early September, I was fortunate enough to join the Young Members Circle of Metropolitan New York on their season opening event. The YMC, if you recall, is a new branch in New York, limited to members 21-39 years old. The branch is the brainchild of Alan Frishman, a long-time Board Member of the New York branch. I've known Alan for decades. He is always swimming with ideas. During the YMC's inaugural season last year, Alan and some of the other members of the New York Branch did a lot of work getting the YMC up and running, but this year, the young members are taking control of most of the functions. Alan was recently awarded the America's Silver Medal for his efforts. I suspect more medals will be on the way. This branch was only started last year and is already one of the top fifteen branches in terms of membership.

In late September I was off to Hollywood, primarily to award Neal Vitale the America's Silver Medal for the work he's done on our Virtual Tasting series and to participate in the Hollywood branch's opening event. I hope you've been watching the Virtual Tasting series, if not, you've been missing out.

It will surprise you that I have only been to Los Angeles twice in my life. Once as a child, to visit Disneyland, and once as a young man to visit clients. I stayed at L'Ermitage in Beverly Hills, a hotel I highly recommend. On my first night in town, I had dinner at Musso & Franks, an institution on Hollywood Boulevard. As great a reputation it has for their martinis and steaks, I am more familiar with it from its regular appearances on Bosch or the Lincoln Lawyer. The Branch's dinner was outside at Marino. It couldn't have been more comfortable. The dinner was great and the wine selection outstanding. Hollywood isn't a large branch, but the members are all outgoing and quite knowledgeable.

The Fall Board Meeting was held in Chicago at the end of October. While we got lots of work done at the meeting, the best part of the weekend was a dinner with many members of the Chicago Branch. Chicago is one of the oldest and most successful branches in the Society. Many people do not know that I grew up in Chicago. I'm a fan of Chicago cuisine, everything from Alinea to Mr. Beef's, I love it all! The opportunity to eat my way through the weekend would not be missed. I must thank IWFS Foundation Board member Tom Weidrich for arranging the dinner with the IWFS America's Board and the Branch. I also want to call out Chicago's Stephen Kaplan for donating an Imperial of 2005 Chateau Hosanna. Unfortunately, he could not attend the event. I would have liked to thank him personally for his generosity.

In early November, I was invited to an event with the Baltimore Branch. I was there to award Mark Geller the America's Silver Medal for the work he has done coding our Ask André app. I was also fortunate to be on hand when the branch awarded long time member Ernie Kovacs the America's Gold Medal. The dinner at Sopra Sotto was great, but what really blew me away was the presentation at the dinner. The theme was Demystifying Chianti. Members Brent Trostle and Livio Broccolino gave a thorough well-researched, and well-presented history of Chianti that led to a horizontal tasting of Montefioralle Winery's Chianti Classico Annata, Chianti Classico Riserva, and the Chianti Classico Gran Selezione.

As I write this, I'm preparing for my Thanksgiving supper. This year, the feature wine on the table will be Chateau Rayas 2010. Will this overpower the turkey? Probably. Should I save it for the rib roast on Christmas Day? I don't know. It's one of the things I love to ponder over at this time of year. Enjoy the season. And enjoy whatever you're drinking for the holidays.



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COVER PHOTO: Photo by Dave Purcell



NEWS FROM THE OFFICE

OF THE INTERNATIONAL SECRETARIAT, LONDON

Andrea Warren, *IWFS Executive Administrator*

Dear members

The International Council of Management (ICM) held an online meeting in October, 2025 when the role of Global Chairman of the IWFS was passed by Michael Donohoe, from the Americas, to John Nicholas, of the Europe Africa region. Thanks were given to Mike for the great job he has done over the past two years steering the Society. John now takes on the role of working with the ICM Members from each region, to look to the future and new initiatives to expand and grow the Society in today's world....

One recent initiative was the following podcast collaboration with the highly successful Wine Blast podcast team. The aim was to give members, and non-members, an entertaining but informed insight into the latest top quality sparkling wines. It is also hoped that this will help to spread the word about the Society to pastures new. Please read on to find out more:

The ICM worked with the award winning Wine Blast podcast featuring our monograph 'Sparkling Wines of the World' by Essi Avellan MW – titled 'Top of the Pops: Classic Fizz Beyond Champagne'. If you haven't yet tuned in then go to the homepage of our website and you are directed to the link from there. You can listen while you work, walk or wander the aisles of your local bottle store looking for a new fine fizz to try. It is just under an hour long.

Wine Blast presenters Susie Barrie and Peter Richards, husband and wife team, and fellow Masters of Wine, chat with Essi about everything sparkling—Essi's love of sparkling wine is infectious and encyclopedic. Find out about the 'magnum effect' and the need for 'deliciousness' in wine. Some sparklers are also put to the taste test by Susie & Peter, from the better known producers, to new arrivals and to some surprise entrants! Please do listen and let us know what you think – just email me on sec@iwfs.org.

For an added insight from the IWFS, Mimi Avery is also interviewed giving her overview of how the Society is embracing the arrival of top quality sparkling wines—from blind tastings to featuring in festivals. Mimi is the English Sparkling Wines consultant for our Vintage Guide, a longstanding IWFS member, has 33 years experience in the English wine trade, and the daughter of the late John Avery MW (past IWFS Hon President).

2025/26 - Branch Directory - the updated edition is now available on the website and is an incredibly useful resource providing members with a contact for each branch around the world – currently totaling 132 branches. To view this online only directory go to iwfs.org - Resource Directory and Branch Contacts / Global. You can

also view it via the member App, but have to be signed in to view this information, as it is strictly for members only. Please make use of these invaluable contacts if you are planning a holiday and need some local knowledge on the places to stay and the best restaurants in town.

Global Grapevine – if you would like to keep updated on the latest news of festivals and events across the Society then please watch out for the Global Grapevine, international e-newsletter. It is published three times a year and the December issue is due to land in your inbox if it hasn't already done so, by the time you read this.

Our latest Vintage Guide is now available for 2026 – either in printed format or via the member app. This edition also includes the latest vintage reports from the European regions listed in the Guide. The majority have been written by our Wine Consultants. We thank them for passing on their expert knowledge—freely. Please see the report below.

Wishing you all the best for what remains of 2025 and I look forward to being back in touch in 2026. Until next year....

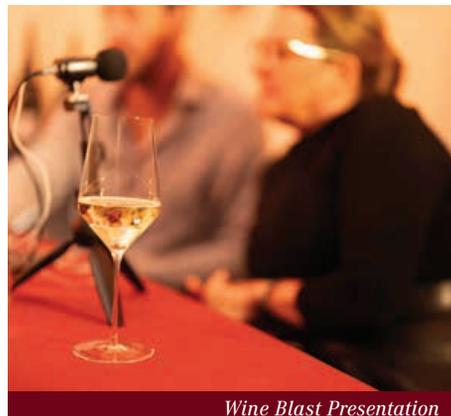
Andrea Warren,
International Secretariat 



Mimi Avery



IWFS Branch Directory



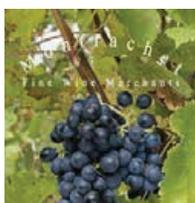
Wine Blast Presentation



IWFS Global Grapevine Newsletter

2024 VINTAGE REPORTS

VINTAGE REPORTS 2024 – EUROPE



BORDEAUX
CHARLES TAYLOR MW
montrachetwine.com

*Exhilarating dry whites and
fresh, harmonious reds*

2024 was a challenging growing season with above average rainfall for much of the year and the greatest mildew pressure in living memory. Fortunately, the vintage was saved by a long, warm, dry period in July and August that dried out the soil, provided some essential water stress to the vines on well-drained vineyards and ensured that the fruit would reach a good level of both phenolic and sugar ripeness. The cool, night-time temperatures ensured high levels of acidity were retained and the dry white wines, harvested in the second and third weeks of September are amongst the finest of recent years with a winning combination of ripe, concentrated fruit and thrilling acidity.

After one of the wettest winters on record (November, December, February and March were all amongst the rainiest of the past 20 years), bud break was early at the end of March. It was difficult to get into the vineyards on heavier soils to treat the vines and the consistently damp weather provoked an early onset of mildew on any vines that were left untreated.

The wet weather continued into May, and it was often necessary to spray repeatedly at close intervals. It was undoubtedly harder for organic producers to withstand the mildew pressure and the many French bank holidays played havoc for estates with inflexible workforces.

Fortunately, the weather improved at the end of the month and for some growers a week of sunshine coincided with the all-important flowering period. For others, however, it arrived either too late or too early or a significant part of the crop was lost to coulure or millerandage.

The rest of June reverted to dull, humid weather with continuing mildew pressure and growers became increasingly pessimistic about their chances of successfully ripening their crop. However, the weather changed dramatically for the better and July and August were both dry and warm. The soil dried out and the fruit started to ripen and thicken their skins. By the middle of August, the vines on free-draining soils were beginning to show welcome signs of much-needed hydric stress. The vintage had been saved and all that was needed now was a month of calm weather to bring the fruit to full maturity.

After a refreshing burst of rain at the end of August, September started clemently, and the dry white wine harvest was completed in good conditions in the second and third weeks of September. The quality of both sauvignon and sémillon is exceptional with good volumes of ripe, healthy fruit giving high quality wines. Both sugar and acidity levels were excellent, and the wines have a natural freshness and balance that hasn't been seen for many years. The aromatic quality of the sauvignon is the finest for a long time with the sémillon bringing both structure and flavour to the blend.

Unfortunately, the good weather failed to hold, and rainy conditions returned from 21st September. Growers had to decide whether to press ahead with harvesting whilst the fruit was still healthy, or risk waiting for greater ripeness and accept a higher incidence of rotten fruit. Most of the merlot was harvested by the last week of September with the cabernets following quickly at the beginning of October. The results are mixed with the well-financed estates on early ripening, free-draining soils at a distinct advantage. The hardier, more

resistant cabernet sauvignon survived the wet conditions better than the more fragile merlot but, as a later ripening variety, it also struggled to reach full maturity.

In the winery, most producers opted for a gentle maceration and were careful not to extract too much tannin. The resultant reds are fresh and aromatic with red rather than black fruit flavours, refreshingly low levels of alcohol and excellent levels of acidity. They are harmonious, forward wines that will give a huge amount of pleasure at a relatively early age.

The sweet white wines, harvested in October, are similarly vibrant with good botrytis character and a fine balance between sugar and acidity. They are reminiscent of a less sweet style of Sauternes made in the 1980s and 1990s.

Overall, it is a vintage to enthusiastically buy the magnificent dry, white wines and to carefully select the reds. There are many successful wines, no blockbusters but plenty of well-balanced, harmonious wines that, providing prices are attractive, deserve a place in any cellar.

Graves (Red) 5 not ready yet
Haut-Medoc 5 not ready yet
Pomerol & St Emilion 5 not ready yet
Graves (White) 7 not ready yet
Sauternes 6 not ready yet





BEAUJOLAIS
WILL HESLOP
flintwines.com

2024 was an extremely challenging year for vigneron in Beaujolais, as it was throughout much of France. The overall yield for Beaujolais was over 20% down on 2023, owing to persistent rain and a series of hailstorms – the most dramatic of which, on July 31st, damaged around 300 hectares of vines. The rain disrupted flowering and meant mildew was a widespread problem. Picking in the Crus typically began in mid-September; there was further intermittent rain during harvest but at least, as numerous vigneron pointed out, there were no concerns about the grapes (or workers) overheating. The best of the resulting wines are fresh and filigree, with good terroir-definition. Most reminiscent, among recent vintages, of 2021, they will please classicists.

Beaujolais 4 not ready yet



ALSACE
DAVID LING
confrerie-st-etienne.com

After a succession of exceptionally hot and dry vintages in Alsace, 2024 could be considered as atypical, but was more exactly a return to normal, a true ‘winemaker’s vintage’ where skill was needed to obtain the best results after fluctuating weather conditions throughout the year.

A mild winter, the hottest February on record and early budburst forecast an abundant and early harvest. However, from May onwards alternating spells of heavy rainfall and cool temperatures set the scene for the rest of the year. Flowering was delayed, quite drawn out but generally promising.

The summer was warm with isolated rain showers, causing a rapid spurt in vegetation growth that required pruning to allow airflow through the vines and thus reduce the risk of mildew and other cryptogamic diseases, aided in this respect by a very hot August that accelerated grape ripening.

In September, temperatures fell and periodic rain showers returned, which slowed maturation and retarded the harvest date. In general, harvesting was completed faster than in recent vintages and had to be fine-tuned as necessary to cope with isolated spells of rain.

The crop was of average size, but about 10% less than in 2023. The quality was generally excellent, giving precise wines with fine, ripe acidity and slightly lower alcohol levels than in previous years.

2024 Riesling and Pinot Noir showed particularly well in the first trade tastings but I can not resist a special mention for 2024 Gewurztraminer. The wines have such a lovely freshness, a fine acidity, a delicate aromatic quality and a lower alcohol level that perfectly match the current trend to enjoy Gewurztraminer just on its own or with a wide variety of modern fusion foods, far from its usual straitjacket of ‘curry, dessert and Munster cheese’!

Alsace 6 not ready yet



CAHORS/MADRAN
(SUD-OUEST)
BRITT AND PER KARLSSON

Very low harvest yields in Cahors marked 2024; many producers had to settle for a quarter of a normal harvest. This is even more worrying as 2023 was also a small year. Several producers are starting to have serious problems. Over the last eight years, five vintages have been small.

Again, 2024 had some very challenging weather conditions. It started with frost in the spring. Some plots that survived the frost were instead damaged by millerandage during the flowering. The region also suffered heavy rains with severe attacks of downy mildew as well as dry and hot spells. It was a year that demanded a lot of work in the vineyard and the cellar. In some places, however, malbec (and also tannat in Madiran) showed good resistance. The wines show richness and structure and have a good concentration of aromas. The quality potential is evident, both for the classic, age-worthy style of Cahors and the more easy-drinking, fruity style.

(This assessment is primarily for Cahors but is overall similar for the whole of the Sud-Ouest.)

Cahors/Madiran 5 not ready yet



CHAMPAGNE
JAMES SIMPSON MW /
LAURENCE BIALY
polroger.co.uk

The 2024 Champagne harvest will be remembered as a tale of resilience and reward. Despite facing a succession of climatic challenges from mildew to storms, coulure to hail, the region has ultimately produced grapes of promising quality, albeit in reduced quantity.

In the Côte des Bar (South-East part of Champagne near the city of Troyes), growers endured a particularly punishing year, with yields in some plots falling as low as 2,000–3,000 kg/ha due to a combination of mildew and frost. More centrally, in the Marne and Aisne, producers fared better but still fell short of the 10,000 kg/ha yield cap, averaging closer to 8,000 kg/ha. That said, many noted the excellent aromatic potential of Pinot Noir and the vibrancy of the Meunier, harvested at peak ripeness thanks to timely picking. Chardonnay presented a mixed picture. Early picked fruit showed great concentration and freshness, while later harvests suffered some dilution due to rain after 24 September. Nevertheless, many producers report wines with purity, balance and welcome acidity, qualities increasingly rare in warmer vintages. The Comité Champagne dubbed 2024 “la belle blessée”—a beautiful, if wounded, vintage. Despite low yields and the absence of a clear harvest “peak”, the fermenting wines show concentration and freshness, with initial tastings offering cautious optimism. While the volume will be supplemented by reserve wines, the 2024 vintage may well reward those who look beyond the numbers.

Champagne 6 not ready yet





LANGUEDOC
MATTHEW STUBBS MW

Winter was very dry yet mild with no significant frosts. Spring was generally wet and cool bringing much needed rain especially in Southern Languedoc and Corbières. Flowering was delayed and somewhat haphazard but those that had dry conditions did well.

Summer dawned quite cool with bouts of rain leading to some fungal disease pressure. July was back to normal with sunny and warm weather typical of the South of France. 2024 did not witness the heat spikes seen in recent years though early August did see some very high temperatures. The second half of the month was much cooler with some rain in the last week. September began quite cool with rain in Eastern Languedoc which delayed ripening. Harvest generally started one week later than 2023. Yields are down around 10% but are much lower in the Roussillon where the impact of drought and water stress was more marked. Quite a challenging year but early signs show that aromatics are strong, alcohols are more modest than previous years and the wines look to be very approachable in their youth.

