



National Capital Sommelier Guild

Newsletter - March 2003

March

- 6 March VPR
- 22 Greek Food with Greek Wines
- 27 Best of the Classics Catalogue

April

- 3 April VPR
- 10 Lailey / Malivoire Tasting
- 16 Best Values of the General List

*Fill every beaker up, my men, pour forth the cheering wine:
There's life and strength in every drop—thanksgiving to the vine!*

The Baron's Last Banquet, Albert Gorton Greene (1802–1868)

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 March, 7:00 – 9:00 p.m.

Thursday, 3 April, 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

Trophy Reds of Australia

Sold Out

Wednesday, 19 March, 7:00 – 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 serve Greek cuisine with special pre-selected Greek wines, we selected the Restaurant International with the following menu:

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

A minimum of two white wines and a minimum of three red wines to complement this wonderful Greek-style dinner will be selected from the Vintages catalogue with the help of the Embassy of Greece. To finish our meal, a Samos Muscat dessert wine will be served.

Members and Sponsored Guests: \$55

Designated Driver: \$30

The Best of the Classics 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 favourite 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 favourites. A

sampling of some old world classics 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

Lailey Vineyard / Malivoire Wine Company Tasting

Thursday, 10 April, 7:00 – 9:00 p.m.

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

The Guild is proud to present two great winemakers in one great tasting. **Ann Sperling** and **Derek Barnett**, two of Ontario's finest winemakers, will lead you through a tasting of their best wines.

Derek Barnett was born in England and studied agriculture in the UK. He gained 10 years of wine making experience at Southbrook Wines, north of Toronto, where his winemaking skill earned him the Air Ontario Winemaker of the Year Award in 2000. Now partnered with Donna Lailey of Lailey Vineyard, they use top quality grapes and years of experience to produce some of Ontario's best wines. Derek will be pouring the best of 2001 including all of his LCBO Classic Catalogue wines.

Ann Sperling achieved international acclaim in BC before moving to Ontario as the first winemaker at Cilento. Now with Malivoire, Ann oversees one of the most exciting wineries in Ontario. Using environmentally friendly viticulture and gentle gravity-fed wine processing, she sculpts some of the most sought after wines in Ontario. Ann will be pouring some newly released 2002 and a special treat from the Malivoire library.

Several of the flights will be accompanied by bite-sized treats from amongst Trattoria Caffè Italia's favourite dishes. After tasting these great wines, you won't have to drive to Niagara to buy them, as both wineries will take orders for many of the wines tasted.

Members and Sponsored Guests: \$50

Best Values of the General List

Wednesday, 16 April, 7:00 – 9:00 p.m.

Chelsea Club, 236 Metcalfe Street (at Somerset)

How many times have you been asked to recommend a wine priced below twenty dollars that is always available at the LCBO? Or even better, do you rise to the challenge of finding that exceptional bottle priced below ten dollars?

Well, this is your opportunity to re-discover LCBO's regular list catalogue! Join us for an evening of exploration and

adventure as we try to uncover some of the hidden gems priced below \$25.

BBQ season is right around the corner, get a jump on your summer wine selection!

Members and Sponsored Guests: \$25

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.

New Membership Cards are Coming Soon!

The NCSG is pleased to announce that new membership cards will be distributed to members. The planned changes are two fold:

Firstly, the NCSG logo will be moved to one face of the card, which will be enhanced to hold our contact information: email, phone, web, etc. The second side will be dedicated to the member's information: blanks will be available to enter your name and membership number. Membership levels will not be directly identified in the new card.

Membership cards will be issued once when members join, and not yearly. All renewed 2003 members will be receiving a new card. Please note that should a card be lost, a replacement will be available.

The new cards are to be distributed in an upcoming newsletter mail out. When you receive your new card simply write your name and transfer your membership number to it, and you are done! This card will then be good for as long as you are a member!

You may ask why are we making changes to the membership card. Your NCSG Board wishes to make maximum use of the card's informative potential by adding key Guild contact info, and we wish to reduce the yearly process of producing and issuing these cards.

Stay tuned!

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

Cuvee Ticket Draw!

