



National Capital Sommelier Guild

Newsletter - February 2003

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*"It wasn't the wine," murmured Mr. Snodgrass in a broken voice, "it was the salmon."
(Somehow or other, it never is the wine, in these cases.)*

Charles Dickens, *Pickwick Papers*

Moderation is a sign of good taste

The National Capital Sommelier Guild strongly supports moderate and responsible consumption of wine and spirits. Guild dinner events allow a designated driver to attend at a reduced price. The designated driver will not be served

alcohol. Guild tasting events provide and encourage the use of spit buckets. As well, at every event, the organizer will arrange a method of safe transportation home for you or your friends, upon request.

Vintages Pre-Release

Thursday, 6 February, 7:00 – 9:00 p.m.

Thursday, 6 March, 7:00 – 9:00 p.m.

Chelsea Club, 236 Metcalfe (at Somerset)

Mark these dates on your calendar and plan to join those who have made this Guild Signature Event a regular feature of their wine life. These events provide an opportunity to sample several of the wines to be released by Vintages on the following Saturday.

The wines are always tasted blind, allowing the quality of each to shine through without the distortions that often

result from knowing the producer's reputation and/or the price range. These tastings give us an opportunity to discover well-made, inexpensive wines, little-known and often ignored quality wines, wines that offer an exceptional price/quality relationship and, to the greatest extent possible, more expensive, highly reputed wines that most would not experience otherwise.

Members and Sponsored Guests: \$25

Guild Wine Tasting Series - Encore! Encore!

Tuesday, January 28, February 4, February 11, and February 18, 7:00 – 9:30 p.m.

Chelsea Club, 236 Metcalfe Street (at Somerset)

Join fellow Guild wine enthusiasts on another intriguing journey of fun, wine appreciation, analytical tasting plus wine and food matching! Guild President, Vic Harradine, will handle weeks 1 and 3 while Cellar Master, Lori Davis, will host weeks 2 and 4.

Enjoy 4 stimulating evenings of fellowship, interactive education and pure enjoyment. Take advantage of this opportunity to hone your analytical tasting skills and discover the basics of wine and food pairing. Only \$80 for

the entire 4 evenings! The series culminates in a fun mystery wine challenge with certificates for all.

There is very limited seating (25 persons) so book NOW to avoid being disappointed. Last year, this series was a smash hit. The topic for each session is as follows: Jan. 28th - Wine Appreciation Introduction, Feb. 4th - Analytical Tasting, Feb. 11th - Wine and Food Matching, Feb. 18th - Fun Challenge.

Members and Sponsored Guests: \$80

An Evening in Provence

Sold Out

Thursday, 13 February, 7:00 – 9:00 p.m.

Chelsea Club 236 Metcalfe (at Somerset)

Romancing the Rhone!

Sold Out

Saturday, 15 February, 6:30 sharp – 9:30 p.m.

Trattoria Caffè Italia, 254 Preston St. (at Gladstone). Parking at rear of the restaurant or at Preston Hardware Store.

A Decade of Excellence - Trius Red Vertical Tasting

Thursday, February 20, 7:00 – 9:00 p.m.

Chelsea Club 236 Metcalfe (at Somerset)

As the Guild celebrates a decade of excellence, it seems appropriate to sample wines from a similar time frame to see if they have progressed, as well. This 'Trade Member Only' event features a number of vintages of Hillebrand's flagship red wine, Trius. These wines have been pried from the winery's private cellars. We will whet our tasting palates on a couple of premium whites before moving on to Trius Red

1991, 1994, 1995, 1997, 1998, 1999 and 2000 plus the super premium Trius Grand Red from the 1999 and 2000 vintages. And just to 'sweeten' the offering, we will sample a glorious ice wine, paired with an appropriate 'afters' to round out the evening. Only 25 seats at the table for this premium tasting.

Trade Members & Sponsored Guests \$40

Simply Syrah

Sold Out

Wednesday, 26 February, 7:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.

