

SPRING 2026



Wine, Food & Friends

THE JUDGEMENT IN PARIS: PART 2

ALSO INSIDE:

- Water
- Bordeaux 2023 Cellar Picks
- Virtual Tasting Series: Henriot Champagne

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CHAIRMAN'S LETTER

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

Introduction

If I've said it once, I've said it a thousand times: my favorite job as America's Chair is honoring deserving members. In January, I traveled to Key West to enjoy the Florida Keys Food & Wine Festival. I also attended a dinner with the relatively new Florida Keys Branch and presented the America's Silver Medal to the branch's founder, Denise Guntert. Denise has had a remarkable couple of years. In addition to founding the branch, she was elected to the America's Board of Directors, took a leadership role on the Branch Development Committee, and arranged for us to cosponsor the Florida Keys Food & Wine Festival—the first festival we've ever participated in that we didn't run ourselves.

The award dinner was held at Little Pearl in Key West. It was the finest meal I've ever had in that city. While I knew Denise through her work on the America's Board, I had the pleasure of meeting many of the branch members. They are an impressive group. I was especially struck by the branch's articulate and knowledgeable Cellar Master, Stephany Duvall. Beyond enjoying her commentary on the wines we had with dinner, I loved hearing her pronounce "Loire" in her Southern Georgia drawl.

When Baltimore's Mark Geller brought our Ask André app to life, I knew it would be a fun tool. I used it again recently, in the field, at Jack Stack BBQ in Kansas City. What wine by the glass pairs with Kansas City-style brisket and burnt ends? The Zin it recommended was an excellent choice.

The Houston Branch's Merrienne Timko, however, took Ask André to the next level. She brilliantly used the app to pair wines for a branch dinner at Porta'Vino with the chef's relatively complex dishes. She matched the wines selected by the app with what was available on the wine list. I only wish I had thought of that.

You might ask what I was doing in Kansas City (besides enjoying the BBQ at Jack Stack's and the fried chicken at Stroud's). I met with Jenny Hemmer of GuildSomm to brainstorm ways to enhance our partnership. As you'll see in this issue, Jenny is now writing a wine column for Wine Food & Friends. GuildSomm is a 9,000 member nonprofit that creates and delivers comprehensive educational content for wine professionals and collectors. In Jenny's column, you'll find a QR code linking to their website—or you can do it the old-fashioned way by visiting www.guildsomm.com. I'm not going to put words in Jenny's mouth; she can speak for herself on these pages, and she knows far more than I do. I don't want to embarrass myself in print.

I'm delighted to report that the Philadelphia Branch is renaming itself the Herbert Engelbert Philadelphia Branch in honor of their longstanding sommelier. Among other steps, the branch needs to sign a new contract with IWFS Americas. I plan to be in Philadelphia for that celebration. I don't expect the branch to serve cheesesteaks, but if they do, Herb can test his decades of wine knowledge against Ask André's AI. Garry Kasparov vs. Big Blue has nothing on us.

Spokane is also changing its name to the Inland NW Branch. "Inland Northwest" or "Inland Empire" has long been used to describe Eastern Washington State and Northern Idaho.

Chinese New Year is right around the corner as I write this—one of my favorite holidays in the dining year. As usual, I'll have a table at Café Evergreen to celebrate the Year of the Fire Horse. I'm bringing a magnum of Bouchard Père & Fils Vigne de L'Enfant Jésus 2009 and a Sine Qua Non Syrah 2006, The Raven, which should bring the fire at 15.5% ABV.

CNY is slightly melancholy for me this year. I'm told the restaurant is closing at the end of February. Evergreen has been part of my life for a long time. Back in the midnineties, my wife, Nancy, and I began frequenting a Chinese restaurant in Midtown Manhattan named Chiam. We didn't know much about wine at the time, but we were eager to learn. The proprietor, Henry Leung, took us under his wing. He told us we'd never be able to learn about wine solely at restaurants—you just can't drink enough wines to learn about them. He sponsored us to join the IWFS.

Chiam eventually moved and became Café Evergreen. Henry retired and turned the restaurant over to Frank Moy, who is now also retiring. The two of them have served me for decades, and I will sorely miss having that restaurant in my life.

It isn't often that I get the opportunity to honor people who have had such an impact on my life. I'm taking it.



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COVER PHOTO: Photo by Dave Purcell

GUILDSOMM INTERNATIONAL

JENNY HEMMER, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Greetings International Wine and Food Society members!

I recently had the pleasure of sitting down with Chris Ankner while he was visiting Kansas City. Over a shared meal overlooking downtown Kansas City, we found ourselves discussing something simple yet powerful: wine has an extraordinary way of bringing people together—across professions, generations, and continents.

I'm Jenny Hemmer, executive director of GuildSomm International, a nonprofit educational membership organization serving wine, spirits, and beverage professionals and passionate enthusiasts. My conversation with Chris centered on how that shared spirit of curiosity and connection exists at both GuildSomm and the International Wine and Food Society.

At GuildSomm, our mission is to support the global beverage community through in-depth, up-to-date, and accessible education. With more than 9,000 members worldwide, we provide articles, podcasts, regional guides, and producer profiles—alongside vibrant discussion forums and events that connect members across countries and backgrounds.

Many people know GuildSomm as a resource for those pursuing advanced certifications such as the Master of Wine or Master Sommelier programs. While we are proud to support that rigorous journey, our membership also serves those who simply want to deepen their appreciation—whether that means understanding a producer's philosophy in Barolo, exploring emerging regions, or feeling more confident when selecting wine for your next IW&FS dinner.

The beauty of wine is that there is always more to discover: a new vintage, an unfamiliar appellation, or a fresh perspective that reshapes what we thought we knew.

Throughout the year, I look forward to highlighting different facets of GuildSomm that may enrich your experience. To begin, we're spotlighting one of our most popular tools: different infographics featured throughout our content. These visual resources are ideal for tasting groups, event planning, or simply expanding your personal wine reference library in a unique way.

We're delighted to share this partnership with the IW&FS community and look forward to exploring the world of wine together. All IW&FS members receive \$20 off an annual membership (normally \$120 US). Use code: iwfs20

Cheers!

*Jenny Hemmer, DipWSET
Executive Director
GuildSomm International*



Jenny Hemmer



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IWFS Scholarship Fund

The International Wine & Food Society Scholarship awards scholarships to qualified students wishing to study oenology, viticulture, culinary arts, and hospitality management at recognized non-profit colleges in the United States and Canada.

Founded in 1935, the UC Davis Department of Viticulture and Enology has long been the premier winemaking/grape growing educational program in the U.S. The school is unique. It combines the sciences of Viticulture and Enology in a single research and teaching unit. The Department includes all of the scientific disciplines that impact grape growing and winemaking. It is held in high regard in the wine business worldwide.

Since 2018, the IWFS Foundation has provided Full Tuition Fellowships to students in its prestigious graduate program.

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Help IWFS Americas Grow!

Increase Membership in Your Branch! | Share the Love of Wine, Food & Friends!

WINE

Wine is where it all begins. Our members savor the world's finest wines and learn what transforms grapes into greatness in a glass.



FOOD

Food, wine's natural mate, takes on new dimensions when talented chefs prepare bespoke dinners for IWFS events. This marriage of wine and food reveals nuances only perfect pairings can achieve.



FRIENDS

Friends are the most important element of all. For without camaraderie at the table, a meal can never be a celebration.



Established in 1933, The International Wine & Food Society is the world's premier not-for-profit gastronomic organization. The Americas Region has over 70 branches containing more than 3,000 members who regularly gather to celebrate the many pleasures of *Wine, Food & Friends*.

FESTIVALS AND CRUISES

The Society's celebratory atmosphere extends to unique travel opportunities. We use our rich history to identify places where wine and food come together at their best. From the lush vineyards of Napa, to the rustic cottages of France, there is no shortage of opportunities to experience the best wine and food from across the world!

Have your non-member friends scan this code or visit www.iwfs.org/americas/overview to learn more!



An aerial photograph of a river with white water rapids, set against a dark teal background. The water is turbulent, with white foam and splashes visible. The overall color palette is dominated by various shades of blue and green, with the white of the rapids providing a stark contrast.

WATER

Story by Doug Frost



O

bviously, we need water to live. Not so obviously, civilization's relationship with water has been, well, murky. The biblical injunction to consume water with wine had little to do with concern over alcohol consumption and everything to do with the lack of sanitary, safe water. The cityscape of a newly civilized environment was a crush of people and animals in close quarters; the water smelled bad and, it was understood, could make you sick.

Wine was employed to ensure a happy water drinking experience. Add an equal amount of wine to water, wait about a half hour, and the microbes and other wee beasties that intend to party in your guts are sent packing by the alcohol in the wine.

It might be notable that this was a time in which one of the greatest miracles ever was the transformation of water into wine. For grape growers, nature performs that trick once a year.

Still, concern over the health and goodness of water has not disappeared; indeed, it is driven bottled water sales even as certain fools want to remove fluoride from tap water. In 2009, bottled water equaled less than a third of the sales of soft drinks in the US, the world's chief guzzler of carbonated beverages. Last year, bottled water bested soft drinks by 120%.

Americans drink more than eight times as much bottled water as they consume wine AND spirits together. Europe is even deeper on the trend; while both the USA and Europe are keen to imbibe New Age beverages and energy drinks.

Trendy beverages and nutraceutical ingredients aside, the embrace of bottled water has transformed the dining experience, and bottles of water outnumber bottles of milk and soft drinks in many refrigerators. From an environmental perspective, that may be a disaster. After all, there is a perfectly good system of water delivery that does not require special packaging, trucking, fuel expenditure and package waste. That system delivers tap water.

But from a wine perspective, is there an impact to all this bottled H₂O? A few trendy restaurants employ water sommeliers; they typically speak to the interaction of water and food. What of the interaction of water and wine?

First, we would have to ask if there are significant differences in bottled waters. The marketers of water might insist that it is so, but is it? Among the waters found on the retail shelves of American stores, there are brands both national and proprietary (I have actually seen a water called Mom's Best). Most of them are local tap water that has had its minerals and flavors (as well as chlorine) removed through reverse osmosis. That makes the water neutral and inoffensive, but many water purists would insist that water of that sort has lost the good along with the bad. We call that throwing the baby out with the bathwater – though I have never understood how you make a mistake like that.

Why clean up a mineral water to that degree? What is so bad that all possible objectionable characteristics should be stripped away, even if some good things are removed as well? For some, the bad part may simply be mineral content that some find unusual. Many more would consider chlorine to be a bad influence, though it is a consequence of our need to drink bacteria-free water.

It probably won't surprise anyone to find that heavily chlorinated water not only obviates the need for a bacteria-killing wine addition, it nearly kills wine as well. While young and vibrant wines seem to suffer little under the stern whip of chlorine, I have often observed that chlorine (and some tap water) makes a mockery of older wines, particularly delicate ones, such as mature Burgundy or Bordeaux.

Perhaps your local tap water has little chlorine. It may even taste good; I have had countless friends insist upon that. Well, people can get used to virtually anything. My own experience is that my city's water tastes just fine, but after returning from a long trip, I'm shocked by how that water has suddenly taken on aromas and flavors it never seemingly had before.

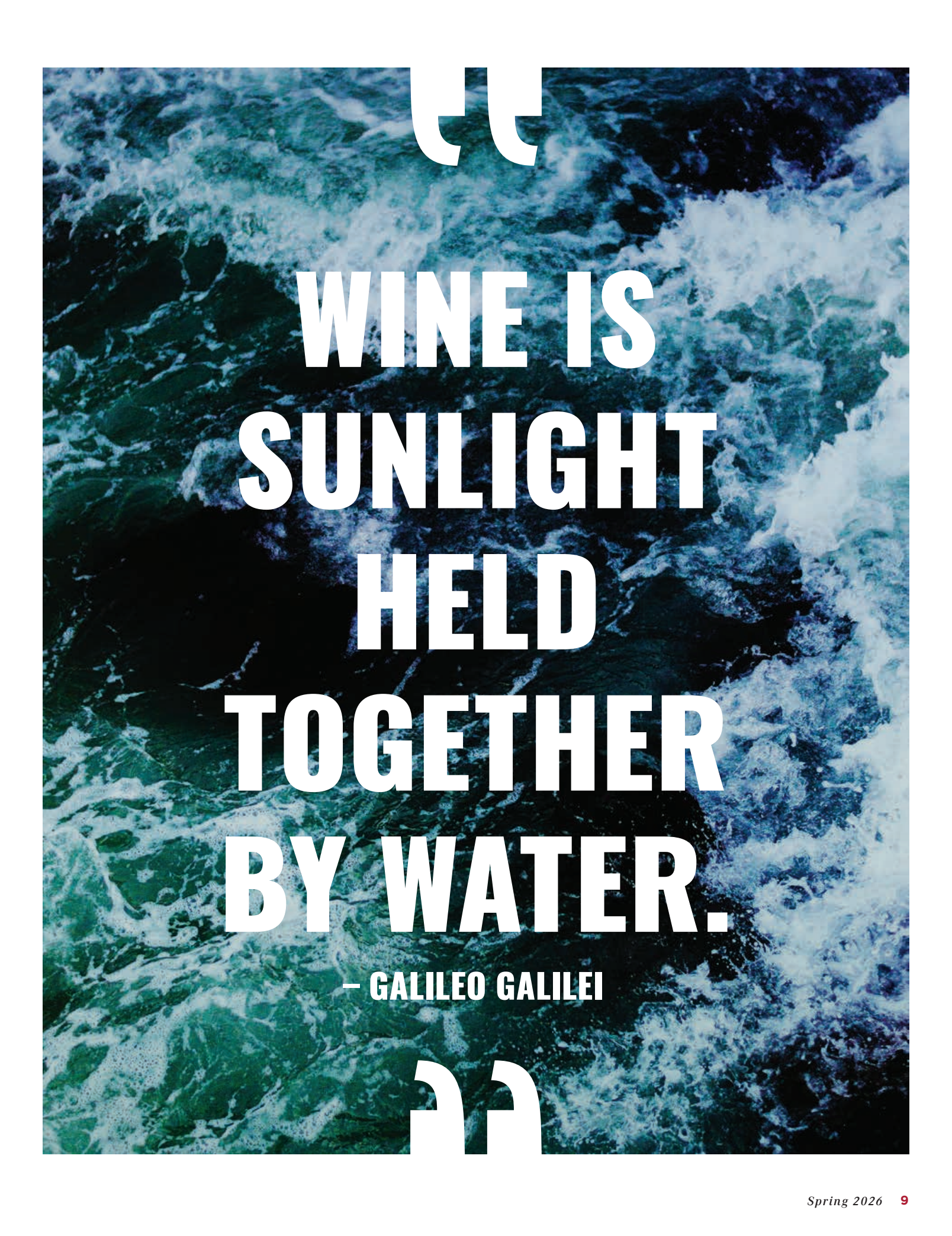
Dining in restaurants in other cities, I have sometimes discovered that others seem unaware of the flavors in their tap water too. Moreover, a few restaurants (they should remain nameless) have brought to my table open bottles of pricey water and insisted that, despite the obvious smell and taste of chlorine, that these were freshly opened and genuine. They were shocked; shocked, I tell you, that I would accuse them of re-filling their bottled water from the tap.

