

SPRING 2025

Wine, Food & Friends

LONDON, CROATIA, AND CHASING THE THIRD TENOR

ALSO INSIDE:

- Interview with Hermione Ireland
- Tasting Series: Riesling and Beyond, The World of German Wine
- Etna, Sicily's Rising Star

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CHAIRMAN'S LETTER

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

Introduction

AS Chairman I spend much of time thinking about Festivals and Events. By the time you read this, we will be well into the final planning stages of the Napa Festival in early May. I hope to see you there. Many members of the Society have chaired events, so I think there is a better than average knowledge of what goes on in planning a dinner. Now multiply that by four dinners, five lunches, three tastings as well as classes, tours, bus transfers and putting together all the wine. You can get the idea why we thank Charles Schurhammer and his committee time and again.

But what I want to do in this space is thank some of the people who have been regrettably unthanked. I want to start with Felicity Jones. Year after year, festival after festival, Felicity has arranged the seating at the tables. The socializing one does at an event is the most important benefit the Society offers. Tables could be (poorly) arranged by an algorithm but Felicity ensures that every table has an appropriate mix of Board Members and ensures that members from the same branch don't create unwelcoming cliques. Over the years the knowledge that Felicity has put together has been incredibly beneficial. She will be taking a back seat in Napa, I can only hope we live up to the standard she has set.

For years, Wayne Markus and Tom Murnan have been taking photos of our festivals. They have been unreimbursed for their time, effort, or even the real costs of photography. You can see several of their photos on the website www.iwfs.org/americas/festivals-1#previousfestivals. We post about 40 pictures of each event

on the website but as you can probably guess, Tom and Wayne take hundreds more. We are working on the details, but going forward, we expect to post all of their photos as well as any other photos that festivalgoers would like to post on a site that would be up for a few weeks after the event.

Members will be able to download any photos they choose. I know people have asked Tom and Wayne personally for this. I hope that this will be easier for everybody.

Last year, The Society's Board added some new members to The IWFS Foundation's Board of Directors. That Board now comprises Andrew Jones (Chairman), Jim Storfer (Treasurer), Arnie Reiter (Secretary), Cheryl Kenny, and Tom Wiedrich.

If you want to chew the bones of corporate structure, you'll love this section. If you find your eyes glazing over, feel free to scroll down to the end. The Society is a nonprofit corporation. We are essentially a social club. The Foundation is a 501(C)3 organization. The Board of the Foundation is elected by the Society's Board. The Foundation is our charitable arm. The Foundation provides a full scholarship to the Culinary Institute of America in Hyde Park, NY. It provides two full scholarships to the UC Davis Viticulture and Enology

Department. It also works in coordination with the Miami branch to fund various scholarships at Florida International University. The Foundation's commitment is roughly \$75,000 per year. This amount is more than the income produced by its investments and

the \$20,000 the Society has donated over the last few years. I hope you will join me in donating to this worthy cause. There is an ad in this issue with instructions on how to donate.

As I write this, my family is preparing for Chinese New Year. For those who celebrate, I wish you Gung Hei Fat Choy. For those curious, CNY is a little like Thanksgiving, in that the celebration centers around a meal. This year I plan to serve a double magnum of 2003 Chateau D'Issan. CNY does bring me back to a great dinner I had years ago with the late Ivan Thornton and restaurateur Henry Leung over a Peking Duck. We were debating what the appropriate wine should be. Ivan chose to be a traditionalist and suggested a red Burgundy, a time-tested pairing with duck. I suggested a big Australian Shiraz. I thought we needed something big to cut through the Hoisin Sauce. Henry argued for a California Cab because, well, he always argued for California Cab. You don't get your restaurant featured in Wine Spectator without a theme.

Briefly, no wine won the pairing. But I had an incredibly enjoyable evening with the man who mentored me to run the New York branch and the man who brought me into the Society in the first place. On evenings when I get bogged down with contracts, corporate law, insurance, and other minutiae of running this great organization, I like to think back on evenings like that and the friends that I have made along the way. It keeps me going.



Wine, Food & Friends

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NEWS FROM THE OFFICE

OF THE INTERNATIONAL SECRETARIAT, LONDON

Andrea Warren, *IWFS Executive Administrator*

Dear members

This is a bumper edition from the International Secretariat. Now is the time of year when we are able to bring you the first tranche of vintage reports to accompany the updated Vintage Card and App for 2025. Your Card will arrive as you renew your membership so it may already be with you. If not, you can of course access all the information today by downloading the App on your phone or tablet. The vintage reports below cover the 2023 vintage for all the European countries and regions featured in the Guide. When reading through the reports the words ‘rigour’, ‘vigilance’, ‘patience’ and ‘care’ are repeated across the continent. What a challenge 2023 has been, once again. The reports have once again been kindly provided freely by our treasured wine consultants and we are very grateful.

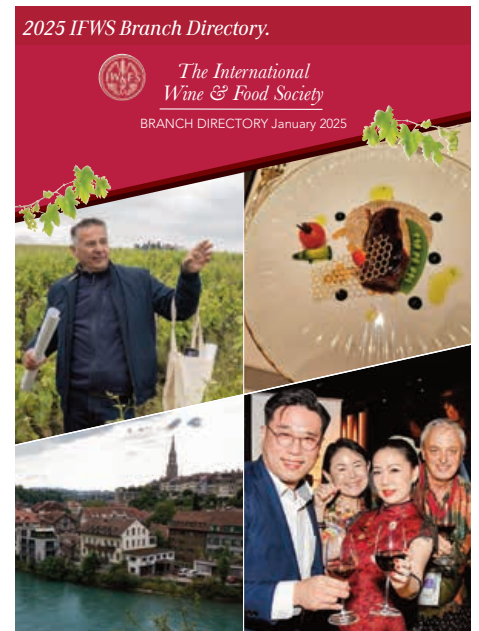
Before we head into the vintage reports here is some more news from the London office.

2025 Branch Directory – please note that the updated 2025 version is now available online via the IWFS website. There are 131 contacts for IWFS branches worldwide in 26 countries. This is an invaluable resource for you if you are planning to travel. To view go to – www.iwfs.org (see Resource Directory and Branch Contacts / Global) or your member App (although you do have to be signed in to view this information as it is strictly for members only).

2025 Monograph – We are sticking with the traditional method.... This year’s focus is on quality sparkling wine and only those made using the traditional method. There are now a number of delicious, top quality sparkling wines being produced from many different countries. This monograph will set out to feature and guide you to those that you should certainly try. You are in good hands as this is being written by one of the best in this field – Essi Avellan MW. Essi is Finland’s first Master of Wine and is a renowned champagne and sparkling wine specialist. She is the author of several wine books and has revised an extended the 3rd and 4th edition of Tom Stevenson’s award-winning Christies’ World Encyclopedia of Champagne and Sparkling Wine. In the words of Tom Stevenson “Essi is the best and most consistent taster I have encountered, and I have tasted thousands of Champagnes with her, so that is no throwaway statement.” We are very excited about our 2025 project and hope you are too.

‘Time for Tea’ Tasting Video

Tea is still a ‘hot’ topic or maybe not so hot if talking about sparkling tea, which is best served chilled! Sparkling tea is proving very popular and is now being listed by a number of the serious vintners such as Berry Bros and Rudd in London who added it to their portfolio in 2024. Bearing this in mind please remember our ‘Time for Tea’ tasting video for a 2025 event. The video is now available on the website, and features Will Battle who takes you through a tasting of six quality teas. There is also a checklist of what is needed to run a successful, educational event. Please take a look and we hope you take the plunge into the world of tea. Please send pictures if you do.



GuildSomm Discount

Looking for a one-stop resource for accurate, comprehensive beverage-related content? If yes, then you may wish to take a look at the GuildSomm offering. IWFS members can join for \$100 per year – a discount of \$20 off the regular annual membership of \$120.

I was impressed at the wide range of information that the paid membership unlocks – from podcasts to producer profiles. You can find out more on this video where Jenny Hemmer, Executive Director of GSI, has recorded a special introduction for IWFS members <https://vimeo.com/1033151569>. To sign up go to this link and enter the discount code IWFS20 at checkout - <https://guildsomm.recurly.com/subscribe/individual-annual-membership>

New merchandise for 2025 – IWFS Apron [photo of Will with apron on]

We are in the process of ordering IWFS branded aprons, similar to the one worn by Will Battle in our Time for Tea tasting video (as mentioned above). Watch this space for more details but we think they will make a nice gift to pass onto restaurant staff, maybe use for your branch events or even buy one for yourself to don when prepping in the kitchen. We think they will be a smart way to further spread the word about the IWFS.

Now, back to the Vintage Reports which are below for you to read and digest at your leisure.

Until next time....

Andrea

Andrea Warren,
International Secretariat 



Will Battle Looks Dashing in the New IWFS Apron.



2023 VINTAGE REPORTS

VINTAGE REPORTS 2023 – EUROPE

BORDEAUX 2023

CHARLES TAYLOR MW

www.montrachetwine.com

MONTRACHET



A seriously fine vintage in the higher echelons, a modern classic, 2023 is a heterogeneous vintage with marked variations in the quality, style, and quantity produced, but with the finest wines combining fully ripe fruit with excellent acidity., A profile that can be summed up as a modern classic.

It was a challenging year for growers with a wet but warm spring posing difficulties with mildew, a successful giving potentially a large crop and hard decisions to be taken on when to pick. Overall, producers with the wherewithal to manage their vineyards effectively, the luck to avoid the heaviest rain, and the nerve to choose the best moment to harvest were able to take full advantage of one of the warmest growing seasons on record. A summer with adequate, but not excessive, rainfall and a long period of fine autumnal weather in which to harvest.

The growing season started early with budbreak in March followed by a wet spring with above average temperatures. Mildew was the obvious danger. Regular treatments were required throughout April and May. A drier fortnight coincided with the flowering period in

the second half of May allowing an excellent fruit set and the promise of a generous crop. However, the rain returned accompanied by one of the hottest Junes on record. The combination of humidity and heat increased the danger of fungal disease and mildew. Some vineyards in particular lost a significant part of the crop.

July was both cooler and drier than June. It was below the 30 year average providing welcome relief to the vines. August was a little hotter but still fresher than most recent summers. The cool nights allowed the grapes to retain highly desirable acidity. The warm weather returned with two heatwaves in the second half of August and the beginning of September. With enough rain to refresh the grapes, ripening continued apace. Much of the white grapes were picked at the end of August, followed by the merlot in the first half of September. The fine weather continued, apart from a day's rain on 21st September that varied from the torrential to minimal depending on the location. Generally, the northern Médoc had the least rainfall and the cabernet sauvignon harvest continued uninterrupted for a further two weeks.

The same rain kick-started the sweet white wine harvest with rapid development of the highly desirable *pourriture noble*. Most châteaux only needed three tries to gather in the fruit with a perfect balance of sugar and acidity.

To summarise, there are excellent wines from the top châteaux in all the major regions of Bordeaux. The northern half of the Médoc, where the rainfall was lowest, had the highest proportion of successes with the majority of classed growths making successful wines. These, along with the top estates that lie on well-drained limestone or gravel soils, are the finest red wines of the vintage. They have an abundance of fresh, ripe fruit, fine tannins, and good acidity. Whilst few wines have the extra size and dimension of the magnificent 2022s, the vast majority are richer and riper than the 2017 and 2021 vintages. There are many estates that have made wines that bear comparison with the excellent 2019s and 2020s.

The dry whites are generally very successful. Harvested early following the relative cool July and August they are ripe but fresh, with higher acidity, and finer minerality than the plumper 2022s.

Similarly, the 2023 sweet white wines are truly fine; crisper and with greater vitality than the preceding vintage. The combination of a cool summer and humidity following rain on 21st September providing perfect conditions for the development of *pourriture noble*.

Prices of many wines are set to fall as a result of often generous yields and the difficult economic context. I am confident that there will be many wines that will be well worth buying.

GRAVES (RED) 5 NOT READY YET
HAUT-MEDOC 5 NOT READY YET
POMEROL & ST EMILION 5 NOT READY YET
GRAVES (WHITE) 7 NOT READY YET
SAUTERNES 7 NOT READY YET

BURGUNDY 2023

CHARLES TAYLOR MW

www.montrachetwine.com

Fresh, opulent whites and attractive, generous reds

The viticultural year, for once, happily started with an early budburst and no significant frost in April. It was an unremarkable spring with normal temperatures and regular rainfall. The vineyards were healthy and the potential crop looked generous with 2 or 3 large embryonic flower clusters on each cane, the result of the consistently fine weather the previous summer. The weather improved for the flowering at the end of May after which it was apparent that a huge crop was in prospect.

As June continued with more of the same dull, cool and rainy weather, the growers were worried both by the threat of fungal diseases, particularly mildew, and by how such a large crop was going to reach full maturity. Most serious producers decided to perform at least one and sometimes two, green harvests to thin out the crop and, fortunately, the weather subsequently improved with drier and warmer conditions in July and August. Indeed, younger vines in well-drained soil even began to show signs of stress by the end of August.

Finally, a burst of hot weather with temperatures well above 30C arrived at the beginning of September and growers suddenly found themselves bringing forward the harvest date as the grapes raced

towards final ripeness at an unprecedented pace. Hot conditions necessitated the need for well-equipped cellars with cooling equipment to bring down the temperature of the fruit and juice, and most of the white grapes were harvested with excellent levels of ripeness by the weekend of the 10th September. By then, the red wine harvest was also underway but it was complicated by a couple of days of significant rainfall on 12th and 13th September. Fortunately, the ground was dry and, after 48 hours, the later pickers were able to resume and were rewarded with greater levels of phenolic maturity.

To summarise, the whites are ripe and opulent, similar in style to the successful 2022s, with a little more acidity when grapes were picked early and with similar levels of concentration where yields had been kept under control. The reds are fresh and elegant, with beautiful, pure red fruits and sufficient structure to age gracefully. Overall, they are more forward and less concentrated than the 2022s but will give more immediate pleasure. It is the most charming vintage since 2017, which is now beginning to drink really well, but with greater depth, personality and aging potential. I feel that it is a vintage well worth buying since prices have, in most cases, dropped, albeit modestly, and, more importantly, the 2024 Burgundy harvest has been one of the smallest on record. This is particularly the case for the red wines where many estates have produced less than 50% of what they made in 2023.

COTE DE BEAUNE (RED) 5 NOT READY YET
COTE DE NUITS (RED) 5 NOT READY YET
CHABLIS 5 NOT READY YET
COTE D'OR (WHITE) 6 NOT READY YET

BEAUJOLAIS 2023

WILL HESLOP

www.flintwines.com



2023 is among the very best vintages of the past decade for Cru Beaujolais. Heavy rain in the spring and early summer replenished water reserves (after a notably hot, dry year in 2022) without disturbing flowering. Summer saw multiple heat spikes but no sustained heatwave. Picking at most estates in the Crus began around September 7th – up to a fortnight later than in '22. High temperatures meant there was a risk of berries shriveling on the vine, so harvest was completed as quickly as possible, but the majority of growers were thrilled with both the quality and quantity of the crop. The resulting wines are juicy, fresh and detailed – with higher acidity than '20 or '22, and extra ripeness compared to '21. They will be expressive and approachable in their youth, but have ample concentration for medium-term cellaring.

BEAUJOLAIS 5 NOT READY YET

ALSACE 2023

DAVID LING

confrerie-st-etienne.alsace



Initial tastings from all over Alsace are more than reassuring, discrediting pundits who forecast the usual effects of a 'hot vintage' like 2003 or 2020. In effect, in many French wine regions 2023 was a difficult vintage, with periods of drought, heavy rain and searing heat, but thankfully, in Alsace the worst extremes were avoided.

The winter was again unusually mild, with no excess of ice or snow, and the vines developed under normal conditions. Summer was hot and dry, but some welcome showers of rain at just the right time enabled the bunches to ripen normally and ensured an average-sized crop. Some heavy rain in August led to fears of oidium and mildew where bunches had not been thinned in anticipation, so where such a green harvest had not been done, sorting tables were in evidence at harvest time to remove affected bunches or those with insects cozily installed in the tightly packed bunches.

Controversially, the authorities declared the harvest open two weeks earlier than usual to placate growers who feared more rain, but those who held their nerve and picked later took full advantage of the 'Indian Summer', gloriously sunny days and cool nights, to pick perfectly ripe grapes under ideal conditions. Botrytis ('noble rot') was rare, so not many late harvest wines were produced.

A sign of the times, two problems mentioned by growers was having to start early in the morning to protect pickers from the heat, and the difficulty of even finding harvest workers to employ!

To summarise the 2023 Alsace vintage, the wines are ripe and nicely balanced with a gentle acidity. Particular stars are: Riesling, fine elegant wines but yields were below average, Gewurztraminer, seductively aromatic with welcome freshness, and Pinot Noir, rich, ripe and deep in colour, some from bunches so healthy that selection was often made on the vine itself. Quite a treat in store...

ALSACE 6 NOT READY YET



CAHORS/MADIRAN 2023 (SUD-OUEST)

BRITT & PER KARLSSON

www.bkwine.com



The vintage 2023 in the South West, particularly in Cahors, was marked by humid spring conditions and a very hot, and dry summer. Both these things had consequences for the harvest. The fight against downy mildew began early in the growing season. The spring was very wet, and these conditions continued well into June, with heavy storms and 200 mm of rain on June 21st. In July, the weather turned warm. Even with great effort, it was challenging to manage the fungus. Around 50% of the vineyards were affected in 2023.

