



National Capital Sommelier Guild

www.sommelierguild.com

Newsletter – February 2004

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*Better be jocund with the fruitful grape
Than sadden after none, or bitter fruit.*

Omar Khayyam, The Rubaiyat (st. 54) (FitzGerald's translation)

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, 4 March 2004, 7:00 – 9:00 p.m.

Chelsea Club, 236 Metcalfe (at Somerset)

Plan to join those who have made this Guild Signature Event a regular feature of their wine life. The VPR provides 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. The VPR gives 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

National Capital Sommelier Guild
99 Fifth Avenue – Suite 130, Ottawa, Ontario, K1S 5P5
Tel: (613) 237-7911
www.sommelierguild.com

Aussie Reds – Times Two

Thursday, 19 February 2004, 7:00 – 9:00 p.m.

Chelsea Club, 236 Metcalfe (at Somerset)

Sold Out

The King is Back Again!

Wednesday, 25 February 2004, 7:00 – 9:00 p.m.

Thursday, 26 February 2004, 7:00 – 9:00 p.m.

Chelsea Club, 236 Metcalfe (at Somerset)

No, this is not Elvis we are talking about, although he is rumoured to be currently appearing at the Casino. We are talking about the real thing, **King Riesling**, and it is back for a grand tasting after having gone missing for a bit more than two years. “*Unbeatable quality; indisputably aristocratic; ludicrously unfashionable*” is how Jancis Robinson summarizes her views on this noble variety. She also states that it produces the loveliest white wine in the world.

In Alsace, it is referred to as the “King of wines”; in Germany, it definitely reigns as the King, producing some of the world’s best and most long-lived whites. Riesling is also grown in many other wine producing regions around the world, and in many countries it makes outstanding wines that are too often unappreciated.

Guild Governor Pierre Dupont, a long-time Riesling fan, has been collecting some of the best Rieslings available in this

country for some time now and he will be sharing many of them with us. We will try to dispose of some old myths and let you discover for yourself that Riesling is definitely of “*unbeatable quality*” and “*indisputably aristocratic*”. As for the “*ludicrously unfashionable*”, let’s hope it stays that way so that we can continue to enjoy some of the world’s greatest wines at reasonable prices. It’s a faint hope as demand and prices have been creeping up and the recent rise of the euro will also add its dastardly effect.

Riesling is a great food wine and we want you to appreciate this. In order to do so we will be serving tasting portions of dishes that are always enhanced when paired with Riesling.

Every past Riesling tasting has been an early sell-out. Consequently we have doubled the number of seats and provided a choice of dates. The same wines will be served at both sessions so there is little point in attending both unless your memory is really bad.

Members and Sponsored Guests: \$45

Pillitteri Estate Winemaker Dinner with Sue-Ann Staff

Sunday, 29 February 2004, 6:30 p.m. for hors d’oeuvres, 7:00 p.m. for dinner

Vittoria Trattoria Restaurant, 35 William Street (in the Market)

What better way to celebrate the first dinner of the new year than with the Ontario Winemaker of the Year for 2002 and the NCSG Wine Person of the Year for 2003! **Sue-Ann Staff**, one of Ontario’s premiere winemakers will come to Ottawa to present some of Pillitteri’s best offerings. To ensure a memorable evening, Chef and Sommelier **Cesare Santaguida** has prepared a special menu to accompany Sue-

Ann’s wines. Among the wines served this evening will be the perennial medal winning Vidal Icewine and Family Reserve Cabernet Franc. Hors d’oeuvres will be served with a unique and delicious Duemila sparkler.

Sue-Ann Staff and Cesare Santaguida invite you to join them as they kick off the NCSG 2004 dinner season.

Menu

Homemade potato chips topped with vanilla mousse

~

Cherry tomatoes stuffed with goat cheese and fresh avocado

~

Pan seared sea scallops on a potato pancake with a citrus beurre-blanc

~

Rigatoni with a wild mushroom ragout

~

Grilled veal chop with a bourbon demi-glace

~

Poached peach, cranberry, and white chocolate tart

Members and Sponsored Guests: \$85

Chocoholics Anonymous

Wednesday, 10 March 2004, 7:00 – 9:00 p.m.