DOUG FROST, CEO, MS, MW



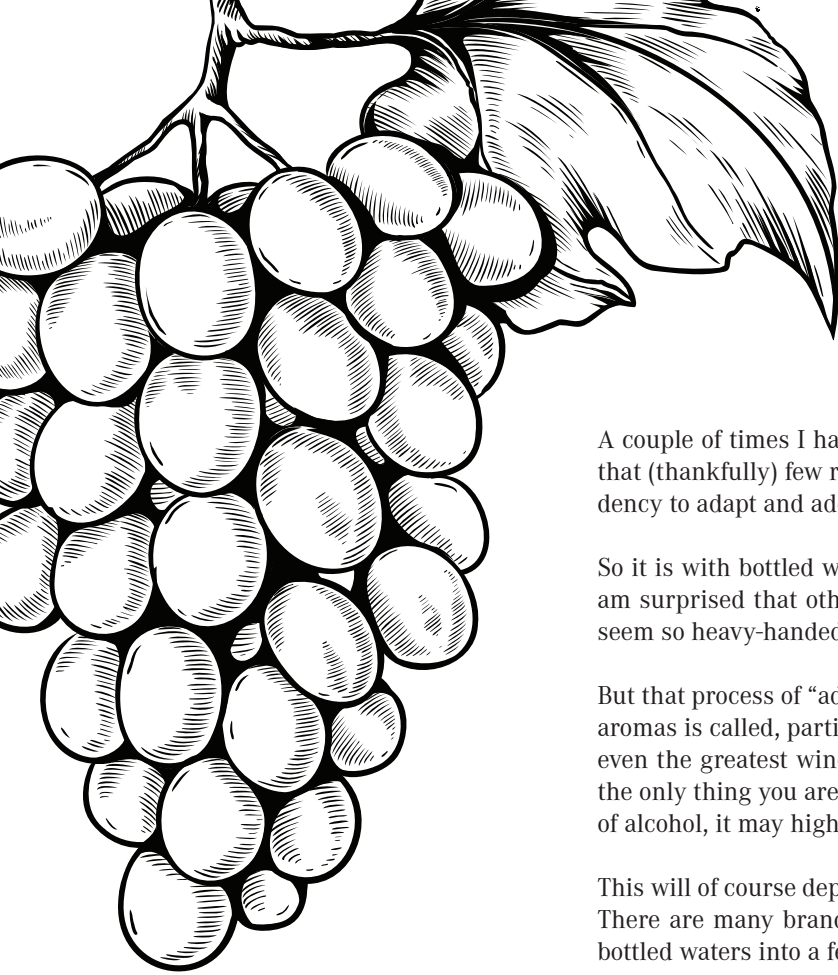
Doug is a Master of Wine and Master Sommelier as well as an author and wine consultant based on Kansas City, Missouri. Frost is one of three individuals in the world to hold simultaneously the Master of Wine and Master Sommelier titles, achieving his MS in 1991 and MW in 1993. The Wine Spectator has bestowed the accolade of Master of Spirits on Mr. Frost. With Dale DeGroff, Steve Olson, Paul Pacult, Andy Seymour and David Wondrich, Frost created BAR (Beverage Alcohol Resource) in 2005. He was awarded Beverage Innovator of the Year 2009 by Cheers Magazine, and he continues to teach and examine for BAR and within the Master Sommelier and Master Wine programs. He is the author of three books, *Uncorking Wine* (1996), *On Wine* (2001), and *Far From Ordinary: The Spanish Wine Guide* (third edition 2009) and is a contributing editor of the *Oxford Companion to Spirits and Cocktails* (2020). Frost is the Emmy Award winning creator and host of the KCPT-TV hosted short series called *FermentNation*. Doug is also president of the Best USA Sommelier Competition (BUSA), official U.S. chapter of the Association de la Sommellerie Internationale, the group that chooses the top sommelier in the world. BUSA chooses America's top sommelier; the current reigning champion (2024) is Mark Guillaudeu.

IWFS Americas will visit Echolands Winery in Walla Walla



**WINE IS
SUNLIGHT
HELD
TOGETHER
BY WATER.**

— GALILEO GALILEI



A couple of times I have caught them in the act. While it is a fraudulent practice that (thankfully) few restaurateurs would attempt, it's based upon the human tendency to adapt and adopt the flavors they drink daily as "correct" and normal.

So it is with bottled waters. As I do not drink many of them on a regular basis, I am surprised that others find some of them so pleasant and neutral, when they seem so heavy-handed to me.

But that process of "adaptation" as this human tendency to get used to flavors and aromas is called, partially explains water's beneficial effect upon wine. Any wine, even the greatest wine, becomes a little less vibrant, a little interesting, if that's the only thing you are tasting. Water, it turns out, not only helps dilute the effects of alcohol, it may highlight the character of your wine.

This will of course depend upon what sort of water (and wine) you are consuming. There are many brands of water out there, but roughly speaking, we can break bottled waters into a few groups:

Sparkling waters

Mineral waters

Still bottled waters

(which do not always run deep, it turns out)

Distilled waters

De-ionized waters

The last two are often used for industrial, medicinal, or health purposes; de-ionized water is required for many chemical processes but tastes little different from distilled water. Neither has much flavor. Perhaps surprisingly, neither seems particularly pleasurable with wine. The explanation harks back to adaptation.

Adaptation is a survival tactic; the brain seeks to "turn off" or at least turn down the volume on smells as soon as they risk becoming overwhelming. I remember learning this in my high school years. I worked at a feedlot; the smell was rank, but with unusually high pay for a high school job, well, the smell of the money was better.

The aroma of cattle and their accoutrement are intense; a mile from work I was wrinkling my nose. A few minutes after I arrived, the smell was not so bad. My brain was making certain that, despite the intensity of that feedlot, if (for instance) a fire was raging over the next hill, I would notice it.





Which is why wine and food are such happy companions, aside from digestive and anti-bacterial advantages conferred by a little alcohol. The same drink of wine, without any other flavors to compete against it, can begin to suffer from adaptation's leveling powers. But if you introduce a little food, anything really, as long as it has a different aroma and flavor, the next drink of that great wine can become like the first: powerful, complex, evanescent, or whatever characteristic it was that first charmed you.

So, my theory with distilled water, or even water treated through reverse osmosis, is that it does not function in this adaptive equation. Since, if the water has been skillfully distilled, there is no aroma or flavor, the water can not act as a differentiator to the wine. It provides hydration, but unlike food or a true mineral water, distilled water does not give the mind something else to focus upon and the result is that the wine can become slightly less interesting.

Which brings us to the two first categories: sparkling and mineral waters. Both types are further classified in the water business by the amount of mineral content and by the character of that content, to flip Dr. King's saying. Some, such as Panna or Fiji, would be considered by most to be mild in mineral content. These can offer a gentle counterpoint to more delicate wines. Others such as Vichy are so rich in minerals and salt as to overwhelm many wines, other than the biggest and most unctuous.

Not all will agree with my characterization of these brands. As with wine, there are people who are sensitive to certain flavors and aromas and those who are not. In recent years, science has proven that there is no such thing as a universal experience of any food or drink. Still, if we paint in broad enough strokes, virtually everyone can find something of the truth in the letters. Waters are salty, or not; they are acidic, or not; and they are mild, or they are intense.

The industry, not surprisingly, is far more specific; producers use numbers such as TDS (total dissolved solids) to define bottled waters, and a high TDS number indicates a powerfully flavored bottle of water. Voss, a decidedly soft French water, has a TDS of 22. Badoit, another French water, is far more robust, with 1200 TDS. At the screaming high end of the scale are waters such as Germany's Apollinaris (2650 TDS) and Spain's Vichy Catalan (2900 TDS).

The water industry uses pH as a definition of style too; indeed, pH gives a pretty good indication of the softness of any bottle of water. With the natural pH of the mouth at 7, anything far below that will likely have a fairly good bite of acidity, as is typical of Perrier (its pH is 5.25).

Perrier's bite is only intensified by its prickle of bubbles. Those bubbles can dance in sprightly fashion with sweet wines. Just as Champagne's typical sweetness is mitigated by its spritzzy CO₂, so a sparkling water can make a sweet wine seem less sweet and, in the case of some sticky sweet wines, less ponderous.



IN WINE THERE IS WISDOM,

Conversely, a still bottled water, especially a water that most would consider to be mild in style, lets the sweetness in a sweet wine shine through.

There is a place somewhere in the middle. Waters such as Vittel, with a TDS of 841 and a fairly friendly pH of 7.5, are far harder to pigeonhole. So too San Pellegrino (1109 TDS and 7.7 pH) is fairly mild among sparkling waters, though San Pellegrino is deceptively capable of handling wines both big and small. The same could be said of many other waters that occupy this middle ground of style. As can so often be said about wine matchings, it all depends. Great combinations are in the mouth of the beholder. Blanket statements are rare.

But here's a blanket statement: virtually all the waters bottled in the US are mild. Theoretically, that may seem counter-intuitive since American wines (especially Californian wines) tend to be so intense in style, weight and alcohol level.

Sparkling water is rare among American bottled waters. That may be good news. Bubbles in sparkling waters can exacerbate the sensation of alcohol; yet softer waters do little to tame Californian wine's intensity.

The irony is that the best bottled waters for big, high-alcohol, high-extract wines are mineral-rich, even salty, mineral waters. While there is nothing new and different about the idea that high intensity waters can counter-balance high intensity wines, there is another dynamic at work.

Salt (and perhaps other minerals - though this is still unproven) tempers tannin and bitterness. It is a physical reaction; any chef knows that salt is required to mellow the bitter character of eggplant, to cite only one famous example. Salt literally clogs the bitterness receptors in the mouth and throat.

While salt rich bottled waters can overwhelm a mild wine, they can also mitigate the sort of intensity that is typical of powerful New World wines. American wine drinkers, in a perfect world, would not be drinking soft and mild American bottled waters, they would save their dollars for mineral rich waters. And those kinds of mineral waters usually come from Europe. But plenty of imported waters such as TyNant, Volvic, and Evian, are mild to the point of self-effacing. For this drinker, Evian can be regarded as mild, but it has a rather distinctive powdered note (it is the high bicarbonates?) that is fine with intense wines. Yet it becomes obtrusive with milder wines.

With Evian as only one example, the simplistic method of pairing powerful wines with flavorful mineral waters and mild wines with mild waters is exposed as insufficiently nuanced. You can begin to see how there are water sommeliers out there who might have a bit of job security.

Some readers might reasonably question the whole enterprise at this point. I know I would, were it not for a little real-life

IN WATER THERE IS BACTERIA.

IN BEER THERE IS FREEDOM,

experience that teaches me that certain combinations of water and wine are good and certain combos are not. I have a colleague who insists upon sparkling water, no matter the time, place or situation. I also tend to insist upon Champagne to begin a meal, at least anytime the occasion merits it (which, as many smarter wags have noted, is always).

At its best, Champagne offers a delicate interplay between incipient sweet fruit and drying bubbles, and between rich lees character (autolysis) and earthy notes derived from the highest concentration of chalk among the world's vineyards. Sparkling water, even the mildest, seems to impinge upon that conversation; more mineral-rich sparkling waters knock Champagne's delicacy right out of the park.

With such anecdotal affinities or antagonisms, the principles of water and wine begin to seem as random as traffic accidents. Still, the consumer embrace of bottled water reflects a need to make the flavor of water as predictable as possible. Whether consumers are misguided is immaterial; they are buying more and more bottled water.

The modern cityscape may soon be littered with empty water bottles; that is a great shame. Yet, this conversation about wine and water can even extend to tap water. Unquestionably, tap water tastes differently when it comes from different

taps. Old areas of most cities harbor older plumbing and when the water sits in those lines, it can pick up strange and unpleasant aromas. Running the tap for a while removes most of it.

As a traveler, I am too keenly aware that tap water has flavor. If you doubt my assertion, try the tap water in New Orleans. I can drink it (and I do) but it is a bit of an adventure.

And my preference for tap water ends abruptly when I arrive in the city of Adelaide in South Australia. I am not sure why it is so, but I do not think I have ever found worse water, not even in the hinterlands of Asia.

Nonetheless, it is the exception that proves the rule. Tap water, if it is your own, tastes fine to locals, even if it tastes weird to some visitors. Numerous surveys have found consumers incapable of discovering a taste difference between tap water and many mineral waters. And in a famous UK study a few years ago, the chief inspector for DWI (the Drinking Water Inspectorate), Jeri Colbourne, noted that tap water from southeastern England had as much calcium, potassium, magnesium, sodium and other minerals as a bottle of Perrier. Who knows? Perhaps, in the future, the hot properties may be tap waters from a particular region.

— BENJAMIN FRANKLIN



BORDEAUX 2023: DRINK NOW, MID-TERM AND CELLAR PICKS



Story by Claire L. Torbeck, DipWSET, Lake Tahoe Branch



Choose the bottle for the moment using a simple three-lane framework (with producer highlights) from a UGCB walk-around tasting.

The Union des Grands Crus de Bordeaux (UGCB) is an association of leading Bordeaux châteaux that hosts trade tastings worldwide. Their annual tour offers a rare chance to taste broadly across the region—Left Bank, Right Bank, and Sauternes/Barzac—while comparing producers side by side. These notes come from a UGCB walk-around tasting of pre-release 2023 samples; impressions reflect that format (young wines, quick pours, limited glass time).

Given the walk-around setting—and the time required to taste thoughtfully and take notes—I did not taste every wine. These are snapshots, not final judgments. Many wines will shift as they integrate, and impressions can change with bottle age and context at the table.

What stood out about Bordeaux 2023 (in this room)

Freshness paired with structure showed best, especially on the Left Bank, where Cabernet Sauvignon often delivered clarity, lift, and a sense of “architecture” on the palate. Many wines offered ripe fruit without heaviness, and the top performers combined perfume, energy, and tannin grip in a way that suggests real aging potential. At the same time, a few wines—particularly at the more “everyday” end of Haut-Médoc—leaned into generous fruit but occasionally felt short on brightness, tipping toward easy-drinking rather than energized balance. In other words: the best 2023s felt bright and built, while the simpler wines felt friendly and front-loaded.

As is often true in Bordeaux, 2023 is a vintage where results felt more producer-dependent than headline-dependent—vineyard health, selection, and sorting choices clearly mattered.

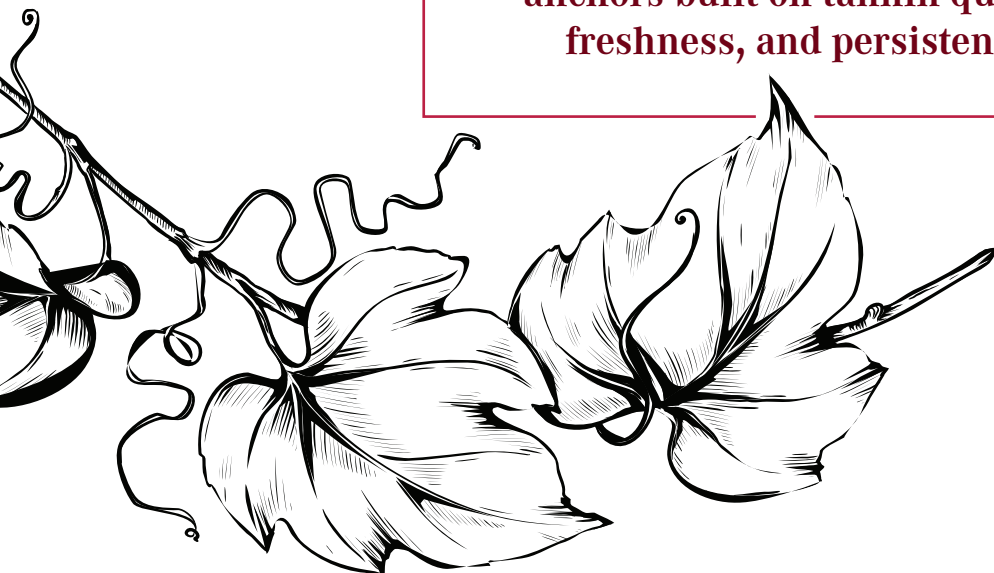
A simple way to enjoy Bordeaux: pick your drinking window

Bordeaux is often discussed as if every bottle must be cellared for decades. In reality, a well-rounded Bordeaux experience includes three lanes:

1. Drink-sooner Bordeaux: early charm, minimal waiting—ideal for social-forward dinners.

2. Mid-term Bordeaux: structured “overachievers” that reward a few years yet drink well earlier.

3. Long-term cellar Bordeaux: classic anchors built on tannin quality, freshness, and persistence.



Long-term cellar candidates (architecture + tension)

Lynch-Bages:

Perfumed aromatics; ripe but fresh fruit. Plush palate with clear tension and a lively finish. A beautiful wine.