The rest of the summer and September were very hot and dry. The combination of drought and fungus diseases makes 2023 a vintage where the quantity will depend on the location of the vineyards. Some vineyards could only harvest 15-17 hectolitres per hectare, whereas others managed a normal harvest of 40 hl/ha. The late August heat wave meant a fast evolution of the maturity of the grapes, and harvest started rather rapidly in September as grape bunches in some vineyards started to dry out. The result is a vintage with lower volumes. Quality wise, there is much finesse in the wines and although the skill of the producer will play a part, overall, we are looking at a promising year.

CAHORS/MADIRAN 5 NOT READY YET

CHAMPAGNE 2023

JAMES SIMPSON MW

www.polroger.co.uk



Characterised by volume if not quality, the 2023 vintage will go down for many as a year of selection. Notable for an unevenness, especially when compared to near-perfect production of the three varieties in 2022, the first week of the 2023 harvest was marked by a heatwave, interspersed with periods of rainfall, leading to a near-disastrous rise in humidity. The Meunier was worst affected, the Pinot Noir generally fared better, and the Chardonnay emerged as the most successful of the three.

The high yields came from a spring with little to no frost damage. Flowering levels then broke records, so it was not surprising that the harvest was a bountiful one. Conditions suggested an ample crop from the outset, but Champagne's capricious weather resulted in a significant presence of downy and powdery mildew, and even botrytis in some vineyards.

From the Grandes Marques to the small growers, the vineyard teams' reactivity was crucial for the treatment of a mildew epi-

demarc that gradually gained a foothold in the region. Vineyard and grape selection was likewise important, but the test of the Champagnes will come in the tasting.

Rigorous selection in the vineyards and with the vins clairs will enable Champagne producers to compose assemblages consistent with the level of quality demanded by the region and its proponents. In the right hands and in the right places, 2023 offers plenty to look forward to.

CHAMPAGNE 5 NOT YET RELEASED

LANGUEDOC (RED) 2023

MATTHEW STUBBS MW

www.vinecole.com



There was a marked east/west split in the Languedoc with some areas like Pic Saint-Loup seeing high spring rainfall whereas from Pézenas towards Limoux it was more a story of drought. Those areas that received these early rains were able to withstand the high late summer temperatures, despite an increased pressure from downy mildew. One of the driest areas, La Clape, did receive some rainfall in July which was some respite from the extremely dry winter and spring. Other appellations in the Languedoc from Picpoul de Pinet to Minervois and Corbières remained dry throughout the whole growing season. The Roussillon, too, was marked by drought with little rainfall in winter and throughout the season. Some areas receiving about 50% of what they would normally expect.

However, it was the heatwave at the end of August for which this vintage will be remembered. Temperatures reached over 43°C for four consecutive days from 20th August causing the vines to shut down. Leaves shriveled, berries were small and those vines without protection from foliage risked sunburn. The net result is this is one of the lowest yielding vintages in recent years. Only 400,000 hl compared to 569,000 hl in 2022. Quality is also more variable than 2022 but despite these challenges some very good wines were made. It required, though, more vigilance in the vineyard and patience in the cellar as grape skins were thicker, sugars in the must were generally high and juice levels lower.

LANGUEDOC (RED) 5 NOT READY YET

LOIRE 2023

JIM BUDD

jimsloire.blogspot.com



Complicated! 2023 was certainly a complicated and stressful vintage for producers in a number of parts of the Loire, especially in Anjou. However, conditions were very variable – for instance the Central Vineyards suffered from drought over the summer, whereas, the western Loire had a huge amount of rainfall. Parts of Anjou had over 200 mm of rain between the beginning of July and the end of September. Even locally conditions varied considerably.

Fortunately, there was no serious frost this year. Bud break brought a large volume of potential grapes. This was confirmed by a rapid flowering in dry and sunny conditions at the end of May and the first part of June. Later on in June, a strong pressure of mildew started. It was essential to spray regularly and at exactly the right moment.

In addition to some grey rot, acid rot was widespread from Vouvray westwards with Chenin particularly badly affected. It may well have been spread by *drosophila suzukii*. Dealing with acid rot is particularly tricky for mechanical picking. Superficially, a bunch can appear healthy as the grapes affected may well be hidden right in the centre. Often those picking by hand were having to cut a bunch in half and then pick out the rotten grapes – a lot of additional work! 2023 is a year when the seriously rigorous vigneron/ne shines.

Despite the difficulties, good wines were made. The Central Vineyards had beneficial rain just before picking started, although the large volume of grapes made the harvest ‘manic’. The increasingly interesting Upper Loire had a good vintage, as did much of eastern Touraine, except for the Chenin affected by acid rot. Reds from Saumur and Western Touraine in parts where rot was less of a problem are also promising.

The Pays Nantais was also successful with picking starting at the beginning of September. It is likely that little sweet wine was made, especially in the more prestigious appellations. Already many producers in Anjou are increasingly concentrating on dry Chenin. A number of producers decided early in the harvest not to attempt to make sweet wine in 2023.

2023 was one of the most complicated vintages of recent times. I have little doubt that some awful wines were made, so it is crucial to buy from producers you trust.

LOIRE (RED) 5 NOT READY YET
SWEET NOT READILY AVAILABLE
DRY WHITE 4 NOT READY YET (MEMBER APP ONLY)

PROVENCE 2023

ROD SMITH MW

rivierawineacademy.com/biography.php



The early part of 2023 saw a continuation of 2022's drought, with water restrictions imposed as early as March. However, at the beginning of May, a deluge came and persisted until well into June. It did bring much needed water, but also caused landslides and run-off in Provence (as in much of North Italy). It also bought the onset of mildew (both powdery and downy), which required careful treatment in the vineyard and, subsequently, in the winery. Warm and dry conditions took over from the end of June, although there was less heat-stress than in 2022. There were further storms at harvest time. These brought a risk of dilution and rot, especially for later black grapes for red wines. These September storms were to a degree localised, though. The 2023 vintage is therefore somewhat 'curate's egg', hence the rating. Top quality producers of reds in Bandol and elsewhere have made good wines via rigorous selection. Lesser reds should be treated with more caution. The rosés and whites resemble those of 2022; a mixture of early harvesting for acidity and later for flavour being the path to success.

PROVENCE 4 NOT READY YET

RHONE VALLEY 2023

JOHN LIVINGSTONE LEARMONTH

www.drinkrhone.com



NORTHERN RHÔNE 2023

Northern Rhône - 2023 is a complicated vintage for the Northern Rhône. The region experienced drought, some mildew, ripening hold-ups, then very different surges of rainfall in mid September. All these will play a prominent role in separating quality across different domains and sectors.

For example, on 18 September, 200 mm [8 in] fell at Hermitage and 180 mm [7.2 in] at Cornas, while Côte-Rôtie received just 25 mm [1 in]. Spring and early summer rainy weather was replaced by drought, before mid-August rain alleviated that situation, followed by a week of extreme heat at the end of August. These were not relaxing conditions for humans or vines. Blockages of ripening on the Syrah occurred, so growers were careful not to extract, the more so because the Syrah was becoming fragile by the second half of September. There is an aromatic side to the wines and sufficient density to enable them to have a structure to evolve. Côte-Rôtie will be more homogeneous than other appellations due to its lesser rainfall. Growers are happy with Condrieu in 2023, compared to 2022, noting that there is freshness present. Mildew in the offing, then drought, then high heat, was not a normal route to achieve a well balanced wine, one with lowish acidity. Yet, the outcomes are regarded as successful, the degree around 13.5°C.

The Marsanne-Roussanne whites are appealing, supple and open, offering early pleasure.

SOUTHERN RHÔNE 2023

Southern Rhône - 2023 is a vintage that has experienced growers very happy with events. The vineyards aided by good levels of pre-season rain, then experiencing drought, then just about avoiding mildew later in the year, since June was cool and rather rainy. The 10 days of 40°C at the end of August were on the limit in creating jam-like grapes, while tannins still needed time to ripen. The pathway was complicated. Yields were high, and required green harvesting for best quality. However, the late season weather was tip-top, and harvesting took place calmly. There is richness in the reds of Châteauneuf-du-Pape in a vintage that may be ahead of 2022. It is certainly deeper than 2021. Gigondas with its cooler zones has done well. Without the heat spike, it could have been a really classic vintage, but it rates highly within the context of recent years.

The whites and rosés are attractive, sometimes gentle, and give fluent drinking, degrees restrained.

RHÔNE RED – (NORTH) 5 NOT READY YET
(SOUTH) 6 NOT READY YET
WHITE (NORTH) 6 POSSIBLE TO DRINK

AUSTRIA 2023

LANCE FOYSTER MW

www.clarkfoysterwines.co.uk



2023 vintage conditions required much hard work and patience in the vineyards throughout Austria. Weather conditions certainly kept producers on their toes, presenting them with a dry, mild Winter followed by abundant Spring rainfall and challenging episodes of damp and disease. Summer brought frequent hot spells and damaging hailstorms affecting most wine-producing regions, adding further to the climatic turbulence of the vintage.

Nonetheless, a glorious Autumn was to follow, with wonderful conditions in the vineyard rewarding those winemakers who demonstrated reactivity, patience, and hard labour with some outstanding wines. Overall, Austria's whites in 2023 are bright, densely packed, and vibrant, showing great harmony between ripeness of fruit and refreshing acidity. A pronounced fruity profile and well-rounded acidity are likely characteristics of Grüner Veltliner. Well-defined grapey aromas and notes of stone fruit show themselves in 2023, rather than the savoury notes and peppery spice that can sometimes characterise this variety.

Reds, too, are in many cases full-bodied and juicy, packed tightly with well-balanced fruit flavours and showcase impressive structural balance and freshness. For many, 2023 will be the next outstanding red wine vintage, following the successes of 2019 and 2021. Sweet wine, and Eiswein in particular, was also produced in considerable volumes. With a relatively late on-set of botrytis, dessert wines are found to be of a very high quality, framed by an impressive stream of refreshing acidity.

Climatic instability in 2023 presented even the most experienced winemaker with many challenges in the vineyard. Volumes produced were generally lower than average, however the overall quality of those wines is extremely high.

(Additional resource for report was the Austrian Wine website <https://www.austrianwine.com/>)

WHITE 6 NOT READY YET
RED 6 NOT READY YET
SWEET 7 NOT READY YET (MEMBER APP ONLY)

ENGLAND (SPARKLING) 2023

MIMI AVERY

www.averys.com

2023 was a tricky vintage. Where some producers will have done well, others not, depending on their harvest schedule. 2023 had the potential to be another 2012 harvest, the most challenging season in 30 years, but the Indian Summer saved the day. In the east of England it was evident from the delivery of the first fruit that this was going to be a big harvest. Analysis showed good ripening levels. It was a heavy crop with almost 50% more weight of fruit than expected. The west of the country had extremely hot weather during flowering which messed with the potassium levels. This meant sugar and acids did not behave as expected. Subsequently, this vintage will be a keeper. Its strength will be when the wines have had time to mature.

ENGLAND (SPARKLING) 4 NOT READY YET



GERMANY 2023

KONSTANTIN BAUM MW

www.konstantinbaum.com
baumselection.com



MOSEL REGION

Mosel Region - The 2023 vintage in the Mosel highlighted Riesling's suitability to the region's climate. The yields and qualities varied based on location and water supply. Warmer winter temperatures led to early budding on April 25th. Predominantly dry and warm weather in May and June promoted vine growth, with flowering starting around June 8th. June and July's heat caused drought stress in drier sites and sunburn issues in July. Heavy rains at the end of July helped. Summer was followed by warm September nights, accelerating ripening unusually fast, resulting in very high degrees Oechsle. Over 50% of grapes were harvested at a Spätlese level and there were also botrytized Riesling grapes harvested for higher Prädikat levels.

RHEINGAU REGION

Rheingau Region - The Rheingau was also hit by heat spikes and heavy rains followed in July and August negatively impacting the grape health of Pinot Noir, necessitating careful selection to harvest healthy grapes. Riesling grapes remained healthy throughout the Rheingau, especially in steeper slopes, leading to high-quality, albeit sometimes small, yields. The total yield for Rheingau is estimated at 228,000 hectoliters, a six percent increase over the long-term average. The harvest started early and required intense selection, especially for non-Riesling grapes. Despite the early harvest completion by mid-October, the hot September days required substantial cooling technology. Early morning and night harvesting were common.

MOSEL 6 NOT READY YET
RHINE 6 NOT READY YET



HUNGARY (TOKAJI ASZU) 2023



Royal Tokaji

CHARLES MOUNT

royal-tokaji.com

After a first quarter with good rainfall and warm weather, the second quarter was characterised by balanced weather and intensive work in the vineyards. In the third quarter good conditions for ripening and good rainfall favoured the set of botrytis on the bunches. At the end of this period we were half way through our dry harvest and had collected first generation aszú berries from our parcels. The fourth quarter turned quite wet which affected the quality of the aszú berries, but most producers were able to complete their planned harvest. The vintage shows very good quality for the dry wines which have very good balance and fruit. The aszú wines have the thrilling acidity of the first generation, and ripeness from subsequent passes through the vineyards.

TOKAJI-ASZU 6 NOT READY YET

ITALY (RED) PIEDMONT 2023



DAVID WAY

winefriend.org/david-way

The 2023 vintage in the Langhe (Barolo and Barbaresco), was marked by extreme variations and multiple challenges. The vines had suffered stress in 2021 owing to the low rainfall and high temperatures, and even lower rainfall and extreme heat in 2022. In 2023, the spring was warm, but May and June saw a period of cool temperatures, and near constant rain. On the one hand, the rain was welcome, helping to offset to some extent the preceding drought. However, much of the rain simply ran off the vineyards. (For the future, growers may have to consider getting permission to create ponds for their own use.) On the other hand, the constant rain was a problem in itself. Growers had to be very conscientious in their spraying in order to avoid substantial losses to downy mildew. Some losses were inevitable. At times, it was too wet to get into the vineyard to spray. Producers who work organically were particularly challenged.

The Langhe mainly escaped the devastating hail that caused near total losses in parts of nearby Roero in July. Late summer saw a heat wave that blocked some ripening and burnt some bunches, followed by welcome rain. Although 2022 was hotter overall, 2023 was marked by swings from cooler to hotter weather and by higher temperature peaks. Growers had to work regularly to remove damaged fruit (due to either or both downy mildew and sunburn) at several points in the season. However, September and early October were warm and allowed Nebbiolo to ripen. In the end, conscientious producers had a small but high-quality harvest with lower alcohol levels than in recent years.

PIEDMONT 6 NOT YET RELEASED

ITALY (RED) TUSCANY & SICILY 2023



RICHARD BAUDAINS

Due to extreme weather conditions which accompanied practically the whole period of the vegetative cycle, the 2023 vintage was one of the most difficult to grow in recent years across the whole of Italy. It was particularly challenging in the centre and south of the country.

TUSCANY

A cold April resulting in late flowering, was followed by May and June with high temperatures and persistent rain which sparked often devastating attacks of downy mildew. July was very hot and August saw damaging hail in some areas. What saved the harvest were the months of September and the first half of October, which were warm and very dry, allowing a late but complete ripening of the reduced crop, promising wines which will probably be superior to 2022. Production is down an average 20% across the region, but some producers suffered even greater losses.

SICILY

The weather followed a similar pattern in Sicily, with the added difficulty of strong winds during the cold and wet month of April, which disturbed flowering. May and June again saw rife fungal disease due to the hot wet conditions. Record temperatures, with peaks in the high 40s in July, had negative effects, especially in the west of the island. The weather stabilized in September and continued fine through October, allowing for a much reduced crop, (on average down 30%) but overall grape quality superior to expectations. The higher vineyards on Etna, and particularly in the predominantly red wine area of the northeast fared better than the rest of the island, although quality may be uneven.

TUSCANY 6 NOT YET RELEASED

SICILY 5 NOT READY YET

VALPOLICELLA (AMARONE) 2023



(see www.tenutasantamaria.wine/harvest-report-2023)

VALPOLICELLA (AMARONE) 5 NOT YET RELEASED

PORTUGAL 2023

CHARLES METCALFE



Spring and autumn rains prevented 2023 from being a year of top quality. 'Challenging' was a word frequently used to sum up the year.

NORTH

The Douro had good winter and early spring rains, giving vineyards ample water after the very dry 2022. The summer avoided heat-spikes, and was dry until occasional September showers refreshed the vines. Most of the best vineyards were picked before heavy rain in mid-September. Some outstanding wines have been made.

Good wines were made in both Dão and Bairrada, though rains in September spoiled the end of harvest.

SOUTH

In the Alentejo, production was about 5 to 10% bigger than in 2022. Quality was very good. August heatwaves and some rain before the end of harvest prevented 2023 from being a perfect year.

NORTH 6 NOT READY YET
SOUTH 5 NOT READY YET

VINTAGE PORT

RICHARD MAYSON

www.richardmayson.com



The winter in early 2023 brought welcome rain to the Douro after a year of extreme drought. A warm spring along with plentiful groundwater led to early-season vigour in the vineyards. Flowering was early but heavy rain in late spring caused mildew problems along with localised hail damage. Veraison was early and ripening was even without the shutdown that accompanies periods of extreme heat and drought. White grapes were picked from the start of August, making this one of the earliest harvests on record. There was a short period of very aggressive heat in late August and by 1st September Port grapes were already being harvested. It all looked very promising until rain halted picking around the middle of the month and continued to fall on and off until the end of September. There was an Indian summer in October. Good wines were made early on with Touriga Nacional (mostly picked before the rain) performing well. Yields were relatively high but the Port beneficio (authorisation) was reduced by more

than 10 per cent due to falling sales. Expect some very good single quinta Ports from this vintage to be released in the spring of 2025 as well as good and plentiful red and white Douro wines.