Languedoc* (Red) 4 not ready yet

LOIRE
www.vinsdeloire.fr

2024 was the year of all challenges. Marked by extreme climatic conditions, the 2024 vintage of Loire wines testifies to the adaptability and know-how of the winegrowers, guaranteeing a diversified and qualitative wine production, representative of the characteristic of Loire wines.

The 2024 vintage stood out for its particularly testing climatic conditions in the Loire Valley. Abundant rainfall, limited sunshine and an increased spread of mildew marked this viticultural year. Despite these obstacles, producers were able to preserve the quality of the grapes, resulting in wines reflecting a plurality of aromatic profiles, depending on grape variety and terroir. The whites combine freshness and crispness, the reds reveal finesse and elegance, while the rosés and fine bubbles promise to be fruity and gourmet.

Loire Red 2 not ready yet
Sweet not ready yet
Dry White 3 not ready yet



PROVENCE
ROD SMITH MW

2024 was, as in the rest of France, variable, with especially abnormally high rainfall in March which brought with it humidity and mildew and presented the same issues for the budding and shooting vines as elsewhere. There were also a lot of hailstorms, which damaged the buds, shoots and fruit set into May and June.

After March, rainfall was down producing a dry and warm spring and above average temperatures from then on. From mid-July to mid-August, the temperature was above 35°C consistently, with a record high on the first of August of 42.4°C.

Although the reservoirs remained full from the spring, the limited rain and high sunshine and heat provoked a very early harvest, beginning in many places in mid-August.

As previously this has resulted in Rosés which are either fresh but lacking depth if picked early, or with good flavour at the risk of being a little flat and soft in acidity if producers waited to harvest. The best managed a fusion of both, as they did in 2023. Whites were generally more successful and captured Rolle's ability to guard its acidity and have resulted in some good rounded flavours.

Rainfall did come in September, but also with significant storms and hail, and a risk of mildew as a result, so the reds are again variable.

In general coastal sites seem to have fared better than those inland, but it is worth researching the commune for the success stories.

As in the rest of France the issues have affected quantity as much as quality, and the reds that have been made should be good for the future.

Provence Red 4 not ready yet



RHONE
JOHN LIVINGSTONE-LEARMONTH
drinkrhone.com

In 2024, like the rest of France, there were crop losses from the bad weather, but the Rhone was less blighted than the likes of Bordeaux. An attractive vintage has emerged.

Northern Rhone reds are low degree, fresh and free running, and possess discreet balance on a more restrained scale than in recent sun-filled years.

Northern Rhone whites, notably Condrieu, are richly aromatic; the Marsanne-Roussanne wines further south are more direct, vertical than the 2023s.

Châteauneuf-du-Pape, where some domaines lost half their harvest, has emerged in the leading cases with tender, at times neatly filled reds, though quality across the Southern Rhone is variable, the best terroirs giving the best results. Expect appealing fruit in the top reds across the region, and stick to estates that have the reputation for hand-made, precise wines.

The whites are fresh and flowing, if not quite at the level of the exceptional 2021 vintage.

Rhone Red North 5 not ready yet
Rhone Red South 5 not ready yet
Rhone White North 6 possible to drink

AUSTRIA
austrianwine.com

After the weather proved to be particularly capricious during 2024, including late frosts, hailstorms and heavy rain, the year ended on a conciliatory note with a very beautiful late summer and autumn. Winemakers managed to bring in the majority of the main harvest in favourable conditions. Although harvest volumes were low, the wines they produced are very pleasing. In general, we can expect well-ripened, balanced white wines that display fine fruit, body and moderate acidity, clearly reflecting the typical varietal characteristics. The deep-coloured, concentrated red wines are expected to mature into an outstanding vintage that is likely to be one of the very best of the last few decades.

Austria White 6 not ready yet
Red 6 not ready yet
Sweet 7 (app only) possible to drink



**ENGLAND (SPARKLING)
MIMI AVERY**

In general, 2024 was a cool year with high rainfall, a very challenging season. Yields were very low both due to disease pressure and the stress of the previous year being such a large harvest. The result was difficult ripening and Chardonnay fared worst. Low yields were made less impactful by the volume of reserve wines from the 2023 vintage. However future blends may vary from the house styles. Even though not the driest of years it was a long growing season which has resulted in complexity in the finished wines. Despite the challenges of the year the winemakers have been very pleased with the quality of the wines.

England Sparkling 5 not yet released

**GERMANY
winesofgermany.co.uk**

What to expect from the 2024 vintage wines - fruity, tangy, mineral

The 2024 vintage promises wines with bright acidity, fresh fruit, and excellent balance, despite challenging weather conditions. A cooler-than-usual growing season and a late frost resulted in smaller yields, but the surviving grapes have produced wines that will delight wine lovers with their quality.

Mosel 6 not ready yet
Rhine 6 not ready yet



Royal Tokaji

**HUNGARY (TOKAJI ASZU)
CHARLES MOUNT**

The 2024 vintage with February and March which were unusually warm. A dry March with several days below freezing followed but good soil water reserves allowed an early start to vegetation growth. The next few months remained warmer than average, but with good rain. Towards the end of June hail caused some damage in the vineyards. July and August were extremely hot months. This not only influenced the vegetation but created some

extreme conditions for further hail, mainly in the southern part of the wine region. Due to the hot conditions harvest for some producers started quite early and most finished the dry harvest before mid-September. At that stage those producers waiting for an aszú harvest were starting to lose hope. The dry conditions were not conducive to the growth of Botrytis. But from mid-September until the beginning of October the weather turned quite wet and warm. The continuous damp and warm weather made Botrytis to cover the bunches. Had the damp conditions continued the crop may have been lost. Finally, from mid-October, the weather turned dry and sunny again and all botrytised grapes started to dry and become ready for the picking. The result was a fantastic vintage with a lot of concentration in the aszú berries and the largest ever aszú harvest from the Royal Tokaji vineyards. Overall, the vintage resulted in well-balanced dry wines with nice acidities and concentrated sweet wines with lot of texture and structure.

5 not yet released



**PIEDMONT
DAVID WAY**

As now seems to be the new norm, 2024 was another extremely challenging vintage, following the drought of 2022 and the wet spring, followed by a very hot summer of 2023. In 2024, the biggest problem was excessive, regular rain. By May, Barolo and Barbaresco had already received the rainfall they usually get in an entire season. By the end of the season, this had risen to 70-100 per cent above the annual average. Persistent rain meant that growers had to carry out twice as many treatments against fungal diseases and to thin the crop appropriately. Some growers reported large losses; others that the concentration of flavour was not as high as usual due to the effects of dilution. Rain continued during harvest, which resembled the 'muddy harvests' of 40 years ago. Grapes had to be transported in the vineyard in baskets by hand as the soil was too wet for tractors. Grapes on the less-than-perfect sites were threatened by grey rot. When the rain relented in the first week of October but threatened to return, there was a scramble to pick and a shortage of pickers. The harvested grapes had lower sugar levels than in recent years and thinner skins, suggesting shorter maceration times and light extraction. Top producers speak of wines of finesse and modest alcohol levels. Only time will tell if they have the concentration required for extended ageing.

Piedmont 5 not yet released



**TUSCANY
RICHARD BAUDAINS**

The weather through the year was marked by great variability, with unseasonal extremes at critical points in the growing season, but also significant local differences. The cool spring made for late budding and flowering. May and early June were wet, while the second half of June and the whole of July were hot and dry, with record temperatures in parts of the central hills. Temperatures went down again in August, delaying the ripening of the late varieties. The bulk of the harvest was conducted between the rains of the first weeks of September and those at the beginning of October. Yields bounced back after the very meagre 2023 vintage. Overall quality is also superior to that of the difficult 2023. Merlot looks promising across the region. At Montalcino the wines can be expected to have good fruit, but less structure, so probably for relatively early drinking. At Bolgheri, the quality of the fruit was high and predictions are for balanced wines with ripe tannins and complex aromas.

Tuscany 5 not yet released



**SICILY
RICHARD BAUDAINS**

After a very dry autumn and winter, water resources were critically low in many parts of the island and particularly in the south and west, and the hot, dry months of June and July brought no respite. Budding and flowering were up to two weeks early, and the first white varieties were harvested exceptionally early, at the end of July. The pressure of disease was almost non-existent, making for extremely healthy fruit, but with possibly unbalanced sugar/acidity levels. The weather conditions impacted on growing conditions to a greater and lesser extent in different parts of the island, making it difficult to generalize about the outcomes of the vintage. Even more than in other years, Mount Etna stands out as the exception to the rule. While the average yield for the region was 16% down on the already very low 2023, producers on Etna were reporting year-on-year increases of up to 60% and comparing quality with that of the very good 2022.

Sicily 6 not yet released



**VALPOLLICELLA (AMARONE)
SARAH HELLER MW**

Though very early in its evolution, 2024 is currently shaping up to be a classic-style vintage, having benefited from slightly cooler conditions during spring and autumn compared to recent vintages and a growing season nearly aligned with historical norms in terms of temperature and the dates of key phenological phases (budding, flowering and veraison). However, the results are somewhat heterogenous. Wines from the hillsides generally had higher acidity that helped with balance, given comparatively high average alcohol levels in both the hills and plains. Rains during harvest, though prolonging the growing season to largely positive effect, also created substantial disease pressure – possibly more of a challenge for those committed to organic agriculture – but overall volumes were not too greatly impacted, sitting above 2021 and 2022, though slightly below 2023. Initial samples tasted were aromatically intense, open fruited, and concentrated – occasionally bordering on warm – but nonetheless showed a distinct “sheerness,” likely reflecting producers’ stylistic shifts towards shorter (100-day or below) appassimento and less vigorous extraction techniques.

Valpolicella* (Amarone) 6 not yet released



**PORTUGAL
CHARLES METCALFE**

In Portugal, the vines got off to an early start after plentiful winter and spring rain. In Dão and Bairrada, spring rain posed problems at flowering and resulted in lower quantities. ‘Challenging but beautiful’, said one winemaker in Dão. The Douro fared better, with a cool September prolonging the growing season, resulting in perfectly balanced, very elegant wines. The rain in Vinho Verde led to considerable disease pressure, but dry weather at picking gave perfect grapes, harvested under optimum conditions. Wet weather in the normally dry Alentejo meant many producers lost grapes to fungal diseases, and there was a 10% fall in the volume of wine made, but growers who managed to treat successfully benefited from a cool July with few heat spikes, and dry picking conditions.

Portugal* North 6 not ready yet
South 6 not ready yet



**VINTAGE PORT
RICHARD MAYSON**

After a run of hot and frequently very dry years, 2024 saw average levels of rainfall and temperatures just below average. This led to a gradual ripening of the grapes with balanced sugar and acidity readings, without the excesses of years like 2018, 2020, and 2022. August was dry but not over-hot and, as a result of good weather continuing through the harvest, some outstanding wines were made in 2024. Charles Symington, winemaker for Cockburn, Dow, Graham, and Warre wrote: ‘It has been a while since we have had such a great alignment in ripening of the different grape varieties, consistently favourable weather both in the lead up to and during the harvest, fruit in such impeccable healthy condition, and fermentations of such excellent quality.’ More detailed information will be forthcoming early next year when we should expect a general vintage declaration, the first since 2017.

Richard Mayson is author of Port and the Douro, published by the Academie du Vin Library where he is Series Editor. He also chairs the Port and Madeira panel for the Decanter World Wine Awards.

Vintage Port 7 not yet released



**SPAIN
HAROLD HECKLE**

The 2024 vintage will go down in history for three and a half reasons. Principal among them is that top wineries have decided to sell wine en primeur for the first time. Second, slumping sales, worldwide, now emphasise the value of good vintages even though experts know an excellent winemaker can mitigate most of the ill-effects of a deteriorating climatology. Thirdly, buyers now comprehend more about how climatic conditions will affect market values.

Spanish producers traditionally sold their wines after having done most of the work for buyers, ageing them in wood and bottle prior to sale. Right now, there is an impressive portfolio of 2024 Spanish wines you can buy “a la avanzada” (in advance).

This triumvirate of conditions has forced producing regions to take a microscope to the harvest and ageing potential of 2024 vintage wines. The discussions have been fevered. The D.O. Rioja officially rated its red wine vintage as Buena (5), a lowly benchmark not seen since 2018. Even more telling, the D.O. Ribera del Duero didn’t stop arguing about it until October 28, a full year after grapes were picked. Their conclusion: the harvest in D.O. Ribera del Duero was Muy Buena (6). The half reason is that for the first time, Rioja has published a separate assessment for its white wines, rating them as better than reds at Muy Buena (6). Once Cinderella wines, Rioja whites have improved exponentially in recent years.

Among producers whose wines you can now buy en primeur is Peter Sisseck of Dominio de Pingus in Ribera del Duero. He acknowledged it was a complex year having only been able to protect 15 of his 35 hectares from freezing in April. He is proud of the results obtained with Pingus. He is more circumspect about his other lines.

Álvaro Palacios spoke poetically of his Priorat wines: “2024 wines will offer great joy. Their refinement is made from memory and sensibility, and they reflect a delicate yet firm world.” His Priorat Garnacha vines have resisted two years of drought and high temperatures. “Still, they have shown incredible resistance,” he said. However, he acknowledged being unable to produce any Les Aubaguets, a wine favoured by some Garnacha enthusiasts. Producers like Palacios, Joan Asens (El Masroig) and René Barbier; regulators, and Pedro Ballesteros MW describe 2024 as a severely drought-impacted vintage with massively reduced yields, more than 50% down, but with promising grape quality. We could give it a temporary 7 with a possibility of downgrading once the wines are ready for bottling.

Spain’s northwest is attracting connoisseurs due to the quality of wines from Bierzo, Rías Baixas, Ribeira Sacra, Ribeiro and Valdeorras, where the red Mencía, the white Godello, and Albariño, are standout varieties of increasing refinement. Álvaro Palacios and his nephew Ricardo agreed with the D.O. Bierzo that the 2024 harvest was exceptional and the consequent wines exhibit potential. “The wines possess depth and power, yet also finesse and delicacy. Their texture is a harmony of layered elements, the paradoxes of a shifting vintage. Such is the magic of old vines,” said Ricardo Palacios. Another member of the family, Rafael Palacios (Álvaro’s brother), who makes outstanding wines in D.O. Valdeorras, has high hopes for the vintage.

Spain North East 7 not ready yet
Ribera del Duero 6 not ready yet
Rioja 5 not ready yet

See issue 156 for reports from the 2025 vintage for the rest of the world. Please note that these reports back to 2021 are available to download from the Secretariat/For Members/Vintage Card Information section of the website.