Pichon Baron:

Structure-first—leaner in profile but full of flavor, with dusty grip that reads “buy for the cellar.” Léoville Barton: Bright, energetic, and firmly structured—one of the clearest examples of Cabernet performing well in the vintage. Clerc Milon: Juicy and lifted with tangible grip—strong aging potential.

How to use them:

If you love classic claret complexity—cedar, graphite, tobacco—these are worth patience and will shine with roast meats, mushrooms, and savory sauces once tertiary notes emerge.

Mid-term wines (balanced, serious, not precious)

Smith Haut Lafitte:

Mineral and minty; cherry/berry fruit well away from jam. Bright acidity and palpable tension—an excellent Pessac-Léognan reference.

Brane-Cantenac:

Plenty of fruit, not overripe; elegant structure behind the fruit. Mid-to-long potential but enjoyable earlier.

Cantenac Brown:

Structure-forward with savory tones; oak present but not yet integrated—needs time, feels well-built.

Château du Tertre:

A personal surprise—floral, powdery aromatics and an elegant shape that evolved in the glass. Gloria: Dusty claret profile with grip, dark fruit, and tobacco—solid mid-palate balance.

Saint-Pierre:

Solid but not showy; balanced components with a firm edge that read as youthful structure.

Haut-Batailley:

Cabernet-led, good mid-palate weight; oak supportive rather than overt. **Lynch-Moussas:** Soft aromatics but full-bodied and balanced—reliable mid-tier drinker.

How to use them:

Great for dinners and “open something serious” occasions that don’t require decades of waiting—especially when you want Bordeaux character with polish.

Drink-sooner / social-friendly (approachable now)

Cantemerle / Citran / Coufran:

Historically solid Haut-Médoc buys. In 2023 they were fruity and pleasant, leaning broad rather than taut. Drink sooner and be happy you did.

Gazin (Right Bank):

Plush, berry-driven, balanced, and long—an easy crowd-pleaser at the table. Talbot: Dark cherry, savory spice, and a juicy finish. Drink sooner or into mid-term.

Siran:

Drinks now, though tannin could hold for several years.

Ormes de Pez:

Generous fruit with grip and a juicy acid line; drink now through mid-term.

Wines to revisit (tightly wound today)

Some wines showed as reserved in the quick format and deserve a slower look: Beychevelle (developing), Giscours (plush with a slight green touch), Kirwan (firm, slightly bitter edge), Dauzac (herbal then richer fruit), Lascombes (a sour-leaning note), Batailley (tart edge lingering), and Langoa Barton (one sample suggested mild cork taint). This is the walk-around lesson in real time: integration matters, and a young claret can look awkward before it looks beautiful.

Sweet wines: the high-impact finish

Suduiraut: Outstanding balance and perfume; sweetness and acidity in step. Already delicious, with clear upside as tertiary notes develop. La Tour Blanche: Sweetness more forward today, lifted by juicy acidity and otherwise well balanced—one to watch with age.

The Takeaway

The most important lesson was not a single “best wine,” but the value of choosing intentionally. Bordeaux can be a delicious drink-sooner claret for a social dinner, a mid-term bottle that rewards a few years, or a long-term classic that evolves into layered complexity. The same framework also helps keep a cellar healthy: something ready now, something improving, and a small tier reserved for special occasions. Bordeaux is simply more fun when you choose the bottle for the moment—and easier to share when you match style and maturity to the meal.



TASTING SERIES:

**A LEGACY OF
ELEGANCE & TERROIR:
VIRTUAL TASTING OF
HENRIOT CHAMPAGNE**

By Charles Schurhammer, Rochester Branch



Founded in 1808, Champagne Henriot stands as one of the few great houses in the region that has remained family-owned for over two centuries. Known for its refined style and focus on Chardonnay-driven cuvées, Henriot has carved out a reputation for wines of finesse, balance, and luminous character. At the heart of its success lies an unwavering commitment to terroir, grape selection, and meticulous craftsmanship that allows the house to produce champagnes of both distinction and consistency.

Henriot sources its grapes from some of the most prized crus in Champagne, with a strong emphasis on the Côte des Blancs. This subregion, famous for its chalky soils and cool microclimate, is the birthplace of Chardonnay of exceptional purity and minerality. Villages such as Avize, Mesnil-sur-Oger, and Chouilly contribute crystalline fruit with a pronounced salinity and tension. Grapes are also drawn from premier and grand cru villages in the Montagne de Reims, where Pinot Noir adds depth, structure, and red-fruit intensity. Pinot Meunier, though used sparingly, contributes roundness and approachability, particularly in Henriot's non-vintage blends. The house philosophy emphasizes harmony across terroirs, blending different crus to achieve wines that express elegance rather than sheer power.

Champagne Collection

SIGNATURE CUVÉES



EXCEPTIONAL CUVÉES



RARITIES



Slide from the presentation.

Chardonnay is the soul of Henriot. It represents a significant proportion of most of their cuvées, giving the wines brightness, precision, and a floral lift. Pinot Noir adds body, length, and subtle spice, while Pinot Meunier brings fruitiness and supple texture. In Henriot's prestige bottling, Cuvée Hemera, Chardonnay and Pinot Noir are blended in equal measure, showcasing both finesse and depth. Reserve wines are also extensively used, enhancing complexity and ensuring continuity of style from year to year.

Since 2020, Champagne Henriot has been under the direction of cellar master Alice Tétienne, a highly respected figure in the Champagne world. Having previously worked with Krug and Maison Krug's vineyards, she brings both precision and a deep respect for terroir to Henriot. Tétienne emphasizes sustainable viticulture, precision in vineyard management, and a commitment to expressing the nuances of each cru. Her philosophy marries tradition with modern sensitivity, ensuring Henriot maintains its legacy while continuing to evolve in line with today's pursuit of authenticity and sustainability.

Henriot champagnes are celebrated for their luminous style—elegant, textural, and persistent rather than opulent or heavy. The dominance of Chardonnay brings lifted aromas of citrus blossom, white peach, and green apple, supported by notes of chalk, brioche, and subtle almond. On the palate, they show a beautiful interplay of freshness and creaminess: zesty citrus and orchard fruits balanced by creamy pastry, hazelnut, and honey accents from extended lees aging. The finish is typically long, saline, and mineral-driven, reflecting the chalk-rich soils of the Côte des Blancs.

From the vibrant Brut Souverain to the refined Blanc de Blancs and the prestigious Cuvée Hemera, Henriot offers wines that capture the essence of Champagne elegance: luminous, harmonious, and deeply rooted in terroir. With Alice Tétienne at the helm, the house continues to honor its 200-year legacy while looking confidently to the future.



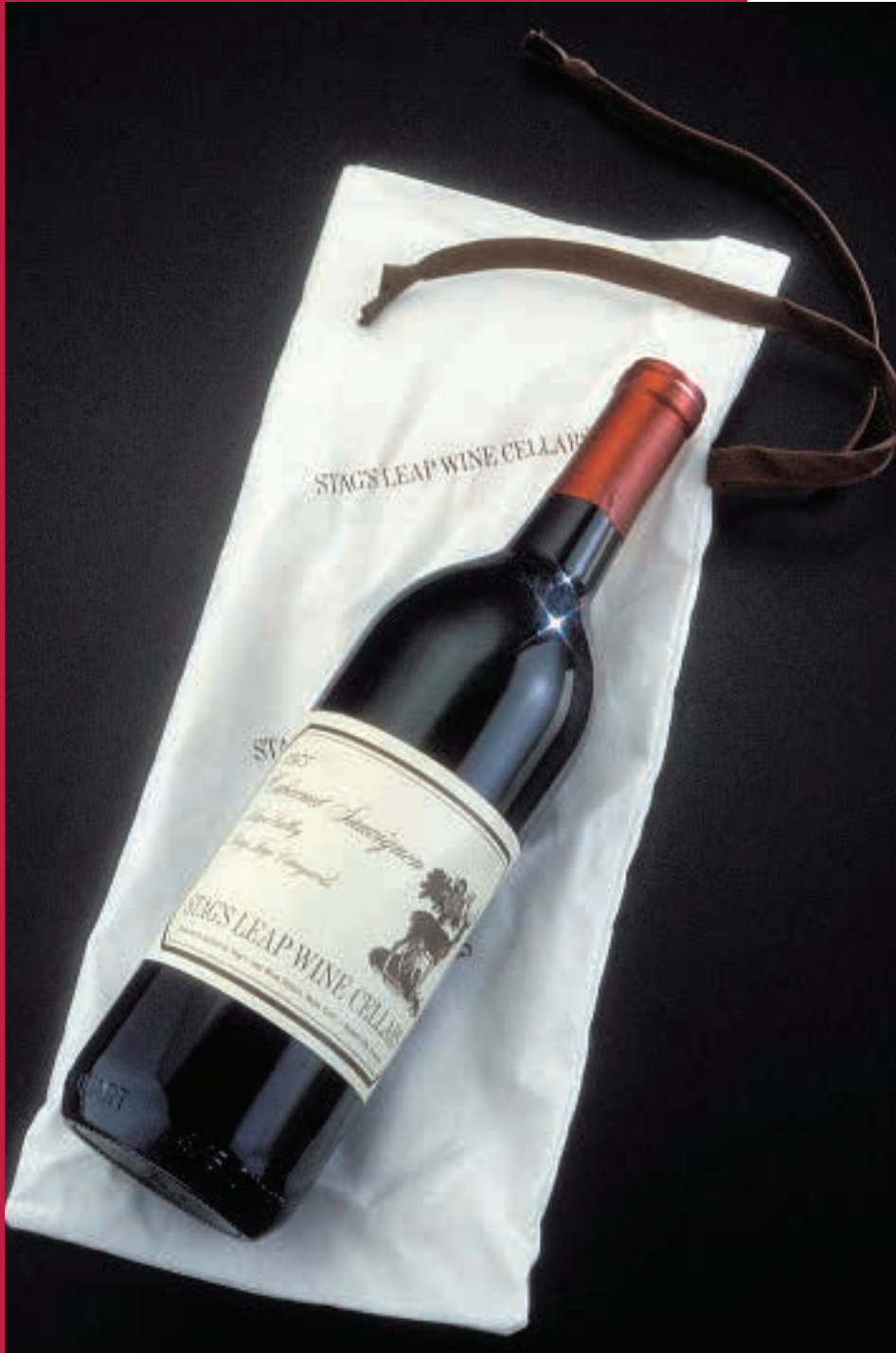
Tanya Pringsheim-Evans giving her Zoom presentation.

When tasting the Champagnes while Tanya was describing them, I was thinking back to the Napa Valley Festival this past May. The Blanc de Blancs didn't disappoint, with its fresh, full fruit flavor and elegance. My favorite of the evening was the Vintage Champagne Millésimes 2014 – in my opinion, this is the essence of what I look for in a fine Champagne. Our guests for the tasting all agreed the Rosé was a real crowd pleaser. It would pair beautifully with a Thanksgiving turkey and its trimmings, with beautiful flavors of strawberry and the treasured dry nature of Champagne. The Brut Souverain had the most interesting story along with unique flavors that I want to continue to explore in the future.

A special thank you to Tanya Pringsheim-Evans for her wonderful presentation, you can visit the IWFS website to see the Zoom presentation if you missed it. I would like to acknowledge the Jackson Family- especially VP Elyse Kudo – for their continued support of our Zoom tasting series.

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>



*Judgement of Paris Winner
Stag's Leap Wine Cabernet Sauvignon 1973*

THE JUDGEMENT OF PARIS

PART 2: THE DEBUTANTS' BALL (REBIRTH OF AN INDUSTRY)

By Ronald Fenolio, CEO/Proprietor, Veedercrest Estates LLC

In “*The Judgment of Paris: Part I*” (the first article of this series, Wine, Food, and Friends Winter 2026 edition) the history of the California wine industry was tracked from the time of the Spanish missionaries starting in the 1770s to the “five disasters of the early to mid 1900s” that totally destroyed the industry. How did the industry get rebuilt and what was the real importance of the Judgment of Paris.

In 1933, following the repeal of prohibition, a few very important pioneers got to work building a new wine industry. Primary among these were the Gallo brothers, Ernest and Julio. During the same year Louis Martini started the Louis Martini Winery in Napa, John Wilson, Jr. caused the rebirth of Inglenook, and George De La Tour hired Andre Tchelistcheff to help him with Beaulieu Vineyards, all iconic names today. Cesare Mondavi did not acquire Charles Krug until 1943. But as noted in Part 1, the industry still had to work through a Great Depression, WWII, and the Korean War before major development.

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 Judgment 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 or 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.



Chateau Montelena Exterior



The 1950s and 1960s were a time of quiet, the “quiet before the storm;” the storm of expansion and of the Judgment of the early 1970s. During this early period Mayacamas was restarted, Stony Hill was founded, and Heitz with its iconic Martha’s Vineyard was created. In 1953 James Zellerback started Hanzell, creating the oldest vineyard of continuously producing Chardonnay and Pinot Noir in North America. The Hanzell Chardonnay should properly be considered the “godfather” of Burgundian style Chardonnay in California. And, of course, in 1966 Robert Mondavi and Peter Mondavi split, with Robert starting the now eponymous Robert Mondavi Winery.

All this early history, be as it may, in the early 1970s there were still fewer than 40 wineries in the Napa Valley, today they number in the 650s. Then came 1972, the “class of 1972” as it is called is generally considered to be the significant turning point in the development of the Napa and California wine industries. The significant wineries of the Class of 1972 are today some of the most famous names in California wine (listed alphabetically): Burgess, Cakebread, Caymus, Chateau Montelena, Clos du Val, Diamond Creek, Franciscan, Rutherford Hill, Silver Oak, Spottswood, Stag’s Leap Wine Cellars, Sullivan, Mt. Veeder Vineyards, my beloved Veedercrest, and among others in other parts of the state, Chalk Hill, Dry Creek, Jordan, eighteen in all. Quite a class, and all of sudden Napa Valley was not a quiet bucolic valley of horse farms and apple orchards. Yet by the end of the decade there were still fewer than fifty wineries.

Enter Steven Spurrier. Steven Spurrier and Patricia Gallagher had opened a small wine shop near the Madeleine, Paris, the Cave de la Madeleine and an affiliated wine school, the Academie du Vin. Steven and Patricia thought it would help promote their wine academy if they held a competition between emerging California wineries and their traditional French counterparts. Steven came to California and with some recommendations drove around visiting and selecting wines from eleven California wineries to create the competition. A little known fact is that for four of these wineries (Montelena, Stags Leap, Clos du Val, Veedercrest) the wines Steven chose were from the first commercial vintage ever produced, and it included all the winners! So much for the European myth that if one has not made wine for fifteen generations one does not know how to make wine!



La Cave de la Madeleine



*Judgement of Paris Winner
Chateau Montelena Chardonnay 1973*



(Left) Heir Apparent Spring Mountain District Chardonnay, 2021

(Center) Chalone Vineyard Chardonnay

(Right) Veedercrest Chardonnay, 2010

The tasting panel was comprised of a “who is who” of French wine aristocracy drawn from the Appellation d’ Origine Contrôlée Board, the Wine Institute of France, the representatives of Domaine de La Romanee Conti and Chateau Giscours, the owners and or Sommeliers of Le Grand Véfour, Tour D’Argent, and Taillevent. Today, we all know the outcome of what has become known as the Judgment of Paris 1976. But it all might have been for naught. The French were appalled and would have buried the results. How could it be that not one French judge voted for a French White Burgundy (Chardonnay) over the California wines? Everyone had voted for Montelena, Chalone, Veedercrest, Spring Mountain Chardonnays, as the first or second place chardonnays. Some of the judges even asked for their ballots back, but Steve Spurrier politely declined the request. The judging had been conducted blind, in an air conditioned quiet ballroom of the Intercontinental Hotel. Fortuitously one journalist showed up, George Tabor of Time Magazine. He wrote a back page article which shocked the world.