Richard Mayson is author of Port and the Douro published by Academie du Vin and Chairs the Port and Madeira panel for the Decanter World Wine Awards

VINTAGE PORT 5 NOT YET RELEASED

SPAIN 2023

HAROLD HECKLE



Very hot weather followed by heavy rainfall in Rioja and Ribera del Duero caused major problems for producers. Some harvested early, sacrificing perfect maturity in a bid to avoid Botrytis and grape skin problems. It became obvious that climatic conditions had affected the harvest to an unusual degree when both Rioja and Ribera del Duero delayed their verdicts on the overall quality of the harvest by more than a month. Eventually, half way through June, both declared the vintage as Muy Buena, very good. Hence, I think it's safe to give a mark of 6 to 2023 in those regions. Priorat and the northeast suffered a lack of rainfall to the point where top wine producers acknowledged that they had been forced to use irrigation for the first time in the region's history. I think it is safe to say that the vintage in the northeast can also be categorised as a 6 given that there was no risk of fungus, although the fruit will have struggled to retain adequate levels of acidity.

NORTH EAST 6 NOT READY YET
RIBERA DEL DUERO 6 NOT READY YET
RIOJA 6 NOT READY YET



A GLASS OF WINE WITH HERMIONE IRELAND

Interview by John Trickett



An expanded version of this interview can be found by scanning this QR code.

If you're reading this, it's safe to say that you have more than an average interest in words about wine. After all, this article is in a magazine published for members of a Society founded on the principle that food's natural companion is wine, and that the union of the two is best celebrated in the company of like-minded friends.

A recent announcement by IWFS Executive Administrator Andrea Warren revealed that Society members around the world can expand their reading horizons and enjoy a bargain in the process. IWFS members now qualify for a 25% discount on most online purchases at Académie du Vin Library. To tell us more about this partnership, Hermione Ireland, the Publisher and Managing Director at Académie du Vin Library, was kind enough to connect via Zoom over both the North Atlantic and a glass of wine.

Q: Thanks very much for your time today. What kind of wine pairs well with this interview?

A: Either Sherry or something fizzy. The last glass I enjoyed was for my son's 20th birthday. That was a Nyetimber Classic Cuvee. But I'm a huge fan of Sherry as well, especially Oloroso.

Q: Sherry is so versatile, it can go with just about any occasion. It would be possible to have an entire meal paired with Sherries.

A: Absolutely.

Q: Have you been with Académie du Vin since its founding?

A: No. Steven (Spurrier) and Hugh (Johnson) had the idea in 2018, and they started getting things together. I think they did most of the work in 2019 and then Michael Broadbent's book was the first one; it was a commemorative edition of Wine Tasting. That came out in April of 2019 and I came on board in June of 2020.

Q: If someone had no idea what Académie du Vin press was, how would you describe it to them?

A: I would say firstly, that we are *the* specialist wine book publisher in the English language. Some of the big publishers put out a few wine books, as do middle-sized publishers, but we only publish wine books. It's our DNA.

I would also tell them that we've been founded by Steven Spurrier and Hugh Johnson. The original intention was republishing classics that are out of print. But actually we've developed into a much bigger business than that. Our aims are rather far more forward-looking than that these days.

The third thing I would say is that we are about wine literature, fine wine writing. We are not reference book publishers. There are three or four really, really good reference books out there, and that's not what we're about.



Hermione Ireland

Q: Do you plan on having books that focus on the combination of wine and food?

A: Hugh (Johnson) was very keen on the idea that we do an anthology, a "collected essays" on the subject.

Q: Well, André Simon was one of his mentors, wasn't he? That would tie in nicely with IWFS...

A: Indeed. Maybe we can talk about doing something with IWFS at some point. That would be interesting. It's on our long-term publishing list. That list is very long!

Q: I bet it is!

A: There have always been books each year that have just pipped that idea to the post.

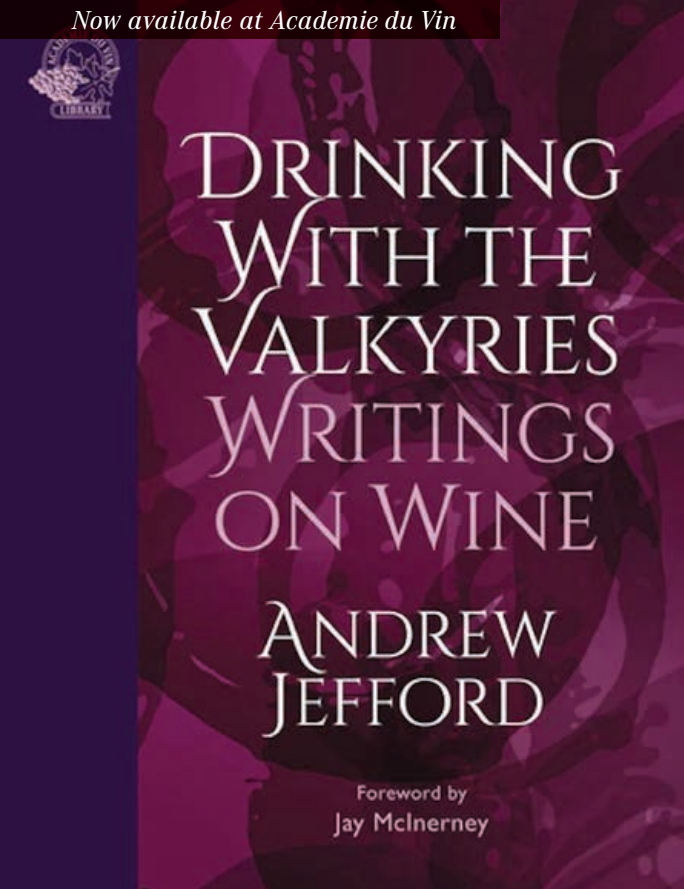
Q: Did you know Johnson or Spurrier before you started to work at Académie du Vin?

A: Unfortunately, no. I only got to work with Steven for about 9 or 10 months before he passed away. Which was far too early. He was so full of energy and ideas. Just an amazing man and I feel very fortunate I had that little time with him. And I love working with Hugh. He is just the most lovely man. As lovely as you would imagine if you haven't met him.

Q: Let's talk about Académie du Vin's website. What kind of content can people see if they go to your site?

A: Well, we have a blog called "Vinosity". We're very proud of the blog, because we've used it to commission work from younger writers who we're not quite ready to commission full books from. The blog allows us to do that, and also cover other regions of the world that might not commission a whole book about, and also publish topical content. "Vinosity" is also a great place to put en primeur information out there.

Now available at Academie du Vin



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ON WINE
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Foreword by
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THE WINES OF
CALIFORNIA

ELAINE CHUKAN BROWN

Q: Anything else we should look for on the website?

A: We will be doing more events in North America next year.

Q: Great!

A: And we also have e-books. We're making a few more in audio, and of course get them all from Amazon if you're a Kindle reader, but you can also buy the e-books directly from us.

Q: That was going to be my next question!

A: Yes, well almost all the books are in e-book format, but some of the older books going back to 2019 are almost finished being converted. But we look forward to having them up very soon.

Q: How did the partnership with IWFS evolve?

A: We knew Andrea (Warren) because her work with the Circle of Wine Writers and we're corporate sponsors of the Circle. We love the Circle and we love Andrea. We'd been doing bits and pieces with IWFS, and this is one of the things that's come out of the conversations. We'd love to do more, because I'm sure a lot of your members are quite keen on reading about wine.

Q: Yes, absolutely. Now, are all of your books available with the discount?

A: We've got this discount which is 25% off...

Q: And thank you for that, by the way!

A: You're very welcome! It's quite a chunky discount and one we normally give to students at WSET, Guildsomm, and Wine Scholar Guild for instance. We're trying to build our website to be best wine bookshop in the world. Because you often go into a bricks and mortar bookshop, there's lots of books you can't get, so we distribute a lot of books for self-published authors and really, really small publishing presses. So those are usually excluded from the discount code because we have agreements with the authors to sell those books for full price.

Q: Fair enough.

A: But almost everything else is included in the discount. We have about 100 books in the shop, and that's not including the e-books and the audio. It's about 150 or 160 if you include those.

Q: So we're talking about the printed books as opposed to the electronic ones?

A: Yes.

Q: Hermione, it was a great pleasure to speak with you. Thanks very much for your time,

A: Thank you very much.

Coming soon: A concise, complete, smartly delivered and cohesive book for serious readers and students of wine. Focusing on the world's fourth largest producer of wine - California - the book takes readers on a journey through the golden state's wines, paying due attention to famous regions such as Sonoma and Napa as well as introducing readers to exciting up-and-coming regions to explore.

Scan this QR code to visit Academie du Vin's website
(enter IWFS25 at checkout to receive the discount):



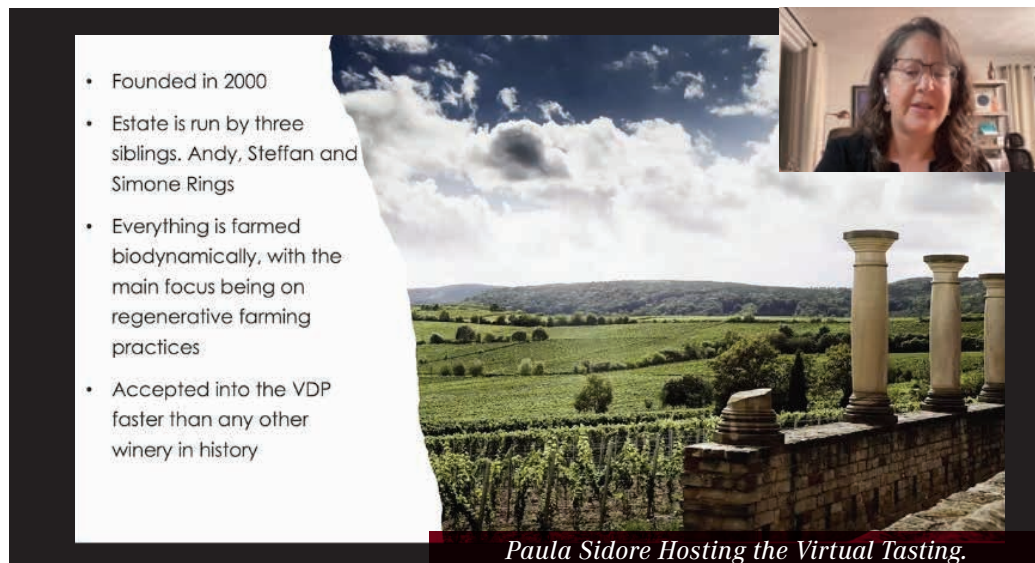
TASTING SERIES: RIESLING AND BEYOND: THE NEW WORLD OF GERMAN WINE

By Neal Vitale, Hollywood Branch

Those of you who participated in the August 2024 IWFS Rhine Cruise had the pleasure of being introduced to Paula Sidore; she spoke during the cruise and conducted tastings. Paula is an expert on the wines of Germany, Austria, Alto Adige, and Switzerland, and she spoke during the cruise and conducted tastings. She is the co-founder of the digital TRINK Magazine, and is the German and Austrian specialist for *jancisrobinson.com*. Her freelance writing can be found in print and online at Saveur, Seventy Daily, Der Feinschmecker, and FINE. Though she lives in Bonn, Germany, she visited the States just prior to Thanksgiving, and we were fortunate to have her lead a Virtual Tasting for IWFS, “Riesling and Beyond: The New World of German Wine.”

Paula used a detailed and informative PowerPoint presentation to introduce us to German wine regions, the key grapes grown in each, and the VDP (Verband Deutscher Prädikatsweingüter) quality classifications that label German wines. The tasting package (chosen in collaboration with Jenna Fields of The German Wine Collection) was assembled to take us beyond the grape most often associated with Germany - riesling - to explore sparkling wine and pinot noir.

We started the tasting with a 2014 Reserve Blanc de Blancs from Sekthaus Raumland in the Rheinhessen, Germany’s largest wine-making region. Volker Raumland founded the business in 1984, and is considered a pioneer in producing high quality sekt, Germany’s sparkling wine. The grapes in this bottling were roughly two-thirds pinot gris, one third pinot blanc. Made using the traditional méthode champenoise, it was kept for 90 months on the lees. The end



Paula Sidore Hosting the Virtual Tasting.

result is a wine that was clean and fresh on the nose and palate, featuring fine, tiny bubbles, and a long, crisp finish.

The next wine - 2022 Felseneck “GG” Riesling - was from Schäfer-Fröhlich, a producer in the small Nahe region, nestled between Rheinhessen and the Mosel. The GG (Grosses Gewächs) designation is for the finest of German white wines, and is specific to dry wines. All GG wines come from vineyards designated Grosses Lage (“great site”), the top level in the VDP classifications. At first, this wine had the characteristic riesling nose of kerosene or petroleum, but then evolved more to one of delicate fruit. On the palate, I got nice minerality and acidity, lime zest, with a note of salinity.

The third wine we tasted came from Pfalz, Germany’s second-largest wine region, which stretches along the country’s border with Alsace. The 2021 Rings Kallstadt Spätburgunder is 100% pinot noir, aged 12 months in a combination of new and used French oak. The wine had a huge, perfumey

nose, conjuring smoky dark fruit, cranberry. On the palate, it was lean and elegant, with notes of forest floor.

We concluded with a wine from famed producer Joh. Jos. Prüm, their 2022 Wehlener Sonnenuhr Kabinett Riesling. The grapes for this wine are grown on a steep (70% incline) south-/southwest-facing slope in the Mosel, in weathered Devonian slate soil, and are hand-harvested. The wine is vinified in small stainless steel tanks, and is unfiltered and unfinned. After the other bottles, this one brought forward an interesting, sweeter - yet slightly vegetal - first note for me. Good acid on the tongue, with green apple, citrus, white fruit, and even a bit of honey as it opened up. Lower in alcohol, likely to be a very good “food wine.”

Participants in the tasting posted how much they liked all the wines, calling them “fantastic.” Paula concluded with many recommendations of other varietals, producers, and regions for all of us to consider, as the next phase of our exploring “The New World of German Wine!”

LONDON, CROATIA, AND CHASING THE THIRD TENOR

Story by Charity Hattenbauer, Arkansas Branch



Seaside Dubrovnik at Night.

I fell in love with opera at 18, and by 19, I had developed a deep affection for The Three Tenors—Luciano Pavarotti, Plácido Domingo, and José Carreras. The prior year, however, marked the end of their concerts together. With a bucket list goal set, I resolved to hear each tenor live before they retired. In 2005, by some miracle, I witnessed Pavarotti perform just two years before his passing in 2007. Fast forward to 2017: I experienced the virtuosity of Domingo in concert at the Lyric Opera of Chicago on a blustery February evening. Only one tenor remained.

José Carreras was the reason for the trio's inception, so it was essential to hear him perform. After his recovery from leukemia in the 1980s, Carreras established a foundation and performed rarely, often in distant locales. But with several concerts planned for 2024, I knew this had to be the year. My husband and I chose Croatia and crafted our autumn vacation around the concert.

With a purposeful 23-hour layover in London, we planned to make the most of a day in the city. New to the IWFS, we were eager to explore the club's flagship headquarters office location, the In and Out Naval and Military Club. After visiting the main sights—Buckingham Palace, Big Ben, Westminster Abbey, and Piccadilly Circus—we received a warm welcome from Andrea Warren, the IWFS Executive Administrator, who gave us a private tour of the club. Our tour included a corner displaying a remarkable oil painting of André Simon, the IWFS founder. Andrea gifted us some splendid IWFS memorabilia and hosted us for afternoon wine at The Goat Brasserie. We concluded our day with a fine dinner in The Coffee Room, the club's formal dining room overlooking St. James's Square. True to our travel tradition of pairing wines local to the places we visit, we chose a crisp English sparkling brut to accompany our meal. The Cornish hen was exquisite, as were the prawn cocktail and Eton mess.

After a memorable day in London, we journeyed across the Adriatic to Croatia, thrilled to explore its wine and culinary traditions. The late September weather could not have been more perfect. Traveling south to north through Croatia was a culinary delight, with perfect pastas, the freshest seafood, and wines that were both clean and full of character. Our visit to Winery Botaro, near Dubrovnik, was particularly memorable. For six generations they produced an impressive array of wines, cheeses, digestive liqueurs, and traditional foodstuffs.

In Dubrovnik, we indulged at Restaurant 360 Dubrovnik, the city's only Michelin-starred establishment. Situated atop the ancient castle walls, the restaurant offers sublime views. The service was impeccable, and the dishes were adventurous works of art! The pigeon entrée was surprisingly nuanced, while the scallop tartare was the best I've ever had.

Continuing northward toward the Carreras' concert, we reached Split, where we explored Diocletian's historic city. We enjoyed unmatched parmesan fries at an outdoor café and a mortadella pizza at Luxor that was pure perfection. A visit to Šibenik led us to exceptional baklava, and in Zadar, we were captivated by the haunting Sea Organ. Our final destination, Zagreb, offered distinctly Austro-Germanic culinary and architectural influences. A dinner highlight was štrukli, a rich, baked pastry and cheese dish, which paired splendidly with a stainless-steel-aged Zinfandel.