The official draw for the 2 Cuvee tickets was held in the Kanata Centrum LCBO in the presence of much bemused and bewildered staff and customers (many of whom would have paid \$10 and entered the draw had the deadline not passed!) on Saturday, February 22, 2003. Kim Bond,

Events Coordinator, made the draw with the list of eligible entrants double checked by Guild President, Vic Harradine, who was not entered in the draw. And the winner was ... James Bertrand, having, by now, reaped the benefits of this \$400 package! Congratulations, James!

Free Wine Newsletter

Ottawa wine writer and Guild member Natalie MacLean offers a free bi-weekly e-mail newsletter that covers a wide range of topics, such as restaurant wine lists, food and wine matching, the health benefits of wine, and her top wine picks, including those from the monthly LCBO Vintages releases, which she pre-tastes.

While she tackles each topic to learn something new, she never takes wine—or herself—too seriously, and writes in a highly entertaining way. There are no ads and your e-mail

address will be kept confidential. Natalie does this because she enjoys the occasional feedback she receives from those on her list.

Her articles have appeared in the *London Times*, *Chicago Tribune*, *National Post*, *Hemispheres (United Airlines)*, *Food & Wine*, *Sydney Morning Herald* and *Ritz-Carlton Magazine*, among others. You can read more of her work and sign-up for the newsletter at www.nataliemaclean.com. Or just e-mail her at nataliemaclean@rogers.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

Somethin' Fishy: Fish and Seafood with Red Wines *Reported by Pam Hatton*

I'll have a glass of red with my fish, please. Huh? The National Capital Sommelier Guild's dinner on January 22nd was a yummy experimentation in flavour combos. Braving the bitter cold we were graciously received at Geraldo's with a fittingly salmon coloured sparkling wine. The Cuvee Catherine from Henry of Pelham was a flavourful blend of 83% Pinot Noir and 17% Chardonnay. The nose was of citrus and toast and once on our taste buds, the balanced seam of acidity made us crave more. Too bad the LCBO sold out of this lovely sparkler the first day of its release.

The dinner started with a wintery spin on the classic shrimp cocktail. A super-sized shrimp was stuffed with duck and shitake mushrooms. Although the duck was hardly noticeable, the pairing with the mushrooms added a complexity and robustness to the dish to support the weight of the earthy Pinot Noir. The Yarra Ridge Pinot Noir showed nicely in its New World fruit forward style of cherries and beetroot. The wine's spicy undertones were enhanced by the lightly bay infused sweet potato cream making the taste sensation unexpected but truly complementary.

The *La Grola' 1998, Allegrini, Veneto, Italy* had more mixed reviews with the scallop pairing. The medium bodied, soft wine was fabulous on its own demonstrating lots of prune and plum. However, with all the fruit and spices going on in the glass, it seemed to dominate the scallop and at the same time, be overpowered by the heat from the chipotle and pine nut salsa. The mellow leek and bitter endive were neutral backgrounds for the wine. All this to say, there were elements of the dish that worked with the wine, but overall there were too many competing flavours and textures to make it a great pairing. A more simplified and toned down preparation of the dish may have made the taste sensation less confusing.

Wines Served:

Cuvée Catharine Rosé Brut' 1999, Henry of Pelham	616458	\$24.95
Pinot Noir 2000, Yarra Ridge, Australia	988568	\$19.90
La Grola' 1998, Allegrini, Veneto, Italy	476598	\$24.40
Chardonnay Reserve 1999, Steve Kocsis Vineyards, Thirty Bench, Niagara	722280	\$34.95
Pinot Noir 2000, Russian River Valley, Sonoma, Kenwood, California	943225	\$29.90
Châteauneuf-du-Pape 1999, Domaine Grand Veneur, Rhône	989061	\$29.85
Pomme de Glace', Clos Saint-Denis, Saint Denis-sur-Richelieu, Québec	591297	\$20.00

February Vintages Pre-Release *Reported by Mike Cowen*

Our assembled tasters were pleasantly surprised by the quality of the white wine flight, which occasionally at VPRs can be rather boring. We had a chance to sample four wines, each of which were excellent examples of their grape variety. The German Riesling was the hands down favourite with its bracing acidity combined with elegant sweetness. Nearly everybody loved the Californian Viognier with its aromas of peaches, pears and honey. A few loved the oaky South

African Chardonnay which had just enough fruit to balance a substantial dose of oak.