None of the American producers were in attendance. No one had assigned great importance to the event. Many in fact were on a tour of Bordeaux and did not go to Paris to witness the event. Until the shock waves hit and the phones started ringing.

So why was this so significant? Was it significant that the California wines won? Of course, that is the most significant PR event of the wine industry for California wines. But what was really going on? This was the debutant ball for the California wine industry! The beautiful wines showed up, they presented themselves well. But remember, only 40 wineries in the Napa Valley at that time. This was the coming out party. This was the announcement to the world that the California wine industry and particularly the Napa industry, was back, it was reborn, and it was going to set the standards for the forthcoming three or four decades.

In the next article, “Where Are We Now?” we will review the industry beginning with the 1980s and bring it to the present.

What's Cooking?

BRANCH EVENTS ACROSS THE AMERICAS

AIKEN

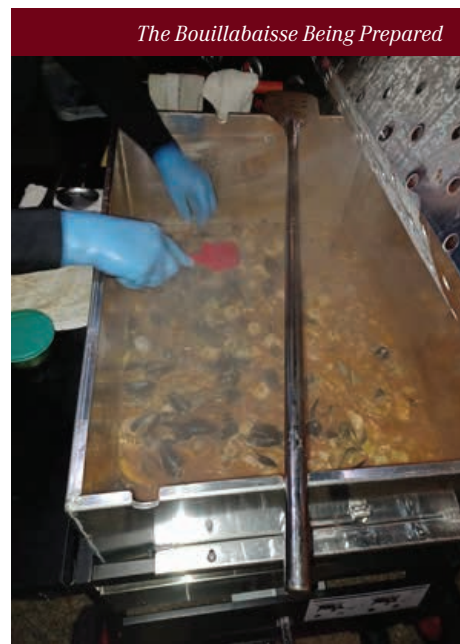
An Evening in Marseille

We were magically transported from downtown Aiken, under the stately oak trees in front to Solo Vino Marchand de Vin, to Marseille, France. The air was thick with aroma of fresh Bouillabaisse being cooked outside by Chef Lou. Oysters, scallops, shrimp, and clams simmered in gallons of fish stock. Aiken Branch members brought hors d'oeuvres, appetizers, side dishes, and desserts to round out the menu. The wines were primarily local to Marseille, and flowed freely. Extra Bouillabaisse was packed in quart containers to enjoy at home later. The evening was magnifique!

November 16, 2025: An Evening in Marseille, Solo Vino Marchand de Vin, Aiken, South Carolina.

🍷 *Rouanne Brut Nature 2023* ✕ Gathering: Sausage Stuffed Phyllo Cups (Patty Oakland), Asparagus Soufflé (Elizabeth Combier). 🍷 *Dom. du Gros Noré Bandol Blanc 2023, Dom. du Gros Noré Bandol Rosé 2023* ✕ Main Bouillabaisse (Lou Giusto). Sides: Corn Soufflé (Cindy Marcotte), French Baguettes (Pam Foss), Garden Salad (Nancy Francis). 🍷 *Les Cadrans de Lassegue St. Émilion Grand Cru 2022* ✕ Cheese Course Assorted Cheeses (Caroline Teese). 🍷 *Grahams 20 Year Tawny Port* ✕ Dessert Pecan Pie Cheesecake (Pam Hardin) Cake and Ice Cream (Mary Blumberg).

The Bouillabaisse Being Prepared



AIKEN

Christmas Gathering

The Aiken Branch met in the intimate library of the Green Boundary Club for a holiday season feast. Tom and Pam Foss worked with Nancy Francis to design a menu for a lovely evening. We first gathered in the club living room for passed appetizers, accompanied by Schramsberg sparkling wines from the cellar of Tom Foss. We then moved to the library for the meal. Space was reserved in the library for the Chef to display his talents. This included carving the stuffed pork crown roast, as well as, the Cherries Jubilee for dessert. It was a treat to have so much attention from the Chef on a night when the club was also serving supper to other members. The attentive staff from the Green Boundary gave us excellent service. It was a fitting end to our year of IWFS events.

December 17, 2025: Christmas Gathering, The Green Boundary Club, Aiken, South Carolina.

🍷 *Schramsberg Blanc de Blancs 2021 Schramsberg J. Schram Blancs 2016* ✕ Before the Seating: Salmon Crostini Chestnuts Wrapped in Bacon Mini Ahi Tuna Bowls. 🍷 *Donnafugata Lighea Zibibbo 2024* ✕ Salad Garden Salad with Mixed Greens and Walnuts. 🍷 *Giuseppe Cortese Barbaresco 2021* ✕ Main: Stuffed Crown Roast of Pork Roasted Brussel Sprouts Butternut Squash Puree. 🍷 *Matteo Correggia Anthos (Dry Brachetto) 2023* ✕ Dessert Cherries Jubilee.

Our Pork Roast, Prior to Carving



ARKANSAS

ROME on The Ridge IV

An Autumn tradition continued on a perfect afternoon and evening in rural Arkansas. Both new and veteran members of our Branch gathered at John Trickett's home to celebrate ROME on The Ridge IV. The Roman reference has nothing to do with the food or wine served. Rather, it's all about timing. Members who volunteer to cook are matched with members who would prefer to bring wine to pair with the dishes. Because 6 courses are generally served (in small portions, thankfully!), our feast begins mid-afternoon and goes until late in the evening. A Roman-length meal if there ever was one.

Each year begins with bubbles and bites prepared by hosts Bev McClendon and John Trickett. Paired wines determine the order of courses, so the meal progresses as a wine tasting would: Champagne (from magnum) followed by sharper white followed by richer white, light red, full-bodied red, and a sweet wine to match our dessert.

Discussions of iteration V of ROTR have already begun. Chefs will soon test dishes and our two sommeliers stand ready to find pairings worthy of the food. Overnight guests were treated to another tradition: Fresh biscuits accompanied by a flight of three compound butters. Alongside orange juice and mimosas, it left guests well fortified for their drives home.

Long live ROME on The Ridge!

November 8, 2025: Rome on The Ridge IV, John Trickett's Home, The Middle of Nowhere, Arkansas. 🍷 *Drappier Brut Cuvée Carte d'Or NV (Magnum)* ✕ Bites, Your Ridge Road Favorites. 🍷 *Sancerre Daniel Chotard 2024* ✕ Chicken Cordon Bleu Meatballs & Spaghetti Squash. 🍷 *Albariño Rias Baixas Do Ferreiro 2023* ✕ Tortilla Soup, Fresh Baked Tortilla Strips. 🍷 *Beaujolais-Villages Morgon Dom. De Thulon 2022 "Les Charmes"* ✕ Chicken Thighs & Mushroom Rice. 🍷 *Malbec Uco Valley Kaiken Ultra 2021* ✕ Tri-Tip Beef Roast, Smoked Paprika Rub & Pinto Beans. 🍷 *Mosel Karthausehof Eitelsbacher, Kartheiser Riesling Auslese Nr. 58 Auction 1999* ✕ His Rufusness Says "Salvette Omnes!"



Rome on the Ridge IV

ATLANTA

Christmas Dinner

This year, we went back to "Fogón and Lions" for our Christmas Dinner. Chef Julio Delgado prepared a very special menu celebrating the timeless rivalry – and harmony – between Old World and New World Wines. It was a journey from the rolling vineyards of France, Italy, and Spain, and the bold terroirs of California, Argentina, and Australia. We explored how geography, philosophy, and passion shape every sip.

President Alberto Arango & Helguita Arango, and Carli & Helga Franceschi hosted the event. The wines were selected by Alberto Arango & Carli Franceschi.

December 14, 2025: Christmas Dinner, Fogón and Lions, Alpharetta, Georgia.

🍷 *Vallformosa Blue Fin Brut Reserva Cava, Spain* ✕ 🍷 *Ch. Gloria 2019 - Bordeaux, France, Peju Winery Cabernet Sauvignon Legacy Collection 2022 - Napa Valley, California* ✕ Golden Osetra Caviar with Champagne Sabayon, Chive Blossom, Whipped Brie With Truffle Honey, Pear Confit, and Tuile De Provence, Citrus Black Olive Crusted Salsify with Black Truffle Espuma, Duck Prosciutto, Orange Puree. 🍷 *Do Ferreiro Albariño Cepas Vellas 2015/2019 - Rias Baixas, Spain. Belle Glos Pinot Noir Las Alturas 2022, California* ✕ Brioche Crusted Striped Bass, Root vegetable Salad, Burgundy Mushroom Sauce. 🍷 *Usseglio Châteauneuf-du-Pape Cuvée Girard 2015 - Rhone, France, Two Hands Shiraz Lily's Garden Shiraz 2020 - McLaren Vale, Australia* ✕ Maple - Black Pepper Marinade Buffalo Tenderloin, Parsnip Silk Sweet Potato Taquito, and Smoked Chili Sauce. 🍷 *Coquito Puertorriqueño* ✕ Dark Chocolate Cake with Port-Soaked Figs, Smoked Sea Salt, and Hazelnut Praline.



Chef Julio Delgado

AUSTIN

Pop-up Dinner at the Austin Club

Have you ever experienced a meal where every course featured artisanal cheeses? Or have you thought about pairing a genuine Austrian-style apple strudel with a fruity Italian Pinot Noir?

Intrigued by these questions, the Austin Club, in collaboration with Texas-based River Whey Creamery, opened up a special gourmet dinner to members and non-members. About 30 IWFS members signed up for the January 22, 2026 event. Of the courses, the silky handmade ravioli filled with roasted butternut squash and River Whey's award-winning 'Caldera España' smoked cheese, was a crowd favorite. It was finished with sage brown butter, smoked paprika, and toasted pepitas. For each course, the representative from River Whey Creamery explained the cheese/food pairing and discussed the methods they use to make alpine-like cheeses in Texas. It was an exceptional evening of wine, food, friends, and learning about the artisanal cheese-making process.

January 22, 2026: Pop-up Dinner, Austin Club, Austin Texas. 🍷 *Crémant d'Alsace Brut Rosé N/V* ✕ Keystone' Crostini with Wild Mushrooms and Truffle Honey. 🍷 *Pewsey Vale Dry Riesling 2023* ✕ Roasted Pear and 'Whey Blue' Salad. 🍷 *Ribolla Brda Classic 2024* ✕ Butternut Squash Ravioli with 'Caldera España. Green Apple Sorbet. 🍷 *Unfiltered Tolaini Al Passo Organic 2021* ✕ Red Wine-braised Beef Short Rib with 'Indigo Ridge' Gratin. 🍷 *Tertano Monticol Pinot Nero 2021* ✕ Warm Apple Strudel with 'Welshman Cheddar' Drizzle.

Handmade Ravioli Filled with Butternut Squash and Award-Winning "Caldera España Smoked Cheese



AUSTIN

February 1, 2026: Gumbo with a Twist PLUS Old Fashioneds Rule the Annual Membership Meeting, Home of Billy and Karon Hill, Austin, Texas.

On a chilly, albeit sunny, Sunday afternoon in February, 36 members of the Austin Branch gathered at the home of Billy and Karon Hill for a very lively Annual Membership Meeting. It wasn't an ordinary meeting. Yes, by-laws were amended, officers were elected, people were thanked, the best venue of 2025 was voted upon, and future events were planned. All while the snacking tables groaned under the weight of beautifully-crafted charcuterie boards. But two aspects of the event stood out.

Firstly, Tom Winterton had started, three days ahead of time, to cook an exceptional chicken, shrimp and andouille sausage gumbo. Lynne Winterton created the twist - she served it with Lundberg Family Farms organic wild rice amped up with a medley of pecans, butter and dried thyme, all roasted together. The wild rice created an additional layer of texture and earthiness, and it greatly enhanced the amazing gumbo.

Secondly, Billy and Karon Hill had recently toured the Bourbon Trail in Kentucky and brought back with them the fine art of making a perfect Old Fashioned. Attendees were offered a chance to enjoy an Old Fashioned crafted from top shelf bourbon, Luxardo cherries, orange bitters, and simple syrup, all chilled with perfectly clear spherical ice balls.

The energy in the room portended an upcoming year of great expectations.

Lynne & Anne Winterton Prepare to Dish Out their Gumbo with a Twist



FOOD FACTOID | *Angostura Bitters*

Primarily used for cocktails, Angostura Bitters are produced by the House of Angostura in Trinidad and Tobago. Created by Dr. Johann Siegert, it was initially developed as a medicinal tonic to alleviate stomach ailments for soldiers of Simón Bolívar's army.

CHICAGO

907th Dinner of the Society – Christmas at the Casino Club

The Chicago Branch celebrated the holidays together at The Casino Club, one of Chicago's best kept secrets and a favorite of the IWFSC. The Casino is always decorated marvelously for the season, making it a perfect venue for our celebration. We gathered in the beautiful Drawing Room for a Champagne reception and passed canapés, and then moved to the Fountain Room for dinner.

December 10, 2025: 907th Dinner, The Casino Club, Chicago, Illinois. 🍷 *Piper-Heidsieck Brut Millésimé, 2012* ✕ Cheese Puffs, Chutney Escargot, Garlic. 🍷 *Dom. Vacheron Sancerre Le Pavé, 2017* ✕ Seared Diver Scallop, Corn Velouté, Crispy Leeks. 🍷 *Dom. Robert Groffier Chambolle-Musigny Les Sentiers, Premier Cru, 1996* ✕ Wild Mushroom Agnolotti, Cream Sauce, Truffle Oil. 🍷 *Ch. Meyney, 1989* ✕ Roast Rack Of Lamb, Potato And Parsnip Puree, Brussel Spouts, Lamb Jus. 🍷 *Dom. Michel Caillot Les Herbeaux Bourgogne Blanc, 2018* ✕ Cheese: Compte, Camembert, Chèvre. 🍷 *Dow Porto Vintage Quinta do Bofim, 1990* ✕ Bittersweet Chocolate Tart, Cherry Compote.

FOOD FACTOID | Bittersweet Chocolate

Bittersweet Chocolate is a type of dark chocolate that contains a high percentage of cocoa solids and less sugar than other types of chocolate. While milk chocolate is usually made with 33% - 45% cacao, and semisweet chocolate around 50% - 60% cacao, bittersweet chocolate typically contains 70% - 80% cacao. Additionally, bittersweet chocolate has high antioxidant, mineral, and fiber levels which can provide potential health benefits like improved blood pressure.

CHICAGO

908th Dinner of the Society – Jeong

The 908th dinner of the Society was held at Jeong (pronounced “chung”). Our hosts were Chef/Owner David Park and General Manager/Partner, Jennifer Tran. Jeong is the maiden name of Chef David's grandmother, who inspired his cooking, and a Korean word that conveys “deep emotional attachment.”