CALIFORNIA'S HIDDEN GEM: MENDOCINO COUNTY WINE COUNTRY

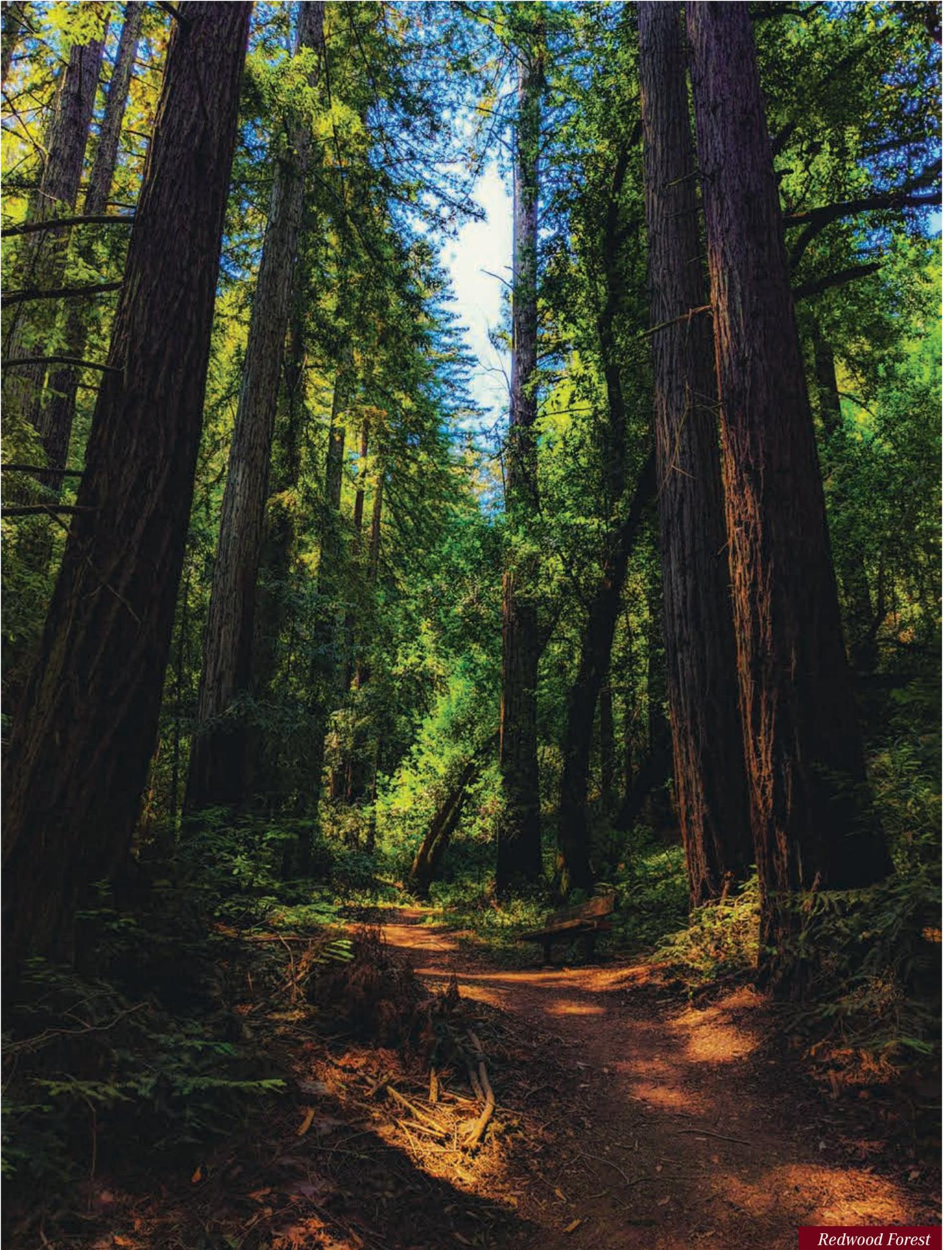
Story / Photos by Dave Purcell



From San Diego to the North Coast

The journey up California's coastline begins at the southern border. Warm sand and gentle surf in San Diego blend city life with beach culture in La Jolla and Coronado. Heading north, the scenery transforms: the glamour and palm-lined boulevards of Los Angeles, the rugged beauty and thriving art scene of Santa Barbara, and the historic charm of Monterey and Carmel.

Each stop carries its own energy, but the further north you travel, the wilder and greener it gets. California is a land of boundless beauty and contradiction—from sun-drenched beaches in San Diego to the misty bluffs of Mendocino County. Along the Pacific Coast Highway, every mile reveals new landscapes that make the state so loved by locals and visitors alike.



Redwood Forest

The California Spirit

California contributes far more than scenery. It is a leader in agriculture, technology, and culture, with a food and wine scene that reflects innovation, diversity, and sustainability. Its relaxed lifestyle and health-conscious food culture contrast with the faster pace of the East Coast, creating a distinctive West Coast identity.

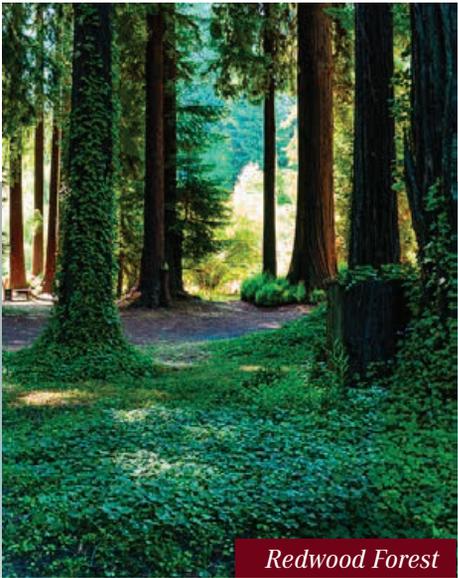
Mendocino's Green Legacy

Just north of Sonoma and Napa lies Mendocino County—a wine region that feels like California's best-kept secret. Unlike its southern neighbors, Mendocino invites travelers to slow down and connect with nature and community. Vineyards are framed by ancient redwoods, wild rivers, and a dramatic Pacific coastline where fog drifts across cliffs.

Wine growing here is defined by sustainability. Nearly 25% of the county's vineyards are certified organic, accounting for a third of California's total. Mendocino also boasts ten times more biodynamic acreage than any other California wine region. Local pioneers have set the standard: Frey Vineyards, the nation's first certified-organic and biodynamic winery; Bonterra, the largest U.S. producer of organic wine; and Parducci, the first American winery to achieve carbon-neutral certification.

These commitments are not just ethical—they are strategic. Today's consumers, especially younger generations, seek purpose-driven brands and environmentally responsible products. Mendocino's reputation was cemented in 2024 when Wine Enthusiast named it Wine Region of the Year, recognition that validates decades of investment in conscious farming.





Redwood Forest



Mendocino Cliffs





Navarro Vineyard



Mendocino Cliffs

A Landscape with Personality

Mendocino spans 3,507 square miles—more than four times the size of Napa—but only about 17,000 acres are planted to vines, one-third of Napa’s vineyard acreage. It is home to 108 wineries and 570 vineyards, most of them small, family-run farms averaging just 14 acres. This intimate scale shapes a community-driven industry rooted in tradition and innovation.

The county is divided into 12 American Viticultural Areas (AVAs), each offering distinctive wines:

Anderson Valley: Famous for elegant Pinot Noir, Chardonnay, and sparkling wines shaped by cool fog and clean air. The valley also hosts a celebrated Pinot Noir Festival each May.

Ukiah Valley & Hopland: Warmer inland climates yield bold Zinfandel, Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, and Mediterranean varietals like Barbera and Grenache.

Other AVAs: A patchwork of microclimates supports Gewürztraminer, Sauvignon Blanc, and other expressive whites, showcasing the county’s diversity.

Notable wineries include Goldeneye, Roederer Estate, Navarro, Husch, and Handley Cellars, all offering inviting tasting rooms. Beyond wine, experiences like Gowán’s Heirloom Cider and farm-to-table dining deepen the region’s culinary appeal.

Authentic Tourism: Coastlines, Redwoods, and Arts

Mendocino County is more than wine—it’s a destination. The village of Mendocino feels like a West Coast version of a New England town, with Victorian homes, artist studios, and cozy bakeries. Visitors stroll streets lined with galleries, boutiques, and farm-to-table cafes, often pausing for local pottery or handmade jewelry.

Nature is ever-present: towering redwoods, windswept coastlines, and star-filled skies. At night, fireplaces glow in bed-and-breakfast inns, while the distant Pacific provides a soundtrack of waves and wind.

Unlike the bustling crowds of Napa and Sonoma, Mendocino offers intimacy and authenticity. Winemakers share stories over tastings, artists open their studios, and each meal feels like it was prepared just for you.



The Path Less Traveled

Mendocino’s quiet authenticity is what keeps visitors coming back. Far less crowded than Napa or Sonoma, it offers meaningful travel—whether exploring redwood groves, sipping small-batch Pinot Noir, or gathering with friends around a farmhouse table.

This is the California spirit in its purest form: wild beauty, resilient communities, and the joy of discovery. In Mendocino, the heart of wine country is not just the vineyards, but the people, the land, and the sense of finding something truly special.

IWFS AUSTIN IN SONOMA

Story by Lynn Jelinski, Austin Branch



Photo: On the bridge at Simoncini Winery. L-R Karon and Billy Hill, Lou and Linda Golm, Lynne and Tom Winterton, Joe and Lynn Jelinski, George Vrba, Bobbie Jarrin, Wiley James, Guadalupe Rivera, Claudia and Steve Reingold



With grape crush in full tilt, fourteen members of the Austin Branch traveled to Sonoma County to participate in five sun-filled days of wine tastings, restaurant experiences, and iconic experiences, all in comfortable camaraderie. There were, however, some sour grapes.

Wineries: We visited seven wineries in four of Sonoma's 19 AVAs; all were family owned and operated, which is becoming more and more unique in the wine country. Taking advantage of insight from our members Lou and Linda Golm, who had previously lived in the wine country, our experience was highly curated. Each winery had its very own distinct personality, wow factor, and special approaches to the wine making and marketing processes. For brevity we will focus on only two of them.

Simoncini Vineyards, Dry Creek Valley AVA: Ken Simoncini and his partner, Chef Deirdre Francis, personally welcomed us to their family winery. It is a small production winery (ca. 2,000 cases) featuring single vineyard wines available only to wine club members, or by direct purchase from the winery. Enormous care is taken in every aspect of production. For example, grapes are hand-picked during the night, mechanically de-stemmed but not crushed, and hand-sorted.

Almost everything is carried out in-house, including the bottling, which is done under an Argon atmosphere to displace oxygen from the bottles, thereby ensuring that it ages well. We were fascinated by the design and engineering aspects of the winery. For example, its wine cave goes almost 650 feet into the hillside, and its on-site waste disposal system minimizes waste, recycles water, and minimizes the carbon footprint.



(From Left): Lou Golm, Wiley James, Tom Winterton, Guadalupe Rivera, Steve Reingold, George Vrba, Bobbie Jarrin, Claudia Reingold, Lynn Jelinski, Lynne Winterton, Billy Hill, Karon Hill, Linda Golm.

The wines were exceptional, and the perfectly-paired small plates are what the winery is famous for. Of the small plates, the crowd favorite was the porcini mushroom bisque, served with their Russian River Valley Pinot Noir.

Lynmar Estate, Russian River Valley AVA: Hidden and very much off the beaten path, we were greeted at Lynmar Estate by a true feast for the senses as pollinators buzzed about the completely perennial gardens. Aromatic lavender, yellow wild flowers, massive amounts of dahlias and salvia, and mounds of artfully-planted perennial grasses, all waved in the light breeze. It was so quiet on the property that we heard the babbling brook before we rounded the curve to see it. Upon arrival, we were treated to an extensive garden tour and saw figs, apples, olives, persimmons, and the aging barrels for balsamic vinegar. At the top of the hill we posed for a photo op (1.) among recently-harvested grape vines, and viewed an eagle's nest in the distance.

Lynmar specializes in Chardonnay and Pinot Noir, and the wine tasting was an over-the-top experience. We were greeted by the owner, Lynn Fritz (Figure 2), who offered us considerable insight into the current state of wine production and sales in California.

Instead of the small plates at Simoncini Vinyards, we were served a paper bag of popcorn dusted with their own blend of salt (seasoned with beet juice and herbs), and drizzled with olive oil.

The wine tasting was not pre-determined; instead we provided



(From Left): Linda & Lou Golm with Lynn Fritz, owner of Lynmar Estate

input on what we wanted to sample. We compared and contrasted wines made from different clones, separate blocks, and from various years. Many thought that the Lynmar Chardonnay wines were among the best we'd had, and the venue among the most stunning (*Figure 3*).

Restaurants: We dined at several highly acclaimed restaurants, including The Matheson, Valette, Catelli's, and Dry Creek Kitchen. For the sake of brevity, we will focus on our farewell dinner, held in a private glassed-in garden room at Dry Creek Kitchen.

Dry Creek Kitchen is a Charlie Palmer restaurant, with its self-described style of progressive American cooking. Executive Chef Shane McAnelly's focus on the bounty of Sonoma County created an exquisite meal. Toasts and hugs and thank-yous were offered up as we celebrated our last night of a fabulous wine and food experience with friends.

The entire meal was served family style. One of our favorite appetizers was a pasta dish, Korean Chile Nuvoles (gulf shrimp, cherry tomato, heirloom tomato water, basil). The vibrantly fruity 2024 Valravyn Chardonnay was a perfect pairing for this dish. Its crisp finish and hint of salinity complemented the delicate taste of the shrimp.

Iconic Locations: There's a lot more to Sonoma County than wineries and restaurants. We stopped at the historic Dry Creek General Store (established in 1881) to pick up snacks and sodas. According to one vintner, the bar at the General Store is where winemakers and vineyard managers gather to discuss the timing of harvest and other vineyard-related activities.

Some of our members hiked the Armstrong Redwoods State Natural Reserve, while others visited the Charles M. Schulz Museum and Research Center to learn more about creation of the Peanuts comic strip. Nearby Santa Rosa is the home town of Guy Fieri of Food Network fame, and it is possible to secure tickets to watch filming of his shows.

Sour Grapes: We would be remiss not to mention that we picked up some negative vibrations during our winery visits: young people are drinking less wine; the over-supply of grapes; the vagaries of weather; and tariffs affecting wine exports to Canada. These sentiments were echoed in a *Wall Street Journal* article, 'California's Wine Industry Is in Crisis,' which was published on October 11, 2025, the day after we returned to Austin.

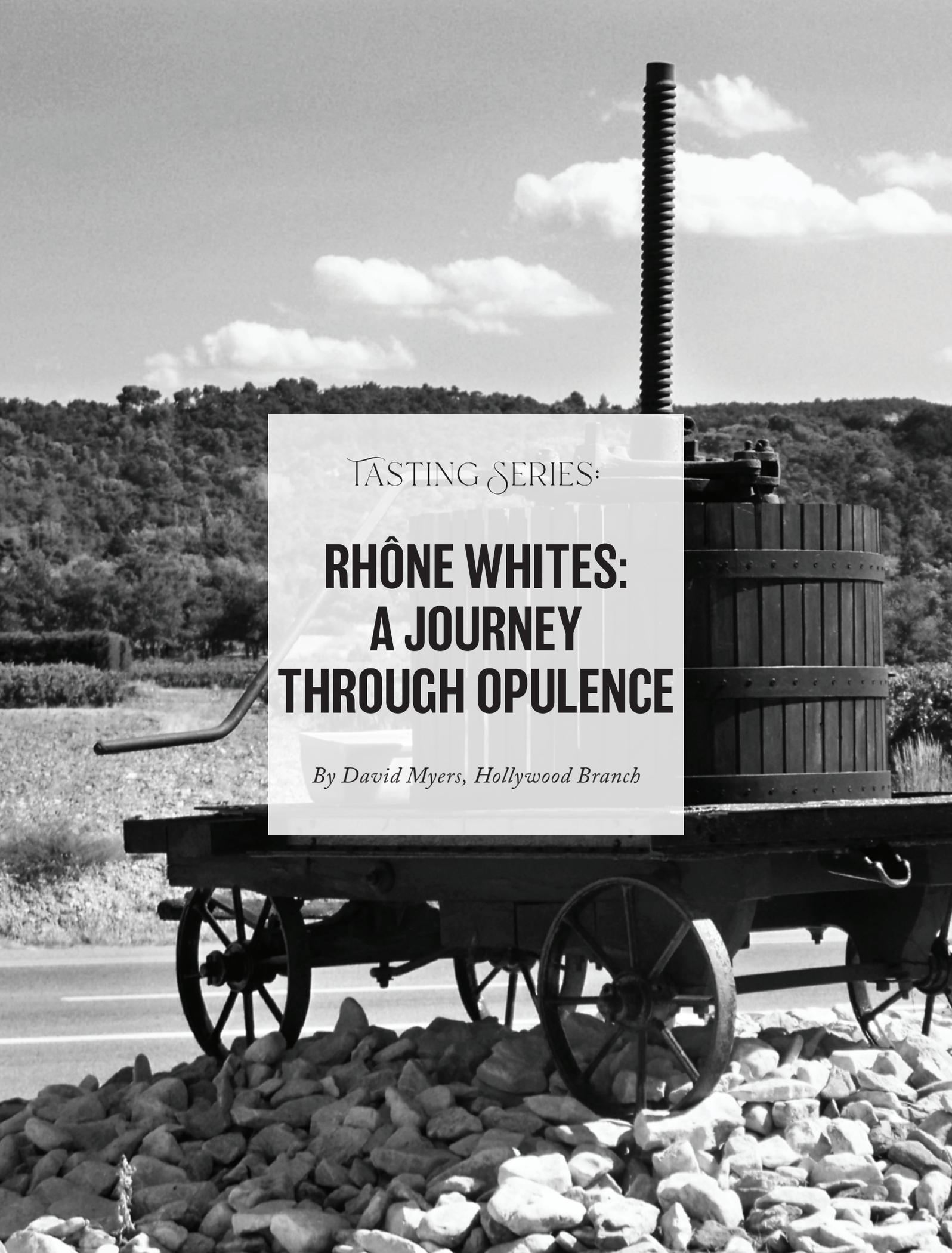
California wines are going to need our support; we hope this article will generate interest for IWFS branches to visit and patronize California wineries.