Chelsea Club 236 Metcalfe (at Somerset)

Trophy Reds of Australia

Sold Out

Wednesday, 19 March, 7:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.

Chelsea Club 236 Metcalfe (at Somerset)

Greek Food with Greek Wines !

Saturday, 22 March 2003, 6:30 pm reception for 7:00 pm dinner

Restaurant International, Algonquin College, Woodroffe Campus. Free parking is available in front of the restaurant.

Greek food has been in great demand ever since the overwhelming success of the Greek film “*My Big Fat Greek Wedding*”. To satisfy members’ needs, we went searching for a location that would serve Greek family fare and at the same time allow the Guild to provide pre-selected wines. Our search led us to chef John Leblanc at Restaurant

International at Algonquin College. Chef John Leblanc who has been involved in many theme dinners for the Guild has suggested the following menu for an emphasis on simple, bold flavours to accompany great quality ingredients that prevail in good Greek cuisine:

Appetizer Plate of
Stuffed Grape Leaves, Stuffed Tomato and Fried Smelts

Bitter Greens Salad with Tzatziki Dressing

Grilled Leg of Lamb with Rosemary Potatoes and Vegetable Moussaka

Pistachio Baklava

The best of Greek white and red wines will be appropriately sourced to complement this enjoyable dinner.

Members and Sponsored Guests: \$55

Designated Driver: \$30

The Best of Classic’s Catalogue

Thursday, 27 March, 7:00 – 9:00 p.m.

Chelsea Club, 236 Metcalfe Street (at Somerset)

Join Guild Director and Cellar Mistress Lori Davis as she presents some of her favorite picks from the most recent Vintages Classics Catalogue offering. This evening provides you the opportunity to discover some new gems and possibly the chance to rediscover some old favorites. A

sampling of some old world classic’s as well as the popular new world wine producing areas will be featured. If you are starting a wine cellar or adding to an existing one, this is your chance to experience a diverse variety of exclusive and limited wines from around the world.

Members and Sponsored Guests: \$50

Guild Business

Guild Policy Change

At the Annual General Meeting in May, 2002, the Guild’s decision to become incorporated as a Not-for-Profit organization was ratified. The following policy has been adopted by the present Board of Directors with the objective of meeting the requirements of the existing Goods and Services Legislation as applied to our membership.

Commencing January 1st, 2003, the following policy shall come into effect.

The Guild shall eliminate differential pricing at our events. All people attending an event will pay the same price,

including non-members attending as sponsored guests. All Guild members may now sponsor 3 guests. Only members and sponsored guests may attend events. Trade members will be offered 4 exclusive events per annum. The ‘Designated Driver’ category remains in effect.

The rationale for this change in policy is that the Guild will NOT collect and remit GST, thereby avoiding a potential increase in membership fees or event prices for our members. It also circumvents increased administrative burdens on the organization.

The Guild Needs You! - 2003 Event Planning

Do you have a special wine interest that you would like to explore and share with other members of the Guild? Perhaps you are interested in discovering the joys of wine and food matching. Well, the Guild needs you!

Your Board of Directors is launching this open invitation to all members who would like to propose, plan, and execute events for the first half of 2003. Just think of the possibilities: explore wines from regions yet undiscovered, match regional wines & cuisine at a special restaurant dinner

or the definitive showdown of Shiraz vs. Syrah. The opportunities are endless!

Send a brief outline of your idea for an event by E-mail to Pierre.Fournier@sommelierguild.com or Mike.Cowen@sommelierguild.com or by snail mail to the Guild office. The Board will review each proposal, then move the selected ones forward by assigning a Director to assist you in the planning and execution. So... what are you waiting for?