A single white wine squeaked into the evening's lineup. The *Chardonnay Reserve 1999, Steve Kocsis Vineyards, Thirty Bench, Niagara* had tropical and buttery notes which were very pleasant but this wine was not the star for the next fish match. To the delight of the event planners, everyone seemed to prefer the red pairings with the beefy rare Ahi tuna steak. The subtly smoky flavours and rare protein of the succulent fish seemed to take naturally to the *Pinot Noir 2000, Russian River Valley Sonoma, Kenwood, California*. The bright cherry fruit forward style with earthy undertones married well with the paralleled deep earthiness of the beetroot and Gorgonzola sauce. The match was perfect. *Châteauneuf-du-Pape 1999, Domaine Grand Veneur, Rhône* was a decent runner up, but the Old World style with its subdued plum, cherry, floral and gamey-ness leaned a little too heavily on the tuna. This excellent wine might pair better with a chunkier meat choice.

The caramelized apple tart with the *Pomme de Glace', Clos Saint-Denis, Saint Denis-sur-Richelieu, Québec* was a mouth-watering finale. So the wine wasn't red, but the original red apples transformed themselves into a deeply caramelized gold liquid. Oddly, the initial nose of the fruit wine was of pears and evolved into the complex aromas of Calvados. The crisp citrus acidity was picked up from the lemon zest sauce and kept the pairing from becoming cloying. The lingering finish almost seemed more apple than the tart. This unique wine was a refreshing change from the perennial (albeit delicious) Ice Wine.

If the laughter around the tables was an indication of the wine and food appreciation, the evening was certainly a success. The warm hospitality and efficient service from Geraldo's staff ensured that the evening went off without a hitch. Thank you.

The second flight consisted of two light reds, a Gamay and a Pinot Noir. The Santa Barbara Pinot was the almost unanimous choice, showing very ripe fruit flavours but only subtle Pinot typicity. In the third flight, two wines dominated the pack. The "Machiavelli" Chianti Classico Riserva was superb with good acidity and ample fruit, which

nicely contrasted the “Muga” Reserva Rioja which showed lots of coconut oak, massive fruit and mature tannins. In the last flight, the clear crowd pleaser was another big fruit forward Australian red, this time the Penfolds Bin 407. It coated our mouths with luscious fruit and well balanced tannin. Perhaps the most interesting lesson of the evening

was being able to compare our personal notes with those of the “experts”. Twelve of the 14 wines were rated 90 or better by Wine Spectator, David Lawrason or Robert Parker. While most of us agreed with some of these scores, in many cases we were left scratching our heads in wonderment at their generosity.

Sauvignon Blanc 2001, Sacred Hill Winery, Marlborough, South Island, NZ	993394	\$19.95
Viognier 2001, Delicato Family Vineyards, Lodi, California	978163	\$18.75
Chardonnay 2001, Hamilton Russell Vineyards, Walker Bay, South Africa	931006	\$25.85
Riesling Spatlese 2000, Weingut Gunderloch QmP Nackenheim Rothenberg, GE	724922	\$26.85
Fleurie 2000, Georges Duboeuf, Chateau des Bachelards, Beaujolais, France	725200	\$19.95
Pinot Noir 2000, Santa Barbara Winery, Santa Ynez Valley, California	942946	\$22.60
“S” Les Rameaux 2001, Chateau Grande Cassagne, Costieres de Nimes, Rhone	956433	\$14.95
Casa de la Ermita Tinto 2000, Bodegas Casa de la Ermita, DO Jumilla, Spain	956334	\$16.95
Chianti Class Ris 1998, DOCG, “Machiavelli”, Vigna di Fontalle, Tuscany, It	726612	\$29.60
Valpolicella 1999, Le Ragose, Classico Superiore DOC, Veneto, Italy	991984	\$17.90
‘Muga’ Reserva 1998, Bodegas Muga, DOC Rioja, Spain	976928	\$22.85
Amarone 1998, “Marano”, Boscaini, Valpolicella Classico, Italy	715110	\$36.80
Mas La Plana 1997, Miguel Torres, Gran Coronas, DO Penedes	315838	\$39.00
Cabernet Sauvignon 1999, Bin 407, Penfold’s, South Australia	414987	\$32.95