Extensive perennials viewed from the Lynmar Estate's tasting room

Soup course at Jordan Winery, garnished with homemade fig leaf oil





TASTING SERIES:

**RHÔNE WHITES:
A JOURNEY
THROUGH OPULENCE**

By David Myers, Hollywood Branch



In our late September Virtual Tasting, we took a trip through France's Rhône Valley to explore the white wines of the region. We were led by Master Sommelier and vice chair for the Board of Directors for the Court of Master Sommeliers, Americas, David Yoshida. The Rhône Valley is the second oldest Appellation d'Origine Contrôlée (AOC) in France, designated in 1937, just five years after the system was started. It is made up of 31 sub-classifications along and near the Rhône River, starting to the north near Lyon and ending below Avignon. None of these areas actually reach the mouth of the Rhône, and some do not touch the river itself, separated by mountains. The Rhône Valley is home to 34 grape varieties, has almost 17,000 acres of vineyards planted, and is responsible for nearly 10% of France's annual wine production.

The underlying soil in the Northern Rhône is primarily granite, while in the south it is mostly limestone. But this is not what is seen in the vineyards. Millions of years' worth of alluvial sediment, thrown off as the Alps grew and the Rhône evolved, accumulated on the surface. This glacial outwash contained non-indigenous materials that now compose the top layers of soil found in the vineyards.

The Rhône Valley features distinct climate zones - Continental in the north, Mediterranean in the south - together with the differing geologies, support a wide array of varieties and wine profiles from north to south. Also important are the valley's prevailing winds. The Mistral, coming from the northwest over the North Sea, is cold and dry; it slows the development of sugars and lengthens the time for grapes to ripen. In years when it is prevalent, the harvest is often delayed. Conversely, the warmer La Bise can blow out the low clouds, improve sunshine getting through, and hasten the grapes reaching maturity.

Côtes du Rhône AOC: In the Bottle



- All dry, still wine
- 3 colors
- Min 11%* alcohol
- **Blanc:** Marsanne, Roussanne, Bourboulenc, Grenache Blanc, Clairette, and Viognier must be the majority of blend
- **Rouge/Rosé*:** Grenache and either Syrah or Mourvèdre must be minimum 60% of the blend



On to the wines in the tasting. Our first is the Signature by La Font du Loup Cotes du Rhône Blanc 2024. Cotes du Rhône wines are always dry – never sparkling and never sweet – and can be white, pink, or red. White Cotes du Rhône must be dominated by any combination of Marsanne, Roussanne, Bourboulenc, Grenache Blanc, Clairette, or Viognier grapes. The La Font du Loup Blanc is a friendly, introductory Rhône white – fruit forward, medium body – but with a minerality that is distinctly European. It has floral and melon notes. Production in concrete and stainless-steel vats gives it a freshness and wonderful mouth feel.

The majority of grapes used in this wine are Grenache Blanc (adapts to many soil types; rich in extract but prone to oxidation, best to drink young) and Clairette (higher in acidity, bringing freshness; more mineral-driven, with a floral bouquet). While La Font du Loup is a well-known Châteauneuf-du-Pape producer, these grapes come from a higher-altitude vineyard outside of the CdP appellation, and are classified as Cotes du Rhône.

We then move on from a regional wine to one that is much more specific, the Château Fortia Châteauneuf-du-Pape Edmée Le Roy 2021. Châteauneuf-du-Pape is very important to the southern Rhône wine region, partly because of its history. In the early 14th century, after several popes were assassinated in Italy, Clement V left Rome and reigned from France. With his summer home in the higher altitudes north of Avignon, the area became known as “Châteauneuf-du-Pape.”

Our tasting wine is made up of 60% Roussanne, 30% Clairette, and 10% Grenache Blanc, done entirely in stainless steel. It is fresh, lively and full-bodied – by no means a lean white wine. There is a richness, an opulence in the mouth, which can be drawn as a throughline for all the Rhône Valley wines. These are food-friendly wines. They build tannin texture, a gripiness in the mouth that makes them behave like light red wines – which makes them very flexible in food pairings.

The Condrieu AOC was designated in 1940, but almost disappeared in 1971 when only 13 hectares (32 acres) were planted to Viognier. Though it is a hard grape to grow, not very well-known, and not very popular, current plantings have grown to over 270 acres. The vineyards are on very steep (up to a 50-degree grade) hills, so labor costs are also steep. The soil in this area is primarily decomposed granite (Arzelle, granite dust, very poor in nutrients) that limits the vine vigor but produces intense flavors in the wine. You will not find inexpensive Condrieu – producing it is truly a labor of love.

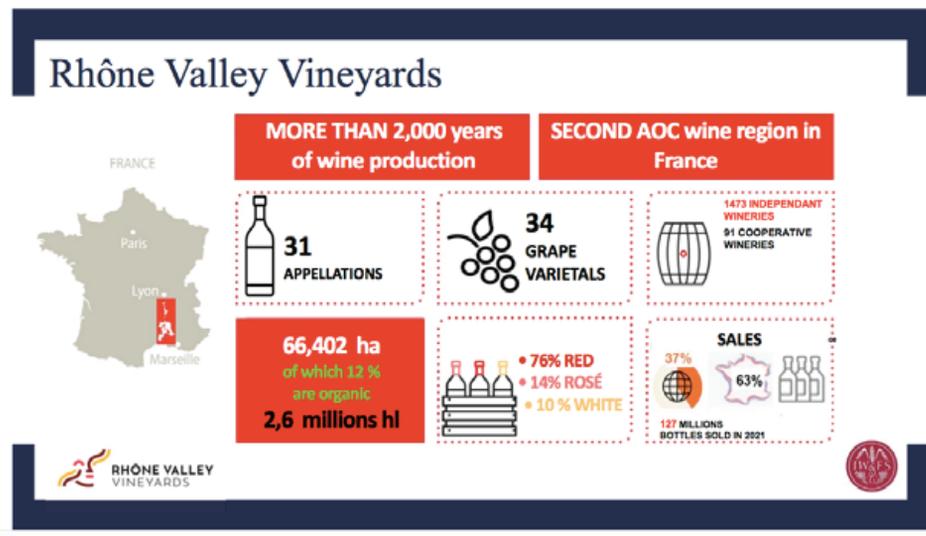
The Xavier Gerard Condrieu 2021 is from grapes grown in two plots outside the village of Condrieu, harvested in two passes, for acidity and body. It is fermented in oak, blended with a small amount of press wine to add texture and some bitterness and complexity. Of all the world’s great white wines, though, Condrieu does not age well; it will not improve in bottle, so buy the freshest, youngest vintage that you can.

The Saint-Joseph AOC is south of Condrieu, on the steep slopes of the Rhône's left bank. It has gone through periods of expansion and contraction – from its original 71 hectares in 1956, up to 7,500 hectares, then down to a current 1,300 hectares.

The J. L. Chave Selection Saint-Joseph Blanc Circa 2022 is barrel-fermented, much like the wines of Condrieu, and has the same richness of fruit. It is less floral than Condrieu, but has the waxiness and nuttiness typical of Marsanne (40%) and Roussanne (60%). Like the Chateau Fortia CdP white, this Chave has a full-body texture – like that of a red wine – with the crisp melon-peach-apricot fruits of white wine. It is a perfect wine to complement pork, chicken, a vegetarian dish, or salmon.

On the right bank of the Rhône, across from Saint-Joseph, is the Crozes-Hermitage AOC. Typical of Rhône appellations, red wine (Syrah, in this case) dominates this area's production. White wines – Marsanne and Roussanne – make up only 10%. The highest-quality whites in the region come predominantly from the original Crozes villages in the northern-most part of the AOC.

The Stephane Rousset Crozes-Hermitage Blanc Vieilles Vignes 2022 – 100% Marsanne – provides the opportunity to contrast a pure varietal bottling with a Roussanne/Marsanne blend, the '22 J. L. Chave Saint-Joseph. The richness of the 100% Marsanne wine is set against the lively acidity that Roussanne brings to the Chave.



Further to the south is the Hermitage AOC, marked by a distinct outcropping of rock – the hill of Hermitage. This AOC's eastern hills – with mostly south-facing vineyards on steep grades – are home to many of the top red and white wines of the Rhône. The name “Hermitage” has a distinctive history. A retired soldier from the Crusades of Pope Innocent III built a small chapel on the hill and lived there as a hermit. The chapel still stands. The land surrounding it – now a vineyard – is called “l’Hermité.”

Hermitage produces a higher percentage of white wines than any other Rhône appellation – 35%. Composed of Marsanne and Roussanne, these wines are the most famous whites in the Northern Rhône. Our final wine, the J. L. Chave Selection

Hermitage Blanc “Blanche” 2021 is 80% Marsanne, 20% Roussanne. The grapes are mostly “Lieu Dit Maison Blanche” – from vineyards surrounding the white house atop the hill of Hermitage. It is a step-up from the previous wines in concentration and intensity – the archetype of what a Northern Rhône white wine aspires to be.

The takeaway from David Yoshida's wonderful presentation and tasting of Rhône whites – lean into them! You won't be disappointed.

Did you miss one of our Virtual Tastings? You can still enjoy it by going to the IWFS website and visiting our Virtual Tastings library. All Virtual Tastings are now recorded and reside on our IWFS YouTube channel. Be sure to check them out!

<https://www.youtube.com/@IWFSAmericas/videos>





THE JUDGEMENT OF PARIS

PART 1: THEN, BEFORE, AND NOW

By Ronald Fenolio, CEO/Proprietor, Veedercrest Estates LLC

We are quickly approaching the 50th anniversary of the now infamous Judgement of Paris, which will be celebrated on May 24, 2026. Fifty years earlier an Englishman, Stephen Spurrier and an American, Patricia Gallagher, had organized a tasting in Paris to try to get some publicity for their wineshop, Caves de la Madeleine, and its associated wine school, the Academie du Vin. Today we all know the outcome of that day, now so infamous in and to California, and the new world wine industry. But why, other than the fact California wines ended up being the top rated, was it so important? This cannot be understood without taking a step back and taking a look at the history of wine in California and America (Part One), then looking at what actually happened at the Judgement of Paris (Part Two), and finally taking a look at where the industry is now (Part Three). So lets begin.

1886 - A CARLOAD OF GRAPES FROM CALIFORNIA





RONALD L “RON” FENOLIO,
Proprietor, Veedercrest Vineyards and Winery
Member at large,
International Wine and Food Society

Ron Fenolio was one of the three original general partners of the partnership that owned and established Veedercrest Vineyards and Winery. Both other general partners have passed. Ron today is the sole proprietor of Veedercrest winery in Napa, as well as being one of the largest importers of Portuguese wines for the United States.

Veedercrest was one of the eleven participants in the 1976 Judgement of Paris. Ron is the “last man standing”, distinguished as being the only remaining owner alive and still working in the industry, all other Judgment of Paris participants having either passed and passed on their interests, retired or sold.

Ron has had a varied career, having been an attorney, investment banker, diplomat, real estate developer, and university professor. But through a number of other careers, he always maintained his passion for food and wine. Ron is fourth generation member of a family involved in the wine industry since the 1880’s, where in Italy where his great grandfather owned a vineyard in Friuli. He and several of his cousins are winery owners and winemakers. He has also been involved in the restaurant and hotel hospitality industries, and has served for four years as Chairman of the Family Winemakers of California. He was honored by being awarded the Antonin Careme Medal from the American Culinary Federation, San Francisco Chapter, recognizing those individuals who have made significant contributions to the culinary, viticultural and hospitality industries. Fewer than 225 individuals including Julia Child have been so honored since its inception in 1969.

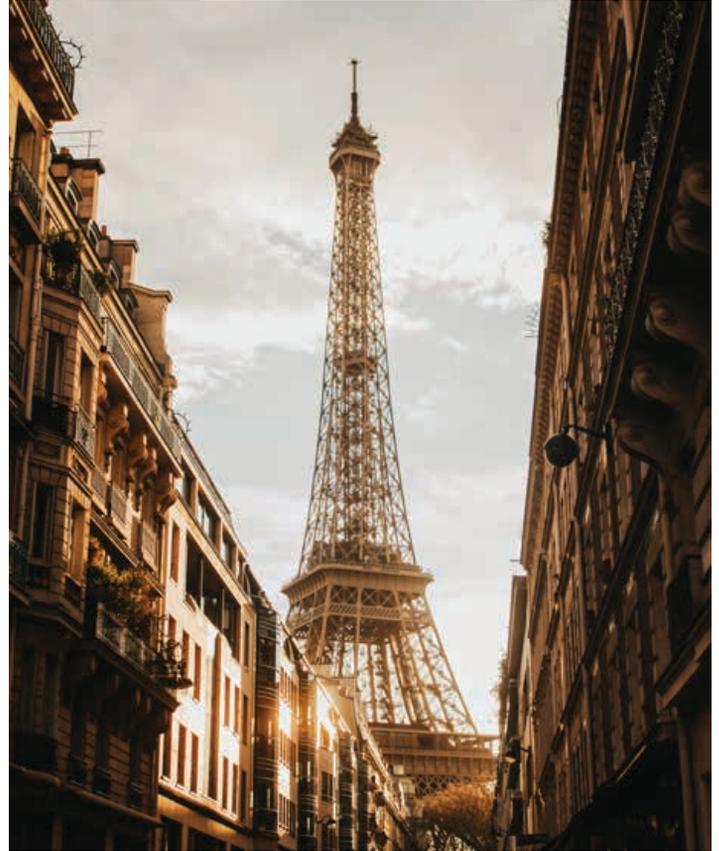
Part One

Even Before California Was A State

The first wine grapes planted in California were planted by Father Junipero Serra while moving north through “New Spain”, the vast territory conquered by the Spanish in North America, and home of Aztecs who called themselves Mexico.. This vast territory did not become known as the country of Mexico until the end of the successful Mexican War of Independence, 1822. The name California was first associated with the Baja California Peninsula as early as the 1530s. What is now California was known at that time as Alta California. Father Junipero Serra was a Catholic missionary who was coming from Baja California traveling north through Alta California to teach Catholicism to the Native Americans in the region. Spanish rulers desired to expand their empire by establishing religious and military outposts.

Father Serra’s first mission, San Diego de Alcalá, was founded in 1769 near the mouth of the San Diego River. His second mission was San Carlos Borromeo de Carmelo, in what is now Carmel, near Monterey. It became his headquarters and he is buried there. Father Serra needed wine grapes to make sacramental wines for the Eucharistic services of the Catholic missions. He probably planted the first vine at San Diego de Alcalá. However, what is generally regarded as the “Mother Vine” was planted around 1770 at Mission San Gabriel Arcangel. It is regarded as the “Mother Vine” as cuttings from this vine were used to propagate wine grape vineyards at other missions. The first sustainable vineyard was established by Father Serra at Mission San Juan Capistrano in 1779. These first plantings were of grapes commonly called the “Mission” variety. However modern DNA analysis established that these vineyards were planted with the Listan Prieto variety from Spain. From these early beginnings commercial wine production can be traced to the Los Angeles area during the 1830s. At the same time, George Yount received a large Mexican land grant for large holdings around what is now Yountville and started planting wine grape vines in the Napa Valley. The area known as Alta California was ceded by Mexico to the United States as part of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, ending the Mexican-American War in 1848. California became a state in 1850.