Items of Special Interest to Guild Members

Ottawa Chamber Music Society Continues Wine Auction Tradition

Ottawa (December 17, 2002)—The Ottawa Chamber Music Society (OCMS) will hold its second auction of fine and vintage wines at 7:00 p.m. on Wednesday, February 26, 2003. The Ottawa Marriott is the sponsor for this event, which will be held in the ballroom at 100 Kent Street. Admittance is \$50, which can be applied as a credit towards any purchase.

Proceeds from this auction help support all OCMS activities including next summer's 10th Ottawa International Chamber Music Festival. OCMS still needs donations of fine and vintage wines. For contributions please call the OCMS office at 234-8008.

Tickets and catalogues will be available soon and updates will be posted regularly on the OCMS Website at www.chamberfest.com.

Special Offers to Guild Members!

CA Paradis has been serving Ottawa restaurants and wine lovers for 80 years. Guild member Diane Paradis would like to offer a **10% discount on all regularly priced**

merchandise to all Guild members. Next time you're shopping at CA Paradis discreetly identify yourself as member of the NCSG and enjoy the savings.

Vines magazine is a bi-monthly, up-scale glossy that has a primary focus on the Canadian wine scene. It offers tasting notes and evaluations on easily available wines, articles on wineries and wine makers and feature articles on regional cuisine. The publisher has agreed to accept subscriptions from Guild members at a 50% discount. This makes the

yearly subscription of 6 issues only \$7.50! Order your subscription by writing to: **Vines Magazine, 159 York Street, St. Catharines, ON L2R 6E9**. Simply send them a cheque for \$7.50, include your name and address and let them know you are a member of the National Capital Sommelier Guild. Good wine reading!

An Offer for Collectors of Wine Implements. Many Guild members are also collectors. Obviously they collect wines, but many others collect wine paraphernalia: corkscrews, carafes, foil cutters, etc. ... and some even collect antiques. Those who harbour a passion for antique wine accessories might find that rare piece missing from their collection at **Ernest Johnson Antiques**. Ernest is a

long time Guild member and informs us that he can show you some fine antique decanters, funnels, spirit tags, wine coasters and corkscrews. Guild members will benefit from a discount of at least 10% on their purchases. The shop is located at 292 MacKay Street at the corner of Dufferin Road in New Edinburgh. It is open Thursday to Sunday. You can call Ernest at 741-8565 for more information.

Cheese and Wine ... Complement your discerning taste for wine with the sumptuous taste for gourmet cheese! The **House of Cheese**, in the Byward Market specializes in a variety of Canadian cheese and gourmet cheeses from around the world. **Guild members are offered a 10% discount** from regular priced cheeses. What better way to discover the

unique flavours of raw milk cheese or to explore the increasing diversity of Canadian cheeses. Let their experienced staff help you add another dimension to your enjoyment and that of your guests. Open 7 days a week at 34 Byward Market, Ottawa, ON K1N 7A2, tel: (613) 241-4853.

Passing Scene

9 January VPR, *Reported by Rod Story*

Peter Collis ably presented the January VPR. He put together an interesting and diverse selection of 14 wines. There was a flight of four white wines followed by two red flights with five wines each.

The pick of the white flight for this reviewer was the Gewürztraminer from Château des Charmes. It had a nose of oil of Bergamot and peach blossom. It was a light style, but definitely true to its varietal. The Pinot Gris was okay, but not the best example of the grape. The Chablis was not worth the money and the Grüner Veltliner didn't taste like any Grüner Veltliner that this taster had before. I expect a Grüner Veltliner to be fresh and young with even a bit of spritz. This one had none of these characteristics.