January 14, 2026: 908th Dinner, Jeong, Chicago, Illinois. 🍷 *Charles Heidsieck Champagne Blanc des Millénaires, 2004* ✕ Puff Pastry: Pulled Brisket, Pyogo, Beef Stock, Butternut Squash, Scallions. 🍷 *RIESLING: Dom. Weinbach Riesling Schlossberg Cuvée Ste. Catherine, 2016, CHENIN BLANC: Ken Forrester Chenin Blanc “The FMC,” 2022* ✕ Kanpachi: Nori Vinaigrette, Citrus, Kimchi, Tartare: Salmon, Doenjang Yuja Gastrique, Arare, Scallop: Clementine Beurre Blanc, Blanched Spinach Dressed In A Confit Of Shallots, Smoked Trout Roe. 🍷 *Bouchard Pere et Fils Beaune 1er Cru Grèves Vigne de L'Enfant Jesus, 2009* ✕ Foie Gras, Apple, Gochujang. 🍷 *Ch. Figeac, 2000* ✕ Australian Wagyu, Kalbi Glaze, Brown Butter Carrot Veloute, Mokgeolli Pickled Cabbage. 🍷 *GEWÜRZTRAMINER: Zind-Humbrecht Heimbουργ Vendage Tardive, 1989, SAUTERNES: Chateau Clos Haut-Peyraguey, 2001* ✕ Sujeonghwa, Cinnamon Sugar Punch, Tapioca, Quince, Sorbet.

FLORIDA KEYS

August Event

Faro Blanco Resort is known for its iconic red-and-white lighthouse, a restored 1950s landmark that anchors a beautiful marina in Marathon, Florida. The Lighthouse Kitchen was the perfect setting for our 13th event. From the moment we began planning, everyone at Faro Blanco went above and beyond to make our evening special. Chefs Steven Savino and Armando Aguirre crafted an incredible custom menu that truly elevated the experience.

August 2025: Event at Faro Blanco Resort, Marathon, Florida. 🍷 *King Estate Inscription Pinot Noir, Willamette Valley, 2023* ✕ Beef Carpaccio - White Truffle Aioli, Parmesan, Arugula. 🍷 *Honig Sauvignon Blanc 2023* ✕ Seared Scallop - Tricolor Carrot Purée, Prosciutto Crisp, Soy Pearls, Pickled Shallot. 🍷 *Elizabeth Spencer Cabernet Sauvignon, Napa, 2018* ✕ Filet Mignon - Taro Root Purée, Charred Pineapple Demi-Glace, King Oyster Mushroom, Shallot. 🍷 *Nicolas Sauternes, France, 2019* ✕ Caramelized Banana Tart. Vegetarian Options: Charred Asparagus with Lemon Zest, Parmesan, and Balsamic Glaze, Pea and Mushroom Risotto, Heirloom Tomato Carpaccio with Whipped Feta and Crispy Garlic.



FLORIDA KEYS

Bird Rescue Center & Historical Crane Point Home

Our evening began with a private tour of the Florida Keys Bird Rescue Center, where guests enjoyed an Antipasto and wine course. The night continued with dinner and a bonfire at the historic Crane House, a restored 1954 mid-century modern "Pink House" located within the 63-acre Crane Point Museum & Nature Center. Built by conservationists Francis and Mary Crane, who purchased the property in 1949, the site is a designated historical landmark. Crane Point reflects over 700 years of human history, including early settlers George and Olivia Adderley, who lived on the property from 1903 to 1949.

November 15, 2025: Bird Rescue center & Historical Crane Point Home, Marathon, Florida. 🍷 *Sartori Di Verona Soave Classico Sella 2023* ✕ Classic Antipasto, Cheeses, Salumi, Prosciutto. 🍷 *Prunotto Dolcetto D'Alba 2022* ✕ Caesar Salad. 🍷 *Stags Leap Artemis 2019*, *Pio Cesare Barolo 2018 Tiramisu & Vin Santo* ✕ Red Wine Braised Short Ribs, Polenta and Roasted Root Vegetables.



Florida Keys Wine & Food Branch Dinner

FORT WORTH

Holiday Dinner

The Fort Worth, Texas Chapter of IWFS met on Saturday, December 6th for a black tie event at the Shady Oaks Country Club. The Shady Oaks Country Club is a private, member owned club in Westworth Village. It is known for its championship golf course designed by Robert Trent Jones, Sr. and its association with Ben Hogan, who was a member.

December 6, 2025: Holiday Dinner, Shady Oaks Country Club, Fort Worth, Texas. 🍷 *Louis Jadot Meursault 2018* ✕ Cream of Potato Soup, Smoked Salmon, Dill Melba Crostini. 🍷 *D'arenberg "The Dead Arm" Shiraz*, *McLaren Vale*, *Aus 2018* ✕ Espresso Rubbed Bison Tenderloin, Spinach-Parsnip Puree, Red Wine Caramelized Shallots, Vichy Carrots. Passion Fruit Sorbet. 🍷 *Retro Cellars 'Elevation' Petite Syrah*, *Howell Mountain 2013* ✕ Camembert Wedge, Quince, Amarena Wild Cherries, Puff Pastry Cracker. 🍷 *Laurent-Perrier La Cuvée Brut Champagne*, *NV* ✕ Croissant Bread Pudding, Eggnog Ice Cream, Bourbon Caramel Sauce.



From Left: Charles & Laura Berlin, Dean & Kelsey Tzobanakis, Michael & Crystal Richardson, Kevin Ingram

GREATER OMAHA

Chinese Take-Out and Wine Pairing

Kathy and Don Wittler and Jill Panzer took on the challenge of pairing wines with Chinese carry-out. Chinese food has varying tastes of sweet, sour, spice, and umami to pair with wine. JJ Chinese Restaurant provided a variety of Chinese food. Michelle Hyder of the Omaha Wine Company helped select a variety of wines to compare. Several food items were at stations for walk-around quaffing. Wine and Chinese food were served family-style. While some may prefer a cold beer with Chinese cuisine the wines that Michelle selected paired reasonably well.

August 10, 2025: Chinese Take-Out and Wine Pairing, Omaha Wine Company, Omaha, Nebraska. 🍷 *Paula Kornell Brut*, *St. Suprey Muscat*, *Weingut Spreitzer Kabinett Riesling*, *Grüner Veltliner*, *Beaujolais*, and *Gamey* ✕ Fried and Steamed Dumplings, Crab Rangoon, Port Egg Roll, and gluten-free Honey Walnut Shrimp. Kung Po Chicken (Spicy), vegetable Le Mein, Hunan Beef (Spicy), Cashew Shrimp, Orange Chicken, Broccoli Beef, and Fried Rice. Fortune Cookies and Mochi Balls.



From Left: Michelle Hyder, Kathy Wittler, Jill Panzer, Don Wittler

GREATER OMAHA

A Parisian Christmas

The Christmas event at Omaha Country Club (OCC) is always the highlight of the year, in no small part due to hosts Dr. Linda Ford, Rita Sanders and Janice Rustia. Dr. Ford was awarded the Board of Americas Silver Medalion for her many years of event planning and hosting the Christmas Event at the prestigious Omaha Country Club and Happy Hollow Club, and events in her home, She was also recognized for introducing many guests to the IWFS, some of whom have become members. Omaha Music Union provided dinner music. The ambiance, menu and Burgundy themed wines were enjoyed by all.

December 6, 2025: A Parisian Christmas, Omaha Country Club, Omaha, Nebraska.

🍷 *Kir Royale of Champagne and Crème de Cassis* ✕ Foie Gras Toast, Fried Shrimp, Brie & Other Creamy Cheeses Board. 🍷 *Chassagne-Montrachet, Vieilles Vignes, Domaine Bernard Moreau et Fils, 2017* ✕ Creamy Mushroom Soup. 🍷

Louis Jadot Chablis 2023 ✕ Sea Bass with Miso, Potato, Spinach & Cherry. Mixed Greens, Mint, Cucumber, Radish, Lemon Vinaigrette. 🍷 *Aloxe-Corton 1erCru Les Valozieres, Jean-Claude Boisset, 2019, Nuits-Saint-George's, Domaine Odoul Coquard, Les Argillats, 2018* ✕ Rack of Lamb with Winter Vegetables & Red Wine Sauce. 🍷 *Dom. Lucien Boillot & Fils, Pommard, 2018* ✕ Chocolate Obsession: Chocolate Cake, Mousse & Ganache with Vanilla Anglaise, Raspberry Sauce and Pecan Crust.



Guest, Dr. Linda Ford, Audrey Arceneaux (Ford's Granddaughter), Members Marsha & (Retired Four-Star General) Anthony Cotton

GULFSTREAM

Cene delle Feste in Sicilia

To celebrate the holidays and conclude the year with a final gathering, a dozen Gulfstream Branch members assembled on the patio of Ristorante Santucci, where an array of amuse-bouche was served alongside a sparkling Franciacorta Rosé. From there, we moved indoors for a special dinner—Cene delle Feste in Sicilia—thoughtfully prepared by Emilio Santucci, the restaurant's owner and chef.

Chef Santucci's culinary journey began in Sicily, where his deep connection to traditional flavors was formed, and then refined in some of Europe's most acclaimed hotels and restaurants. In 2014, he brought that passion to Palm Beach with the opening of Ristorante Santucci. The evening's menu showcased the very best of Sicilian cuisine: impeccably sourced meats and seafood, artisanal house-made pastas, and seasonal specialties, each dish crafted with care and inspired by the island's rich culinary heritage.



Gulfstream Members Celebrating Cene de la Feste in Sicilia

December 16, 2025: Cene delle Feste in Sicilia, Ristorante Santucci, West Palm Beach, Florida. 🍷 *Sparkling Franciacorta Rosé* ✕ Variety of Amuse-Bouche. 🍷 *Clos Beylesse Rosé (2023)* ✕ Italian Cold Cuts and Cheese. 🍷 *Etna Bianco "ROC" Gianluca Lavigna (2021)* ✕ Carpaccio di Capesante (Scallop Carpaccio). 🍷 *ArPePe Rosso di Valtellina, Nebbiolo (2022)* ✕ Mezzaluna di Osso-Buco. 🍷 *Primitivo Riserva Gioia del Colle Fanova (2020)* ✕ Stinco di Agnello al Timo (Lamb Shank). 🍷 *Pasitto di Pantelleria - Firriato (2022)* ✕ Cannoli con Pistachio.

HONOLULU

September 27, 2025: Kahala Home Hosts Three Amigos Event, Home of Karen and Jeef Deer, Honolulu, Hawaii.

Honolulu IW&FS members and guests enjoyed the popular “Three Amigos” (John Doty, Robert Fung, and Jeff Deer) event on September 27, 2025, at Karen and Jeff Deer’s Kahala home. For the encore event (3 years in a row), Maui native Chef Elmer Guzman prepared award-winning Pacific fusion appetizers and entrees.

The menu included appetizers of Mini-Seared Ahi Poke Bowls and Petite BBQ Pulled Pork Sliders with Tropical Aioli. The dinner buffet included Mari’s Mixed Greens with Shaved Hearts of Palm, Red Onion, Tomato and Lemon Miso Dressing, Mushroom Risotto, Crab Crusted Hamachi with Beurre Blanc, and a carving station of Slow Roasted Prime Rib with horseradish and Au Jus. For dessert, we enjoyed Haupia Mousse with Toasted Coconut and Creme Brulee. In addition to being delicious and plentiful, everyone enjoyed the easy to eat “pupu” (appetizers) style servings while gathering in comfortable and relaxed seating areas.

The Honolulu group selected wines from their Branch cellar which included Charles Heidsieck Brut Champagne NV, Aubert Sonoma Coast Chardonnay 2022, Flowers Sonoma Coast Chardonnay 2022, Domaine Bouchard Beaune du Chateau 2015, and Vigna Paganelli Brunello de Montalcino Riserva 2016. The evening included by bottles of wine brought to the event by members and guests, including Shafer Hillside Select Cabernet Sauvignon 2013, Chateau La Grange Saint Julien 2017, and Chateau Lynch Bages Pauillac 2021.

In addition to being a friendly, relaxing, and comfortable location to share their hospitality, fine wine and great food, the Deer’s home provided a fun atmosphere for the casual Hawaiian Style get-together, with good friends.



From Left: Jeff Deer, Bob Fung, John Doty

HOUSTON

Wild Game Dinner

Our evening began in the beautiful restaurant garden with passed Hors d’oeuvres and sparkling wine giving members a chance to visit for a time. Later, in the main dining room, the event host Mark Bermann gave a detailed account of how this incredibly unique restaurant began in 2003 under the name of Ouisie’s Table & Traveling Brown Bag Lunch Company. This establishment is well known for featuring the regional cuisines of Texas, Louisiana, and especially the South. Mark and Executive Chef Martin Bolanos selected the menu and the perfect wines for each course.

November 23, 2025: Wild Game Dinner, Ouisie’s Table, Houston, Texas. 🍷 *Jp Chenet Rosé Sparkling* ✕ Smoked Salmon Canapés, Tenderloin on Hot Biscuit. 🍷 *2023 Comte de La Chevaliere Sancerre* ✕ Oysters Rockefeller. 🍷 *2023 Sonoma Cutrer Chardonnay* ✕ Brown Butter Scallop, Baby Arugula, Toasted Almonds, Julienne Radishes and Roasted Beets Salad with Orange and Balsamic Reduction. 🍷 *2022 Vincent Morey & Sophie Santenay, Burgundy* ✕ Seared 5 Spice Duck Breast, Apple Wood Bacon and Sweet Potato Hash and Garlic Butter Brussels Sprout with Black Currant Cumberland Sauce. 🍷 *2023 Ken Wright Cellars Pinot Noir* ✕ Grilled Wild Sika Deer Chops with Cherry Glaze, Potato and Butternut Squash Gratin. 🍷 *Fladgate 20 Years Old Tawny* ✕ Ouisie’s Pot de Creme Au Chocolat.



From Left: Members Pat Pollan, Jim & Robyn Wood, Guest Terry Shelton, Past Chapter President Maureen Singleton

HOUSTON

Annual Holiday Dinner

The Annual Holiday dinner was organized by hostess Lisa White. Lisa selected Chef E.J. Miller at Chardon, located at the Thompson Hotel. His reputation as a chef dedicated to highlighting the best of local ingredients through authentic French techniques. Lisa and Chef Miller worked closely with Chardon sommelier, Renato Bringas, to select a delightful complement of French wines to pair with the inspired menu. The restaurant design presents the perfect atmosphere for the wines and menu because the décor provided the simplicity and warmth of bistros found within Paris’ iconic and charming neighborhoods like Montmartre and La Marais.

December 7, 2025: Annual Holiday Dinner, CHARDON, at the Thompson Hotel, Houston, Texas. 🍷 *Veuve Cliquot Reserve Cuvée Brut NV* ✕ Duck Wings, Bitter Orange Reduction, Sesame, Chive, French Onion Soup Dumpling, Oxtail, Gruyère, Sherry Vinaigrette, Brillat-Savarin Whipped. 🍷 *Dom. Pavelot Savigney-les-Beaune 2022* ✕ Wild Mushrooms and Escarole, Mache, Farmer’s Cheese, Sherry Vinaigrette. 🍷 *Dom. Matrot Meursault 2022* ✕ Coquille et Leeks. 🍷 *Maison Jean-Baptiste Souillard St. Joseph 2022* ✕ Wagyu Beef Cheek Bourguignon, Bacon, Mushrooms, Sauce Brunoise. 🍷 *20 Year Mas Amiel Maury* ✕ Il Flottante, Chocolate Cremeux, Merengue, Hazelnut Praline.



From Left: Andrea Teoh, Jackie Macha, Sandy Flannigan, Glenda Gause, Mackenzie Van Meter

JACKSONVILLE

Annual Holiday Wine Event

Once again, The Wine & Food Society of Jacksonville celebrated the Holiday Season with a wine tasting event at the home of Mark & Kathy Kallaus. Twelve wines were served, starting off with a three-litre bottle of Gilbert Jacquesson Cuvée Selection Recollant Manipulant a Troisay Champagne which had been a gift from Jed Steel to Tom Marsland and Dotti Cahill for their 50th anniversary. Thirty-eight members and guests enjoyed the merriment as they went from room-to-room sampling various wines. Wonderful catering by Josh Agan and his wife, Intan, of Routes Culinary Travels topped off the event.