Father Junipero Serra passed away in 1784. He did not live to see what became of the twenty one historic missions of California, or the furthest north established in Sonoma. Mission Sonoma, officially called Mission San Francisco Solano, was founded in 1823 by Padre Jose Altamira. It is the only mission founded during the period of independent Mexican rule. The first substantial vineyards in Sonoma were planted near the mission during the 1823 to 1825 period. However, these were not the first vineyards planted in what was to become Sonoma. The earliest plantings of grapevines in what is now Sonoma County are attributed to Russian colonists at Fort Ross in 1812.





Our narrative now continues with a side trip to the east coast of America, specifically to Monticello in Virginia, the home of President Jefferson. He had represented the United States in France and became an ardent devotee of French table wines. Jefferson is credited with starting vineyards in Virginia around 1803 on land surrounding his home at Monticello. Many attribute him to being America's first true viticulturist, but that honor probably belongs to Father Junipero Serra. Wine grape production was also being developed in Ohio, New York, and Missouri.

By 1900, starting with these early pioneers, America had developed a thriving wine industry. It is estimated that there were 2000 to 2500 wineries in America at the beginning of the 20th century. It

is estimated that America was producing approximately 23,000,000 gallons of wine at the start of the century. The California industry had grown substantially by this time, producing over 90% of the total output. Much of this wine was exported to Europe in barrels to be bottled. This wine was not regarded as quality product by Europeans.

Then disaster hit – specifically five disasters. The first was the First World War (1915, stopping exports), Prohibition (1919, stopping domestic consumption), the Great Depression (1929), the Second World War (1939), and the Korean War. Prohibition instantly stopped the production of wine, except for a few wineries allowed to continue making sacramental wine. The industry suddenly collapsed

and almost all historic wineries went out of business.. Not only that but when Prohibition was repealed (1933) the combined effect of the Great Depression and WWII meant that there was neither venture capital or able-bodied workers available to rebuild the industry; our men were off to war. After World War II and the Korean war the men wanted to get educated, get a good job, get married, and have families.

So who were the pioneers who restarted the industry after the end of Prohibition? Why was 1972 so important? What led up to, and why was the Judgement of Paris significant? We will explore these important milestones in **Part 2 – Rebirth of an Industry.**

THE IWFS FOUNDATION

The IWFS Foundation, Inc. (the Foundation) is a company incorporated under the laws of the State of Delaware, whose sole member is IWFS Americas Inc. Its purpose is to award scholarships in the name of The International Wine & Food Society which fund the tuition fees of qualified students wishing to study oenology, viticulture, culinary arts and hospitality management at recognized non-profit colleges in the United States and Canada. The Foundation is recognized as a tax-exempt organization under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code on the basis that it is the supporting charitable foundation of IWFS Americas Inc. Donations made by members are therefore deductible for US tax purposes.

In addition to funding these three major commitments, the Foundation is available to provide assistance to any Branches which are already making donations to their local culinary schools or may wish to do so in the future. We want to hear from Branches about their charitable activities and understand how we may be able to help. The Foundation no longer makes ad hoc 'matching grants' but it will consider supporting a branch's charitable endeavor by entering into a joint pledge agreement, whereby the Foundation and the branch jointly agree to fund a named scholarship for a fixed number of years.

For more information, and to make a donation, click on the QR Code to be taken to the Foundation page on the IWFS website.





WELCOME TO THE 2026 KEY WEST FOOD & WINE FESTIVAL!

The International Wine & Food Society is pleased to be a sponsor of this annual event. Founded in 1933 by André Simon, the IWFS has grown into a global organization dedicated to a principle that is best summarized by our motto: Wine, Food & Friends.

Our members regularly gather in local branches to celebrate the pleasures of the table. These events range from black-tie banquets at Michelin-starred restaurants to informal tastings at members' homes.

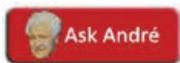
IWFS members also have exclusive benefits such as travel opportunities to wine- and food-related destinations around the world. Another is a subscription to our quarterly publication Wine, Food & Friends, a recent copy of which is found in your registration materials.

FREE WINE & FOOD PAIRING APP

To give you a peek into one of our members' favorites, please use the QR code at the bottom to sample "Ask André" our AI wine and food pairing app. Named for our Society's founder, our members have found it's handy to use whatever your level of expertise. You can also use André to learn more about the IWFS, and please feel free to contact us for more information.

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What's Cooking?

BRANCH EVENTS ACROSS THE AMERICAS

AIKEN

Oregon Wine Dinner

John and Patty Oakland hosted the Aiken Branch at the Sage Valley Gun Club. It is a tradition for the Oaklands to host the Aiken Branch at Sage Valley in October. John and Patty had visited both Shea Wine Cellars and Penner Ash Wine Cellars many years ago, and are fans of their wines. John decided to feature all Oregon wines at this year's dinner.

October 28, 2025: Oregon Wine Dinner, Sage Valley Gun Club, Vaucluse, South Carolina. 🍷 *Argyle Estate Brut Rose 2019* ✕ Charcuterie Board, Fried Pickles. 🍷 *Shea Wine Cellars Chardonnay 2023* ✕ Smoked Salmon and Toast Squares. 🍷 *Shea Wine Cellars Estate Pinot Noir 2021, Homer Vineyard Pinot Noir 2021* ✕ Braised Short Ribs, Baby Vegetables, Scalloped Potatoes. Artichoke Salad. 🍷 *Penner Ash Willamette Valley Pinot Noir 2018* ✕ Elvis Presley Cake (German Chocolate Cake with Peanut Butter Frosting and Bananas Foster a la Mode).



The Fall-Themed Centerpiece

ATLANTA

October 4, 2025: Annual Business Meeting and Summer Picnic, The Barquín's Residence, Atlanta, Georgia.

On Saturday, 4 October, under cloudy skies and a very pleasant 78 degrees, we held our traditional Summer Picnic at the residence of Arturo and Bere Barquín, in Atlanta, GA.

The afternoon started with a Cava reception and an amazing assortment of cheeses and hors d'oeuvres. Following the Business Meeting, everyone enjoyed more hors d'oeuvres, more Cava, and many outstanding "end-of-bin" red wines from the Branch Cellar.

The event concluded with a Pig Roast accompanied by a traditional rice with green pigeon peas cooked by Helga Franceschi, wife of Carli Franceschi, founder of the Atlanta Branch.



Hosts Bere and Arturo Barquín

BURLINGTON

Vertical Tasting of Pinot Noirs

Winemaker Alison Findlay, from Niagara College Teaching Winery, led us through a vertical tasting of five other Pinot Noirs. Cherry House restaurant did a marvelous job of pairing multiple courses of their local foods to the five years of Pinots. Naturally, we started with a Niagara College 2019 Dean's List Blanc de Blanc bubbly, paired with an assortment of Crab cakes, Baked brie, and Avocado Bruschetta, just to set the mood and give everyone a chance to chat and meet Alison and other guests.

Wild mushrooms are a natural pairing for Pinot Noirs, and we were not disappointed with the Wild Mushroom ravioli, in a Niagara College Pinot Noir cream sauce, to try with each of the wines. The discussion revolved around the subtle differences in the wine strengths and flavours, across the years. For those of us who have been to Oregon, we noted that the youngest wine was reminiscent of some the Oregon Pinots that we had tasted. What fun to be able to do that!

As always, the evening was about great wine, outstanding food, and the camaraderie of good friends.

May 25, 2025: Vertical Tasting of Pinot Noirs, Cherry House Restaurant, Burlington, Ontario. 🍷 *Dean's List Blanc de Blancs 2019* ✕ Choice of: Pan Fried Crab Cake - Spicy Caper Aioli, Baked Brie - Phyllo, Wild Blueberry Compote, Baby Arugula Salad - Strawberries, Chèvre, Honey Coffee Vinaigrette, Avocado Bruschetta - Hass Avocado, House made bread, Balsamic Reduction. Wild Mushroom Ravioli - Pinot Noir Pommery Cream Sauce. 🍷 *Dean's List Pinot Noirs 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022* ✕ Choice of: Grilled 6 oz Filet Mignon - Apple, Bacon & Bourbon Jus, Mashed Potatoes, Seasonal Vegetables, Oven Roasted Chicken Breast - Honey Pommery Jus, Mashed Potatoes, Seasonal Vegetables, Pan Seared Chilean Sea Bass - Roasted Red Pepper, Onion and Caper Salsa, Basmati Rice, Seasonal Vegetables. 🍷 *Choice of Premium Liqueurs* ✕ Choice of: Bergamot Scented Brownie Bread Pudding, Seasonal Cheesecake, Seasonal Crème Brûlée, Strawberries and Cream.



Attendees with Winemaker Allison Findlay

CHICAGO

904th Dinner of the Society – Schwa

The IWFC Dinner No. 904 was at Schwa with Chef Michael Carlson and Chef de Cuisine Caleb Trahan. We were excited to return to this creative Wicker Park venue as they celebrated their 20-year anniversary. Schwa has earned a MICHELIN Star every year since 2011. The team's extreme creativity and complexity of dishes provided us with limited food notes this evening but major excitement and intrigue.

September 10, 2025: 904th Dinner, Schwa, Chicago, Illinois. 🍷 *Piper-Heidsieck Champagne Cuvée Brut NV* ✕ Shrimp - Blossom, Pinon, Harissa Shake - Kefir, Vadouvan, Sotol Raviolo - Quail Egg, Truffle, Ricotta Crab - Lychee, Culantro, Sofrito, Blossom, Pinon, Harissa. 🍷 *Aubert Chardonnay CIX Estate Vineyard 2019* ✕ Sablefish - Corn, Rhubarb, Corn Husk Cornbread - Sabayon, Leche De Tigre, Roe Smoked Kaluga - Rutabaga, Raspberry, Mustards. 🍷 *Ch. Sociando-Mallet Bordeaux en magnum 1986* ✕ Quail - Ssamjang, Apple, Chamomile À La Mode - Foie Gras, Apple Jack, Cinnamon Wagyu - Matsutake, Strawberry, Batter. 🍷 *Ch. Sudaïraut Sauternes 2001* ✕ Ramen - Kataifi, Strawberry Tart, Tea Cheese - Black Walnut, Choco, Aged Parmigiano Soda - Rucola, Bubblegum Plum, Hop Water. 🍷 *Barbeito Malvasia Madeira 1948* ✕ Bubblegum - Arugula, Plum, Chamoy Banana - Chicory, Pimento Dram, Long Pepper.

CHICAGO

905th Dinner of the Society – Oriole

The IWFC Dinner 905 was at Oriole, led by Executive Chef and Owner Noah Sandoval. Since opening in 2016, Oriole has been awarded and retained two Michelin stars. This is a special venue and we were treated to a special 6-course tasting menu that was designed for the IWFC. It is always a pleasure to choose wines for a dinner at Oriole. The excellence of the food and the complexity of the dishes provide for multiple options for the pairings.

October 8, 2025: 905th Dinner, Oriole, Chicago, Illinois. 🍷 *Pol Roger Champagne Brut Reserve NV* ✕ 🍷 *Dom. Weinbach Riesling Schlossberg Cuvée Ste. Catherine L'Inédit 2015* ✕ Foie Gras - Michigan Blueberry, Oxalis. 🍷 *Dom. Vacheron Sancerre Chambrates 2020* ✕ Golden Kaluga Caviar - Crème Fraîche, Apple, Fava Tendrils, Kohlrabi, Lemon. 🍷 *Dom. Leftaive Mâcon-Verzé 2022* ✕ Turbot - Dill Roulade, Butternut Squash Amazake, Fried Caper Gremolata, Pickled Ground Cherries. 🍷 *LeVieux Donjon Châteauneuf-du-Pape 1998* ✕ Truffle Risotto - Gran Reserva Carnaroli Rice, Caraway, Truffle, Chive, Confit Quail Egg. 🍷 *Ch. Figeac 2000* ✕ A5 Miyazaki Wagyu - Sudachi Glaze, Turnip Purée, Horseradish, Pickled Turnips, Candied Eggplant. 🍷 *Blandy's Terrantez Madeira 1977* ✕ Carrot Cake - Spiced Carrot, Pineapple, Coconut, Huckleberries, Tonka Bean Mousse, Candied Black Walnut.

FORT WORTH

Fall Dinner

The Fort Worth, Texas Chapter of IWFS met on Friday, September 26th for a black tie event at the Fort Worth Club. The Fort Worth Club was established over 30 years ago and helped define and influence Fort Worth's distinctive character. The head chef is Tim Prefontaine and was named the 2014 ACF Chef of the Year.

September 26, 2025: Fall Dinner, The Fort Worth Club, Fort Worth, Texas. 🍷 *Sabine Godme Champagne Premier Cru Blanc de Blancs Brut NV* ✕ Petit Schnitzel Roulade, Osetra Caviar on Blinis with Chive Cream. 🍷 *Eisele Vineyard Sauvignon Blanc 2018* ✕ Butternut Squash Bisque, Braised Pheasant, Plum Gastrique. 🍷 *Jean Dauvissat Pere & Fils Chablis 2021* ✕ Herb Poached Halibut, Lobster, Roasted Fennel, Black Trumpet Mushrooms, Champagne Butter Sauce, Blood Orange Sorbet. 🍷 *Dom. de l'Île Margaux Cuvee Mer de Garonne 2004* ✕ 🍷 *Ch. Barde Haut (Saint Emilion Grand Cru) 2010* ✕ Olive Cured Rack of Colorado Lamb, Roasted Tomato Spinach Cake, Seet Pea Coulis, Vichy Carrots, Natural Jus. River Valley Farms Baby Gem Salad, Pear and Roquefort Charlotte, White Balsamic and Basil Vinaigrette. 🍷 *Ch. Guiraud Sauternes 2011* ✕ Warm Apple Tart Tatin, Dried Cherries and Vanilla Ice Cream.



(From Left): Ben Matheson, Scott & Kathi Mahaffey, Margie Veale, and Richard Polson

HOUSTON

Annual Business Meeting and Dinner

The Houston Racquet Club is the premier tennis club in Houston, situated on 31 acres among stately trees in the Memorial Villages on the banks of Buffalo Bayou. Our Houston Chapter business meeting was followed by a champagne reception and an exquisite dinner prepared especially by Executive Chef Emmanuel Campos. The dinner was hosted by April Rentz. Member Pat Pollan generously donated the Taittinger champagnes.

August 6, 2025: Annual Business Meeting and Dinner, Houston Racquet Club, Houston, Texas. 🍷 *Taittinger Champagne* ✕ Braised Short Ribs, Arancini with Truffle Aioli, Shrimp Mousse Canape on Brioche Toast with Tobiko Caviar. 🍷 *BY.OTT Rosé, France* ✕ Tun Tartar and Avocado, Citrus Marinated Crudo Ahi Tuna, Crispy Wontons, Wasabi Foam, Fennel & Micro Cilantro Salad. 🍷 *Bandini 2019, Mendoza, Argentina* ✕ Seared Foie Gras & Duck & Cannelloni, Slow Braised Confit, and Salsa Cremosa Al Tartufo. 🍷 *Sullivan Cabernet Sauvignon 2022* ✕ Venison and Wild Berries, Pan Roasted Venison Loin, Silky Fondant Sweet Potato, Cipollini Onions, Asparagus Tips, Jus with Wild Blackberries Gastrique. 🍷 *Ch. De Pez 2021* ✕ Burnt Honey Chocolate Cake, Honey and Chocolate Mousse, Toasted Pistachio.



Hostess, April Rentz and member Pat Pollan present the IWFS Certificate to Executive Chef Emmanuel Campos

HOUSTON

Annual Installation Dinner

The Annual Installation Dinner for our Houston Chapter was held at Tony's restaurant, Tony's has long been a favorite of our chapter, and we have enjoyed several truly memorable dinners here in the past. This dinner was no exception, with an imaginative menu developed by Chef Kate McLean paired with wonderful Old-World wines. All of the new and continuing board members recited their oath of office to begin a new and exciting year for our Houston Chapter. This event was hosted by our-going president, Preston Towber and in-coming president, Brian Faulkner.