Our hotel, The Esplanade, a 1925 art deco masterpiece, was originally built to host passengers from the Orient Express. Among Zagreb's highlights was Pupitres, a wine bar that took us on an educational journey through Croatia's diverse wine regions. Croatian pumpkin seed oil, I must note, is truly a delicacy. We found that wines made from Plavac Mali (red) and Pošip (white) grapes stood out, and we also discovered Malvasia Istriana, which is certainly worth seeking out. Croatia's sparkling wines show great promise as well.

The evening of the concert finally arrived! Following an exceptional Croatian dinner, we headed to Lisinski Hall to see Carreras. Though his music is intimately familiar to me, I had no idea what the program held. With my heart excitedly pounding, I clutched my husband's arm as Carreras delivered stirring renditions of classics like *The Impossible Dream*, *Granada*, *Moon River*, the *Brindisi* from *La Traviata*, and a breathtaking *O Sole Mio*. Despite his nearly 78 years and his previous health struggles, his voice remained a vessel of pure beauty, power, and emotional resonance. Conducted by David Giménez and accompanied by the Zagreb Philharmonic, Carreras enraptured the audience with his inspiring selections and at least four encores, each note echoing with vitality and depth. I ended the night with many happy tears and overwhelming gratitude.

It was a profoundly moving night of music, a culmination of a decades-old dream, and a wonderful European journey.

Dubrovnik Interior at Night.



Beautiful Zagreb.



Sea Organ Zadar.



ETNA, SICILY'S RISING STAR

Story by Richard Baudains, Images Provided by Etna DOC Consorzio



Etna Vista, Sicily.



Introduction

Sicily is a major force in the current Italian wine scene. It has enormous natural resources and an industry which is dynamic, outward looking and reactive. If in the 1990s it was the introduction of international varieties which first raised the profile of Sicilian wine, (there is an interesting historical parallel with Tuscany here) today it is the appeal of the island's native varieties which is driving the market, and amongst these, the wines of Etna are undoubtedly the rising stars.



Sicily Overview

The first thing to say about Sicily is that it is big. With nearly 98,000 ha under vine (latest data from the Ministry of Agriculture) it has more vines than any other region in Italy. To put that figure in an international context, it has been calculated that the island has three times the vineyard area as that of the whole of New Zealand put together. With 61 authorized grape varieties, 23 DOCs, one DOCG, numerous IGTs, and a huge diversity of soils and climate conditions, the production is also extremely heterogeneous. The challenge for the modern wine industry, which relies heavily on export, has been to create a critical mass with a recognizable brand identity. The strategy over the past ten years has been to invest heavily in the catch-all, island-wide Sicilia DOC. The de-

nomination is currently claimed by roughly one fifth of the total surface area, and in 2022, accounted for a production of more than 83 million bottles (Sicilia DOC Consorzio). The wines have a very clear stylistic orientation. In its official promotional material, the dynamic and very efficient producers' Consorzio, declares the aim of the DOC is to offer wines which are (quote) "sustainable, modern and easy to drink;" a characterization which corresponds to the vast majority of the wines currently on the market. Sustainable, certainly. Thanks to the low pressure of vine disease, Sicily is able to claim the highest percentage of organically managed vineyards in the country, (although that has to be balanced by the energy resources needed for the indispensable use of refrigeration in the cellar).

Modern and easy to drink, also. The wines are generally of a high technical standard and meet the contemporary demand for fresh wines, increasingly white rather than red, with low-to-moderate alcohol levels. Within the category, there is much to enjoy. Grillo, when not over-cropped, makes white wines with an appealing candied fruit and herby character. Cerasuolo di Vittoria is capable of dry, spicy wines with a slightly liquoricy note. Catarratto can be crisp and citrusy when made sensitively. However, the search for native grape wines with the structure and complexity to age, takes one elsewhere; for example, to the rare sweet wines from the islands, to the great solera Marsalas (a subject which would require an article in its own right) and to the wines of the moment, Etna DOC.

Etna DOC

The Terroir

Mount Etna rises to a summit of 3,300 metres and has a circumference of 180km. Roughly two-thirds of this circumference is included in the Etna DOC zone, which stretches in an arc from the north to the southwest face of the volcano, climbing from 500 to 1,000m above sea level. Mt. Etna has been described as "an island within the island", with a natural environment which is strikingly different to that of any other in the region.

Soils

The soils are nearly exclusively of direct volcanic origin and vary, according to the period of the lava flow that created them, from pebbly gravel to sand with varying amounts of ash and pomace. The concentration of minerals, in particular potassium, combined with high water retention makes them extremely fertile, while their alkaline chemical composition makes for wines with low pH, a feature which favours longevity and gives both reds and whites a notable tangy intensity. More difficult to pinpoint exactly, but something which many tasters note, is a smoky, gunflint character which tends to emerge with age.

Climate

Annual rainfall ranging from 600mm to over 1000mm, is considerably higher than that of any other viticultural area on the island. As a result of the high altitudes, diurnal temperature variations are consistently more extreme, reaching up to as much as 30°C in some parts of the mountain in the run in to the harvest. The long half-moon shape of the DOC zone makes for significant climate variation between the different slopes of the mountain, but the common features are long hours of sunlight, more or less constant ventilation, and fewer temperature peaks than in any other part of the island. Put together, these features make for healthy grapes, long ripening, and late harvesting.

Vineyards

Although recent plantings are often wire trained, Etna is best known for its bush vines, which may be free standing or supported by single poles. Steeper slopes are

terraced, but traditionally not planted in rows but rather on the "quincone" system of equidistance between vines. Collectively, Etna probably has the oldest vineyard population of anywhere in Italy. Eighty-year old vines are far from a rarity and, thanks to soils that offer a natural barrier against phylloxera, many older plants are still ungrafted,

Evolution

The most highly quoted producers of Etna Rosso today command prices on a level with prestige Barolo, but it has not always been so. Etna has a history of bulk wine production for blending, and not of premium bottled wine. It is a legacy which it has carried with it until very recent times. Etna gained DOC status in 1968, but the impact of the DOC was slow to be felt. Burton Anderson summed up the status of the production at the beginning of the 1990s when he wrote in his *Wine Atlas of Italy* (Mitchel Beazley, 1990) that the wines of Etna "though produced in some quantity, never equal the grandeur of the setting". He conceded that Carricante had "good fruit and acidity" but he found that "reds from Nerello Mascalese are rarely inspiring". At that time, critics had scant regard for Sicily as a whole, and Etna was completely off the critical radar. It was not until nearly 20 years later that the wines started to receive serious attention, as the first new investors arrived from outside the region. Even then growth was slow. The real acceleration has only been seen in the past ten years. According to the data of the Etna Consorzio, in 2013 there were 203 growers and 680ha in produc-

tion in the DOC zone. By 2021 the number of growers had risen to 390 and the area under vine to 1,300ha. In the same period, total production rose from 1.5 million bottles to 4.5 million and increased again in 2023 to over 5.8 million (Regione Siciliana Ist. del Vino e dell'Olio), still a drop in the ocean compared to the 83 million bottles of the Sicilia DOC, but an indication of the explosion of interest in Etna wines. The rapid growth has not always been accompanied by consistent quality, but in the hands of the top producers, Etna is capable of wines of great personality, and an elegance and finesse often likened to that of Burgundy. An application for an up grade to DOCG status is in the pipeline, and it will be interesting to see the effect of tighter controls which should be coming into effect by 2006.

The White Grapes: Carricante

The white Carricante is a true native of Sicily, with a history of production limited exclusively to the island. It was planted more extensively across the region in the past, but it is sensitive to drought stress and fungal diseases and it requires the very particular conditions that Etna offers to thrive. Carricante is vigorous and potentially high-yielding and it only produces quality if it is pruned short. It is a late variety, but it ripens at altitudes, in some cases outside the DOC zone at over 1000m, at which the red Nerello struggles. It has low sugar, high total acidity and very low pH, qualities which in the past were prized as the base for Vermentino in the north of Italy, but with the



right handling, offer the prerequisites for the production of what is arguably Italy's greatest native white wine. When the wines are young, they can appear deceptively simple, but they have a prodigious ability to develop over time, acquiring a flinty intensity with Riesling-like nuances and great depth and complexity. The variety is generally bottled under the Etna Bianco label, possibly in blends with small percentages of the local Minella and/or Catarratto.

The Red Grapes: Nerello Mascalese

Nerello Mascalese is the principle grape of the Etna Rosso DOC. The variety takes its name from the Piana di Mascali, a coastal plain to the north of Catania. Ian d'Agata in his definitive work on the subject, *Native Wine Grapes of Italy* (University of California Press, 2014) cites studies which trace the origin of the variety to a natural crossing between Sangiovese and Mantonic Bianco, which makes it a relative of Calabria's Galioppo, and in part explains Nerello Mascalese's pale shades. There are two principle clones available commercially, but the majority of the population derives from massal selections, making for notable intravarietal diversity. Like Carricante, it is a vigorous variety which performs best with short-pruned bush training. It ripens before Carricante on warmer, lower slopes and tends to be sensitive to vintage variation and especially to terroir. The variety has moderate alcohol, moderate to high acidity and tannins which need to ripen completely to avoid giving an excessively vegetal streak to the wines. Nerello Mascalese is typically blended with Nerello Cappuccio, which on its own is a less interesting grape, but complements the former by reinforcing the colour and softening the acidity. The intense sour red fruit and dry, linear profile of a classic Etna Rosso make it highly attractive to drink young, but with moderate bottle age, the aromas broaden to include intriguing notes of tobacco leaf and Mediterranean herbs. Older bottles are hard to come by, but in my experience the wines seem to peak at 8-10 years.

Quo Vadis?

Following a decade of dizzy ascent, Etna is now in the situation of having to manage success. Rapid growth has led inevitably to an increase in the number of entry level wines from the denomination, and some producers are anxious that Etna is in



danger of losing the focus on terroir-driven fine wine in favour of simpler, immediate-drinking varieties that slot into the general profile of the DOC Sicilia. Given the potential for further growth and the strong market demand, I think there may be the risk of the Icarus effect, but the application for DOCG and the mapping of the contrade are indications that the policy of the Etna Consorzio is to support top end production. Although some international varieties are grown with success on the mountain, I do not see them playing an important future role in this. Perhaps the biggest challenge which lies ahead is the great unknown of climate change, but Etna producers have the inestimable advantage of being able to combat rising temperatures by moving further up the mountain. There are already vineyards at 1,300m, and it is not inconceivable that the DOC zone will have to be extended in the future beyond the current 1,000m limit.

For the full version of this article, please visit iwfs.org/americas.

Richard Baudains was born and brought up on the formerly French-speaking Island of Jersey (hence the French surname). To satisfy his wanderlust he studied to become an English language teacher, a profession he has had the good fortune to pursue in many of Italy's top wine regions. He published his first article with Decanter in 1989 and has been writing about Italian wine for the same London-based magazine ever since. He is a regional chair at the Decanter World Wine Awards, on the team of the Slow Wine Guide for Friuli Venezia Giulia, contributes to the Wine Scholar Guild and teaches M.A. Courses on Wine Journalism at the Università delle Scienze Gastronomiche. Outside of wine, he works as a Cambridge University English language examiner. He lives in Gorizia, Italy.

Richard has kindly been the IWFS wines consultant for Italy, Tuscany/Bolgheri since 2018 and Sicily for 3 years which first appeared in our 2023 guide.

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.

Patricia Falcon



The Scholarship in Action

Patricia Falcon, 2018 IWFS Scholar. Patricia finished her Master's degree in Hospitality Management in the summer of 2020. She served as an exemplary student throughout her undergrad and graduate studies. Excelling in her passion for food while working alongside many prominent chefs during her time as a volunteer for South Beach Wine & Food Festival (SOBEWFF). During her time at FIU, she received several leadership and food scholarships for her interest in culinary advancement and volunteerism at SOBEWFF. In addition, during the latter half of 2019, she was chosen for an apprentice position with illy Café Caffè North America.

As a result of the pandemic, Patricia started her own business from home, A'guede, named in memory of her mother who passed before she could see graduation come to fruition for Patricia. A'guede Sweet & Salty can be found via Instagram @aguedesweetsalty. Additionally, she teaches at Somerset Academy South Homestead.



Want to contribute to the IWFS Scholarship fund?

Scan the code to view the form.

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14 O'Brien Court
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IT'S EASY TO GIVE AN AWARD TO A WORTHY MEMBER



Story by Stephen Hipple, Awards Committee Chairman

	Medals Awarded to IWFS Americas members	What must the recipient have done to merit the award?	Who can nominate someone for this award?	How do I nominate someone for an award?	Cost to your branch?
	Board of the Americas, Silver	Four years of outstanding service within a local branch or to IWFS Americas	Any branch president or their designee! The application must be signed by an officer of your local branch. Members of the IWFS Americas Board of Directors can also request these nominations.	Any one of the following can download and fill in an application: A branch president, their designee, or a member of the IWFS Americas Board of Directors. Download and fill in the application. Attach it to an email; the address on the form. State the honoree's branch and their contributions to it. Be specific! Include positions the nominee has held and how long they've been an IWFS member. More details can be found below.	\$80
	Board of the Americas, Gold	Seven years of exceptional service within a local branch or to IWFS Americas; must have received Board of Americas Silver			\$80
	André Simon Bronze	Ten years of meritorious service at the local, national or international level; must have received Board of Americas Gold			\$225

The IWFS Americas Inc. Awards Committee wants to increase the number of Medals and Certificates of Appreciation given each year. The Committee is aware there are many members of the Society who work hard to make their branch better. Those members deserve an award, whether it is a Certificate of Appreciation, the Americas Silver Medal, Americas Gold Medal or the André Simon Bronze Medal. Requests for these awards can be submitted by any branch.

The application process has been made much easier.

If you're on your home computer, you're just a few clicks away from these forms. Just 1) Go to *IWFS.ORG*, 2) Login 3) Click on Awards. It is that easy! (Pro tip: Save the blank form to your computer and you will have it ready to fill in the next time you apply for an award.)

Email the completed form to me at stephenhipple@hotmail.com. Please remember that any application must be approved and signed by your branch's president or duly authorized representative.

Since streamlining the application process, IWFS Americas has awarded 3 Certificates of Appreciation as well as 9 Board of the Americas Silver, 3 Board of the Americas Gold and 1 André Simon Bronze Medals. There's someone in your branch who deserves to be recognized, so please go to www.iwfs.org/americas/awards to request one today!

What's Cooking?

CLUB EVENTS ACROSS THE AMERICAS

AIKEN

A Twomey Tasting

John and Patty Oakland hosted the Aiken Branch at the Sage Valley Gun Club. The annual fall dinner at Sage Valley is a tradition for branch. John selected wines from his cellar. He has long been a fan of Silver Oak, and shared wines from the sister winery, Twomey, at this year's dinner. The host also selected a date close to the full moon; a splendid sight over the fields of the Gun Club.

October 19, 2024: A Twomey Tasting, Sage Valley Gun Club, Aiken, South Carolina.

🍷 *Twomey Sauvignon Blanc 2022* × Mero Sea Bass: Medallion of Mero Seabass served seared resting on a bed of sauteed Shiitake Mushrooms and Candied Red Onions with Saffron Tomato Butter and Basil Oil. 🍷 *Twomey Pinot Noir, Alexander Valley 2020, Russian River Valley 2020, Dundee Hills, Willamette Valley 2021* × Petite Beef Wellington: Petite Filet of Beef with Mushroom Duxelles, Prosciutto and Dijon baked in a Puff Pastry to a golden tone served with Madeira Sauce and Baby Vegetables. Artichoke Salad, Tender Butter Lettuce, Long Stem Artichokes, Sweet Grape Tomatoes dressed in a Champagne Vinaigrette. 🍷 *Sandeman Founder's Reserve Ruby Port, Portugal* × Chocolate Tart, Vanilla Bean Creme Anglaise, White Chocolate, Whipped Cream and Dark Chocolate shavings.

John Oakland Describing Twomey Pinot Noir.



ARKANSAS

ROME on the Ridge III

ROME on The Ridge is an annual tradition for the young Arkansas Branch. Members who love to cook prepare food while those less comfortable in the kitchen bring wines to match them. This year's courses took us around the world with culinary visits to Italy, Thailand, France, Spain, and Germany. Lively conversation both accompanied and followed the feast. The overnight guests had a healthy discussion around the fire pit as to which course was the best. There was no agreement, since everything was so good. However, when it came to the most unusual (but surprisingly good) pairing, spicy Chicken Satay served with Vouvray was the hands-down choice. Several attendees had designated driver spouses, but many of the guests stayed overnight. To greet the morning and send overnighters on their way, a breakfast of mimosas, mini-biscuits, and a flight of compound butters was served. Everyone is already looking forward to next year!

The Arkansas Branch Enjoys a Day in the Country.



November 2, 2024: ROME on The Ridge III, John Trickett's Home, Charleston, Arkansas.

🍷 *Roederer Estate Brut NV from Jeroboam* × Road Ridge favorites and Charcuterie-ish nibbles. 🍷 *Chardonnay, Frank Family Vineyards 2020* × Spinach and Ricotta Ravioli with Alfredo Sauce. 🍷 *Vouvray Barton & Guestier "Les Petites Parcelles"* × Chicken Satay with Peanut Sauce and Cucumber Relish. 🍷 *Roederer Estate Rose NV* × Mini-Croque Monsieures. 🍷 *Mercurey 1er Cru Les Puillets 2021 "Phillippe Le Hardy"* × Coq au Vin Meatballs with Pioneer Woman 'taters. 🍷 *Berkasteler Graben Spatlese 1994 Weingut Wegeler* × Applejack Butter/Pecan Bundt Cake with Caramel Sauce.