Shiraz/Syrah Blends *Reported by Dawn Harvie*

One of the greatest things about the Guild is the breadth of tastings they present. Thanks to James Bertrand, the Shiraz/Syrah Blends evening provided yet another wonderful tasting due not only to the selection of wines but also to an interesting flight pattern. The first flight consisted of seven wines and a small stack of cards each naming one of Cabernet Sauvignon, Grenache, Malbec, Pinot Noir, Pinotage, Sangiovese and Zinfandel—the grape varieties that were in the blend with Shiraz/Syrah. We were asked to match the grape listed on the card with the wine in our glasses—one card per glass. To make our task more difficult, the blended wines contained anywhere between 22% and 65% of the Shiraz/Syrah grape, so it may not have been the primary grape. Oh, and one more thing, other grapes may have been blended into the mix as well! Although most of us failed miserably at this task, we all had a lot of fun trying! The Goats do Roam was called a “supermarket” wine. The Collage Zinfandel-Shiraz surprised many of us with 76% Zinfandel! The Zinfandel certainly didn’t stand out. The Chateau de Lancyre was noted as being a good food wine.

The Shiraz/Syrah blends in flight two, James told us, had “one grape in common,” and then he added, “It’s going to be impossible to figure it out.” Well, it wasn’t quite impossible—one of our veteran tasters correctly guessed Cabernet Sauvignon. Wonderful flight! The Bin 2 had lovely dark fruit, good acidity and tannins. The Clancy’s had lots of fruit and a beautiful complexity. And the Mountain Blue was amazing with its huge mint aromas and luscious fruit.

The common grape in flight three was Grenache: Shiraz/Syrah in varying amounts was blended with Grenache in varying amounts, with other grapes in the mix as well. Rod Story wrote about the Coudoulet de Beaucastel in the February 2003 Bulletin (Passing Scene, 9 January VPR). He described the wine as having “the perfect nose of Concord grapes” but not standing up to its “normal reputation”. Rod and I both agreed that the Beaucastel showed much better at this tasting with notes of fruit, candy and strawberry jam and good fruit flavours and tannin. And the favourite of the flight was the Ironstone Pressings, an absolutely amazing wine with big fruit and tannins.

Enigma Pinot Noir-Syrah, Maison Thorin, NV	576298	\$9.90
Goats do Roam, Charles Back Fairview, South Africa, 2000	718940	\$10.90
Shiraz Malbec, Leasingham, Clare Valley, Australia, 1998	584946	\$16.00
Collage Zinfandel-Shiraz, Kendall-Jackson, California, 1999	567628	\$15.85
Il Briccone Shiraz Sangiovese, Prino Estate, Australia, 1999	943704	\$22.05
Chateau de Lancyre, Coteaux du Languedoc, France, 1999	541219	\$15.95
Bin 389 Cabernet Shiraz, Penfolds, South Australia, 1999	309625	\$34.90
Bin 2, Penfolds, South Eastern Australia, 1999	468629	\$17.90
La Cuvee Mythique, Vin de Pays d’Oc, Midi, France, 1998	352468	\$19.95
Clancy’s, Peter Lehmann, South Australia, 1999	702688	\$23.95
Mountain Blue, Rosemount Estate, Mudgee, Australia, 1999	583183	\$59.00
Coudoulet de Beaucastel, Cotes du Rhone, France, 1999	979120	\$26.95
Cana, Cotes du Roussillon, France, 1999	985960	\$29.00
The Ironstone Pressings, d’Arenberg, McLaren Vale, 1998	974816	\$39.00
Chateau de Beaucastel, Chateauneuf-du-Pape, France, 1998	711317	\$35.00

An Evening in Provence: Distinctive Wines from the South of France *Reported by Joseph Phelan*

As *Robert Parker Jr.* states in his fifth edition of the *Wine Buyers Guide*, “Provence is an exciting and diverse region that is turning out not only extremely satisfying rosés but also immensely promising red wines and a few encouraging whites. Yet it remains largely uncharted territory for wine consumers.”