September 18, 2025: Annual Installation Dinner, Tony's, Houston, Texas. 🍷 *Veuve Clicquot Brut Champagne* ✕ Oven Roasted Tomato and Ricotta Tartlet, Caviar "Pie", Kaviari Baenki, Blini, Crème Fraîche. 🍷 *Vie di Romans Pinot Grigio "Dessimis" 2022* ✕ Burrata Pugliese, Shades of Melon, Crispy Green Beans, Sicilian Olive Oil, Maldon Sea Salt, Wildflower Honey. 🍷 *Dom. Louis Michel & Fils Chablis 2023*

✕ Campanelle al Limone, Santa Barbara Sea Urchin, Squash Blossom, Meyer Lemon. 🍷 *Damilano Barolo Lecinquevigne 2016* ✕ Superior Farms Lamb Chop, Parsnip Gelée, French Breakfast Radish, Spruce Tip Lamb Jus. 🍷 *Warre's Vintage Porto 1977* ✕ Sea Salta Pistachio Souffle with Tony's Macaron, Callebaut Chocolate Sauce.



The Americas Silver Medal was presented to Jean Durden and Sharilyn Lampson by Mike Donohoe and Bonnie Meine for their extraordinary service to IWFS as past chapter presidents, board members, and dinner hosts

JACKSONVILLE

A French Dinner

The Wine & Food Society of Jacksonville enjoyed its opening dinner for the 2025-2026 season at the acclaimed Rue Saint-Marc restaurant, where Chef Scott Alters and Sommelier Gabrielle Alters created a spectacular four-course dinner with matching wines. Through their many travels and studies, the couple brought a new perspective to Jacksonville's food culture by championing local, sustainable farming and an uncompromising commitment to handmade creations through traditional craftsmanship practices.

September 18, 2025: A French Dinner, Rue Saint Marc, Jacksonville, Florida. 🍷 *Limited Edition "Noble Dry" Chenin Blanc, Willamette Valley, Oregon, 2022* ✕ Key West Spiny Lobster Salad with Cashews, Mango, Haricot Vert, Thai Herbs, Lemongrass Vinaigrette. 🍷 *Eruptio Verdelho, 2021, Acores, Pico Island, Portugal, 2021* ✕ Olive Oil Poached Swordfish, Toasted Pine Nuts, Caponata, Castelvetrano Olives, Salsa Verde. 🍷 *Massaya "Terrasses de Baalbeck", Beqaa Valley, Lebanon, 2022 (Grenache, Syrah, Mourvèdre)* ✕ Za'atar Crusted Lamb Loin, Eggplant Puree, Glazed Turnips Panisse, Roasted Lamb Jus. 🍷 *Bodega Pablo Fallabrino "Alcyone", Canelones, Uruguay, NV, Tannat* ✕ Dark Chocolate Delice, Pecan Bavaois, Preserved Figs, Salted Caramel, Milk Chocolate Ice Cream.



Mike Munsch and Rebecca Black

JACKSONVILLE

Pairing Wine with Food Class #6

On a bright Saturday afternoon, we gathered for an afternoon of culinary exploration as we savored four thoughtfully curated tapas, each paired with two distinct wine selections. This tasting highlighted how a white and a red wine can elevate the same dish in surprisingly different ways. John McCarthy, North Florida Fine Wine Advisor at Terroir Selections guided us through the informative class.

October 18, 2025: Pairing Wine with Food Class, Royal Palm Village Wine & Tapas, Atlantic Beach, Florida. 🍷 *Guy Charlemagne Rosé Brut Champagne, Le Mesmit-sur-Oger, France, NV, Ch. des Bachelards Comtesse de Vazeilles Fleurie, Beaujolais, France, 2022* ✕ Curated Selection of Cheeses, Charcuterie & Olives. 🍷 *Tegernseerhof Durnstein Federspiel, Wachau, Austria, 2022, Nostre Pais Rouge AOP Costieres de Nîmes, Rhone, France, 2021* ✕ Smoked Mahi Fish Dip, Cured Salmon Crostini. 🍷 *Dom. Saint Madeleine Vezeley, Burgundy, France, 2022, Grochau Commuter Pinot Noir, Willamette Valley, Oregon, 2022* ✕ Baked Alvarez Butternut Squash with Moorish Spice Blend, Goat Cheese, Pomegranate Molasses, Pepitas Migas. 🍷 *Dom. Bernard Fleuriot et Fils Sancerre, Loire, France, 2023, Dei Rosso di Montepulciano Tuscany, Italy, 2023* ✕ Garlic Sauteed Mayport Shrimp with Fresh Herbs, Tomato, Roasted Garlic Aioli, Fresh Focaccia.



Charcuterie with Rose Champagne

KANSAS CITY

September Dinner

IWFS Kansas City Branch members enjoyed dinner on September 16, at NOKA, a new local Japanese farmhouse-style restaurant. NOKA means “farmer” in Japanese. The diners were treated to “rustic Japanese” food from a live fire kitchen by Executive Chef and owner Amante Domingo.

September 16, 2025: Dinner at NOKA, Kansas City, Missouri. 🍷 *Uka Junmai Daiginjo Sake* ✕ Edamame Toast Bites, Kimchi Sourdough, Goat Cheese, Seven Spice, Sushi Donuts, Sushi Rice, Kombu Salt, Salmon Roe, Crème Fraîche. 🍷 *Lieu Dit Chenin Blanc 2023* ✕ Lobster Fish Bisque, Monkfish, Red Curry, Coconut Milk, Steamed Rice. 🍷 *Vinzant Riesling 2024* ✕ Tostada, Tempura Nori, Dry Aged Salmon, Avocado, Cilantro, Ponzu Lime, Chipotle Aioli. 🍷 *Goldschmidt Vineyards Singing Tree Chardonnay 2022 or Shannon Cabernet Sauvignon 2022* ✕ Seafood Hot Pot Risotto, Smoked Tofu, Bok Choy, Umami Mushrooms or Filet of Beef, 6 Oz Kimchi Compound Butter, Grilled Chinese Broccoli. 🍷 *Kagatsuru “Umeshu”* ✕ Matcha Creme Brulee, Citrus, House Spun Sugar.



(From Left): Dorene Shipley, Mary Lou Spalding, Ping Lee, Lynn Schweig, Regina Kort, Susan Newsam, Janet Meisinger

LAKE TAHOE

IW&FS Wine, Flavor and Fire Dinner

The International Wine & Food Society shared a night of Spanish enhancement, a journey through the flavors, aromas and traditions of one of the world's most celebrated culinary landscapes. Set against a beautiful Golf Course setting, this dinner took place in Galena, NV between Beautiful Lake Tahoe and Reno, NV at the home of the Lafrances. Members surrendered to the fiery romance of Spanish guitar provided by Lucas Aizu of The Reno Philharmonic.

Spanish Cava and Albariño, with a Cecilio 2013 was set aside for the hors d'oeuvre and the Fragos do Lecer Godello, R. Lopez de Heredia Rioja 2011 found themselves paired with the main course. A wonderful Alvear Pedro Ximenez Sherry was shared with dessert.

September 9, 2025: Wine, Flavor and Fire Dinner, Home of Sara and Leonard Lafrance, Galena, Nevada.

🍷 *Spanish Cava and Albariño with a Cecilio 2013* ✕ Manchego & Apricots with Almonds and Chive Tomato Toast, Jamon Iberico, Potato Torta, Smoked Paprika Herb Cheese. 🍷 *R. Lopez de Heredia Rioja 2011* ✕ Grilled Shrimp, Papas Bravas, Herb Coulee, Parsley, Lemon. Basque Chicken, Chorizo, Saffron Pea Rice, Tomato Sauce and Olives. 🍷 *Alvear Pedro Ximenez Sherry* ✕ Scoop of Vanilla Ice Cream, Family Style Chocolate & Churro's—Thick Hot Chocolate, Cinnamon Churro.



Hosts Sara & Leonard Lafrance

MEMPHIS

Michelin Worthy in Memphis

On September 15th the Memphis Wine and Food Society returned to River Oaks Restaurant owned and operated by widely acclaimed master chef Jose Gutierrez. The classically trained French Master chef born in Provence prepared a menu and meal worthy of a Michelin star. Dinner Chairman paired outstanding French wines from the Society's cellar with each course. The quail farci dish was particularly notable; the foie gras stuffing an enduring nod to French gastronomy. As expected, the event was very well attended and given great reviews by all.

September 15, 2025: Michelin Worthy in Memphis, River Oaks Restaurant, Memphis, Tennessee. 🍷 *Dom. Tempier Bandol Rosé 2023* ✕ Cured Salmon with Pickled Radishes. 🍷 *Chassagne-Montrachet, Dom.-Bobbefoy 1er Cru en Remilly 2016* ✕ Rack of Dover Sole with Leek and Vermouth Sauce. 🍷 *Dom du Vieux Telegraphe, La Crau, Châteauf-du-Pape 2009* ✕ Quail Farci with English Pea Puree, Baby Vegetables with Orange Bordelaise. 🍷 *Ch. Beau-Sejour Becot 2000* ✕ Leg of Lamb slow cooked with Flageolet Beans. 🍷 *NV Moet Chandon Nectar Imperial Rosé* ✕ Cherry Bomb.



Dinner Chair George Johnson (Green Jacket)

MINNEAPOLIS / ST. PAUL

Farm at the Arb

Thanks to our planners Joe Tashjian & Kay Savik and Jolie & Steve Klapmeier, our Fall Vendage this year was a true farm to table extravaganza! The event was kicked off in the rustic barn of the Farm Garden with a sampling of wines grown with local Minnesota grapes. We learned about the craft and challenges of cold climate wine making from Enology specialist Drew Hortman of the University of Minnesota.

Served family style and surrounded by a tablescape of fresh cut grass, miniature tractors and windmills, our three course meal (curated by MN Arboretum culinary lead Beth Fisher and executive chef Niki Heber) was filled with fresh seasonal ingredients from the bucolic farm fields of Minnesota. The flavors of fall were in full swing and paired perfectly with wines from Provence, Oregon, and California.



Brunch Members at the Arb

August 23, 2025: Farm at the Arb, Minnesota Landscape Arboretum, Chanhassen, Minnesota. 🍷 *Mas de Gourgonnier Les Baux de Provence Rosé 2024, Provence France* ✕ Summercrisp Pear and Heirloom Tomato Salad, Shaved Fennel, Arugula, Spinach Sesame Garlic Yogurt Dressing. 🍷 *Left Coast Cali's Cuvee Pinot Noir 2022 Willamette Valley Oregon, Trefethen Family Vineyards Eshcol Chardonnay 2025 Napa Valley California* ✕ Mixed Grill Meatballs, Elk, Lamb and Chicken Meatballs served with Smoked Tomato and Vegetable Puree, Manchego Cheese, Mixed Herbs, Green Top Carrots, Herb Garden Chimichurri Burrata, Cucumber & Zucchini Salad, Local Yogurt Herb Dressing, Kernza Flatbread, Black Garlic Honey. 🍷 *Foris Moscato 2023 Rouge Valley Oregon* ✕ Roasted Apple, Sweet Corn & Vanilla Mousse.

MONTEREY PENINSULA

Dinner at the Adobe

On August 24th, members enjoyed a unique and wonderful dining experience at Casa Amesti; an historic adobe built by Jose Amesti in 1822 and now home to the Old Capital Club, the oldest private men's club in Monterey. Members Jeff and Vivian Saper; Stan and Sharon Meresman; Rich and Joyce Thau worked with Executive Chef Thomas Snyder in creating a fabulous dinner. Passed hors d'oeuvres were enjoyed in the walled garden under bright, blue skies followed by dinner.

August 24, 2025: Dinner at the Adobe, Casa Amesti, Monterey, California. 🍷 *Champagne Domaine de Marzilly Ullens Lot 08 Brut NV* ✕ Smoked Trout Roe, Sauce Gribiche, Endive Spear, Pork Terrine, Whole Grain Mustard, Pistachio, Dried Tomato, Croquet of Bacalao, Garlic Aioli. 🍷 *Flywheel Brosseau Vineyard Chardonnay 2023* ✕ Dungeness Crab & Watermelon Salad, Cucumber, Avocado, Basil. 🍷 *Paul Hobbs Russian River Pinot Noir 2022* ✕ Sea Bass, Pancetta & Bell Pepper Relish, Garlic Emulsion. 🍷 *Ch. Faugères Saint-Émilion Grand Cru Classé 2015* ✕ Lamb Saddle, Stuffed with Sun-dried Tomato, Olives, Roasted Garlic, Shallot Cabernet Sauce. 🍷 *Graham's Vintage Port 2017* ✕ Stone Fruit Salad, Lemon Verbena Panna Cotta, Almond Praline Dust.



Event Hosts Jeff Saper, Sharon & Stan Meresman, Joyce & Rick Thau

MONTEREY PENINSULA

Annual Luncheon

On October 19, 2025, fortunate members and guests gathered at Corral de Tierra Country Club located in the heart of John Steinbeck's Pasture of Heaven area just east of Monterey for our annual luncheon to elect new board of governors. This was our branch's 289th event. The country club and dining room were beautifully decorated with fall decorations.

Our hosts Helayne and Alan Williams oversaw a magnificent event with exquisitely prepared French appetizers and courses prepared by Executive Chef William Bennett.

October 19, 2025: Annual Luncheon, Corral de Tierra Country Club, Pastures of Heaven, California. 🍷 *Pierre Sparr Brut Reserve Cremant d'Alsace* ✕ "Croque Monsieur"; Brioche, Truffled Gruyere Fondue, Prosciutto, Salmon Rillettes Éclair; Crème Fraîche, Kaluga Caviar, Steak Tartar; Cornichon, Dijon, Red Koshu, Egg Yolk Jam, Goat Cheese Tart; Olive, Roasted Tomato Tapenade. 🍷 *Clos Cibonne "Cuvée Spéciale des Vignettes" Tibouren Côtes de Provence Rosé 2023* ✕ Potato Garlic Soup; Rustic Crouton, Roasted Garlic Oil, Leek Ash. 🍷 *Dom. Faiveley Gevrey-Chambertin Vieilles Vignes 2023* ✕ Local Rock Cod "Provençal"; Fennel, Roasted Tomato, Olive, Anchovy, Caper. 🍷 *Dom. Durieu "Lucile Avril" Châteauneuf-du-Pape 2022* ✕ Dry Aged Prime Beef Short Rib "Bourguignon"; Chanterelles, Slab Bacon, Red Wine, Celeriac Puree. 🍷 *Ch. Coutet Barsac 2017* ✕ French Apple Tart; Calvados, Caramel, Whipped Crème Fraîche.



(From Left): Sheila Tansill, Pam Gallaway, and Helayne Williams

MONTREAL

An Evening in Sicily

Du Boucher à la Table combines a butcher's shop, a cheese emporium, and a dining experience in a "bring your own wine" environment. The menu, created by Mark, Suzan, and Marty, included a wide selection of Italian Antipasto, Bocconcini, grilled octopus, calamari, and zucchini focaccia with Sarullo extra virgin olive oil, imported directly from the hills of Ribera, Italy.

The Mains will include 3 choices of Italian specialties including pasta, grilled fish, and veal filet. We reserved the fully covered outdoor patio. A wonderful locale for a summer evening, sharing elegant, harmonious wine pairings by our Cellar Master, Earl. Du Boucher À La Table and the butcher were voted amongst the best Italian restaurants by Panoram Magazine readers. The perfect place to celebrate the last month of Summer.

August 18, 2025: An Evening in Sicily, Du Boucher a la Table, Montreal, Quebec. 🍷 *Nino Franco Brut Prosecco di Valdobbiadene, Veneto, Italy* ✕ Cacciattore Sausage, Olives, Zucchini Focaccia con Sarullo Extra Virgin Olive Oil. 🍷 *Colli Orientali Scarbolo Friulano, Friuli, Italy* ✕ Bocconcini Caprese (Fresh Mozzarella, Grape Tomatoes, Basil, Calamari Fritti, Polpo Alla Griglia (Grilled Octopus with Sardinian Couscous). 🍷 *Colli Orientali Scarbolo Friulano* ✕ Italian Tuna Tartar, Avocado, Taro Chip. 🍷 *Les Bèates TB Terra Blanc 2022, Coteaux-d'Aix-en-Provence, Morellino di Scansano Cru Madrechiesa 2014, Maremma, Italy* ✕ Cod, Braised Lentil, Seasonal Vegetables, or, Milk Fed Veal Tournedos, Wine Reduction, Potato Puree, or Linguini Pomodoro con Gamberetti (Large Shrimp). 🍷 *Castello Di Monsanto, Vinsanto del Chianti Classico La Chime, 2006, Grappa Chardonnay Ambré Peroni Maddalena* ✕ Tiramisu, Sorbet.