ATLANTA

(L - R) Daisy Araica, Chaun Bunt, Fred Lona.

Christmas Dinner

The Atlanta Branch final event of 2024 was held at “Fogón and Lions”, the hottest restaurant in Alpharetta. Fogón's Spanish translation is "stove." This open kitchen employs an impressive 14-foot open-hearth wood-burning contraption. Chef and Owner Julio Delgado reserved the restaurant for our exclusive use and prepared a Spanish/Basque menu inspired by a recent vacation to the region.

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

December 15, 2024: Christmas Dinner, Fogon & Lions Restaurant, Alpharetta, Georgia.

🍷 *Segura Viudas Aria, Paco & Lola Albariño 2021, Viñedos de Párganos Rioja El Puntido 2004, Bosquet des Papes Châteauneuf-du-Pape Cuvée Tradition 2017, Raymond Usseglio Châteauneuf-du-Pape Cuvée Girard 2009* ✕ Grilled Chistorras with Padron Peppers, Salsa Verde, “Gilda” White Anchovies, Piparra Peppers, Spanish Olives, Jamon Iberico, Idiazabal Cheese, Date Puree, “Pintxo de Txaka” Crab Meat Pintxo, Croquetas de Tortilla de Patatas, Ajo Negro. Apple Chicory Salad with Fennel, Walnuts, and Manchego Cheese, Trucha a la “Andorrana,” in Agua de Lourdes, Clam Sauce, Chicken Basquaise, “Chuleton Asado,” Smoked Trumpet Mushrooms, Truffle Butter, Cabbage and Potatoes “Trinxat”, Basque Piperade Casserole. Holiday Turrón Souffle, Sherry Anglaise, Vanilla Ice Cream.



BALTIMORE

Longtime Committee Members Ernie Kovacs, John McCormick, & Bill Trimble.

December 4, 2024: 34th Holiday Dinner, Greenspring Valley Hunt Club, Owings Mills, Maryland.

For each of the last 34 years, the Wine & Food Society of Baltimore has presented a year-end Holiday Dinner. The last 29 of these were held at the Greenspring Valley Hunt Club and hosted by the same three members, Ernie Kovacs, John McCormick, and Bill Trimble! It is an event that we all have eagerly anticipated. This trio has suggested that it is time for some others to oversee this event. That will happen next year, and kudos to Ernie, John and Bill for the succession of outstanding Holiday Dinners.



BOSTON

Boston Branch's 90th Anniversary & Holiday Dinner.

Branch 90th Anniversary & Holiday Dinner

The Boston Branch celebrated the 90th anniversary of its founding and the Holidays with a black tie champagne reception and five course dinner held at the St. Botolph Club in Boston. Among the wine highlights was a flight of four vintages of Domaine de Chevalier 1983, 2003, 2004, and 2005. Two new members Debra Blyth-Wilk and Richard Wilk were presented with their medallions. The event took place exactly 90 years from the December 5, 1934—the same date when Andre Simon met with some leading Bostonian wine and food lovers at the Ritz-Carlton to discuss the founding of the Branch.

December 5, 2024: 90th Anniversary & Holiday Dinner, St. Botolph Club, Boston, Massachusetts.

🍷 *Champagne Meteyer Cuvee Marine NV* ✕ Deviled Quail Eggs and California Sturgeon Caviar, Smoked Trout on Gaufrette, Rabbit Rilette on Toasted Brioche. 🍷 *Trimbach Pinot Gris Reserve Personnelle 2017* ✕ Torchon of Foie Gras, Warm French Bread and Pickled Red Onion. 🍷 *Francois Berthenet Montagny 1er Cru Les Bonneveaux 2019* ✕ Diver Scallops, Delicata Squash, Saffron Creme and Bull's Blood Beets. 🍷 *Dom. De Chevalier 2012, 2005* ✕ Lamb Loin En Croute, Wild Mushrooms, Sautéed Spinach, Glazed Baby Carrots and Red Wine Demi-Glace. 🍷 *Dom. De Chevalier, 2004, 1983* ✕ Truffled Brie, Comte and Cantal Cheeses, Fried and Dried Fruits. 🍷 *Ch. Climens Sauternes-Bar-sac 2007* ✕ Creme Caramel, Fresh Berries.



BURLINGTON

Wonderful Local Food and Wine Pairing at Michelin Star Restaurant – Pearl Morisette

Our Burlington Branch members and guests enjoyed unique appetizers such as gougères with honey nut squash and goat cheese and delicate chicken liver mousse, followed by a 4-course locally sourced seasonal menu designed by Executive Chefs Daniel Hadida and Eric Robertson. These two culinary artists were acknowledged as two of the best chefs in the world and were awarded 2 out of 3 knives at The Best Chef 2024 awards held in Dubai.

We enjoyed the amazing food from the main restaurant, but in a private setting at their RPM Bakery. It is here that they have developed relationships with local farmers and millers, who are proponents of diverse and resilient heritage grains that are sown and grown in Ontario. These flavourful wheats are featured in slow-fermented sourdough bread, crisp buttery pastries, and savoury delights. As a result, we had the best of both worlds – Michelin star cuisine and specialized bakery fare.

To compliment the food, we started with a bubbly, of course! Cave Springs Blanc de Blancs was a brilliant example of Ontario's prowess at sparkling wines. This was followed by Pearl Morisette's own special blends: Irreverence White - Chardonnay, Viognier, Pinot Noir and Reisling, all well-known grapes in Ontario. We also enjoyed a Red Furie - a more classic blend of Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot and Cabernet Franc which paired beautifully with the lamb. We ended with a Brachetto d'Acqui, with its light ruby red colour, purple highlights, lively froth and persistent perlage. It was a lovely match for dessert, and, notably, is also a perfect match for chocolate.

After a number of International events, it was great to celebrate local food and wines so close to home, and it was yet another example of great wine, food and friends. Cheers.

November 23, 2024: Local Food and Wine Pairing, Pearl Morisette Winery, Jordan, Ontario.

Canapes: Gourgeres, Caramelized Squash, Ham and Cheese, Crispy Potato, Chicken Liver Mousse, Crispy Potato, White Bean. Dinner: Sourdough and Whipped Butter, Pork Rillettes, Celeriac Remoulade and Preserves, Carrot and Ginger Soup, Habanada, Braised Lamb Shoulder, White Bean, Roasted Onion, Crispy Bread. Dessert: Brown Butter Tart, Roasted Apple Compote.



Pearl Morisette Dinner Attendees.

BURLINGTON

Chinese New Year

Mott 32 was the perfect venue to celebrate the Chinese New Year, with a group of friends. In a floor-to-ceiling windowed room which overlooks downtown Toronto, the ambiance was just right.

For a change, we settled on two wines served throughout the meal: A crisp, dry German Riesling and a warm, velvety Côtes du Rhône. At least one of the wines paired perfectly with each course, and sometimes both!

Ahhh, the food ...14 courses of beautifully prepared, impeccably served, and delicious dishes. Iberico pork, done 2 different ways, was a highlight. So was the unique experience of having Apple Roasted Peking Duck, carved tableside. It was a fitting way to celebrate the Chinese Year with a Wood Snake. It represents growth, flexibility, and tolerance. All are attributes our chapter strives to emulate. Cheers, once again to good wine, food, and friends.

February 1, 2025: Chinese New Year, Mott 32, Toronto, Ontario.

🍷 Schloss Lieser-Thomas Haag, 'Wehlener Sonnenuhr' Riesling, 2021, Vincent Paris, Crozes-Hermitage, Rhone Valley, 2022 ✂️ Barbecue Pluma Iberico Pork, Yellow Mountain Honey, Marinated Cucumber, Pomelo, Hot & Sour Iberico Pork, Shanghainese Soup Dumplings. Alaskan King Crab Meat Soup, Conpoy, Sweet Corn. Minced Duck Fried Rice, Asparagus. Apple wood Roasted Peking Duck "Mott 32 Cut", Signature Nova Scotia Lobster :Ma Po Tofu, Chili, Triple-Cooked Black Angus Short Rib, General Tso's Free-Range Chicken, Chili, Braised Egg Tofu, Morel Mushroom, Pea Tips, Fish Broth, Goji Berry, Lily Bulk. Almond & Chocolate Oolong Tea "Xiao Long Bao", Fresh Mango, Coconut, Glutinous Rice Roll.



Mott 32 Dinner Attendees.

CAYMAN ISLANDS

Blue Gala Dinner

The IWFS Cayman Islands Branch hosts an exclusive Gala Dinner at Blue by Eric Ripert to celebrate the unveiling of Blue's renovation. A special menu was curated by Chef Thomas Seifried and guests had an opportunity to meet Chef Eric Ripert during this grand re-opening event.

November 14, 2024: Blue Gala Dinner, Blue by Eric Ripert, Grand Cayman, Cayman Islands.

🍷 *Henriot Hemera, 2008* × Canapes. 🍷 *Hansell Cuvee Alyce Chardonnay* × Striped Bass Slivers, Corn, Sweet Potato, Aji Amarillo Emulsion. 🍷 *Frederic Emile Riesling, 2016* × Lightly Seared Langoustine, Pineapple, Cauliflower, Indian Spiced Sauce. 🍷 *La Clarte de Haut-Brion, 2017* × Pan Seared Dover Sole, Romaine Heart, Truffle, Parmesan - Vichyssoise. 🍷 *Ch. Duhart-Milon, 2009* × Seared Wagyu Tenderloin, Foie Gras, Truffle, Maderia Jus. Compressed Kiwi, Yoghurt Sorbet, Cucumber-Mint Broth. 55% Equatoriale Chocolate, Tahitian Vanilla, Cognac, Cherry Clafoutis.

Guests Gather for Champagne during the Reception of the Black Tie Gala Dinner at Blue by Eric Ripert.



CHICAGO

896th Dinner of the Society - Oriole

Oriole is led by Executive Chef and Owner Noah Sandoval. Since opening in 2016, Oriole has been awarded and retained two Michelin stars. Oriole has recently received the Jean Banchet Award for Restaurant of the Year. This is a special venue and we were treated to a special 6-course tasting menu that was designed for the IWFS.

November 13, 2024 : 896th Dinner, Oriole, Chicago, Illinois.

🍷 *Pol Roger Vintage Brut 2015* × A5 Miyazaki Wagyu Tartare, Pickled Butternut Squash and Black Truffle, Sablefish Croquette, Smoked Sablefish Belly and Golden Kaluga Caviar. 🍷 *Ch. La Tour Blanche 2001* × Foie Gras, Mission Fig and Anise Hyssop. 🍷 *Pehu Simonet Champagne Grand Cru "Fins Lieux No 2 Verzenay Les Crayères" 2013* × Golden Kaluga Caviar, Red Kuri Squash and Bone Marrow. 🍷 *Dom. Vacheron Sancerre Blanc "Chambrates" 2020* × Matsutake, Smoked Roe and Cabbage. 🍷 *Fontodi Flaccianello della Pieve 2012* × Apellini Truffle and Yeast. 🍷 *Joseph Phelps Insignia 1997* × A5 Miyazaki Wagyu Palm Sugar and Thai Herbs. 🍷 *W & J Graham's Vintage Port 1977* × Chocolate Buckwheat and Espresso.

CHICAGO

896th Dinner of the Society - Jeong

The 898th 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."

Chef David is classically trained. A Culinary Institute of America graduate, he moved with his family from Korea to New Jersey when he was eight. After finishing culinary school, he worked at various New York and Chicago restaurants including as line cook at now-shuttered Michelin-starred Takashi and at Grant Achatz's The Aviary. He was one of the Chicago's Eater 2017 Young Guns Winner. He was a semifinalist for the James Beard Foundation Award for Rising Star Chef in 2017. Chef David and Jen met at the CIA as students. Jen pursued a career in the food manufacturing industry prior to deciding to put their eggs in the same basket, so to speak.

The duo introduced us to their brand of thoughtful inventive contemporary Korean inspired cooking.

CHICAGO *continued...*

January 8, 2025 : 898th Dinner, Jeong, Chicago, Illinois.

🍷 *Bollinger Special Cuvée Brut NV* ✕ Ork & Kimchi Mandu, Kimchi Emulsion, Shitake Oil and Scallion Curls, Curry Potato Croquette, Dongchimi. Soy and Orange Ge. 🍷 *Dom. Weinbach Schlossberg Cuvée Sainte Catherine Grand Cru 2016, Aubert Larry Hyde and Sons Vineyard 2016* ✕ Salmon Tartate, Dwenjang Gastrique, Crispy Rice Pearls, Whipped Yuzu Crème Fraîche, Eomuk, Salted Shrimp and Scallop Roulade Wrapped in Squash, Squash Relish with Sunflower Seeds, Rutabaga and Apple Purée, Gochujang Aioli, Scallop, Clementine Beurre Blanc, Blanched Spinach Dressed in a confit of Shallots, Garlic, Sesame. 🍷 *Frederic Esmonin Gevrey-Chambertin Estournelles Saint Jacques 1er Cru 1996, 1Ridge Monte Bello 1997* ✕ Grits, Jimmy Red Corn Grits Topped with Duck Confit, Frisée Salad Dressed in Asian Chive Oil and Soy Pickled Seaweed, Zabuton, Australian Wagyu with Brown Butter Carrot Velouté, Crispy Pressed Rice Cake, Makgeolli Pickled Cabbage. 🍷 *Dönnhoff Riesling Spätlese Oberhäuser Brücke 2006* ✕ Boricha, Roasted Barley Tea Ice Cream, Ssuk (Mugwort) Cake and Streusel, Sesame Brittle, and White Chocolate Crèmeux.

FLORIDA KEYS

Spanish Paella Dinner

The Florida Keys members gathered at the home of Daniel and Liz Samess for their final event of the year. The theme chosen for our celebration was a Spanish Paella Dinner. After a year of food, wines and many events filled with fun, we celebrated the first year of successfully starting a new branch of the International Wine & Food down in the Florida Keys. The evening was a beautiful 78 degrees as we sat poolside to enjoy each other's company.

November 9, 2024 : Spanish Paella Dinner, Home of Daniel and Liz Samess, Florida Keys, Florida. 🍷 *Licia Albarino 2023, Finca Martello Rioja Reserva 2016* ✕ Gambas al Ajillo (Spanish Garlic Shrimp), Patatas Bravas, Spanish Potato Omelet, Spanish Meats, Cheeses, and Olives, Croquettes, Pan Con Tomate. 🍷

Lodi Bone Shaker Old Vine Zinfandel ✕ 🍷 *Gonzalez Byass Nectar Pedro Ximenez Dulce Sherry* ✕ Tarta de Santiago, Spanish Almond Cake.

Florida Keys Members Enjoying the Last Event of the Year.



HONOLULU

August 31, 2024 : 3 Amigos, Home of Karen and Jeff Deer, Kahala, Hawaii.

For the tenth time in a little more than a decade, three dozen IW&FS members and guests enjoyed the popular “Three Amigos” (John Doty, Robert Fung and Jeff Deer) event on August 31, 2024, at Karen and Jeff Deer’s Kahala home. For this encore event, Chef Elmer Guzman prepared many of his award-winning Pacific fusion appetizers and entrees.

The menu was well thought out and the food was presented beautifully and professionally by experienced servers and helpers. In addition to being delicious, it was plentiful and easy to eat “pupu” style without necessarily sitting around a traditional dining table. The dishes included Blackened Ahi Tataki with Chili Garlic Sauce on Toast, Grilled Kalbi Taco with Miso Gochujang and Pickled Daikon, Mixed Greens with Shaved Red Onion, Tomato, Cucumber and Lemon Miso Dressing, Scented Roasted Potatoes, Wrapped Chicken Roulade, Seared Snapper with Ginger Scallions, Hand Carved Roasted Prime Rib with Au Jus and Horseradish, Banana Bread Pudding with Caramel Drizzle, and Blueberry Clafoutis with Sweet Cream.

HONOLULU *continued...*

The hosts selected wines from the Branch cellar which included Ramage La Batiste 1996, Ramey Claret 2007, and Leeuwin Estate Art Series Cabernet 2012, among others. The evening was further enhanced by favorite selections of wine brought to the event by members and guests to share among the gathering, which included Leoville Barton 1998, Marcassin Pinot Noir 2014, Saunter Eagle Summit Cabernet 2015, Kapcsándy Cabernet 2016, Peter Michael Belle Côte Chardonnay 2017, Sassicaia 2020, and Rombauer Chardonnay 2022, among others.

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

It was another terrific event in a beautiful location with spectacular food, great wine and good friends.

(L - R) Tina Doty, Marilyn Pappas, Angel Foster, Karen Deer, Kathleen Okubo.



HOUSTON

Dinner at Costa Brava Bistro

Houston chapter members gathered at Costa Brava Bistro in Bellaire on Thursday, October 17, 2024, for an IWFS dinner focused on cutting-edge Spanish wines heralded by critics and sommeliers, paired with delicious, traditional Spanish foods. It was an evening of discovery! Costa Brava executive chef Kitty Bailey, a longtime culinary figure in Houston, has created a wonderful set of classic dishes which were paired with highly rated wines to explore new flavors and Spanish wine regions.

October 17, 2024 : October Dinner, Costa Brava Bistro, Houston, Texas.