Chelsea Club, 236 Metcalfe (at Somerset)

Come out and indulge yourself in the decadence of chocolate and wine perfectly matched. When they are both at their best it is a perfect marriage that can deliver a taste sensation made in heaven and yet will be enjoyed right here at a NCSG tasting!

This will be an extensive tasting and overview of the best wines matched with the best Belgian chocolate. We will try white, milk, and dark chocolate in several cocoa strengths

Members and Sponsored Guests: \$45

A Wine Tour of Tuscany

Thursday, 18 March 2004, 7:00 – 9:00 p.m.

Café Italia, 254 Preston Street (at Gladstone)

Tuscany, a region once stifled by viticultural traditions dating back three millennia, is recognized today for producing world class wines. In this tasting the Guild will provide an overview of the major wine producing districts in Tuscany with examples from some of the better known winemakers. Red wines only will be sampled from Chianti,

along with at least one decadent chocolate dessert. These will be paired with a wide assortment of wines, liqueurs, and spirits in an attempt to find that perfect match.

Join Guild Director Paul Courtice on a splendiferous adventure and spend an evening lingering over a table full of chocolate and wine. Chocolate, wine, and friends—what could be better than that? Not much!

Members and Sponsored Guests: \$50

Guild Business

Have you renewed your membership for 2004?

You can check your membership status by looking for the text “04-OK” on the mailing label of your January newsletter. This indicates that your membership is in place for 2004 and you can count on receiving all of the Guild’s communications without interruption. To the many who have already renewed, we say thank you, and we look forward to your participation in the events of 2004.

If you do not see “04-OK”, your membership has not been renewed. Renewing can be as easy as sending an email. See the enclosed Membership Renewal Form for details.

If you have renewed and the “04-OK” is missing from your mailing label, please email joe.hatz@sommelierguild.com so that we can take an appropriate action.

Items of Special Interest to Guild Members

FREE Wine Newsletter

Guild member Natalie MacLean, recently named the World's Best Drink Writer, offers a FREE wine e-newsletter with wine picks, articles, and humour. There are no ads and all e-mail addresses are kept confidential. To sign up, visit www.nataliemaclean.com or e-mail natdecants@nataliemaclean.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 a member of the NCSG and enjoy the savings.

Vines Magazine Guild Director Rod Phillips has been appointed Editor-in-Chief of *Vines Magazine*. *Vines* is an up-scale, glossy wine magazine, published six times a year, that covers the world of wine with particular attention to Canada. Each issue contains wine reviews written by the *Vines* team of critics across the country, and features articles on food and wine, wine travel, and wine regions. Look for a forthcoming feature on Port written by former Guild President, Vic Harradine. Guild members may purchase a one-year subscription for only \$8.50, which is half the normal subscription and much less than the store price (\$3.95 an issue). Just send a cheque to **Vines Magazine, 159 York Street, St Catharines, Ontario L2R 6E9**, with a note saying that you are a member of the Guild. Good wine reading!

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 cheeses 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

All Ports Bulletin *Reported by Pierre Fournier*

Organizing a Guild event can sometimes feel like a mix of leg work, planning, and terror. But regardless of what you have experienced, as soon as the first guests arrive you begin to feel that something magical is about to take place. For me, this feeling of magic began some three months prior to the start of this event—how much better can it get than to have the opportunity to taste exquisite Ports in the company of a true expert.



Huyshe Bower, Executive Vice Chairman of Taylor Fladgate & Yeatman

On a starry Tuesday evening in November, fifty guild members were privileged to have shared a few hours and twelve Ports with Huyshe Bower, Executive Vice Chairman of Taylor Fladgate & Yeatman. Spanning 40 years, the ages of the Ports were only surpassed by Mr. Bower's perspective which extends some 44 years from the vineyards to the executive of the one of the flagship producers. And to our complete pleasure, he guided us with humour and insight through the tasting.