Members Enjoying Du Boucher

MONTREAL

French Bistro - Farm to Table

Restaurant État-Major is a charming French Bistro located in the Hochelaga-Maisonneuve district of Montreal. Our hosts are Dominic LaFlamme and Vincent Chatelais.

État-Major offers a delightful French Cuisine made with fresh market ingredients, with a menu that includes Fish, Bison, Foie Gras, and various other main dishes. The focus is "farm to table" with an ever-changing season inspired menu. The restaurant is known for its excellent staff. This is a BYO wines, so our Cellar Master Earl chose a wonderful selection of fine wines from our Cellar to pair with this menu, exclusively created for us - IWFS Montreal - with the chefs working together with the organizers. A wonderful evening was had by all with members staying into the 11th hour. The evening ended with a "spirited" auction for the unopened wines that had been enjoyed during the evening.

October 6, 2025: French Bistro - Farm to Table, État-Major, Montreal, Quebec. 🍷 *Dom. Bott-Geyl Paul-Édouard Crémant d'Alsace - France, Alsace* ✕ Canapes Assortis. 🍷 *Joseph Drouhin Saint-Véran 2022 - France, Bourgogne* ✕ Scallop Pan Seared with Mussels, cream, white wine, and artichoke chips. 🍷 *Dom. Ostertag Alsace Pinot 2023 - France, Alsace* ✕ Foie Gras marinated in Calvados Grilled Brioche and Seasonal Fruit. 🍷 *Dom. Claude Riffault Sancerre Blanc Les Boucauds 2023 - France, Vallée de la Loire, Ch. de Beaucautel, Châteauneuf-du-Pape 2012 - France, Southern Rhone - Châteauneuf-de-Pape* ✕ Artic Char, Seasonal Vegetables, Bavette de Bison, Wine Reduction, Chanterelles, Pepper Sauce. 🍷 *Inniskillin Vidal Niagara Peninsula 2019, Canada, Niagara Peninsula* ✕ Beignet État Major - Caramel Salted Butter, Vanilla Ice Cream, Chocolate Amandine - Crème Anglaise, Maple Syrup Ice Cream.



Alex Mersereau Describing Wine at État-Major

NEW ORLEANS

Dinner at Herbsaint

The New Orleans IWFS dinner was held at Herbsaint, the flagship restaurant of Chef Donald Link located on St. Charles Avenue. The event was organized by John Martin. A surprise was the attendance of IWFS Global Chairman Mike Donohoe who presented the Americas Silver Medal to New Orleans President Chris Dorion. Chris has served as President and event organizer for over ten years.

August 23, 2025: August Dinner, Herbsaint, New Orleans, Louisiana. 🍷 *Santa Margherita Prosecco DOCG Valdobbiadene NV, Veneto, Italy* ✕ 🍷 *Bieler Pere et Fils Rosé, 2024, Vin de Provence, France* ✕ Fried Catfish with Chiles & Green Rice or Fried Green Tomatoes with Louisiana Shrimp and Sauce Gribiche. 🍷 *La Atalaya el Camino Garnacha, 2022, Almansa, Spain* ✕ Herbsaint Gumbo with Chicken, Tasso & Andouille. 🍷 *Daou Sequentis Reserve Merlot, 2021, Paso Robles, California* ✕ Duck Leg Confit with Dirty Rice and Citrus Gastrique OR Pan Roasted Cobia OR Filet au Poivre with Pommes Puree. 🍷 *Warres 'Warrior' Port, Phino e Rio Torto Valleys, Portugal* ✕ Flourless Chocolate Cake with Dulce de Leche and Spanish Peanut Brittle.



Global Chairman Mike Donohoe Presents the Americas Silver Medal to President Chris Dorion

NEW YORK

April 14, 2025: Event #1335, Annual Black Tie Gala, Four Twenty Five, New York, New York.

Our Annual Black-Tie Gala was held at New York's newest and hottest restaurant, Four Twenty Five, showcasing the culinary artistry of Jean-Georges Vongerichten. The evening began with a cocktail reception composed of a selection of butlered canapés, including Maine Lobster Rolls, Spiced Chicken Samosas and Tuna on Rice Cracker paired with Roederer Collection 241 Champagne. After our reception, we indulged in a wonderful four-course dinner prepared by Chef Jonathan Benno. The menu included Peekytoe Crab Salad paired with Pascal Cotat Sancerre, LesMonts Damnés 2020, Faroe Island Salmon paired with Bouchard Clos de la Mousse 2012, Seared Wagyu Tenderloin paired with La Mission Haut Brion 1990, and Ducru-Beaucaillou 1988 with our artisanal cheeses. The IWFS Americas Silver Medal was awarded to both Angela Grande and Doug Hurley for their dedication to the continued success of the New York Branch.



(From Left): New York Branch President Jack A. Gordon, Angela Grande, Doug Hurley, and NY member / IWFS Americas Chairman, Chris Ankner

NEW YORK

May 15, 2025: Event #1336, Pertimali/Sassetti Dinner. L'Artusi Supper Club, New York, New York.

Members enjoyed an educational evening hosted by Cristina Rossi of Tuscan producer Pertimali/Sassetti at the exclusive L'Artusi Supper Club. The evening began with a chef's selection of passed canapés paired with Sassetti's Prosecco di Valdobbiadene Superiore DOCG Brut. We continued with a family style dinner comprised of a cornucopia of antipasti with Sassetti's Rosso di Montalcino 2023, then a selection of pastas paired with the Brunello di Montalcino 'Mulino' 2019 and 2020. We next enjoyed roasted chicken and hanger steak paired with Brunello di Montalcino Riserva 2012 and 2019. We finished the divine repast with a selection of artisanal Italian cheeses paired with Sassetti's Brunello di Montalcino Dieci 2007.



Suzanne Petruzelle and Membership Co-Chair Angela Grande

NORFOLK

September 10, 2025: Fall Back with Friends, Black Cow Fat Pig, Norfolk, Nebraska.

As the summer wound down and the days became shorter, we all anticipated another opportunity to get together, eat some good food and drink some good wine, and simply enjoy each other's company. A simple idea in a fast-paced world that each one of us craves - a chance to slow down and experience the things that make life special. A fall barbecue at our local eatery which started with bacon wrapped Brussel sprouts & fried pickle chips along with a special selected Harvest Moon cocktail. The opening salad featured cucumbers and tomatoes paired with a Scattered Peaks Fumé Blanc 2023. Our main course consisted of smoked brisket and grilled scallops with aged macaroni & cheese and Nebraska grown sweet corn (none better!) served with Booker Harvey & Harriet Red Blend 2022....what a great match that was! Dessert consisted of a freeform peach tart with vanilla bean ice cream (it's OK if you're drooling) paired with a Sauvion Vouvray 2023 from the French Loire Valley. What a way to end the meal! Amidst all this was laughter, genuine interest and honest conversation with each other. None better.



(From Left): Clark Froehlich, Paula Pflueger, and Connie Kube

NORTHEAST TEXAS

September 26, 2025: The Flavors of Fall, Webb Hill Country Club, Wolfe City, Texas.

For our first taste of fall, Chef Holey created a menu filled with favorite flavors of the season and Wine Master Jeremy Dicken rose to the occasion with outstanding wine selections. Guests were greeted with a sparkling glass of Louis Bouillot Perle de Vigne Brut to accompany a lavish buffet of hors d'oeuvres. The second course featured a peach gazpacho perfectly paired with Finca Vallejo Rueda from Spain. Our third course was a beautiful bone-in pork chop stuffed with grilled sausage and apple and glazed with honey mustard. Roasted vegetables and rye bread completed the course and were accompanied by an 1858 Pinot Noir Monterey. Rounding out a wonderful evening, we enjoyed a sweet potato and buttermilk tart served with Dr. Heidemanns Bernkastel Riesling Kabinett 2021.

NORTHEAST TEXAS

Tailgate & Taste

On Sunday, October 19, members of the Northeast Texas Branch gathered at the Vance's Back Forty party barn for a tailgate themed wine tasting. Many members came dressed representing their favorite team and our host committee were dressed as referees.

October 19, 2025: Tailgate & Taste, Vance's Back Forty Party Barn, Greenville, Texas. 🍷

Santi Nello Prosecco 1858 Sauvignon Blanc, Uro Toro La Enfermera Tempranillo, 2022 Renieri Invetro Super Tuscan 2021, Amici Cabernet Sauvignon 2022 ✕ Traditional Tailgating Treats: Hot Dogs, Wings, Frito Chili Pie, Popcorn.



Members Enjoying the Tasting

OAKVILLE

They Grow Grapes in That Country?!? South Africa Edition

The IWFS Oakville chapter recently hosted a sell-out evening dedicated to exploring the wines of South Africa, as part of its ongoing “They Grow Grapes in That Country?!?” series. The event offered members a chance to discover the diversity and character of South African winemaking, with a thoughtfully curated selection of wines and expertly paired dishes.

Sommelier Sean Rowlands of Gradwell Wines led the tasting, bringing both expertise and charm to the presentation. His insights into the history, terroir, and techniques of South African producers was informative and engaging, earning high praise from attendees. Many remarked that Mr. Rowlands was among the most memorable speakers the chapter has ever welcomed.

The food and wine pairings were equally well received, thanks to Devon Masciangelo of the Wine Bar and Maeven Chef Marijke Terry. Their menu complemented the wines beautifully, enhancing the tasting experience.

Seven wines from the Western Cape were showcased, including three from Stellenbosch: Ken Forrester Sparklehorse, Pearce Predhomme Chenin Blanc, and Aslina Chardonnay. A Bon Courage Shiraz added richness, while Tulbagh’s Krone Rosé Sparkler and Lutzville’s Pinotage brought variety and depth.



Claire McWilliams serves the food while Sean Rowlands Discusses South African Wine

The evening concluded with a pour of Klein Constantia Vin de Constance 2013—a sweet wine with a storied legacy. Klein Constantia was the first vineyard in South Africa, established in 1685. Once favored by Napoleon and referenced by literary icons like Dickens and Austen, it was a fitting finale. Host Erin Culbert shared her personal connection to the wine, having discovered it during a 2009 tour of South Africa.

October 3, 2025: They Grow Grapes in That Country?!? South Africa Edition, Member’s Home, Mississauga, Ontario. 🍷 Ken Forrester Sparklehorse Cap Classique Brut Sparkling Chenin Blanc 2020 ✕ Whipped Roasted Pear Ricotta, Wildflower Honey on Toasted Baguette. 🍷 Krone Cuvée Cap Classique Brut Rosé Cuvée Sparkling 2022 ✕ Blini, Crème Fraiche, Smoked Salmon. 🍷 Pearce Predhomme Chenin Blanc 2023 ✕ Endive, White Fish Ceviche. 🍷 2021 Aslina Chardonnay ✕ Pumpkin Bruschetta On Sourdough Crostini. 🍷 2019 Lutzville Pinotage Francois La Vaillant ✕ Duck Confit, Braised Plums, Served Ina Disc Of Baked Polenta. 🍷 Bon Courage Estate 2020 Shiraz ✕ Puff Pastry, Sandwiched With Beef Brisket, Micro Arugula, Reduced Blueberry Compote, Garlic Aioli. 🍷 Klein Constantia Vin de Constance 2013 ✕ Gorgonzola, Baked Peach Compote, Pastry Tartlet.

OMAHA

Monday Night Wine-Down

The Omaha Branch went to a newly opened steakhouse with a French accent, Pivot Prime. We were tasked to identify three pairs of wines served blind. A Smith Haut Lafitte Blanc 2019 vs. a Peter Michael L’Apres-Midi Sauvignon Blanc were both very much in the French style and hard to differentiate the origin. Next, we had to identify Left Bank from Right Bank with Châteaux Montrose and La Fleur Petrus both from 2014. Finally, we had two mountain Cabernets Sauvignons to identify, the Chappellet “Signature” 2013 and the La Jota Howell Mountain 2015. This was a good exercise to test one’s tasting skills. Many thanks to hosts Hasan Hyder & Joe Goldstein.

September 22, 2025: Monday Night Wine-Down, Pivot Prime, Omaha, Nebraska. 🍷

Assorted Fine Quaffing Wines ✕ American Wagyu Tatak. 🍷 Smith Haut Lafitte Blanc, 2019, Bordeaux, Peter Michael “L’Apres-Midi”, 2023, Sauvignon Blanc, California ✕ Lyonnaise Salad, Frisée + Crispy Potato +Slow Cooked Egg + Pork Belly +Mustard See + Bacon Dressing. 🍷 Ch. Montrose, 2014, Left Bank Bordeaux, Ch.La Fleur Petrus, 2014, Right Bank Bordeaux ✕ Truffle Ravioli, Herb Ricotta +



Pivot Prime Staff and Hosts - Chef de Cuisine Christopher Blazeski (wearing hat), Joe Goldstein (center blue), and Hasan Hyder (grey coat)

Fresh Truffle + Cured Egg Yolk + Butter Emulsion + Crispy Prosciutto. 🍷 Chappellet “Signature” Cabernet, 2013, California, La Jota Howell Mountain Cabernet, 2013, California ✕ 9 oz. Prime Filet Mignon, Potato Leek Gratin Dauphinois, Creamed Spinach.

OMAHA METRO

All American Wines, A Pre-Celebration of America's 250th birthday & the 50th Anniversary of the Judgement of Paris

To celebrate the 50th anniversary of the famous 1976 Judgement of Paris, the Omaha Metro Branch went to Flemings Prime Steakhouse and poured two wines that participated in the judgement: Chateau Montelena 2022 and Stag's Leap 2021. In 1976, the Montelena Chardonnay 1973 was the top white wine, beating out the Domaine Roulot Mersault-Charmes 1973, while the Stag's Leap 1973 beat the likes of Mouton Rothschild 1970. We served the Chateau Montelena Chardonnay 2022, and the Stag's Leap Artemis Cabernet Sauvignon 2021, but also such stalwarts as the Schramsberg Blanc de Blancs 2021 and the Joseph Phelps Cabernet Sauvignon 2021. Thanks to producers Michelle Hyder and Jill Goldstein for reminding us of this benchmark California achievement in beating the more established French wines.

July 31, 2025: All American Wines, A Pre-Celebration of America's 250th birthday & the 50th Anniversary of the Judgement of Paris, Flemings Prime Steakhouse, Omaha, Nebraska. 🍷 Assorted Quaffing Wines from the Omaha Metro Branch Cellar ✕ Flemings Signature Onion Rings, Beef Wellington Bites, Chef's fresh-baked bread with Flemings signature spreads. 🍷 Schramsberg Blanc de Blanc 2021 ✕ Jumbo Lump Crab Cake w/Red Pepper & Lime Sauce. 🍷 Ch. Montelena Chardonnay 2022 ✕ Summer Salad with Roasted Peaches & Burrata. 🍷 Stags Leap Wine Cellars Artemis Cabernet Sauvignon 2021, Joseph Phelps Cabernet Sauvignon 2021 ✕ USDA Prime New York Strip

Flemings Potatoes au Gratin, Creamy Cheddar & Monterey Jack Cheese Blend, Leeks, Jalapeno. Chef Rafael's Famous Street Corn. 🍷 Dolce Late Harvest Dessert Wine by Far Niente 2019 ✕ Apple Galette ala mode.