🍷 *Gramona 'La Cuvee' 2018 Corpinnat Penedes* X Costa Brava Olive, Croqueta with Jamon Iberico, Grilled Octopus on Fingerling. 🍷 *Gramona 'Gessami' 2023 Muscat, Sauvignon Blanc, Gewurztraminer, Penedes* X Black Seafood Rice with Jumbo Shrimp, Squid and Jumbo Lump Crab Meat. 🍷 *Familia Torres 'Salmos' 2019 Priorat, Clos i Terrasses 'Laurel' 2021 Priorat* X Crispy Lamb Chops with Boletus and Roasted Red Peppers. 🍷 *Jorge Ordenez 'No2 Victoria' 2019 Moscatel de Alejandria, Malaga* X Torrijas with Orange-Butter Sauce, Apricot Compote and Candied Citrus.

Event Host Charlie Bennett, Presented IWFS Certificate to Owner/ Executive Chef, Kitty Bailey as Angeles Duenas, Owner/General Manager and Chapter President Preston Towbar Look On.



HOUSTON

Holiday Dinner

Executive Chef Olivier Burgos provided an inspired dinner created just for us! Chef Burgos is a French native who has worked in numerous Paris Michelin-starred restaurants. He has traveled throughout Asia, working in Singapore, Malaysia, and Indonesia, expanding his knowledge of the world's cuisine. He spent a couple of decades in Australia where he opened and sold an award-winning restaurant. Chef Burgos became the Head of Culinary Arts at The Culinary Institute Le Nôtre in 2017 and accepted a position as Executive Chef at Royal Oaks in 2021. Royal Oaks' sommelier, Nick Blumer, paired the wines and provided a wonderful description of each wine and why it was selected. Former Houston chapter president, Lisa White was the event host.

December 8, 2024 : Holiday Dinner, Royal Oaks Country Club, Houston, Texas.

🍷 *Laurent Perrier Brut 2012* X Escargot Vol-Au-Vent, Beef Tartare Crostata. 🍷 *Matt Taylor Komorebi Vineyard Chardonnay, Sonoma Coast, 2018* X Lobster and Citrus Salad, Saffron Dressing. 🍷 *Dom. Brun-Avril Chateauneuf du Pape Blanc, 2021* X Scallops and Jerusalem Artichokes. 🍷 *Ch. Leoville Barton, St. Julien, Bordeaux, 2015* X Wagyu Zabuton Steak, Sauteed Foie Gras. 🍷 *Royal Tokaji Aszu 6 Puttonyos, 2017* X Chocolate and Caramel.

(L - R) Sommelier Nick Blumer, Chef Oliver Burgos, Event Host Lisa White.



JACKSONVILLE

Howard Caplan, Tanja Wegerer, Robert Jones.



Deck the Palms

Once again members and guests of The Wine & Food Society of Jacksonville gathered to celebrate the season at the home of Mark & Kathy Kallaus. Attendees were greeted at the door with a glass of Champagne Bollinger Special Cuvee NV. From there they were directed into the dining room where they were presented with their choice of Tattinger Champagne Brut as well as three other white wines. At this event, members and guests were free to roam and sample wines at the four wine stations.

December 21, 2024: Annual Holiday Wine Event, Kallaus House, Jacksonville, Florida.

🍷 *Station One: Bollinger Special Cuvee NV, Tattinger Champagne Brut NV, Pierre Prieur & Fils Sancerre 2023, Dr. Loosen Blue Slate Riesling Kabinett 2022, Louis Latour Puligny Montrachet Sous Le Puits 2020* 🍷 *Station Two: Maison Louis Latour Santenay, Bourgogne 2019, Merry Edwards Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir 2010, Famille Perrin Chateau de Beaucastle Chateauneuf du Pape 2010, Vieux Telegraphe Chateauneuf du Pape 2003* 🍷 *Station Three: Ch. d'Armailhac Grand Cru Classe, Pauillac 1995, Ch. Prieure-Lichine Grand Cru Classe Margaux 1996, Ch. Canon-la-Gaffeliere Grand Cru Classe Saint-Emilion 1995* ✕ *Station Four: Graham's Vintage Porto 1991, Don PX Pedro Ximenez Grand Reserva 1979* ✕ Buffet: Herb Marinated Shrimp with Citrus Sauce, Spinach and Goat Cheese Stuffed Mushrooms, Mini Crab Cakes with Smoky Tomato Remoulade, Fresh Vegetable Spring Rolls with Chili Sauce, Potato Skins with Bacon, Cheddar, and Creme Fraiche, Chicken Satay with Creamy Peanut Pesto Dipping Sauce, Boursin Cheese and Double Tomato Relish, Artisan Charcuterie Display with Fruit, Nuts, and Crackers, Salted Caramel Brownies, Mini Eclairs, Red Velvet Mini Cupcakes.

JACKSONVILLE

Bruce Ackerman and Jeanne Maron.



A Brazilian Inspired Dinner

Chef Rodrigo Demarco, born in Sao Palo, Brazil started his gastronomic career at a young age working in his uncle's catering service. By the age of 16 he had opened his first restaurant followed by other restaurant businesses, all the while pursuing his passion for food and service. Chef Demarco also studied Oenology with the Brazilian Association of Sommeliers. Our hosts, Bruce & Diane Ackerman, discovered this small restaurant in a strip shopping center and fell in love with it! All those at the dinner agreed.

January 14, 2025: A Brazilian Inspired Dinner, Rustic 21 Bistro, Jacksonville, Florida.

🍷 *Henri Dubois Brut Prestige Champagne NV* ✕ *Pastelzinho de Frango com Catupiry (Creamy Chicken Cheese Pastries), Dadinho de Tapioca (Fried Tapioca Squares), Brazilian Cheese Bread.* 🍷 *Louis Latour Puligny-Montrachet 2020* ✕ *Pear Salad (Mixed Greens, Balsamic Vinaigrette Dressing, Pear, Blue Cheese and Walnuts).* 🍷 *Catena White Clay Semillon-Chenin Blanc, Piatelli Grand Reserve Malbec* ✕ *Choice of: Bobo de Peixes (Brazilian Fish Stew with Mashed Yucca, Coconut Milk, Ginger, Cilantro, White Rice and Fried Banana) or Costela ao Molho Madeira com Risotto de Parmesan (Braised Short Rib with Madeira Sauce and Parmesan Risotto) or Lasagna a la Bolonhese (Lasagna Bolognese - Homemade Pasta with Bechamel and Bolognese Sauces, Mozzarella Cheese, Sliced Ham and Parmesan).* 🍷 *Manoella Ruby Finest Reserve Porto* ✕ *Mousse au Chocolate or Bolo de Rolo Goiaba (Thin Layers of Handmade Rolled Cake with Guava Paste Filling embedded with Port Wine served with Vanilla Ice Cream.*

KANSAS CITY

Annual Meeting & Dinner

The Kansas City Branch held its Annual Meeting and black tie dinner at the Kansas City River Club on November 12, 2024.

Suzanne Shank (current president) installed the new Board: President, Kim Jones; Vice-President, Celia Honeycutt; Secretary, Lynn Schweig; Treasurer, Kevin Laffey. Executive Chef Jos van Hengel, originally from the Netherlands, refined his culinary prowess in some of the world's top kitchens in Rotterdam, Chicago, and southern California. He has introduced his distinctive and modern approach to fine dining inspired by his world travels, the use of seasonal local ingredients and utilizing unconventional gastronomic techniques.

KANSAS CITY *continued...*

November 12, 2024: Annual Meeting & Dinner, The River Club, Kansas City, Missouri.

🍷 *Cremant de Bourgogne, Louis Picamelot, Blanc de Blancs, Brut* × Passed Canapes, Shrimp Garlic Bread Rouleau; Bacon Wrap Dates. 🍷 *Rhone, Mas de Bressades, Costerie de Nimes, France, 2020* × Granny Smith Salad, Young Greens, Romaine, Apple Cider Dressing, Granny Smith Sorbet, Pistachio, Parmesan Shavings, Raw Granny Smith Apple, Black Pepper, Borage Flowers. 🍷 *Rombauer, Chardonnay, Carneros, California, 2022* × Cauliflower Soup, Brown Butter, Anchovies, Black Olive, Roasted Cauliflower, Parmesan. 🍷 *Aston, Pinot Noir, Sonoma Coast, California, 2021 or Duckhorn, Cabernet, Napa Valley, California, 2020* × Cauliflower Soup, Brown butter, anchovies, black olive, roasted cauliflower, Parmesan or Halibut Filet, Herbed Potato Waffle, Sauce Vin Blanc, Bread Crust, Young Arugula, Sea Beans, Spinach Puree, Green Beans. 🍷 *Duckhorn, Cabernet, Napa Valley, California, 2020* × Prime Striploin, Green Cabbage Seared In Duck Fat, Purple Potato Brunoise, Fresh Truffle, Green Peppercorn Demi Glaze, Pickled Radish, Green Shiso. 🍷 *Pedro Ximenez, Solera NV* × Pedro Ximénez Crème Brûlée, Px Foam, White Raisins, Raisin Tuilles.

(L - R) Lynn Schweig, John Lohmeyer, Suzanne Shank, Dr. Ivan Batlle, Dr. Karla Batlle, & Kim Jones.



(L - R) Kimberly Ried, Karen Yungmeyer, Dr. John Yungmeyer, Sharon Barry, Deanna Diebolt.



KANSAS CITY

December 10, 2024: Holiday Sparkler, Kansas City, Missouri

The IWFS Kansas City Branch kicked off the holiday season with its festive Holiday Sparkler on December 10. The catered cocktail party was held at a private venue in Kansas City. A pianist performed while members and their guests enjoyed wine, food and music. Lon Lane's Inspired Occasions provided the hors d'oeuvres, including their famous "Hot Onion Puffs", chorizo and black bean empanadas, grilled tenderloin Yorkshire pudding, cold smoked salmon with herbed Boursin, Belgian endive petals, chocolate brownies with crushed peppermint, and jammy thumbprint cookies. Wines served were Scharffenberger Brut Rosé, Thierry Fournier Reserve, M. Bonnamy Crémant De Loire, and Kumusha Rosé.

KITCHENER-WATERLOO

Celebrate Christmas 2024

Jason Ernst, General Manager of Sole Restaurant and Wine Bar provided an exceptionally fine dining experience complimented by perfect wine pairings from the house cellar. The evening started with live entertainment by Amie Debrone, actor/singer/dancer/teacher and Jason White on keyboard.

December 3, 2024: Celebrate Christmas 2024, Sole Restaurant and Wine Bar, Waterloo, Ontario.

🍷 *Champagne Moutard Père & Fils, Grand Cuvée, France* × Bavarian Meat and Cheese Board. 🍷 *Sauvignon Blanc Igt Veneto, Italy* × Solé Salad, Honeycrisp Apples, Heirloom Carrots, Arugula, Kale, Candied Pecans, Crumbled Goat Cheese, Hemp Seeds, Lemon Thyme Dressing, Serego Alighieri Possessiononi Garganega. 🍷 *Wente Chardonnay, California or Schug Pinot Noir, Sonoma California* × Baked Salmon, Dukkah Crusted, Spiced Pumpkin Squash, Brussel Sprouts, Cassoulet Beans, Maple Mustard. 🍷 *San Giorgio Ciampoleto Rosso Di Montalcino, DOC, Tuscany, Italy* × Beef Short Ribs, Fingerling Potatoes, Chimay & Date Jus, Tangerine Gremolata. 🍷 *Vineland Estate Late Harvest Cabernet Sauvignon, Niagara* × Vanilla Bean Creme Brulee and Cake Truffles, Milk Chocolate Dipped.

Event Hosts Barb & Frank Carere and Mary Ellen & Dietmar Sommerfeld.



LA JOLLA

What An Extravaganza!

Despite a few last-minute cancellations, we hosted an exceptional event with around 50 attendees—just shy of our usual 60+. The atmosphere was both festive and elegant, as the gentlemen donned formal black tie with their medallions while the ladies, dressed to impress, wore their smaller medallions with grace and sophistication.

This year, the service at West Gate was nothing short of outstanding. From start to finish, every detail reflected thoughtful execution. The wine service, impeccably timed to precede each food course, seamlessly set the stage for a refined and memorable evening. The table settings were a visual delight, with intricate details that elevated the dining experience. Meanwhile, the harpist's enchanting melodies provided a serene and magical backdrop, creating an ambiance that was both intimate and luxurious.

The evening began with a lively reception where tray-passed hors d'oeuvres were perfectly paired with Billecart-Salmon Brut Rosé. The champagne's elegance and effervescence complemented the appetizers beautifully, setting a celebratory tone as conversations sparked and glasses clinked. The highlight of the evening was, without question, the presentation of the IWFS BDA Silver Medal Award to Chef Michel Malécot. It was truly heartwarming to see everyone come together to honor such a deserving recipient. Witnessing the joy and pride on Michel's face, as well as the collective applause from all in attendance, was a reminder of the community and camaraderie that define our gatherings.

Altogether, it was a magnificent evening filled with laughter, fine wine, and heartfelt moments. It was such a pleasure to see everyone again, sharing in the joy of this special occasion. The night was unforgettable!

December 8, 2024: Christmas Gala, The Westgate Hotel, San Diego, California.

🍷 *Billecart-Salmon Brut Rose* X Tray Passed Hors d'oeuvres Burgundy Escargot Vol Au Vent, Pacific Bluefin Tuna Tartar Cucumber, Preserved Lemon, Artichoke Heart Boursin, Parmesan. 🍷 *Far Niente Chardonnay, CAVE Collection 2017* X Duck Prosciutto Roasted Butternut Squash, Apple Chips, Quail Egg, Arugula and Baby Frizee. 🍷 *Louis Latour Corton-Charlemagne Grand Cru, 2020* X Maine Lobster and Sea Scallop Fennel Marmalade, Grilled Leek, Tomato Saffron Broth. 🍷 *M. Chapoutier Ermitage Le Pavillon, 2014* X Cape Grim Beef Tenderloin Cippolini Onion, King Oyster Mushroom, Creamy Potato Aligot, Green Peppercorn Sauce. 🍷 *Dolce, Late Harvest Wine, 2016* X Black Forest Yule Log Sacher Cake, Chocolate Cremeux Cherry Sorbet. 🍷 *Yuste Aurora Sherry Manzanilla* X A Special Holiday Gift for Members.



Michel Malécot Receives BDA Silver Medal Award, Rich Smith Chair, Chef Michale, Charlie Black, VP.

MEMPHIS

Dinner with a Mid-South Legend

Chef/Owner Wally Joe (THE LEGEND) and Chef de Cuisine Andrew Adams opened their doors at Acre Restaurant for the November dinner of The Memphis Wine & Food Society. A wine dinner at Acre is always well received and generates a large turnout. Dinner Chairmen Jim Vogel and Mike Harris provided broad guidance and the culinary team delivered an exquisite menu. While all the dishes were wonderful, the Sable Fish in Brioche received widespread acclaim among members and quests. Additionally, the wines pulled from the society's cellar were a focal point and the pairings were an integral part of the dinner. The beef spinalis (the outer edge of the ribeye) was a spectacular course with the celebrated 2000 Bordeaux (Gruard Larose). The creativity of Wally and Andrew was on full display, which created a memorable evening for the Society.

November 12, 2024: Dinner with a Mid-South Legend, Acre Restaurant, Memphis, Tennessee.

🍷 *Domaines des Comtes Lafon Meursault, Clos de la Baronne, 2014* X Sable Fish in Brioche, Charred Broccoli Puree, Sunchoke and Caviar Coulis. 🍷 *La Spinetta (Rivetti) Barbaresco Vursu Vigneto Staderi, 2006, Frederic Magnien Chambolle-Musigny 1st Cru Les Borniques (Magnum), 2002* X Spiced Honey Glazed Duck Breast, Duck Confit & Foie Gras Stuffed Ravioli, Caramelized Celeriac Puree, Quince & Pomegranate. 🍷 *Ch. Gruard Larose, St Julien, 2000* X Roasted Beef Spinalis, Artichoke Mousse, Potato-Onion Bacon Gateau & Truffle Consomme. 🍷 *Dona Antonia Reserve Tawny Port* X Chestnut Sponge Cake, Currant Confit, Chestnut Mousse and Chocolate Cream.



Champagne & Aperitif Wines Members at Acre Restaurant.

MEMPHIS

Deck the Halls

The Memphis Country Club was the location for the annual holiday dinner of the Memphis Branch of the International Wine and Food Society. The club was beautifully decorated and warm on a frigid winter evening. Robert Fogelman served as dinner chairman for this outstanding evening. Mr. Fogelman is currently president of MCC. The food, wine and service were exemplary. The evening began with aperitif wines, champagne, and passed appetizers of Foie Gras Tart with onion confit and Charred Duck Tartare on crostini with grape mist. A departure from most of the society's wine events, Chef Andy and Robert decided on a first course of truly amazing wild mushroom soup paired with Calera Jensen Vineyard Pinot Noir 2012. Everyone enjoyed a very festive gathering, kicking off the holiday season for many.

(L - R) Jean and Billy Weiss, Bradley and Robert Fogelman.



December 8, 2024: Deck The Halls, Memphis Country Club, Memphis, Tennessee.