On an extremely cold February evening a full house of wine lovers at the Chelsea Club experienced for themselves a panoply of wines from six of Provence’s diverse viticultural areas. Though rosés make up over 75% of the wines made in Provence I chose to showcase the reds (13 of them) and one white to see if Parker and others were correct in their positive opinions.

The first flight of four wines offered the only white wine of the tasting, a lovely lightly-oaked Sauvignon Blanc and Semillon blended number from Côteaux d’Aix en Provence’s *Château Calissane*. Most participants expressed the view that this would be a lovely summer patio wine with its balanced fruit character and fresh acidity. The trivial question though: A patio in Ottawa or in Provence?

Moving on to the reds, the first of the five wines selected from the Côtes de Provence appellation for the tasting was *Château de Berne*’s “Cuvée Special”, a blend of Cabernet Sauvignon, Grenache and Syrah. Not everyone was taken with the obvious youth, tannins and cedar wood notes in this “food wine”, though the minty notes did capture some attention. Noteworthy was the level of acidity in this wine and for that matter for all of the red wines tasted. Many were surprised to see such good natural acidity in wines from a markedly warm climate. The answer is the result of carefully selecting sites that offer good microclimates.

The third wine of the flight unfortunately was “corked”—too bad as this was from one of Parker’s four star rated producers, *Domaine Hauvette*. The final wine was *Domaine Gavoty*. This was the crowd favourite, a wine comprised of Syrah, Grenache and Cabernet Sauvignon.

The second flight of four wines came from the Côtes de Provence appellation. These included: *Domaine Ludovic de*

The wines (in the order they were tasted):

Château Calissane, 2000, Château Cal Lançon, AC Côteaux d'aix en Provence	\$18.40
Château de Berne, 1998, (estate bottled), AC Côtes de Provence	\$25.00
Domaine Hauvette, 1998, Dominique Hauvette, AC Les Baux de Provence	\$35.00
Domaine Gavoty, 1999, R & P Gavoty, AC Côtes de Provence	\$15.65
Domaine Ludovic de Beausejour, 1999, Maunier & Terrasson, AC Côtes de Provence	\$16.20
Domaine la Bernarde, 1998, Meuenart Pere et fils, AC Côtes de Provence	\$17.65
La Courtade, (estate bottled), 1999, AC Côtes de Provence	\$26.25
Château Testavin, 2000, Domaine du Thoucar, AC Côtes de Provence	\$20.95
Château Vignelaure, 1999, (estate bottled), AC Côteaux d'aix en Provence	\$21.75
Les Côteaux de Bellet, 1999, (estate bottled), AC Bellet	\$31.65
Château Simone, 1999, (estate bottled), AC Palette	\$34.80
Château Bas, ‘Cuvée du Temple’, 1999, (estate bottled), AC Côteaux d'aix en Provence	\$22.00
Château Vannières, 1999, (estate bottled), AC Bandol	\$29.00
Château de Pibarnon, 1999, Comte de Saint Victor, AC Bandol	\$36.75

Beausejour (Grenache, Syrah and Cinsault), *Domaine la Bernarde* (Syrah, Cabernet Sauvignon and Grenache), *La Courtade* (97% Mourvèdre & 3% Syrah) and *Château Testavin* (Syrah & Grenache & Mourvèdre). All displayed rather markedly different flavour profiles due, in part, to the respective blending partners and in their respective mix proportions. The hit of the flight was the very fruit-forward, heavily extracted *Château Testavin*—a limited production wine (only 8,000 bottles) that was sourced directly in Provence.

The third flight represented very distinctive wines from the two smallest Provençal appellations, Palette (*Château Simone*) and Bellet (*Les Côteaux de Bellet*), as well as a wine from Côteaux d’Aix en Provence (*Château Vignelaure*). The Bellet selection was particularly noteworthy being a blend of varietals that originated in Piedmont in Italy and grown in a small area around the City of Nice near the Italian border. This limited production wine offered rather unusual aromas and characteristics that seemed to please the majority of tasters. *Château Vignelaure*, on the other hand, is a wine that is as close to Bordeaux as it is possible to get in Provence. With 60% Cabernet Sauvignon, 30% Syrah and 10% Grenache, it displayed some typical bell pepper and cassis notes, and general opinion was that it was a real food wine.