Event Coordinators Michelle Hyder (L) and Jill Goldstein (R) flank the Flemings Serving Crew

PASADENA

Asian Exploration

The final event of our 70th season was at a highly regarded fine dining Chinese restaurant called Bistro Na's. Bistro Na's represents the highest Chinese culinary offering in metro Los Angeles to date. They received Michelin One Star in 2019 and 2021 under the leadership of Executive Chef Tian Yong. The restaurant's expansive interior, splashed with red, gold, and blue, is as comfortable as it is eye-catching. The calligraphy in the VIP rooms connotes a sense of Zen. Chef Tian prepared an outstanding seven course menu to share with our group. Dinner Chair Peter Wong was up to the challenge and selected a beautiful selection of wines to complement the courses. The delightful Lewis Cellars Cabernet Sauvignon 2013 was the final wine of the evening. It was awarded wine of the year by Wine Spectator in 2016!

April 29, 2025: Asian Exploration, Bistro N, Temple City, California. 🍷 Penfolds Thienot Rosé N.V. Champagne ✕ Tuna Fish Tart, Crab Meat Mushroom Tart with Caviar, Beef Tartare. 🍷 Alheit Cartology Western Cape Bush Vines Chenin Blanc South Africa 2021 ✕ Cherry Chicken Liver Pate, Smoke Duck Breast with Uni, Deep Fried Eggplant Strips. 🍷 Schiopetto Collio Friulano M Friuli-Venezia Italy 2020 ✕ XO Sauce Scallop with Shrimp and Scallop, Steamed Dumplings. 🍷 Trimbach, 'Frederic Emile' Riesling, Alsace, France, 2017 (T.W. Glendale) ✕ Dry Braised Black Cod with Homemade Noodles. 🍷 Occidental Pinot Noir Freestone-Occidental Sonoma Coast USA 2016 ✕ Roast Duck Wraps. 🍷 Lewis Cellars Cabernet Sauvignon Napa Valley, USA 2013 ✕ Pan Fried Angus Beef Filet with Eggplant, Imperial Court Cheese, Sweet Rice Roll, Red Bean Cake, Honey Carrots, Seasonal Fruit.



Members Congratulate Chef Tian

PASADENA

In the Heart of Downtown Los Angeles!

Redbird is Chef Neal Fraser's flagship restaurant and features Modern American cuisine that is refined yet approachable and highlights the multi-cultural influences of Fraser's native city - Los Angeles. Located in downtown Los Angeles, Redbird is carved into one of the city's most historic architectural gems, inside the former rectory building of Vibiana. Redbird is recognized by the Michelin Guide (California) and 50 Best Discovery. In addition, Redbird | Vibiana received the Los Angeles Conservancy's 2019 Preservation Award Chair's Award.

October 21, 2025: In the Heart of Downtown Los Angeles, Redbird, Los Angeles, California.

🍷 *Bollinger Champagne Special Cuvée Brut, France*

🍷 *NV Launois Pere et Fils Champagne Grand Cru Cuvée*

✂️ *Passed Hors D'oeuvres, Pao De Queijo, Whipped Butter, Albacore Poke, Crispy Ginger Rice, Avocado, Sesame, Beef Tartare, Kimchi Aioli, Seaweed Crisp.*

🍷 *Bodegas Rafael Palacios Godello Valdeorras Louro*

do Bollo, Spain 2019 ✂️ *Tangerine Beets, Ricotta*

Salata, Local Citrus, Chicories, Dukkah. 🍷 *Ramey*

Chardonnay, Rochioli Vineyard Sonoma USA 2022

✂️ *Garganelli Wild Boar Sugo, Fennel Pollen.* 🍷 *Valdi-*

cava Brunello di Montalcino DOCG, Tuscany Italy 2013 ✂️ *California Sea Bass Tomato Saffron Broth, Fregola, Fennel.* 🍷 *Caymus 40th Anniversary Cabernet Sauvignon, Napa USA, 2012 Ch. Montrose Bordeaux, Saint-Estephe France 2000* ✂️ *Pistachio Cream Puff Raspberry And Vanilla Bean.*



Rufus Rhoades and Jon Boggs

FOOD FACTOID | Seaweed

Seaweed refers to any number of plants and algae that grow in bodies of water. There are a variety of seaweeds used in culinary settings, but they all are low in calories, fat, and sugar while being a good source of iron, magnesium, omega-3, vitamin A, etc. It has been eaten by people from Asia and the Pacific for centuries, but is only now gaining popularity in the West. From flavoring broths and soups to sushi and stir fry, seaweed can add a nice brine and salty taste to a wide range of cuisine.

PHILADELPHIA

August 4, 2025: August Dinner, Studio Kitchen, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

Our August dinner was at Studio Kitchen. It is a unique dining experience with the food being prepared by Chef-Owner Shola Olunloyo who comes to Philadelphia via Nigeria, England, France and Southeast Asia. He was the first Chef-in-residence at Blue Hill at Stone Barns. He prepares, plates and serves the food in his kitchen surrounded by seatings in which the dishes are prepared and magnificently plated in front of your eyes. The wines from the groups' cellars were ideal matches. The cuisine is intellectually stimulating and educative as to why the ingredients and methods of preparation are employed.



Dinner Chairs Jay Bomze and Deb Denis with Chef Shola

PUERTO RICO

Summer Gala

The members closed the 2024-2025 calendar of events with an exquisite evening at La Bóveda, where Chef Carol Reyes curated a masterful tasting menu that celebrated Iberian flavors with refined elegance. The reception dazzled with playful bites like Serrano-Manchego croquetas and pulpo a la gallega layered over potato mil hojas, perfectly paired with Dom Pérignon Brut 2015.

Dinner began with a delicate salt-cured foie gras, lifted by apple chutney and Friulano from Schiopetto. The cod course was a standout—buche de bacalao with white beans and smoked mussel sauce, harmonized by a Puligny-Montrachet. A rustic rabbit fideuà followed, deepened by wild mushrooms and Château Pavie Decesse 2000.

The pork duo—Abanico Ibérico and crispy cochinillo—was bold and indulgent, matched by the legendary Chateau Lafite Rothschild 1998. A trio of cheeses with roasted grapes and membrillo led into a sublime almond tart with honey ice cream, crowned by Château De Fargues 2005. Each pairing was thoughtful, each dish a story thanks to our hosts, Maria and Jorge Ruiz.



(From Left): Pedro & Caremn Piquer, Carol Reyes, Maria & Jorge Ruiz

August 2, 2025: Summer Gala, Boveda Restaurant, San Juan, Puerto Rico. 🍷 Dom Pérignon Brut 2015, Champagne ✕ Croquetas de Jamón Serrano y Manchego, Mejillones en Escabeche, Chicharrón, Lemon aioli, “Pulpo a la gallega”, Potato Mil Hojas, Pimentón, Crab Salad, Cured Egg Yolk, Caviar, Terrina De Cochinillo, Truffle Vinaigrette, Quail Egg. 🍷 Schiopetto, Friulano 2022, Capriva del Friuli, Italy ✕ Foie Gras, Salt Cured Foie Gras, Apple Chutney, Micro Salad. 🍷 Puligny-Montrachet, Clos du Cailleret 2015 J Chartron, Côte de Beaune ✕ Cod, White Beans, Chistorra, Smoked Mussel Sauce, Buche De Bacalao, Tomato Sofrit. 🍷 Ch. Pavie Decesse 2000, Saint-Émilion ✕ Fideua, Rabbit Confit, Wild Mushrooms, Pimiento Sofrito, Lactose Aioli. 🍷 Ch. Lafite Rothschild 1998, Pauillac ✕ Pork Duo, Abanico Ibérico, Crispy Cochinillo, Potato-Morcilla Pavée, Shishito Peppers. 🍷 Chapelle Chambertin V. V. 2007 Perrot Minot, Côte de Nuits ✕ Cheese, Bucheron, Rocal, Vandeón, Baguette, Roasted Grapes, Membrillo. 🍷 Ch. De Fargues 2005, Sauternes ✕ Almond Tart, Lemon Financier, Blueberry Compote, Frangipane, Honey Ice Cream. 🍷 Coffee

TORONTO

Presidents' Garden Party

On September 7th, 2025, IW&FS Toronto held another elegant and convivial Presidents' Garden party at the home of Supriya and Brett James. The unpredictable September weather held up, with its gray clouds and rain dissipating, allowing an array of impeccable hors d'oeuvres and tastings of outstanding wines from IW&FS Toronto's cellar.

The highlight of the party was the legendary Egon Müller Scharzhofberger Riesling Kabinett 2006, a rare and iconic wine from one of Germany's most respected producers, known for crafting Rieslings that can age beautifully for decades. The tasting lineup also included bright whites like the volcanic Firriato Etna Bianco Le Sabbie Dell'Etna 2019, and rich reds such as, the classic Domaine Diochon Moulin-à-Vent Vieilles Vignes 2011 and the well-aged Angove Cabernet Sauvignon Classic Reserve 2000.

September 7, 2025: Presidents' Garden Party, Home of Supriya and Brett James, Toronto, Ontario. 🍷 René-Henri Coutier Champagne Grand Cru Blanc de Blancs Brut NV, Adernats Cava Brut Nature Gran Reserva NV, Egon Müller Scharzhofberger Riesling Kabinett 2006, Firriato Etna Bianco Le Sabbie Dell'Etna 2019, Knee Deep Sauvignon Blanc Sémillon 2014, Dom. Diochon Moulin-à-Vent Vieilles Vignes 2011, Angove Cabernet Sauvignon Classic Reserve 2000, Emiliana Pinot Noir Novas Gran Reserva 2011, Nittaus Zweigelt Heideboden 2001 ✕ Trio of Heirloom Beets - Candied Pecans, Aged Chèvre, Kohlrabi Cress, Lemon Thyme Dressing Caprese Skewers - Bocconcini, Fresh Basil, Cherry. Tomatoes, Olives. Honey Crisp Apple, Stilton Cheese Parcels, Walnut Pastry. Salad Rolls - Rice Paper, Rice Noodles, Thai Sauce, Crisp. Coconut Crusted Jumbo Tiger Shrimp With Housemate Plum Sauce. Mini Yorkshire Puddings With Tenderloin Of Beef, Stilton Cream. Mini Lamb Burgers - Feta Mousse, Mint, Rosemary, Garlic, Arugula. Vegetables.



Members Enjoying the President's Garden Party

VANCOUVER

September 15, 2025: Wok with Whisky, ChiuChow Seafood Restaurant, Vancouver, British Columbia.

Many people enjoy drinking spirits with Chinese food, and in Vancouver, we enjoyed an evening of different whiskies and cocktails with our own Master Sommelier, Leigh Barkley. Leigh educated us with a presentation on the history of whiskey and the different types of whiskies around the world. Following the presentation, ChiuChow Seafood Restaurant served a 10-course dinner featuring a regional style of Chinese cuisine from China's Guangdong province, known for its fresh, light flavours. Our courses consisted of Traditional roasted Peking duck; Medley of seafood & tofu soup; Sautéed Dungeness crab in superior broth; Sautéed scallop & prawn with vegetables; Crispy squid; Deep-fried mini bean curd cube; Lettuce wrap with minced duck meat; Stir fried sliced beef & broccoli in satay sauce; Fried rice with shrimp & BBQ pork, and ending with dessert.



Master Sommelier Leigh Barkley with Guests

Accompanying our meal were three whiskey cocktails, Paper Plane based on Kentucky Bourbon, À La Louisiane based on Canadian rye whiskey, and Penicillin based on a Blended Scotch, plus two whiskies to be shared on the table - Tamnavulin Speyside Single Malt Scotch Whiskey, Sherry Cask Edition and a tasty Single Malt whisky from Vancouver Island, Shelter Point Smoke Point A Fireside Dram.

And for those who were not adventurous enough to swig the whiskies, our Cellar Master Kim Mead offered Tantalus Riesling and Selbach-Oster Zeltinger Riesling Alte Reben Trocken, Blue Mountain Gamay and Michel Guignier Morgon-Canon.

All of the beverages, the cocktails, the whiskies and the wines, matched well with the tasty Chinese food and were thoroughly enjoyable.

Our thanks go to Leigh Barkley for his whiskey presentation, to Cellar Master Kim Mead for presenting the wines for us to enjoy and to Van Doren Chan for her commentary on the food and cuisine and for working so hard to set up a most enjoyable event.

Photo: Master Sommelier Leigh Barkley with guests

WASHINGTON, DC

Seafood Extravaganza

This year's Seafood Dinner promised to be one of our best yet. If you have yet to dine at Cordelia Fishbar, you're in for a real treat. Located in the Union Market neighborhood in NE Washington DC, Cordelia is a true seafood lovers destination. Owned by the Clyde's Restaurant Group, the restaurant features an extensive raw bar, tinned seafood menu and a charcoal grill that they do some incredible grilled fish dishes on. Chef Sal Ferro is no stranger to our society. He had his hand in a couple of our dinners. For our trial dinner we had a real collaborative menu design where he allowed the committee to really have a hand in creating what we feel is a great representation of all the amazing dishes the restaurant offers.

October 14, 2025: Seafood Extravaganza, Cordelia Fish Bar, Washington DC. 🍷 Dom. Gerard Millet Sancerre 2020 ✕ Raw Bar Oysters, Jumbo Shrimp, Lump Crab Dijonnaise, Smoked Trout Dip Caviar Bumps with Burrata, Chive and Potato Rosti Sardines and Oil with Pepperonata, Arugula, Whipped Butter and Focaccia Pan Rustico, Whipped Butter and Anchovy Oil Sauce. 🍷 Maison Albert Bichot Chablis 1er Cru Fourchaume 2018 ✕ Duo of Scallops and Hamachi Crudo Delicata Squash, Toasted Hazelnuts, Brown Butter Vinaigrette, Asian Pear, Purple Shiso, Yuzu Kosho Vinaigrette, Toasted Sesame. 🍷 Dom. Jean Grivot Vosne-Romanee "Le Beaux Monts" 2013 ✕ Coal Roasted Turbot Confit Fingerling Potatoes. Charred Broccolini, Sauce Vert. 🍷 Elio Grasso Barolo Ginestra Casa Mate' 2013 ✕ Maine Lobster and Day Boat Calamari Smoky Pomodoro, Calabrian Chili, White Wine, Basil, Pangrattato. Lemon Sorbet with a Vanilla Cookie.



(From Left): Dr. Paulette Brown, Ozgur Karaosmanoglu, Alinda Iman, W. Warren Miller, Emily Lange, Ken West (Treasurer), and Michael Polmar (Wine Committee)



FESTIVALS & CRUISES

The following IWFS Festivals and other events are coming up in the next year. And yes, others may pop up from time to time. Check www.iwfs.org for event details. **Sign up early, as these wonderful adventures sell out quickly.** Join in the fun, fine food, wine, and of course, fabulous friendships. Note: All festivals listed are open to all members in all regions: Americas, Europe/Africa and Asia/Pacific. Visit iwfs.org for more information on all upcoming festivals 🍷

Porto and Douro Valley May 6-11, 2026

IWFS Europe Africa is delighted to invite members from around the world to join an exceptional festival organised by IWFS in conjunction with Grape Escapes and celebrating the wines, food, and culture of Porto and the Douro Valley in Portugal.

The tour features two nights in Porto – the city that gave Portugal (and the celebrated wine) its name - followed by two nights in the heart of the Douro Valley, home to some of the World’s oldest vineyards, before returning to Porto for a final night with a gala dinner at a Port Lodge.



Paris and Bordeaux Trip May 14-23, 2026

IWFS Americas Inc. has tried to duplicate what worked best for our highly successful trip in 2022 and improve on the parts where we could.

There will be three days in Paris at the Bristol Hotel, which will include three-star restaurants, Versailles, and an evening boat ride on the Seine. Our six days in Bordeaux will be at Le Grand Hotel in central Bordeaux. 🗨️ include visits to Chateau Margaux and Chateau Pavie, among many others.



Walla Walla Trip June 1-5, 2026

Join us for a five-night IWFS Americas organized wine festival in Walla Walla, Washington from June 1-5, 2026. Walla Walla is a charming small historic town with a walkable downtown, distinguished for its world-class wine. It is a hidden gem that people have heard about, but only a few have experienced first-hand. We will be staying at the picturesque Marcus Whitman Hotel in the downtown area, with rooms starting at \$219 per night, just 10 minutes from Walla Walla airport.





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