🍷 *Calera Jensen Vineyard Pinot Noir, 2012* × Wild Mushroom & Asiago Cheese Soup with Truffle Garlic Croutons. 🍷 *Dom. Vincent & Sophie Morey Chassagne Montrachet 1re Cru Morgeot, 2016* × Seared Sea Scallop, Celery Root Puree, Coral Sauce Candied Lemon, Chervil. 🍷 *Ch. de Fonbel St. Emilion Grand Cru, 2005* × Cabernet Braised Veal, Lyonnaise Potatoes, Vegetables Provincial. Mango Basil Vacherin, Lime Meringue, Basil Ice Cream, Mango Sorbet.

MONTEREY PENINSULA

Holiday Dinner

On December 8, 2024, very fortunate members and guests gathered at Corral de Tierra Country Club located in the heart of John Steinbeck's Pasture of Heaven, just east of Monterey, for our annual Holiday Dinner. This was our branch's 284th event. The country club and dining room were beautifully decorated with holiday motifs.

Our hosts Louis Frizzell and Sheila Tansill oversaw a magnificent event with exquisite European and French inspired appetizers and courses prepared by Executive Chef William Bennett and wines selected by Peter Tansill, Sommelier. Juli Alexander filled the dining room with beautiful harp music.

(L - R) Louis Frizzell, Sheila Tansill, & Pete Tansill.



December 8, 2024: Holiday Dinner Party, Corral de Tierra Country Club, Monterey, California.

🍷 *Chardonnay, Stonestreet Estate, 2020* × Spanish Octopus Carpaccio, Crispy Artichoke, Meyer Lemon, Olive Oil, Aleppo Pepper. 🍷 *Bianco Toscano, Castellare Di Castellina "Le Ginestre", 2023* × Poached Turbot Fillet, Kaluga Caviar, Beurre Blanc, Herbed Buttermilk. 🍷 *Chateauneuf du Pape, Dom. Le Prieure Des Papes, 2020* × Dry Aged Rohan Duck Breast, Duck Confit and Wild Mushroom Crepinette, Caramelized Garnet Yam Puree, Kumquat. 🍷 *Gran Reserva 904 Seleccion Especial Tinto, La Rioja Alta, 2015* × Prime Beef Wellington, Wagyu Tallow Confit Carrot, Black Garlic Soubise, Cabernet Reduction. 🍷 *Champagne, Henri Giraud Solera Ratafia* × Sticky Toffee Pudding Cake, Spiced Rum Muscovado Toffee Sauce, Maple Pecan Ice Cream, Jamaican Banana Rum.

NAPLES

An Evening of Italian Cuisine and International Wines

The Naples Branch began our 2025 Season at Bellini Restaurant and Bar, located in Naples, FL. Fifty-seven members joined together in the Rotunda Room to share an Italian Dinner accompanied by an International selection of wines. The menu created by Owner Mike Melucci, featuring wines paired by our wine expert, Lou Bernardi, was well received by our members. Traditional Italian dishes of Lobster Ravioli in a Light Pink Sauce, Ahi Tuna Tartare, Veal Scallopini, and a scrumptious Tiramisu, were delicious and received rave reviews from our members. The wines perfectly complimented each course. An evening of laughter, fine food, wine, and companionship was enjoyed by all!

NAPLES *continued...*

November 11, 2024: An Evening of Italian Cuisine and International Wines, Bellini Italian Restaurant & Bar, Naples, Florida.

🍷 *Louis Charles Rose Champagne, NV* × Caprese Skewers, Arancini with Gorgonzola Dip. 🍷 *Madelyn Cuvee, White Blend, Napa, 2021* × Lobster Ravioli in a Light Pink Sauce. 🍷 *Gravel Pit Pinot Noir, Doral Vineyards, Sonoma, 2017* × Ahi Tuna Tartare. 🍷 *Recchia Armarone della Valpolicella Classico, Veneto, 2017* × Veal Scallopini with Barolo Wine Sauce and Mushrooms, Parmesan Mashed Potatoes and Grilled Asparagus. Tiramisu.

Dr. Don Robbins & Kathleen Boyle.



NEW ORLEANS

Holiday Black Tie at Arnaud's

With over 100 years serving French creole cuisine in the heart of New Orleans' French Quarter, Arnaud's Restaurant radiates into eleven historic buildings and seventeen dining rooms. Our annual holiday black tie dinner featured an Imperial (6L) of St. Emilion Grand Cru from our group's cellar. This fantastic dinner was organized by branch President Chris Dorion. Branch Sommelier Michelle O'Connell and Bill Kuhlman provided the wine pairings. The chef is Tommy DiGiovanni.

December 7, 2024: Holiday Black Tie Dinner, Arnaud's, New Orleans, Louisiana.

🍷 *J M Gobillard & Fils Brut Traditionelle, NV, Hautvillers, France* × Soufflé Potatoes with Béarnaise Sauce. 🍷 *Melanie Pfister 'Berg' Riesling, Alsace, France, 2023* × Demi Shrimp in White Remoulade Sauce on Fried Green Tomato. 🍷 *Melanie Pfister 'Berg' Riesling, Alsace, France, 2023* × Demi Sautéed Gulf Fish Amantine- with haricots Verts. 🍷 *Finca Nueva Reserva Tempranillo, Rioja, Spain, 2016* × Turtle Soup. 🍷 *Imperial of Ch. Fonplegade, Saint-Emilion Grand Cru, Bordeaux, France, 2011* × Veal Tournedo- Port Wine Sauce and Brabant Potatoes. 🍷 *Café Brûlot* × Chocolate Rosemary Torte.

(L - R) Allain Gagnet, Margaret Cordes, Liz Hailey, Charlotte Dorion, Michelle O'Connell, Blair Reynolds.



NEW YORK

December 16, 2024: CP & IWA at Kebab aur Sharab, New York, New York

Chapter President Jack Gordon organized a unique event pairing ultra-premium sake with Indian food at Kebab aur Sharab. Hosted by Richard Geoffroy, the former Chef du Cave at Dom Pérignon for 28 years. Richard built the first new sake brewery in sixty years in Japan where he creates his IWA 5 sakes in various "Assemblages." The evening began with canapés paired with 2015 Dom Perignon Champagne (one of his final vintages) followed by the IWA Assemblages 2, 3, and 4 served at different temperatures to best complement each course. The menu included Bhel Bites, Curryleaf Prawns, Wagyu Pathar, Purple Yam Chaat, Baby Goat Dori Kebab, Paneer Dori Kebab, Coconut Kerela Fish Curry, Bone Marrow Biryani and Jalebi Caviar with Rabdi and Saffron Milk Foam.

(L - R) President and CEO of ABCK Corp. Arnaud Brachet, Salil Metha, Chef and Owner Richard Geoffroy, IWA Sake Owner, Sommelier Dean Fuerth, & Étienne Geoffroy.



NORFOLK

December 5, 2024: Basque in the Season, Black Cow Fat Pig, Norfolk, Nebraska.

The Norfolk Branch celebrated the holiday season by experiencing the cuisine of San Sebastian, Spain. Master chef Michael Behrens prepared the culinary feast for us.

For the people from the Basque Country, food is one of the most important aspects of life to enjoy! It is sharing big plates of food around the table; it is celebrating happy occasions; it is a way of life!

The highlight of the evening was our take on the Spanish Christmas lottery. Affectionately known as "El Gordo" (The Fat One), it is one of the world's oldest and most massive lottery draws. Established in 1812, this lottery is not only a significant part of Spanish Christmas traditions, but also a major source of excitement due to its enormous prize pool. Each member has a lottery ticket and gradually, each ticket is eliminated until only one participant remains.....the winner! In our case, the winner received a bottle of Segura Viudas Brut Reserva Heredad.

The menu consisted of Pintxos of spinach and goat cheese croquette, marinated warm olives and Marcona almonds served with traditional Sangria; a sopa course of savory tomato and jamón paired with a La Conreria Priorat Tinto; a plato principal of Iberia pork with peppadew, roasted fingerling potatoes and white asparagus served with a Castillo Clavijo Rioja Gran Reserva; and a dulce course of Basque cheesecake with lemon curd and cream along with a flute of Poema Brut Cava. Delicioso!

(L - R) Ed & Renee McClymont, John & Sue Burns, Tim Brogan, Clark Froehlich & Paula Pflueger, (Seated) Michelle & Bob Dudley



NORTHEAST TEXAS

Christmas Celebration

The Northeast Texas Branch of IWFS held its annual Christmas Dinner and Wine Tasting on December 13, 2024 at Webb Hill Country Club outside of Wolfe City, Texas. Forty-eight members and guests were treated to a delicious and festive menu prepared by Chef Scott Holey. He and his staff once again amazed us with their delightful menu that paired so well with the selection of wines.

December 13, 2024: Christmas Celebration, Webb Hill Country Club, Wolfe City, Texas.

♥ *Louis Bouillot Perle De Vigne Brut Sparkling Wine* × Shrimp Remoulade, Blue Cheese Pastry Twirls, Spinach & Feta Stuffed Mushrooms, Prosciutto Wrapped Boursin Cheese. ♥ *Dr Heidemanns-Bergweiler Riesling Qba 2022* × Holiday Honey Crisp Apple & Feta Salad with Honey Mustard Dressing. ♥ *Ropiteau Pinot Noir Reserve 2021* × Grilled New York Strip Steak Medallions with Mushroom Bordelaise Sauce, Potato Palmier and Seasonal Vegetables. ♥ *Truth & Valor Cabernet Paso Robles 2021* × Coconut Cake with Cranberry Curd Filling.

(L - R) Don & Jo Etta Talley, Joyce Issacs.



OAKVILLE

East Meets West Winter Wonderland at Mark's Christmas Tree Farm

On December 2, 2024, IWFS Oakville held its holiday event at Mark's Christmas tree farm in Hamilton, the family home of one of our members. With the help of the Executive Committee, the barn was transformed into an "East Meets West Winter Wonderland." Silk sarees were hung from the rafters with care, boughs, wreaths, and Christmas decorations everywhere. It was a cold night, but the candles, heaters, good cheer, and ugly sweater contest kept the mood elevated. The meal was catered by Cascata Bistro, whose Chef Paul Gauthier trained under Executive Chef Jason Bangerter at Langdon Hall. The wine pairings were selected by our own Christian Frayssignes.

December 2, 2024: East Meets West Winter Wonderland, Mark's Christmas Tree Farm, Hamilton, Ontario. 🍷 *Champagne Andre Chemin Premier cru Brut Millésime, 2016* ✕ Amuse Bouche: Gougères filled with Goat Cheese and Caramelized Onion, and Crispy Jerusalem Artichoke Cups with a Chorizo Filling. 🍷 *Villota Rioja Blanco Selección, 2020* ✕ Trout Rilette with Crème Fraiche and Sourdough Crostini. 🍷 *Audarya Estate Cannonau di Sardegna, 2015* ✕ Main course: Braised Lamb Shank with Glazed Leeks, Spiced Cabbage Puree, and Red Wine Jus, or Polenta and Seared Mushrooms with Caramelized Apple and Ice Cider Reduction. 🍷 *Cantine Ceci Otello Lambrusco dell'Emilia* ✕ Dutch Cocoa and Almond Flour Cake with Dark Chocolate Ganache and Cardamom and Orange Cranberry Puree.

"Ugly" Christmas Sweaters and a Rustic Christmas Tree Farm Provided an Abundance of Christmas Spirit.



OKLAHOMA CENTRAL

Fall Dinner

The IW&FS Oklahoma Central Branch met for their fall dinner at Sedalia's Oysters and Seafood Restaurant in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma on November 21, 2024. Sedalia's was listed in Bon Appetit last year as one of the top 25 upcoming restaurants. Branch president Lynn Kickingbird and her husband, Kirke, served as hosts. The extraordinary menu was created and prepared by owners Silvana and Chef Zachary Walters. We were offered a rather rare package by Sedalia's - we could bring our own wines to share or enjoy the chef's selection of wine or cocktails from the restaurant.

November 21, 2024: Fall Dinner, Sedalia's Oysters and Seafood Restaurant, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma.

🍷 *Avignonesi's Da-Di Toscana IGT Bianco Blend, Cortona, Tuscany* ✕ 🍷 *Butter Chardonnay from JaM Vineyards, Lodi, California* ✕ Endive and Fennel Salad with Grapefruit Supremes and Parmesan. Grilled Oysters with Beurre Blanc and Trout Roe. 🍷 *Lady's Who Shoot Their Lunch Shiraz, 2020* ✕ Focaccia with Szechuan Oil and Salt Cod Butter and House Made Ricotta Gnocchi with Mussels in a Sunchoke (Jerusalem Artichoke) Cream Sauce. 🍷 *Hahn Pinot Noir, 2023, Central Valley, California* ✕ Roasted Pork Loin on a bed of Roasted Kale with Apples, Brown Butter, and Mustard Sauce, and Grilled Grouper on a bed of Seaweed with Fondant Potatoes and Normandy Sauce. Sorghum Tort with a Focaccia Crust and Crème Diplomat.

(L - R) Charles Whipple (Founding Member), Peggy Butcher, Lynn Kickingbird, Chef Zachary, Silvana Walters, Kirke Kickingbird, Bart & Nancy Frank.



OMAHA

High Noon Stag

Lost Rail Country Club is a new destination for the Omaha Branch. Chef Joe Anderson was excited to give a stretch to his culinary skills. We started with a tasting of a French first growth, 2004 Chateau Haut Brion, compared to a 2013 Joseph Phelps Insignia and a 2006 Chateau Beaucastel from Chateauneuf-du-Pape AOC. All were delicious! Raviolo al'Uovo was a highlight of the meal. Handmade pasta with an umami sauce, piped with Ricotta cheese, it had a runny egg yolk hidden inside with bacon bits on top. Its mélange of flavor exploded when you bit into the egg yolk, boosting the complex flavor.

November 9, 2024: High Noon Stag, Gretna, Nebraska.

🍷 *Wines from our Cellar* × Cured Meats, Artisan Cheeses, House Baked Breads. 🍷 *Ch. Margaux, 2004, Ch. Beaucastel Chateauneuf-du-Pape, 2006, Joseph Phelps Insignia, 2013* × 🍷 *Cos Saint Jean Chateauneuf-du-Pape Blanc, 2022* × Cioppino Soup, Halibut, Mussels, Shrimp, Salmon, Tomato Broth. 🍷 *Roserock by Drouhin Pinot Noir, 2016* × Raviolo al' Uovo, House Made Raviolo, Ricotta, Egg Yolk, Sage Brown Butter. 🍷 *Chappellet Signature Cabernet Sauvignon, 2013, Delille D2 Estate Red, 2017* × Burlington Board, Pepper Crusted Tenderloin, Fondant Potatoes, Truffle Polenta, Hand Turned Carrots. 🍷 *Croft Porto, 2011* × Cheese, Langres Chalancey, Fiscalini Cheddar, First Light Goat Brie, Seniorio de Montellarreina. Chocolate Mousse Trifle.

Event Producer Dave Thrasher & Chef Joe Anderson.



OMAHA METRO

An Evening Exploring Wines From The Oldest Family Ranch In Napa Valley's Stags Leap District!

Co-Hosts Brent Rasmussen and Susan Rauth fell in love with Regusci wines and presented them to the Omaha Metro Branch in an unusual event. Regusci is the oldest family ranch in Napa Valley Stags Leap District. The term "Ghost Winery" was given to the few remaining early Napa Valley wineries that were in existence between 1860 and 1900. Very few of these Ghost Wineries remain as the vineyards of most Napa Valley wineries were decimated by the phylloxera infestation of the 1890's. The economic depression of that decade and later Prohibition (1920-1933) was the final blow for many others. Production is small and limited, but all the wines were choice and delicious.

November 3, 2024: An Evening Exploring Wines From The Oldest Family Ranch In Napa Valley's Stags Leap District!, Oak Hills Country Club, Omaha, Nebraska.

🍷 *Assorted Wines from our Cellar* × Quaffing and Appetizers. 🍷 *Stags Leap Arcadia Chardonnay, 2020* × Butternut Squash Soup, Apple, Leek. 🍷 *Regusci Brave Night Red Wine, 2020* × Roasted Beet Salad, Ricotta, Frisee, Dried Cherry, Merlot Beet Vinaigrette. 🍷 *Regusci Zinfandel, 2018* × Truffle Ravioli, Cheese, Brown Butter, Sage. 🍷 *Regusci Patriarch Red Wine, 2017* × Lamb Lollipop, Crème Fraiche, Apricot & Mint Quinoa, Apple and Mint Chutney. 🍷 *Regusci Angelo's Cabernet Sauvignon, 2017* × Wagyu Sirloin, Oyster Mushrooms, Brussel Sprouts with Calabrian Chili & Confit Garlic, Seared Radicchio. 🍷 *Louis Roederer Champagne* × Pumpkin Mousse Sauternes Sorbet, Red Wine Blackberry.

(L - R) Co-Hosts of the Regusci Wine Exploration, Tom Henne, Tracy Hightower-Henne, Susan Rauth & Brent Rasmussen.



PALM BEACH

Annual Holiday Gala

Thank you to Dr. Peter and Mrs. Stephanie Lamelas for hosting such a wonderful and exclusive Holiday Gala. Members and guests enjoyed exceptional, highly-rated, big bold wines selected by the Bottle Boys, paired with Chef Bogdan's classic steak house dinner. It began with a reception of heavily poured Champagne and passed hors d'oeuvres. The evening was held in the Lakeview Terrace Room at the majestic and exclusive Mar-a-Lago Estate on the island of Palm Beach. The wine and cuisine were only surpassed by the company of our members and guests.

Dr. Peter & Mrs. Stephanie Lamelas.