December 19, 2025: Annual Holiday Wine Event, The Kallaus House, Jacksonville, Florida. 🍷 *Gilbert Jacquesson Cuvée Selection Recollant Manipulant a Troisay Champagne, Taittinger Brut La Française NV Champagne, Bernard et Fils Fleuriet Sancerre 2023, Viansa Bianchetta Trevigiana 2023, Brewer Clifton Ste. Rita Hills Pinot Noir 2023, Lavinea Eola-Amity Hills Pinot Noir 2023, Arcadian Sleepy Hollow Vineyard Pinot Noir 2023, Faust Napa Valley Cabernet 2017, Concha y Toro Don Melchor Cabernet 2000, Darioush Napa Valley Cabernet 2000, Tresor Ferrari-Carano Red Blend 2000, Taylor Fladgate Vintage Porto 2017* ✕ *Pani Puri with Truffled Cauliflower Purée, Hacklebak Caviar, Shrimp Tostada with Blue Corn Tortilla, Chipotle Aioli, Mango Pica, Ricotta Crostini, Mortadella, Green Olive, Marcona Almond, Yellowfin Tuna Tartare, Shallot, Caper, Miso Aioli, Furikake, Middlins Chip, Chicken Siu Mye, Steamed Chinese Dumpling, Sesame, Scal-lion, Mini Beef Wellington, Bearnaise Sauce, Beef Short Ribs, Rosemary Polenta, Salsa Verde. Mini Pear Tartlet, Salted Caramel, Creme Patisserie, Almond Cookie Marcona Almond, Short Bread, Black Forest Cake, Chocolate Mousse, Port Poached Cherries.*



JACKSONVILLE

Dinner at Dwight's Bistro

On January 25th, thirty-one members and guests returned to Dwight's Bistro in Jacksonville Beach to celebrate the new year and enjoy some of Dwight's specialties. The restaurant, located in a small strip shopping center, is noted for its French cuisine, but excels in many Italian dishes, such as shrimp and scallop casino, ricotta gnocchi, giant ravioli, and tiramisu. One cannot go wrong with a visit to Dwight's Bistro.

January 25, 2026: Dinner at Dwight's Bistro, Dwight's Bistro, Jacksonville Beach, Florida. 🍷 *Henri Debois Brut Prestige Champagne NV* ✕ *Mini Crab Cakes, Sliced Seared Tuna, Roasted Sea Bass Chunks.* 🍷 *L'Oratoire Des Papes Châteauneuf-du-Pape 2023* ✕ *Shrimp and Scallop Casino with Shallots, Garlic, Roasted Red Pepper and Smoked Paprika.* 🍷 *Petit Guiraud Sauternes* ✕ *Foie Gras with Sherry Onions.* 🍷 *Andrea Felici Verdicchio Dei Castelli De Jesu Classico Superiore 2022* ✕ *Ricotta Gnocchi with Cherry Tomato Polidoro.* 🍷 *Tolani Valdisanti Super Tuscan 2021* ✕ *Roasted Filet and Vegetables with Demi-Glace Peppercorn Sauce. Home Made Classic Tiramisu.*



KANSAS CITY

Annual Meeting & Dinner

This year, members of the Kansas City Branch held their Annual Meeting and Dinner on November 11 at Hallbrook Country Club in Leawood, Kansas. At the conclusion of the business meeting, members adjourned to dinner where Executive Chef Michael Simianer and his staff prepared four impressive courses, with several of the wine pairings sourced from the KC Branch wine cellar.

November 11, 2025: Annual Meeting & Dinner, Hallbrook Country Club, Leawood, Kansas. 🍷 *Albert Bichot Cremant de Bourgogne Brut Rosé, Burgundy, FR* ✕ *Duck Rillettes, Apple Butter & Gouda Gougères, Black Garlic Tuille, Caviar, Chives, Crispy Rice Cracker - Gf, Tuna Mousse, Sesame Powder, Avocado, Cucumber, Tamari. Seasonal Bread & Butter Basket, October Harvest Salad, Baby Kale, Delicata Squash, Whipped Feta Cheese, Persimmons, Pears, Walnuts, Poached Raisins, Apple Cider Vinaigrette. Cappelletti, Butternut Squash, Ricotta, Lobster, Crispy Leeks, Crushed Pepitas, Torn Herbs.* 🍷 *Gandona Encosta Cabernet Sauvignon 2019* ✕ *Braised Short Rib, Whipped Duck Fat Potatoes, Broccolini, Crispy Onion Straws, Bordelaise.* 🍷 *Ch. Fortia Châteauneuf-du-Pape Edmée Le Roy 2021* ✕ *Chilean Sea Bass, Mushroom Risotto, Braised Kale, Crispy Leeks, Demi Glaze.* 🍷 *Coffee* ✕ *Hazelnut Financier Cake, Brown Butter, Dark Chocolate Crèmeux, Espresso, Fig.*



LA JOLLA

Christmas Gaga 2025

'Twas a fortnight before Christmas at La Jolla's Torrey Pines Lodge,
Where 70 LWFS members and guests, in black tie and brocade, formed a holiday cavalcade—
A graceful procession marking the 74th year of the La Jolla Wine & Food Society.
Member medallions gleamed, name tags softly aglow,
As a Champagne Reception whispered of pleasures yet to come—
And set the tone for an evening of elegance.
Round tables were set, flowers placed just so,
And each course arrived with effortless grace.
Two white wines led the way, like reindeer drawn near—
Grand, expressive, and shaped by stone and citrus—
Guiding the evening forward with balance and quiet power.
And one might imagine—just for a moment—
That from the far end of the cellar,
A familiar voice called names into the winter air:
“Now Ruinart, luminous and refined;
Now Rosé, graceful, delicately inclined;
And Francis Orban, come forward to view,
with orchard fruit and brioche carried with you.
On Corton-Charlemagne, noble and bright;
On Chablis Les Clos, precise as starlight;
On Mazis-Chambertin, stride steady and sure;
On Clos de la Roche, deep, resolved, and pure.
And Le Méal of Hermitage—carry us through the night;
And Rieussec, appear golden as dessert draws near.”
Thus, the Trustworthy Wines pulled the evening forward,
Course by course, glass by glass,
Until Dessert arrived, glowing with Sauternes—
Lifted by age, patience, and grace, and the night found its gentle landing.
And through it all, the Harpist's gentle strings
Wove warmth, friendship, and seasonal cheer into the hall.
But I heard Santa exclaim, ere he drove out of sight:
“What a well-kept cellar. Happy Christmas to all.”
So ends a Christmas Gala worthy of 74 treasured years—
Rich Smith, LWFS



From Left: Milan & Tierney Brandon and Carolina & Tom Gildred

December 7, 2025: Christmas Gaga 2025, The Lodge at Torrey Pines, La Jolla, California. 🍷 *Ruinart Blanc de Blanc NV* 🍷 *Ruinart Rosé NV De Morgenzon Reserve Chenin Blanc* ✕ Reception: Passed Hors d'Oeuvres. 🍷 *Corton Charlemagne Grand Cru (Louis Latour 2022)* ✕ Black Truffle Risotto. 🍷 *Mazis-Chambertin Grand Cru 2014 - Charles Van Canneyt. Clos de la Roche Grand Cru 2019 - Pierre Amiot. Ermitage Le Méal 2014 - M. Chapoutier* ✕ Duo of Australian Wagyu. 🍷 *Ch. Rieussec, 1990 Sauternes* ✕ Bartlett Pear Baked Alaska. 🍷 *Chablis Les Clos Grand Cru 2020 - Christian Moreau* ✕ Butter Poached Dover Sole.

LAKE TAHOE

December 13, 2025: Christmas Soirée at Le Bistro, Le Bistro, Incline Village, Nevada.

What a spectacular way to celebrate the season! The International Wine & Food Society Christmas Soirée at Le Bistro Restaurant in Incline Village was an evening filled with warmth, elegance, and true holiday spirit—an unforgettable gathering from start to finish.

A special thank you to Julie Rauchle, whose hosting was nothing short of exceptional. Julie created a welcoming, festive atmosphere that felt both intimate and refined, making every guest feel part of something truly special.

The culinary experience was outstanding, thanks to the talent and creativity of Chef Dave Blair. Each course was beautifully presented, thoughtfully prepared, and full of rich seasonal flavor. The menu struck the perfect balance between comfort and sophistication, showcasing the best of Le Bistro's French-inspired cuisine while delivering the elevated dining experience IWFS members appreciate.

Equally impressive was the wine selection curated by Sudsy Torbeck, who brought an excellent lineup of French wines that paired beautifully throughout the evening. Each bottle complemented the food perfectly, and the selections added depth and authenticity to the theme of the night. The wines were elegant, expressive, and perfectly suited for a festive Christmas celebration.

From the first pour to the final bite, this event was a wonderful reminder of what IWFS does best—bringing together great people, exceptional food, and world-class wine in a setting that creates lasting memories. Bravo to Julie, Chef Dave, Sudsy, and the entire Le Bistro team for an incredible Christmas Soirée. This was holiday dining at its finest, and we're already looking forward to the next IWFS gathering!



Christmas Soirée at Le Bistro

MEMPHIS

November 5, 2025: A Taste of Blue Honey, Blue Honey Bistro, Germantown, Tennessee.

The Memphis Wine and Food Society returned to Blue Honey Bistro for the November dinner. Since the last visit Chef/Owner Drew Byran was selected as a 2025 James Beard semi-finalist for best chef Southeast region. The quaint bistro is operated by Drew and his wife Courtney who closed the restaurant to host the private event. Dinner Chairmen Chris Lamberson and Jerry Marshall worked closely with Chef Drew to create the menu and the cellar committee to pull notable wines from the society's cellar. The poached Faroe Island salmon paired with the *Markus Molitor Schiefersteil Riesling 2011* reminded many members how outstanding and versatile a quality dry Riesling can show. Everyone departed with a full appreciation why it is difficult to score a reservation at one of the top dining spots in the Memphis area.



Chris Introduces Drew and Courtney

MEMPHIS

U Club Holiday Dinner

The Memphis chapter gathered for the holiday season dinner December 12th at the University Club of Memphis. Dinner Chairman Mike Williams a long tenured member of The U Club working with Executive Chef Kenneth Williams presented a tremendous dinner in an elegant holiday decorated setting. The dinner was indeed worthy of the of the esteemed reputation this private club has enjoyed for generations. The evening began with petit jalapeno duck poppers and artichoke beignets along with champagne and aperitif wines from the society's cellar. Outstanding dishes paired with carefully selected wines resulted in a very enjoyable festive holiday evening. The pan seared foie gras along with 2007 Chateau de Fargues, Sauternes was one of the most acclaimed courses for the appreciative crowd. A splendid evening and one to be remembered.

December 12, 2025: U Club Holiday Dinner, The University Club of Memphis, Memphis, Tennessee. 🍷 *Hyde de Villaine Vineyard, Napa Chardonnay 2020* ✕ Lobster Bisque with Chive Oil. 🍷 *Ch. de Fargues, Sauternes 2007* ✕ Pan Seared Foie Gras, Pear Chutney, Pistachios. 🍷 *Ch. Grand-Puy Lacoste, Pauillac 2006* ✕ Wagyu Braised Beef Short Ribs, Hand Dived Jumbo Scallop, Parsnip Puree, Crispy Brussel Sprouts, Tawney Port Glaze. 🍷 *Bodegas Jorge Ordonez, Malaga Victoria #2 Moscatel 2024* ✕ Buttermilk-Cinnamon Panna Cotta, Seasoned Berries, Local Honey, Micro Mint.



The Group Awaits the Chateau Grand Puy-Lacoste 2006

MONTREAL

Snow Storm SteakHouse

Winter started early in Montreal, and nothing was better than a warm steakhouse with great steaks, food, and wonderful wines. We enjoyed each other's company and food and wine, while watching the snow come down outside. 1855 Steakhouse combines the rich flavors of a steakhouse with the exquisite freshness of Mediterranean cuisine.

We had a wonderful selection of fine wines to pair with this special menu selected by our Wine Master Earl from our Cellar.

November 10, 2025: November Dinner, Snow Storm Steakhouse, Montreal, Quebec. 🍷 *Wines from the Montreal Branch Cellar* ✕ Caesar Salad or Greek Salad. Shrimp Cocktail or Smoke Salmon. NY Cut Strip Loin (14 oz) "cuisson", Lamb Chops, Whole Grilled Med Sea Bass. Crème Brûlée, Manhattan Cheese Cake, Key Lime Pie.



Enjoying 1855 Steakhouse in Snow Storm

MONTREAL

Japanese Fusion in the Winter

What a special evening was had by the 24 members and guests who came out. The snow abated and the parking was plentiful—the night was chilly outside (-20c = -4F) and warm inside. IWFS 2026 started with a super wine and dine experience. Starting with a meet and greet while we shared a special Japanese Sake to warm us inside.

The Chef/Owner Karl Wong and his wonderful staff prepared his multi-course evening starting with Fresh NB Unami Oysters followed by many other tasty dishes including their famous Sushi Pizza. The many wines selected by our Cellar Master Earl seemed in excess but ran smoothly from course to course, and requests have come from Members to purchase them. We started with a select Japanese Cold Sake and then Earl traveled us through France, Austria, New Zealand, and finished with a Japanese Style Plum Liquor for dessert.



January 26, 2026: Japanese Fusion in the Winter, YUUKAI Japanese, Montreal, Quebec. 🍷 *Sakari No.11 Junmai Daiginjo, Japan* ✕ Oysters. 🍷 *Zantho Grüner Veltliner Burgenland 2024, Austria - Burgenland* ✕ Edamame, Wakame Salad. 🍷 *Gabin et Félix Richoux Irancy 2019, France - Bourgogne* ✕ Gyoza, Beef Sashimi (Carpaccio). 🍷 *Whitehaven Sauvignon Blanc Marlborough 2024, New Zealand - South Island* ✕ Sushi Salmon Tartare Pizza, Mount Fuji Salmon Tartare, Bali Tuna, Salmon Exotic, Unagi Nigiri (Eel). 🍷 *Dom. Barmès Buecher Trilogie 2023, France - Alsace* ✕ Sunshine Specialty Roll with Salmon, Deluxe Specialty Roll with Spicy Tuna, Kama Specialty Roll with Crab Stick, Shrimp, Mango and Tuna, Special K Specialty Roll with Shrimp Tempura, Avocado and Scallop Tartare. 🍷 *Choya Umeshu Plum Liquor* ✕ Choice of Green Tea Ice Cream or Green Tea Cheese Cake.

NAPLES

Italian Wine Dinner from Veneto to Sicilia

The Naples Branch began its 2026 Season at a local Favorite, Angelina's Ristorante. Our members embarked on a journey from Veneto to Sicilia, featuring wines, selected by Angelina's own sommeliers seamlessly paired with each delectable food course created by their talented chefs, representing each region.

Angelina's is one of Southwest Florida's most awarded Restaurants, including the coveted Wine Spectator Best of Award of Excellence since 2012 and the only Golden Spoon awardee in Bonita Springs FL.

Thanks to our hosts Jeff Batoff and Sheryl Condit for arranging this wonderful evening.