The final flight of three selections featured two very powerful, tannic gamey reds from the Mourvèdre-dominated appellation of Bandol (*Château Vannières* & *Château de Pibarnon*) and a tannic blockbuster from Côteaux d’Aix en Provence produced by *Château Bas*. Wow, youthful wines (1999 vintage) can be quite challenging but probably will offer delights in a few years if we believe Lloyd Evans’s glowing tasting notes in the *Classics Catalogue*.

Were the positive comments of Parker and other wine critiques justified regarding these distinctively, expressive wines from Provence? I can honestly say that judging from the collective sentiments expressed during the evening the answer is yes.

Romancing the Rhone *Reported by Vic Harradine*

The concept was simple enough, 3 Rhone wine makers, 8 wines, three appetizers and home by nine thirty. Think again! Ever the comfortable venue, the upstairs of the popular Trattoria Caffè Italia welcomed 58 Guild members and guests who were in for a pleasant surprise. The wine makers were there early, opening and testing the wine (only one corked) and by 7:10 we were on our way. After the perfunctory introductions we met the principals of 'The Case for Wine', Lloyd Evans and Terry Milne, and the three delightful winemakers, Yves Cuilleron, Pierre Gaillard and Francois Villard.

Before each flight, one of the winemakers introduced the wines and their concept for the partnership in 'Les Vins de Vienne'. Each a masterful winemaker in their individual Domaines, this partnership has focused on producing wines from very low yields, old vines whenever possible and with enough extraction and alcohol to make you think New World rather than Old. They spoke comfortably in French with Terry providing an English translation. It went so well, one hardly noticed the melding of the two.

Flight One introduced 2 lovely whites with the room evenly split for their favourite. The Saint Peray, 80% Marsanne, 20% Roussane, was nicely balanced and could easily age another 2 to 4 years. The Condrieu, 100% Viognier, was honey and floral, full bodied with a lingering finish. A beauty now and good for developing another 5 years in the cellar.

Flight Two stepped the wines up a notch along with the volume in the room. The simple Cote du Rhone wasn't simple. It was 50% Syrah and 50% Grenache with great

garrigue on the nose, lovely smooth and creamy mouth feel and enough fruit for everyone. Great acidity was present in all these wines. The Cairanne was 70% Grenache, 20% Syrah and 20% Carignan (I know that is 110%, something lost in the translation, I fear). Or maybe not, it was a big wine! The winemakers, when pushed, preferred the Cote du Rhone and the room split evenly between the Cairanne and the Gigondas.

Flight Three blew the lid off it. Huge fruit forward wines with 14 and 14.5% alcohol bruisers that had it all. The 100% Syrah, Saint Joseph, was atypical with very smooth tannins and great fruit and balance for such a young wine. The Hermitage lived up to its pedigree with 100% Syrah, done in 40% new barriques, and from wine that had been purchased in extremely small quantities (some only a barrel) to be meticulously blended into the wine in front of us. The Chateauneuf-du-Pape was forward and elegant enough to be tasted after the Hermitage. No mean feat. A very animated group by this point, with comments flowing freely.

The tasters, and now you, were offered the opportunity to purchase these wines via 'The Case For Wine'. Quantities are quite limited and, conveniently, they are in 6 bottle cases. Expect delivery in May. Contact Terry Milne or Lloyd Evans at info@thecaseforwine.com or 1-888-267-2642. Visa/MasterCard accepted.

The cuisine: The shrimps in Pernod and tomato sauce may have been a bit much for the 2 whites, while the veal piccata married well with the second flight. The hearty lamb chops and accompanying vegetables were a lovely complement to the final flight.

The wines that were tasted, and that may be purchased, follow:

Flight One:

Les Bialeres 2001, AOC Saint Peray	85 points	\$36
Le Cambée 2201, AOC Condrieu	92 points	\$61

Flight Two:

Les Cranilles 2000, AOC Cote du Rhône	89 points	\$30
La Perdendaille 2000, AOC Cairanne	90 points	\$36

Flight Three:

Les Pimpignoles 2000, AOC Gigondas	90 points	\$50
L'Arzelle 2000, AOC Saint Joseph	88 points	\$41
Les Chirats de Saint Christophe 2000, AOC Hermitage	90 points	\$75