PALM BEACH *continued...*

December 3, 2024: Annual Holiday Gala, Mar-a-Lago Estate, Palm Beach, Florida.

♥ *GH Mumm 'Grand Cordon' Brut Rose* × Steakhouse Caesar Salad, Grilled Baby Gem Romaine, Caesar Dressing, Garlic Crouton. ♥ *HDV Chardonnay 'Hyde Vineyard' 2019* × Warm Lobster Tail, Grilled Asparagus, Chorizo and Pea Ragu, White Asparagus Foam. ♥ *Antica 'Townsend Vineyard' Cabernet 2016* × Duo of Wagyu, Rib Cap and Fork Tender Beef Cheeks, Corn Puree, Garlic Crouton, Cherry Tomatoes, Perigeaux Sauce. ♥ *Alios Kracher 2005 Trokenbeerenauslese* × Trio of Baked Alaska, Dulce de Leche, Pistachio, Coffee. ♥ *1983 Fonseca Vintage Port* × Assorted Truffles.

PASADENA

Celebrating Our 70th Season!

We enjoyed a wonderful evening at the Sunset Marquis hotel, a West Hollywood staple for over 60 years. The evening started with the ultimate insider's tour of this famous Rock n Roll hotel. A champagne reception followed at the famous Nightbird studios where we learned about the various artists that have recorded there such as Kiss, Aerosmith, Aretha Franklin, Billy Idol, Kendrick Lamar & Ke\$ha just to name a few.

We then congregated at the Cavatina restaurant a perfect harmony of space and tranquility. Our dinner was curated by Chef Luis Morales who oversees every aspect of dining at the Sunset Marquis. He prepared a special menu with carefully chosen local ingredients to complement a diverse progression of fine wines selected by our cellar master, Dave Felton. This included a perfectly cellared, Chateau Haut-Brion, Pessac-Léognan Bordeaux, France (Premier Cru) 1995.

October 22, 2024: Celebrating our 70th Season!!!, Cavatina at The Sunset Marquis Hotel, West Hollywood, California.

♥ *Taittinger Brut Champagne, Prélude Grands Crus France NV* × Mini Lobster Rolls Lemon Aioli, Tarragon, Kaluga Caviar Oysters, Marukan Yuzu Ponzu, Golden Osetra Grilled Cheese Brioche, Caramelized Onion. ♥ *Ken Forrester FMC Chenin Blanc Stellenbosch, South Africa 2016* × Chilled Blue Mexican Prawns Granny Smith Apple, Avocado, Green Curry, Jaew. ♥ *Moone-Tsai Chardonnay, Napa Valley, USA 2018* × Butter Poached Sea Bass, Golden Cauliflower Velouté, Lemon Grass, Smoked Trout Roe. ♥ *Amuse Bouche Vin Perdu Red Wine, Napa Valley, USA 2015* × Lasagna Rollatini Braised Duck Legs, Porcini Mushrooms, Black Garlic, Rosemary. ♥ *Ch. Haut-Brion, Pessac-Léognan Bordeaux, France (Premier Cru) 1995* × Slow Roasted Venison Rack Pomme Puree, Smoked Onion, Black Truffle, Bordelaise. ♥ *Donnafugata Passito di Pantelleria "Ben Ryé" Zibibbo, Sicily, Italy 2021* × Erborinato di Pecora, Sheep's Milk Blue Cheese, Autumn Fruit, Honeycomb, Candied Pecans.

(L - R) Michael Hatch, Dinner Chair Tony Cannizzo, & Member Leo Dencik.



PHILADELPHIA

Monthly Dinner, La Famiglia

The Sena family opened La Famiglia in 1976 in a former Colonial-era tea warehouse in Old City, Philadelphia. The restaurant was opened by Carlo "Papa" Sena and his family, who brought their culinary traditions from Naples, Italy. It has survived the test of time and ownership remains in the hands of the same family. Our dinner was served in a classic traditional room with a stately bar area and the walls covered with paintings of Italian significance. The dinner was outstanding with delicious sauces and the service attentive and precise. The wines were well matched to the courses.

November 20, 2024: Monthly Dinner, La Famiglia, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

♥ *Tenuta Caretta Airtala Langa, Metodo Classico Brut* × ♥ *Chassagne-Montrachet, Morgeot, Dom. Blain-Gagnard, 2017* × Oyster Florentine, Polenta with Mushroom Ragout, Francesine alla Verdure. ♥ *Beaune, 1er Cru, 153rd Anniversary, Jadot, 2012* × Lobster with Roasted Tomato, Spinach, and Olive Oil. ♥ *Oreno, Tenuta Sette Ponti, 2016* × Pici Carbonara. ♥ *Ch. Rayne Vigneau, 2010* × Veal Medallions with Cherries, Port Wine Sauce, and Roasted Potato. ♥ *Coffee, Tea, Espresso, Cappuccino* × Zuppa Inglese.

Dinner Chairman Mark Kogan with Owner Giuseppe Sena.



SANTA FE & NORTHERN NEW MEXICO

December 3, 2024: Holiday Cocktail Party, Milk of the Poppy, Santa Fe, New Mexico.

There was good cheer at the Holiday Cocktail Party, held at the Milk of the Poppy, a medieval apothecary-inspired bar in Santa Fe's historic Railyard. Members enjoyed a glass of champagne when they arrived and then were given the choice of signature Milk of the Poppy cocktails. Holiday appetizers, including lobster rolls, were available with a choice of white and red wine.

Members Enjoying the Holidays at Milk of the Poppy.



TORONTO

Delights of Summer

On September 8th, 2024, IWFS Toronto's Annual Presidents' Garden Party celebrated the vestiges of Summer in the elegant garden of Board member, Supriya James. The Toronto chapter uncorked some stellar wines that had been maintained in the branch's private 1100-bottle wine cellar. Thanks to the annual wine levies paid by IWFS Toronto members, its wine cellar is constantly restocked for wine tastings by present and future members. At this event, their last bottle of a 1999 Quintarelli, in addition to some 2007 Chiantis, a couple of 2000 Bordeaux, as well as, some 20+year-old Cabernet Sauvignons and Syrahs from Chile, were uncorked and sampled. Accompanying the wine tastings was an array of impeccable hors d'oeuvres, created and served by Jayne's Gourmet.

September 8, 2024: Annual Presidents' Garden Party, Home of Supriya James, Toronto, Ontario.

A Selection of six Hors D'oeuvres: Brie and Mushroom Tarts, Crispy Eggplant, Yorkshire Pudding, Chive Crepes, Tuna Tartare, Crab Cake.

President of IWFS Toronto, Todd Roberts.



TUCSON

A Night in Paris

Sixty-one members and guests of the Tucson IWFS Branch gathered on January 21 at the Historic Arizona Inn for a delightful evening of wine and food hosted by members Jennifer and Barton Tretheway. Chef Aron Fonte Grushka and his staff orchestrated a delightful evening of food and wine for the largest-ever Tucson IWFS gathering. Compliments to the Tretheways, Chef Aron, and the Arizona Inn staff for a lovely evening!

January 21, 2025: A Night in Paris, Arizona Inn, Tucson, Arizona.

♥ *Cote Mas Cremant de Limoux* - Brut ✕ Duck Confit Rolled Tacos: Truffle Gouda, Pear, Queso Fresco & Fresno Chili, Spinach and Artichoke Phyllo Tarts: Phyllo filled with Creamy Spinach and Artichoke and Boursin Cheese, Topped with Candied Bacon. Seared Sea Scallop: Pea Puree, Vanilla Carrot Beurre Blanc, Rainbow Carrots and Pickled Fresno Chili. ♥ *Morgadio Albarino Rias Biexas 2023* ✕ Mushroom & Madeira: Local Mushrooms, Foie Gras, Asparagus, Crispy Mushrooms. Baby Lettuce: Fennel, Blood Orange, Pine Nut Brittle and Local Micro Greens, Truffle Honey Citrus Vinaigrette. ♥ *Dom. Rostaing 'Le Vassal' Rouge 2021* ✕ Herb Crusted Lamb Rack and Lamb Shoulder Rotellini: Bee Pollen Butter Broccolini, Honey Glazed Cipollini Onion. ♥ *Ostinato Marsala Fine Ambra Dolce* ✕ Olive Oil Cake: Blood Orange Icing and Sweet Corn Ice Cream.

(L - R) Host Jennifer Tretheway, Chef Aron Fonte Grushka, Host Barton Tretheway, Branch President Stu MacKay.



VANCOUVER

December 24, 2024: Christmas Dinner, Vancouver Club, Vancouver, British Columbia

Our Holiday season kicked off with our Annual IWFS Christmas Dinner at the iconic Vancouver Club where we were treated to a fabulous five course meal accompanied by excellent wines from our cellar.

Our dinner was held in the beautifully decorated Grand Ballroom, replete with Christmas tree and evergreen wreaths. We enjoyed a glass of Jean Hantin Brut Champagne, a Grand cru, together with Chef's canapes. Then we sat for a presentation of Andre Simon's Silver Award to members Garfield Marshall, Susan Man, Larry Stefan, and Karen Stierhof in recognition of their support and assistance in organising events for our members. We then enjoyed a first course of Braised Endive with Poached Pear, Gorgonzola, and Candied Walnut, paired with Château Suduiraut le Blanc Sec de Suduiraut 2019. A delicious Oyster Velouté with Seared Scallop followed, paired with the Moreau Père et Fils Chablis 1er Cru Vaillon, cuvée Guy Moreau 2020.

Next up was a totally delicious Garganelli Braised Short Rib Pasta with Arugula, Pine Nuts and Pecorino together with a Pianirossi Marema Solus 2006 from Tuscany. Our main course was Veal Osso Bucco with a Heritage polenta and Gremolata paired with M. Chapoutier Crozes Hermitage les Mesonniers 2016. A traditional Christmas dessert, a Plum Pudding flambeed tableside and accompanied by a glass of Smith Woodhouse LBV Port 2008 ended our meal. A very fine finish to a magnificent meal.

Our thanks go to Cellarmaster Kim Mead for her comments on the wines, to Milena Robertson for her photography and to the whole team at the Vancouver Club for a memorable evening.

President Jim Robertson & Joan Cross Welcome New Members John & Dee Miller.



VANCOUVER

January 27, 2025: Journey with Gin, Sequel - Kitchen and Bar, Vancouver, British Columbia.

"Mothers' Ruin" - what a special event we enjoyed with a unique presentation of the history of gin and how it is made - so many different styles! - accompanied by slides and three special cocktails. A delicious meal at The Sequel Kitchen and Bar, one of Vancouver's new restaurants, followed. Master Sommelier Leigh Barkley gave a masterful presentation of gin's history through the ages. Chris described the three cocktails we enjoyed, the Army and Navy, featuring Dillon's Dry Gin 7 with orgeat, lemon and angosturas bitters, the Gin Basil Smash (Milena's favourite), featuring Hayman's London Dry Gin with lemon and basil, and The Vancouver, featuring Glendalough Dry Gin with B&B, vermouths and orange bitters; all delicious drinks, accompanied by tastes of The Sequel's bacon jam.

Following a stunning presentation, we enjoyed a dinner of Grilled Rib-Eye Steak with Organic Symphony Greens and a glass of Chateau Haut-Batailley 2009, ending with Crepes Suzettes and a glass of Chateau Giraud Sauternes 2010.

Overall, a special event that was thoroughly enjoyed by all. We thank Leigh, Chris, and Sequel G.M., Jae Kim for a splendid evening and Milena for her photos of the event.

Three Gin Cocktails - Three Happy Members! Alvin Nirenberg, Van Doren Chan, & Milena Robertson.



WASHINGTON D.C.

Cabernet

The November Event was held at Rare as the event theme was Cabernet. When you think Cabernet, you think meat and when you think meat, you think Steakhouse. Accordingly, we have decided to go back to Rare Steakhouse for this event. RARE Steakhouse & Tavern is a one-of-a-kind fine dining concept that brings together the best qualities of world-class dining venues with USDA prime, dry-aged steaks, exquisite wines and first-class service bolstered with Midwestern charm. Inspired by the old nostalgic romance of great American steakhouses, the restaurant's Wisconsin founders created RARE as a destination for those who appreciate the finer things in life.

November 12, 2024: Cabernet, RARE Steakhouse, Washington DC.

🍷 *Denis Dubourdieu Liaison Bordeaux Rosé, 2023* × Mini MD-Style Crab Cakes with Old Bay Remoulade, Tomato Bruschetta with Thinly Sliced Cucumber, Ahi Tuna Sashimi with Mango-Lime Emulsion. 🍷 *Guigal Condrieu La Doriane, 2022* × Pan-Seared Sea Scallops Fennel, Frisee & Citrus Emulsion. 🍷 *Sassicaia 2008* × American Wagyu Carpaccio Truffle Oil, Shaved Fresh Truffles and Sea Salt. 🍷 *Two Cabernet-based wines from the IWFS-DC cellar, were served "blind": Opus One, 2005, Concha y Toro Cabernet Sauvignon Don Melchor, 2005* × Broiled New Frontier Bison Striploin Charred Broccolini, Garlic Fries & Red Wine Sauce. 🍷 *Taylor Fladgate Vintage Port, 2003* × Chocolate Pot De Creme Toasted Meringue.

(L - R) Dr. Geoff Kaplan, Craig Zwobot, & President Ray Sobrino.



WASHINGTON D.C.

Holiday Celebration

The December dinner was held at the Historic Georgetown Club at 6:30pm on December 3rd. The Club occupies one of the few remaining 18th century frame buildings in the historic port district of Georgetown. It is believed to have been John Suter's Tavern, circa 1783, where the plans for the nation's capital were hammered out. The members and guests gathered in the Living Room for passed canapés and champagne and then moved upstairs to the paneled dining room for a delicious dinner the Chef had prepared for us. The highlights of the courses was the Pan Seared Duck Breast & Foie Gras paired with a 2012 Cham-bolle-Musigny!

December 3, 2024: Holiday Celebration, Georgetown Club, Washington DC.

🍷 *Piper Heidsick Champagne NV* × Smoked Salmon, Caviar Blinis, Potato Croquettes, and Lobster Bisque. 🍷 *Weinback Riesling, 2020* × Arctic Char Crudo - Grapefruit, Pineapple Caper Relish, Pomegranate Gel, Garlic Chips. 🍷 *Fernand Lechenaut Chambolle-Musigny, 2012* × Pan Seared Duck Breast And Foie Gras Duo, Foie Gras, Soubise, Pickled Cranberry, Spiced Duck Jus. 🍷 *Brigaldara Amarone della Valpolicella Case Vecie, 2007* × Cervena Venison Loin, Bran-died Chestnut Pudding, Parsnip, Swiss Chard, Red Wine Venison Jus. 🍷 *Ch. Guiraud, 2005* × Kiwi Tart, Sauternes Glaze, Fresh Berries.

(L - R) President Ray Sobrino, Dr. Marc Lippman, & Aydin Tuncer.





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. 🍷

Napa Valley Festival: May 4-9, 2025

A fabulous Festival next May 4-9, 2025 with accommodations at the Andaz Hotel in Napa! The Festival includes lunch at the French Laundry, a 3 decade tasting at Freemark Abbey, followed by dinner at the Abbey, cooking classes at CIA, and a Black Tie dinner at CIA Greystone, among other events. Spots will be limited.



Photos by: King Lee



Rioja Festival: May 20-25, 2025

IWFS Europe Africa invite members from around the world to join an exceptional festival organised by IWFS in conjunction with Grape Escapes to discover the wines, food, culture and history of the Rioja region of Spain.

We will visit some of the most prestigious winemakers in the Region, including Bodega Marques de Murieta, Cosme Palacio and Paganos as well as the opportunity to taste wines in Haro (with its historical Barrio de la Estacion). We will dine in our hotel on the first evening and enjoy dinner in the iconic Marques de Riscal Hotel. We will also enjoy a Tapas style dinner in Logrono and a Gala Dinner with Bruno Coelho.

A pre-Festival two night Bilbao-based tour, including a day trip to the Basque country coast, is offered. Though fully booked, we have a short waitlist. You can be lucky. Details can be found at the Europe/Africa IWFS website.

2025 FESTIVALS

BE ON THE LOOKOUT FOR THESE FUTURE IWFS EVENTS!

Europe / Africa Great Weekend: **September 12-14, 2025**

If you and your friends are visiting Europe later this year you would very welcome to join EA members in the UK at the Great Weekend in September. The highlight of the weekend will be dinner in Thornbury Castle - 4* Relais et Châteaux hotel with a 3AA Rosette restaurant on Friday 12th . The castle is several centuries old and entertained Henry VIII amongst others of the medieval period. It is now a luxury hotel – easily accessible by road and rail from London. One hour from Heathrow Airport and 30 minutes from Bristol Airport. Full details of the Great Weekend will be available later in the year but the dates are confirmed. More information about the castle and details of reserving accommodation can be accessed at: www.Thornburycastle.co.uk

Alternative accommodation for members and guests will be at a nearby hotel and coach transport will be provided. To receive more information as the programme develops please register your interest with: peter.mcgahey@btinternet.com



Malaysian Festival Celebration:

November 3-9, 2025

Malaysian Festival Celebration amongst the Penang, Ipoh, and Kuala Lumpur IWFS Chapters. For expression of interest contact apz@iwfs.org. More info will come via email, on the website, and in *Wine, Food & Friends*





Wine, Food & Friends

**THE INTERNATIONAL WINE
& FOOD SOCIETY**

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Dubrovnik Harbor, Croatia. Photo by: Charity Hattenhauer