November 11, 2025: Italian Wine Dinner from Veneto to Sicilia, Angelina's Ristorante, Bonita Springs, Florida. 🍷 *Prosecco, Caposaldo, Brut, Veneto, NV* ✕ Caprese Skewers, House-Made Mozzarella, Marinated Heirloom Tomatoes, Basil, Topped with Balsamic Dressing on a Skewer. 🍷 *Vermentino, La Spinetta, Tuscany, '22* ✕ Little Gem Chopped Salad, Little Gem Lettuce, Gorgonzola Dolce Dressing, Baby Heirloom Tomato, Radish, Crispy Guanciale, Gorgonzola Dolce. 🍷 *Tusca d'Almerita "Lamuri" Nero d'Avola, Sicily, '20* ✕ Butternut Squash Ravioli, Five Roasted Butternut Squash and Mascarpone Filled Handmade Ravioli, Sauce of Orange Sun-Dried Tomato Butter, Truffle Oil, Arugula, Candied Pecans. 🍷 *Ripasso, Zenato, "Ripasso," Valpolicella Superiore, '19* ✕ Veal Marsala, 6 oz. Veal Tenderloin Scallopini, Wild Mushrooms Marsala Sauce, Broccolini, Roasted Potatoes. Angelina's Signature Zeppole, Fried Dough, Light and Airy, Tossed in Cinnamon-Sugar Served with Dark Chocolate and Berry Sauce.



NEW ORLEANS

Black Tie at Restaurant August

Our annual black tie dinner was held at Restaurant August, the flagship restaurant of Chef John Besh located on Tchoupitoulas St. Executive chef Corey Thomas created a wonderful menu for us, and we paired the entrée with magnums of a fantastic 2010 Margaux from our collection.

December 19, 2025: Black Tie Dinner, Restaurant August, New Orleans, Louisiana. 🍷 *Schramsberg Blanc de Blanc, North Coast, California 2022* ✕ Hand Passed Hors d'Oeuvres, Blue Crab Tartlet, Shellfish Custard, Satsuma, Beef Tartare "Rossini", Foie Gras, Truffles. 🍷 *Te Mata Gamay Noir, Hawke's Bay, New Zealand 2022* ✕ Bluefin Tuna Crudo, Passionfruit, Mirliton Mignonette, Serrano. 🍷 *Albert Bichot Bourgogne Aligoté, Burgundy, France 2023* ✕ Red Snapper pontchartrain, Shrimp, Leeks, Wild Mushrooms, Sauce Bearnaise. 🍷 *Ch. Giscours La Sirene de Giscours, Margaux, France, Magnum 2010* ✕ Dry Aged Duck Breast, Black Trumpet Mushrooms, Red Currants, Heirloom Grits. 🍷 *Espresso Martini made with Stolichnaya Vodka, Riga, Latvia and Fratelli Branca Borghetti Liquore di Vero Caffè Espresso, Italy* ✕ Boston Blackout éclair Coffee Cream.



NORFOLK

Chinese Lunar New Year 2026
The Year of the Fire Horse

The Norfolk, Nebraska Chapter spent the evening celebrating the Chinese Lunar New Year 2026 - The Year of the Fire Horse. The event was also attended by 10 representative friends from the Nebraska Chinese Association. It began with live music played with authentic Chinese instruments and featured a traditional dragon dance to drive away evil spirits and usher in a happy, healthy and prosperous new year for us all. Chinese inspired dishes were served in a red lantern-lit dragon pagoda. The dinner concluded with a mandarin orange illusion dessert, with this fruit being a traditional symbol of luck and happiness. It consisted of orange liqueur-soaked sponge cake surrounded with orange ganache, covered in white chocolate, all shaped and hand painted to look exactly like and orange. A truly international themed dinner!

December 10, 2025: Chinese Lunar New Year Dinner, Norfolk Country Club, Norfolk, Nebraska. 🍷 *Fleurie la Madone Gamay Beaujolais* ✕ Chinese Pork Dumplings. 🍷 *Bulles de Nages Grenache Blanc Extra Brut Champagne* ✕ Chili Oil Wonton Soup and Chinese Cucumber Salad. 🍷 *Unanime Pinot Noir* ✕ Nobu Chilean Sea Bass with Miso Marinade and Baby Bok Choy. 🍷 *Pet Nat Dandy Blanc de Blanc Sparkling Wine* ✕ Mandarin Orange Dessert.



Event Committee From Left: Bill & Mary Meyer, Casey & Wanda Knake, Ann & Rob Dover, joined by Performing Members of the Nebraska Chinese Association

NORTHEAST TEXAS

Wine with Friends

The Northeast Texas Branch of IWFS met at Cork & Brew in Commerce, TX for our November tasting. Our member hosts included Teddy & Ann Reel (owners of Cork & Brew), Jeremy Dicken, Joan Lambert & Patrick Etie, Don and Talley, Michael & Mary Garrett, Joyce Isaacs, Paula Ballew, and Janet & Danny Duncan. Upon arriving, members & guests were treated to a serving of Gluhwein, a red wine wine served warm and spiced with cloves, cinnamon, and orange peel ... perfect for a fall day. However, the weather surprised us with an 80 degree November day, but the Gluhwein was still delightful.

November 16, 2025: Wine with Friends, Cork & Brew, Commerce, Texas. 🍷 *Louis Bouillot Flashback Extra Brut* ✕ Selection of Cheeses. 🍷 *Terres Blanches Alchimie Sauvignon Blanc 2022* ✕ Assortment of Salads. 🍷 *Olema Pinot Noir Sonoma County 2023* ✕ Smoked Meats: Salmon, Ham and Beef Tenderloin. 🍷 *Borrasca Premium Cuvee Sparkling Wine* ✕ Raspberry & Mango Sorbets, Dark and Milk Chocolates.

NORTHEAST TEXAS

January 18, 2026: 50 Years of the Northeast Texas Branch, Home of Jim & Claire Reynolds, Commerce, Texas.

The Northeast Texas Branch rang in the new year by celebrating its 50th anniversary. Jim & Claire Reynolds, members since 1992, hosted the event in their lovely home. Jim spoke of the history of our branch and the members that have received the Americas Silver Medal were recognized.

Members were asked to bring a bottle of wine and a favorite dish to share with the group. With amazing wine, food and friends, everyone enjoyed the celebration.



Members at the Event

OAKVILLE

Blu Dog Art Gallery Portuguese Event

On October 24, 2025, IWFS Oakville's chapter gathered at Blu Dog Art Gallery in Oakville for an unforgettable exploration of Portuguese food and wine. Thanks to generosity of owner Debra Pearce we dined with a backdrop of art in the company of friends both old and new. We were journeyed through the wines by Anne Popoff of Le Savoir-Boire who is both a sommelier and a new member of our group. The food was catered by Ola Portuguese Bakery in Oakville. The wines were paired by Frank Snyder and our cellar master Christian Frayssignes.

In addition to some education on Portuguese varietals, a few happy souls left with new art acquisitions to boot!

October 24, 2025: Blu Dog Art Gallery Portuguese Event, Blu Dog Art Gallery, Oakville, Ontario. 🍷 *Marques de Marialva Baga, Blanc de Noirs, Brut 2022 and Tinto Bairrada* ✕ Sardines in an Endive Bed. 🍷 *Quinta da Avelada (Loureiro & Alvarinho), and LAB White blend and Astronaut Field Blend 2020* ✕ Octopus with Garlic And Smoked Paprika and Roasted Vegetables. 🍷 *Quinta das Setencostas 2020, Astronaut Field Blend 2019, DAC Alvaro Castro (Dao)* ✕ Cod, Piri-piri Chicken Bites, and Grilled Lamb Chops with Rosemary and Garlic. 🍷 *Graham's 10 year old Tawny Port* ✕ Mild and Spicy Sao Jorge Cheeses. 🍷 *White Semi Dry 2003 Quinta Das Heredias Porto Branco Meio-Seco* ✕ Mini Pasteis De Nata (Custard Tarts).



OMAHA

55th High Noon Stag

We had a fantastic Noon Stag with an unusual sit-down tasting between Tawny Port and Maderia as well as a vertical tasting of four magnums of Dunn Vineyards Napa Valley Cabernet 2012 to 2015. There are a lot of similarities between Tawny Port and Madeira. Both are made in an oxidated style where they sit for extended times in a barrel and both have aguardiente (Portuguese brandy) added. But they do not taste the same. The best Madeiras are made from white grapes, while Port uses red. And Madeira is heated while aging in the wood, which makes it the longest aging wine in the world.

January 3, 2026: 55th High Noon Stag, Flemings, Omaha, Nebraska. 🍷 *Assorted fine quaffing wines from the Omaha Branch cellar* ✕ Flemings Signature Onion Rings, Chicken Satay with Soy Ginger Sauce, Shrimp Cocktail, Chef's Freshly Baked Bread with Fleming's Signature Spreads. 🍷 *Port vs. Madeira Tasting: Leonardo Old Tawny Port "60", D'Oliveira Malvasia Madeira 1990* ✕ Assorted Cheese & Fruit Plate. 🍷 *Louis Jadot Chablis 2023* ✕ Caesar Salad Romaine, Parmesan, Fried Capers, Crispy Prosciutto. 🍷 *Penfolds Bin 28 Kalimna Shiraz 2018, Louis Jadot Beaune Premier Cru Celebration Burgundy 2018* ✕ French Onion Soup. Baked with Gruyere and Parmesan Cheeses. 🍷 *Dunn Vineyards Napa Valley Cabernet Sauvignon 2012, Dunn Napa Valley Cabernet Sauvignon 2013, Dunn Napa Valley Cabernet Sauvignon 2014, Dunn Napa Valley Cabernet Sauvignon 2015* ✕ Prime Tomahawk Ribeye, Flemings Potatoes au Gratin, Creamy Cheddar and Monterey Jack Cheese Blend, Leeks, Jalapeno, Chef Rafael's Famous Street Corn. 🍷 *Doisy Vedrines Sauterne 2011* ✕ Baked Apple & Brie Galette.

From Left: Host Tom Murnan, Operating Manager Sarah Wallace, Executive Sous Chef Jose Velasco, President / Host Mike Wilke



OMAHA METRO

Rhône Rangers: Do you know your Grenache from your Syrah?

Rhône Rangers is a term coined by the Wine Spectator magazine for California wineries who grow French Rhône grape varietals. Randal Graham was the first Rhône Ranger pictured on their 4-15-1989 cover dressed as the Lone Ranger. Our challenge was to identify pairs of red wines served blind for three courses to see if we could identify which wines were Syrah and which Grenache, and explore the different characteristics between them. We also tasted a pair of white wines non-blind made with Marsanne, Roussanne, Grenache Blanc and Viognier grapes. The food was taken from French recipes or were French inspired.

November 21, 2025: Rhône Rangers: Do you know your Grenache from your Syrah?, Le Bouillon, Omaha, Nebraska. 🍷 *High quality wines from the Branch cellar* ✕ Hors d'oeuvres & Quaffing, Mushroom Croquettes & Grilled Octopus Brochette. 🍷 *Tablas Creek Cotes de Tablas Blanc 2018, Tablas Creek Esprit de Tablas Blanc 2016* ✕ Ricotta Dumpling Consume. 🍷 *Tablas Creek Grenache 2018, Holus Bolus "Presqu'île Syrah Vineyard" Santa Marias Valley 2018* ✕ Porchetta & Socca Provençal. 🍷 *2017 K Vintners "The Boy" Walla Walla Valley Grenache, K Vintners "Rock Garden Vineyard" Walla Walla Syrah 2017* ✕ Duck Garbure. 🍷 *Dom. Courbis Cornas Champerose 2015, Roger Sabon Reserve Châteauneuf-du-Pape 2017* ✕ Beef Daub. 🍷 *Ch. Couet Barsac* ✕ Apricot Tart.

From Left: Chef de Cuisine Joel Walsh, Tom Murnan, Executive Chef / Owner Paul Kulik, Mary Murnan



PALM BEACH

Annual Holiday Gala

The Palm Beach Branch presented their Annual Holiday Gala on December 18, 2025, at the exclusive Mar-a-Lago Club. The festive and medallions black tie affair was hosted by president, Frank Pilotte and his wife, Bjaye Pilotte. Forty members and guests enjoyed highly rated wines with a sensational five-course dinner prepared by Mar-a-Lago's impeccable Culinary Team, led by esteemed Culinary Director Bogdan Boerean.

Attendees stopped by the estate's towering Christmas tree in the main living room for photos before gathering poolside for cocktails. Dinner was served in the stunning white and gold ballroom.

December 18, 2025: Annual Holiday Gala, Mar-a-Lago Club, Palm Beach, Florida. 🍷 *Vineyard 7 & 8 Estate Reserve Chardonnay* ✕ Grilled Maine Lobster Tail Micro Vegetables, Lime, Orange Beurre Blanc. 🍷 *Dom. Feuillat-Juillot Montagny 1er Cru Les Coeres Blanc* ✕ Chardonnay Poached Pear, Baby Arugula, Frisee, Fresh Herbs, Warm Goat Cheese, Champagne Vinaigrette. 🍷 *Beringer Vineyards Cabernet Sauvignon Private Reserve 2001* ✕ Beef Wellington, Mushroom Duxelle, Chicken Mousse, Seared Foie Gras, Truffle Mashed Potatoes, Grilled Asparagus, Bordelaise Sauce. 🍷 *Bodegas Toro Albalá Don PX Gran Reserva 1971* ✕ Plum Pudding, Brandy Cream Sauce. Salted Chocolate Chip Cookies, Housemade Truffles.



Mrs. Bjaye and Mr. Frank Pilotte

PARADISE VALLEY

November 20, 2025: Arizona Sunset Tasting of Washington Wines, Home of Mary Ruedinger and Tom Shellander, Paradise Valley, Arizona.

A perfect November 20 evening was the backdrop for the IW&FS Paradise Valley, Arizona branch's visit with Washington wines from the Alexandria Nicole Cellars. Proprietors Ali and Jarrod Boyle led the members through the tasting of their Viognier 2024, Cinsault 2021, Merlot 2022, Syrah Block 17 2022, Mr. Big Petite Sirah 2021, and finishing with the Destiny 2021. The wines were accompanied by a buffet of heavy appetizers, Beef Tenderloin, Coq au Vin, and Salmon fillet with Caviar.

Event organizers Joan Jackson and Dee Johnson noted that eastern Washington is the same latitude as Burgundy, Bordeaux, and the Rhone Valley, ideal for wine grapes. Washington state is the 2nd wine producer in the US behind California. Alexandria Nicole Cellars was started by Jarrod and Ali Boyle in 1998 in the Horse Heaven Hills AVA in Eastern WA.

The event was held at the home of current board president and treasurer, Mary Ruedinger and Tom Shellander.

From Left: Event Hosts / Organizers Tom Shellander, Mary Ruedinger, Winery Owners Jarrod & Ali Boyle, Mark & Dee Johnson, Joan & Allen Jackson



PHILADELPHIA

December Dinner at Caribou

The Holiday spirit was in full swing as members and guests dined at Caribou Cafe, an iconic French Bistro in Philadelphia. Chef Townsend Wentz prepared an extraordinary menu of spectacular and delicious dishes.

December 8, 2025: December Dinner, Caribou, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. 🍷 *Charles Heidsieck Blanc de Blancs Brut NV Champagne* ✕ Cheebooktook Oysters, Ginger-Pear, Rosé "Pont Neuf" Potato, Golden Osetra Caviar, Vanilla Ice Cream Mimosa Tête de Veau Croustade, Sauce Ravigote. 🍷 *Pouilly-Fuissé, Vieilles Vignes - Dom. Cheveau 2017* ✕ Roasted Hokkaido Sea Scallops, Cara Cara Oranges, Fennel, Oven Dried Tomato, Uni-Nori Emulsion. 🍷 *Meursault, Charmes - Dom. Thierry Matrot 2017* ✕ Duck Fat Tagliatelle, Maine Lobster, Black Truffle Butter, Lobster Jus. 🍷 *Chambolle Musigny, Les Charmes - Amiot Servelle 2014* ✕ Roasted Squab, Seared Foie Gras, Olive Oil Potato Purée, Wild Mushrooms, Madeira Jus. 🍷 *Ch. Sociando Mallet (Haut Medoc) 2006* ✕ Roasted Lamb Loin Crepinette, Sweet and Savory Winter Vegetables "En Cocotte", Salmis. 🍷 *Alvear Pedro Ximenez Solera 1927* ✕ Dark Chocolate Soufflé, Chartreuse Chantilly.