For the first red flight, the highlight was the Pinot Noir from Switzerland. It had a light, fresh strawberry/cherry nose and on the palate was quite elegant in a lighter style. It is very rare to find such a good example of Pinot Noir at this price point (especially from Switzerland)! The Saint-Amour was okay, but not worth the money. For three bucks less,

The wines in the order they were tasted were:

2001 Tokay Pinto Gris, 'Ancienne Cours des Chevaliers de Malte', André Blanck, AC Alsace	959486	\$16.65
2000 Chablis, 'Saint-Pierre', Jean Dauvissat	992784	\$23.75
2001 Grüner Veltliner, Weingut Birgit Eichinger, Austria	950238	\$15.80
2000 Gewürztraminer, Château des Charmes, St. Davids Bench, Niagara Peninsula	453472	\$14.95
1999 Merlot, Cave Springs, Niagara Peninsula	235051	\$15.95
2000 Malbec Reserva, Finca Flichman, Mendoza, Argentina	746727	\$14.90
2001 Valdiguie, Beringer, California	296079	\$14.60
2001 Saint-Amour, 'Cuvée Saint-Valentin', Pierre Ferraud et Fils, Domaine Toutant, Beaujolais	726976	\$17.95
2000 Pinot Noir, 'Soleil de Sierre', Imesch Vins Sierre, AC Valais, Switzerland	973255	\$21.40
1999 Coudoulet de Beaucastel, Pierre Perrin, AC Côtes-du-Rhône	979120	\$26.95
1999 Cordillera, Miguel Torres, Curicó Valley, Chile	731109	\$25.70
2000 Château la Fleur Chaigneau, 'Vieilles Vignes', J.L. Dutilot, AC Lalande de Pomerol	722009	\$31.45
2000 Cabernet Sauvignon, Katnook Estate, Coonawarra, South Australia	590471	\$29.00
1999 Petite Sirah, Ridge Vineyards, York Creek, California	990507	\$45.95

Amore Amarone *Reported by Yohanna Loucheur*

The 24 Amarone aficionados attending the event on January 16 knew they were in for a special tasting of Paul Courtice's favorite wines. They were not disappointed, as no less than 15 wines were presented in five flights, several from the legendary 1997 vintage (maybe the best ever in Italy). Paul had prepared a brochure with lots of very useful information about the grapes and the techniques used in making Valpolicella, Ripasso, Recioto and Amarone. The brochure also contained the names of the wines presented (except for the mystery flight), a blessing for note takers.

Corvina, Rondinella and Molinara were introduced (by the way, these are grapes, not characters from a Puccini opera) as glasses were distributed. The first flight was an introduction to the lighter Valpolicella style. Lots of fruit (my notes talk

buy the Beringer Valdiguie. Beringer used to label this wine Gamay Beaujolais because it tasted much like Beaujolais. If you like a lower acid, fruity, quaffing red, this is your bottle. People liked the Cave Springs Merlot as well the Malbec from Argentina.

As always, the best was saved for last. Three of the wines stood out and were worth the money. The Ridge Petite Sirah was the highlight of the evening with clove and allspice on the nose and a wonderful finesse and structure on the palate. The Katnook Cab had a huge cedar nose, with ripe green pepper. It was a big wine with the required structure to support it. The Cordillera from Chile was the best value of the three. It reminded me of a cool climate Cab from Margaret River. The Coudoulet de Beaucastel had the perfect nose of Concord grapes and wasn't up to its normal reputation. The Chateau La Fleur Chaigneau was good with its structure and fruit (needs a couple of years) but overpriced when compared to the Cordillera.

of sour cherries), nice acidity—nothing to write home about, but good quaffing, food friendly wines. Le Polane had the preference of the majority in attendance.

The second flight had four wines in the Ripasso style (the new wine is repressed over the lees of the Amarone of the previous year, giving it a richer, slightly sweet taste). Plates with pieces of Gorgonzola and some heavenly Spring Parmesan appeared. It is worth talking about the Parmiggiano: this one is made with spring milk, when the cows eat the new grass, giving the cheese a very delicate flavour. It had a perfect texture and accompanied the wines very nicely. Opinions about the second flight were more divided but the Tedeschi got slightly more votes. The wines

had a fuller body than the Valpolicellas, some tannins, lots of fruit. I even detected some violet in the Galli.