From Left: Restaurant Manager Gordana Kostovski, Chef Townsend Wentz, Dinner Chair Sean Elstone, Sous Chef Alex Nissley



RENO

Black and White Masquerade Dinner

On October 25th, 2025 Dave and Bonnie Brody hosted a Black and White Masquerade dinner at their home. It was attended by about twenty eight members. We enjoyed a six course menu with every dish lovingly curated by none other than our own host, Bonnie Brody. Every dish was created as a piece of art and especially paired with selected wines. They were exquisite! We all went home with a special mask as a keepsake. Some of the comments heard that day were - This is one of the best events of the year.

October 25, 2025: Black and White Masquerade Dinner, Home of Dave and Bonnie Brody, Reno, Nevada. 🍷 *Perrier-Jouet, Grand Brut, Epernay, Champagne* ✕ Potato Blini with Osetra Caviar, Ahi Tuna with Ponzu and Wasabi Cream in Phyllo Cups. 🍷 *Morgadío, Albariño, Rias Baixas, Spain, 2023* ✕ Salad, "Tower Salad" of Hearts of Palm, Yellow Beet, Avocado with Pinenut Brittle, Feta and Guajillo Pepper Dressing. 🍷 *Plumpjack, Chardonnay, Reserve, Napa, 2023* ✕ Fish,

Poached Lobster Crepe with Sweet Carrot Sauce. 🍷 *Blackberry-Sambuca* ✕ Sorbet. 🍷 *Crocker & Starr, Cabernet Franc, Napa, 2021, Ch. de Pressac, Grand Cru, St. Emillion, Bordeaux 2018* ✕ Braised Short Ribs in Red Wine Reduction, Butternut Squash-Mushroom Bread Pudding and Sauteed Carrots of Color. 🍷 *Ch. Roumie-Lacoste, Sauterne, 2022* ✕ Lemongrass Parfait with Pink-Peppercorn and Pineapple Salsa.

Guests at the Black and White Masquerade



ROCHESTER

Eighty-Sixth Annual President's Dinner

The fire glowed in the dining room of the Rochester Golf and Country Club, offering some comfort from the -10-degree temperature outdoors. The Rochester chapter has its President's Dinner in the winter but it seems as if the weather is always at its coldest on the night of the gala. The mood in the room was warm, however, anticipating the meal that chef Austin Murphy and staff had created. President John Dilger had chosen the wines from the chapter's cellar to best accompany the food choices and they did not disappoint. Soon, the guests were glowing along with the fire.

January 17, 2026: Eight-Sixth Annual President's Dinner, Rochester Golf and Country Club, Rochester, Minnesota. ❖ *Louis Roderer Cristal Brut, 2002, 2012, 2014* ❖ Sturgeon Caviar and Crème Fraîche on homemade Potato Chips. ❖ *Ch. d'Yquem "Y" Ygrez, 2016* ❖ Citrus-cured Hamachi, Compressed Cucumber, Fennel Pollen and Yuzu Olive Oil. ❖ *Paul Hobbs George Menini Estate Chardonnay, 2020* ❖ Butter-poached Scallop, Parsnip Purée, Brown-butter Crumb and Lemon Oil. ❖ *Marcassin Vinyards Pinot Noir, 2012* ❖ Seared Foie Gras, Cherry-pint Gastric, Brioche and Roasted Mushroom and Roaster Squash Agnolotti with Brown Butter, Sage and Toasted Hazelnuts. ❖ *Ch. Latour, 1995* ❖ Beef Tenderloin Roulade, Black Truffle, Potato Pavé, Sauce Périgieux. ❖ *Ch. D'Yquem 2009* ❖ Valrhona Chocolate Crèmeux, Hazelnut Praline, Concord Grade Gel, Cocoa Tuile.



From Left: Jill Dilger and President John Dilger

SACRAMENTO SAN JOAQUIN

September 6, 2025: End-of-Summer Lobster Boil, Home of Diane and Tim Cronan, Sacramento, California.

We had an End-of-Summer Lobster Boil in the backyard of Diane and Tim Cronan's home catered by the Napa Lobster Company.

A reception of home-smoked wild salmon, shrimp cocktails, summer skewers, charcuterie boards, and organic home-grown Kadota figs were accompanied by Roederer Brut 2023 and Villa Maria Sauvignon Blanc. Dinner included 1 ½ pound Maine lobsters, jumbo shrimp, Louisiana hot links, sweet corn on the cob, whole artichokes and red new potatoes, accompanied by Stags' Leap Napa Chardonnay 2023, and Scherrer Russian River Valley Pinot Noir 2015. Cake and Cookies were matched with 2010 Chateau Coutet, 2019 Dolce and Stonestreet Triple Crown.

Following dinner, the Jay Rolerz Band, a popular Sacramento classic rock band played. We enjoyed a guest appearance for a couple of songs by none other than our Secretary, Jed Bittner, on lead guitar. The committee hosting the dinner included President Diane Cronan, Tim Cronan, Jennifer and Greg Tudor.



Members Enjoying the Lobster Boil

SACRAMENTO SAN JOAQUIN

November 14, 2025: Holiday Kickoff Dinner, Le Cercle de l'Union, San Francisco, California.

The Sacramento/San Joaquin Branch held its Holiday Kickoff Dinner in San Francisco at Le Cercle de l'Union, commonly referred to as the French Club, on November 14, 2025.

We enjoyed a reception, including Gougères, Salmon Toast Points, and Estate Caviar on Blinis which were paired with Delavenne Pere & Fils Champagne Grand Cru Bouzy.

The first course was Halibut with Ajoblanco and Crunchy Turnips, accompanied by the Château de la Maltroye 2020. This was followed by Chicken Balotine with Albufera Sauce & Wild Mushrooms paired beautifully with the Scherrer Russian River Pinot Noir 2015. Next up was Lamb Roulade served with the Château Beaucastel 2006 and the Château Pégaü "Cuvée Réservee" 2010 followed by Fromages de France. Dessert was Meringue, Ice Cream, Sorbet, and Seasonal Fruits served with the Château Coutet 2006.

Jed Bittner was presented with the Americas Silver Medal at the dinner in recognition of his tremendous contributions to our Branch. Congratulations and very well deserved, Jed!

The committee included Marjorie and Larry Booth, President Diane Cronan, and Tim Cronan.

President Diane Cronan Awarding the IWFS Americas Silver Medal to Jed Bittner



SPOKANE

Night in Paris

What a wonderful evening at Française Restaurant deep within the Perry District in Spokane. A beautiful restaurant known for its fine French cuisine and wonderful atmosphere. When you walk in the restaurant, you are struck by the beautiful décor and art on the walls. We enjoyed a 5 course menu paired with wines skillfully selected from our private cellar. The Col Solare Cabernet Sauvignon, Red Mountain, WA, 2014, a huge bold wine, patiently aged to peak at this time, was specular with rich fruit flavor, balance with elegant finish. This event was well orchestrated leaving an unforgettable evening to our members and guests.

January 13, 2026: Night in Paris, Française, Spokane, Washington. 🍷 Française House Sparkling X Savory Bread Pudding Croquettes, Lonza, Fig Mustarda, Sorrel. 🍷 Pewsey Vale Vineyard Eden Valley Riesling, Barossa, Australia, 2021 X Crawfish Risotto, Vert Sorage, Confit Shallots, Preserved Lemon. 🍷 Rôtie Cellars Homage, Rhone Blend, Columbia Valley, WA, 2016 X Beet Salad, Sheep's Milk Brouse de Rove, Hazelnut, Citrus, Watercress. 🍷 Col Solare, Cabernet Sauvignon, Red Mountain, WA, 2014 X Pork en Presse, Rosemary Jus, Celery Root, Apple Compote, Endive. 🍷 Graham Porto Vintage, Douro, Portugal, 1994 X Citrus and Chocolate Clafoutis, Port Wine Cremaux.

Beet Salad and Citrus



TORONTO

Christmas Wine Dinner at the Verity Club

On December 13, 2025, Sommelier, Beverly Crandon, took members of the IWFS Toronto branch on an incredible tasting journey with wine pairings complementing a gorgeous meal prepared by George Restaurant. It comprised of beef tartare, lobster slaw, tuna, lamb, and chocolate panna cotta. The hit of the evening was the unexpected pairing of the hand-harvested Pai Rias Bixaxis, 2020 (Albariño) with the second course: fresh, tender lobster rested on a bed of persimmon and fresh zucchini slaw and a pumpkin seed wafer rendered extra crispy thanks to generous sprinkles of egg yolk and sunflower seeds' crumble. The Albariño's high minerality and stone-fruit notes augmented the complexities of this delicate lobster dish.

December 13, 2025: Christmas Dinner, Verity Club, Toronto, Ontario. 🍷 *Corte Moschina Roncathe Soave 2018* × Beef Tartare, Curry aburi, black rice. 🍷 *Pai Rias Bixaxis 2020* × Lobster, lemongrass mayo, fermented carrot. 🍷 *Chionetti Dogliani 2020* × Tuna, Peppercorn mayo, candied cucumber. 🍷 *Copain Syrah 2010, Mason Cabernet Franc 2022* × Lamb, Miso mustard, Basil jus. 🍷 *Kracher Beerenauslese Cuvée 2017* × Chocolate Panna Cotta, Chantilly, Chocolate Streusel.



From Left: Brett James, Supriya James, Jayne Dunsmore

TUCSON

South African Dinner

Forty-five members and guests of the Tucson Branch of IWFS met on January 21 for an outstanding evening of South African food and wine. Chef Obie of Tucson's Mountain Oyster Club's research into South African cuisine made for an outstanding evening orchestrated by members Gwen Porter and Kathy Tucker. The meeting also highlighted the Tucson Branch changing of the guard, with Paul Predick (right) taking the reins from Stu MacKay after eight years of MacKay's leadership.

January 21, 2026: South African Dinner, Mountain Oyster Club, Tucson, Arizona. 🍷 *Graham Beck Brut Rosé NV* × Biltong. 🍷 *Fleur du Cap Chenin Blanc, Stellenbosch 2024* × Cape Malay Curried Mussels, Meyer Lemon Crème Fraîche, Persillade. 🍷 *Capsensis Silene Chardonnay, Stellenbosch 2022* × Herb Roasted Kingklip, Local Mushrooms, Sauce Mornay. 🍷 *Meerlust Rubicon, Stellenbosch 2018* × Cape Town Braai, Wood Grilled Lamb, Beef, & Boerewors, Classic Salads & Sides. 🍷 *Klein Constantia Muscat Vin de Constance, Western Cape 2014* × Rooibos Poached Pear, Mielie Meal Cake, Date Molasses.



South African Dinner / Changing of the Guard

VANCOUVER

December 15, 2025: Christmas Dinner, Terminal City Club, Vancouver, British Columbia.

Another highly enjoyable Christmas dinner event – they seem to get better every year! Everyone agreed that Vancouver's Terminal City Club provided the perfect venue for a five-course dinner presented by Executive Chef Dan Creyke, which deserved the fine wines that paired well with each course.

We started with a glass of Bruno Gobillard Champagne Brut, a tasty bubble to accompany canapés of Pear & Chevre Tart with walnuts and honey pearls, Crispy Confit Pork Belly with black bean glaze and crispy shallots and Japanese Nobashi Prawns with okonomi sauce, kewpie and seaweed dust, all excellently presented and interesting tastes.

Upon seating for our five-course dinner, we started with a winter salad of roast golden beets, pomegranate, Pemberton kale and a truffled goat cheese fritter paired with Gilbert Picq & Ses Fils Chablis Dessus La Carrière 2019, followed by prosciutto wrapped sturgeon with brown butter celeriac velouté and spring salmon ikura and a Château Carbonnieux Blanc 2021 from Bordeaux.

Our main course was cranberry-glazed venison with robuchon potato, crisp brussels, miso creamed spinach, roast carrots and jus paired with a Chateau Gloria 2009 at the peak of maturity, followed by a cheese course of tickler cheddar & Shropshire blue with red wine poached pear mostada and crostini together with a glass of Michael-David Vineyards Zinfandel Lust 2012. Our sweet finish was a chocolate hazelnut rocher bar with whipped frangelico ganache and fresh raspberry, paired with Graham Porto Vintage Malvedos 1988, an excellent ending to a fantastic dinner.

During the evening, we were pleased to present membership commemorations for 20, 45 and even 50 years to members, magnificent achievements!

Our thanks go to Chef Dan Creyke for his splendid menu, to Wine Director of the Terminal City Club, the delightfully informative DJ Kearney for her commentary on the wines, to our Cellarmaster Kim Mead for her selection and comments on the wines, and to Milena Robertson and Ina Hunt for their record and photographs of a very successful event.



IWFS Vancouver Branch Presents Membership Commemoration for 50 Years to Dr. Robert Rothwell

YORK

November 15, 2025: Ode to Oregon, Glen Rock Mill Inn, Glen Rock, Pennsylvania.

On November 15, 2025, The York, PA Chapter welcomed esteemed winemaker, Joe Dobbes and his wife, Patricia from Eola-Amity Hills in Willamette Valley, Oregon to share Joe's exquisite portfolio of Pinot Noir, Chardonnay, Sauvignon Blanc and Methode Traditionelle Sparkling wine. After decades of great success in the wine industry, Joe and Patricia decided to go small and bought a 21-acre property in Salem they named Orchard House Vineyard where they began Iterum Wines. Iterum is Latin for again, afresh and once more which enabled Joe to get back to his roots after owning and managing the hugely successful Dobbes Family Estate wines and Wine by Joe.

The event was held at the historic Table 1837 – Glen Rock Mill Inn where Proprietor and Chef, Brandon C. Hufnagel worked his magic presenting New American cuisine with classical French influences. The menu featured fresh locally sourced foods.

Guests enjoyed Poached Shrimp Carpaccio, Local Roasted Pumpkin Ravioli, Cast Iron Seared Duck Breast, Cocoa & Spice Braised Beef Short Rib with Buttered Potato Puree and Root Vegetable Melange, Dutch Cocoa Spice Cake with Rumtopf of Red and Black Berries and finished with a cheese course of Point Reyes blue Cheese, Toasted Almonds and Seeded Crackers.



From Left: Owner Iterum Vineyards Joe Dobbes, VP Jolene Tolbert, Proprietor GRMI Brandon Hufnagel



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 🍷

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 and include visits to Chateau Margaux and Chateau Pavie, among many others. Please go to our website, iwfs.org for more details.



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.



Barossa Valley Festival November 6-8, 2026

IWFS Asia Pacific is excited to inform you of our upcoming IWFS Barossa Valley Festival scheduled for November 2026. The festival will commence in the vibrant city of Adelaide and progress to one of Australia's most important and historic wine regions - the Barossa Valley in South Australia - home to some of Australia's most iconic wines. Our organisers have worked very hard to put together a great programme, full of unique wine and food experiences. Please bear in mind that there are only 45 places for the Barossa Valley Festival. So please be quick to book if you would like to attend.

BOOKING

Payment must be received at the time of booking if paying by credit card, or in our account in full (and net of all bank fees) within 14 days of booking. If payment is not received by then, your place will be offered to those on the waitlist.

However, please note that you must book your first nights accommodation at the festival hotel in Adelaide separately. Notes on how to book your accommodation are included in the festival brochure and the festival booking site. We suggest that, once your booking is confirmed, you book your hotel room in Adelaide immediately. We really hope you will join us in November. It will be very special. If you have any questions or have difficulty booking either festival please email administrator.apz@iwfs.org.

Warmest regards to you all,

Nicola Lee
Chair - IWFS Asia Pacific



Wine, Food & Friends

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Navarro, Photo by Dave Purcell