After the glasses were cleared, it was time to get to the stars, the Amarones. These were made in the dry style (the Recioto would come later), with grapes dried all winter on straw mats before being fermented dry. The three wines were quite different. The Farina was preferred, although the Boscaini came a close second. Nobody liked the Castellani, which is made in a “modern” style in order to please New World palates. Paul flattered us by saying we were savvy drinkers, but if this crowd is any indication, the winemaker should maybe rethink his strategy ... My own notes talk of jammy fruit, hot finish, harsh, bitter. By comparison, the Farina was very smooth with intense berry flavors (and maybe some fennel) and a long finish. I found the Boscaini very “grapey”, with a nose reminiscent of a Late Bottled Vintage port, but it got very positive comments from several people. We learned during the discussion that Amarone is aged in huge vats, avoiding the strong oaky notes associated with barrel-aging. Again the Parmesan accompanied the wines very nicely.

After this magnificent flight, we turned to the Recioto. This was a chance to taste a much older wine, after the infanticides committed on the Amarones. The Galli 1985 surprised everyone by not being sweet. It was nutty, with some cooked apple notes. However, coming after the sweet and very intense Masi Recioto, the Galli seemed overly thin. The Masi, with a smoky nose and a rich taste, was preferred by the majority. Several compared it to Vintage Port, though with a better acidic structure, and we all enjoyed some Gorgonzola with it.

Then came the mystery flight. Four glasses were brought, one of each of the four styles we had tasted. The challenge was to identify each style. Everybody correctly identified the first wine (an Amarone) and the last (a Recioto), and all but two people correctly told the Valpolicella from the Ripasso.

In summary, a fantastic event: we tasted delicious wines, had great cheese, learned a lot and had fun too! Everybody thanked Paul for sharing his knowledge and the wines so generously, before heading out into the cold Ottawa night. But somehow, even the Canadian climate could not dampen the warmth provided by Amarone and good company!

The wines (in the order they were tasted):

1997	Le Polane Valpolicella Classico DOC (Bolla)	\$15.90
2000	Seregio Alighieri Valpolicella Classico DOC (Masi)	\$14.50
1999	Mara Vino di Ripasso (Cesari)	\$13.95
1999	Valpolicella Classico Superior, Ripasso (Rene Farina)	\$12.75
1997	Capitel del Nicalo Valpolicella (Ripasso) (Tedeschi)	\$13.80
1997	La Ragose Ripasso (Galli)	\$14.75
1998	Farina Amarone della Valpolicella DOC (Farina)	\$32.75
1997	Marano Amarone della Valpolicella DOC (Boscaini)	\$35.85
1997	I Castei Amarone della Valpolicella Classico DOC (Castellani)	\$32.90
1997	Mazzanello Recioto della Valpolicella Classico Amandolato (Masi)	\$57.85
1985	La Ragose Recioto della Valpolicella (Galli)	\$110.00
1995	Mazzano Amarone della Valpolicella (Masi)	\$85.95
2000	San Ciriaco Valpolicella DOC (Boscaini)	\$13.45
1997	Santo Stefano IGT Rosso di Veronese Ripasso (Boscaini)	\$14.95
1999	Recioto della Valpolicella Classico DOC (Fratelli Bolla)	\$57.50

Visa or MasterCard Pre-authorization

Members who wish to make charges against their **Visa** or **MasterCard** must complete this *pre-authorization* and mail it to the Guild's address at 99 Fifth Avenue - Suite 130, Ottawa, On K1S 5P5. Visa or MasterCard information will not be accepted by phone or by E-mail. This authorization will remain in effect until the expiry date or rescinded by you.

I authorize the National Capital Sommelier Guild to charge my event registrations and membership to my Visa or MasterCard Number provided below.

Visa Account Number: _____ Expiry Date: Mo. _____ Yr. _____

MasterCard Number: _____ Expiry Date: Mo. _____ Yr. _____

Print Name: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____