In retrospect, the flow of wines seems almost unbelievable as we traversed the spectrum of Ports with exquisite examples of each. Our thanks to Alain Brunelle of Whitehall Canada for having both donated two and sourced another two of the products featured. We began the tasting with two white Ports: the Chip Dry and Special White. Refreshing and elegant they laid the foundation for an evening of discovery. The second and third flights contained a selection of Ruby, Late Bottle Vintage, Vintage, and single Quinta Ports. Although difficult to highlight just one, the 1988 Quinta de Vargellas was superb—vibrant and rich with ample fruit and a harmonious pallet that almost seemed impossible to top. But the best was yet to come.

There are a few tastings that are almost mythical in nature: Taylor's century of Port, a single flight of 10, 20, 30, and 40 year old Tawnies, is certainly one of these. Our fourth

flight was a trip through time as we experienced the changes brought about by careful blending and proper ageing. Pared with cheeses, crackers, fruit, and chocolate, these wines taught us all a lesson in complexity and composition which is truly difficult to convey in words. Some two months later, I can still vividly recall the velvety textures of the wines and the comments at our table pointing to the younger Tawnies being the better matches for the food. For me, the 40 year old stands on its own, no accompaniment required!

The final bottle of wine of the evening was a magnum of Vintage 1970 priced at \$895 You might say that for such a price, expectations would be rather high—well in this case they were exceeded. From the moment Mr. Bower removed the cork, the smell of crème caramel began to fill the air as a team of volunteers assembled to begin decanting and pouring the wine. Once in the glass and served, it was a true joy to experience the texture, weight, and balance supporting a cast of flavours. I overheard many descriptors detailing the types of spices and fruit present, but for me it was all about that crème caramel!

The only sad part of the evening was that before we knew it was over. Many thanks to the cast of volunteers who helped make the event run smoothly, and to our partners at Whitehall Canada. And of course to Mr. Bower we say, "Thank you! Come back any time!"





January 2004 VPR *Reported by Jim Gallivan*

A hardy group of guild members braved the chilling cold to attend the January VPR. The first flight featured five white wines. The d'Arenberg Stump Jump was the most interesting wine of the flight. It was light bodied and complex with floral, citrus, and peach aromas, and a fairly high acid. However, the overall favourite was the Deinhard Riesling—a typical young German riesling. The Pouilly-Fumé proved why New Zealand is now the home of Sauvignon Blanc. The Zind-Humbrecht Pinot Gris had good body and flavour, but was surprisingly sweet, while the Trimbach Gewurztraminer was a solid Alsatian example, with a floral, spicy nose, good body, and a hint of lime on the finish.

The second flight featured “New World” reds. The Malivoire Pinot Noir had a spicy cherry aroma with a light body and clean finish. The Lakeview Meritage had a nose of bell pepper, dark berries, and smoked meat with good tannins and an acid finish. It needs food and/or to age. The last two wines tied for the favourite slot. The Dry Creek Vineyard Merlot had a soft berry nose with vanilla and toast. It was slightly sweet with a soft finish and light tannins. The Frescobaldi Cabernet Sauvignon (LCBO Wine of the

Flight 1

The Stump Jump, Riesling/Sauv Blanc/Marsanne, 2002, d'Arenberg, South Australia	922203	\$12.95
Riesling QbA, 2000, Deinhard, Mosel-Saar-Ruwer, Germany	928176	\$15.95
'La Moynerie' Pouilly-Fumé, 2001, Michel Redde et Fils, AC Loire, France	729178	\$20.95
Pinot Gris, 2001, Zind-Humbrecht, AC Alsace, France	918102	\$33.95
Gewurztraminer, 2000, Trimbach, AC Alsace, France	958462	\$23.95

Flight 2

Pinot Noir, 2002, Malivoire Wine Co., Niagara Peninsula	996777	\$25.95
Meritage, 2000, Lakeview Cellars, Niagara Peninsula	573212	\$15.95
Merlot, 1999, Dry Creek Vineyard, Sonoma Valley, California	923243	\$24.95
Cabernet Sauvignon, 2001, Marchesi de' Frescobaldi, Castiglioni, IGT Toscana, Italy	974394	\$19.95

Flight 3

Château St. Didier-Parnac, 2001, F. & J. Rigal, AC Cahors, France	303259	\$14.95
Assisi Rosso, 2001, Fratelli Ernesto & Remo Sportoletti, DOC Umbria, Italy	926857	\$19.95
Mamre Brook Shiraz, 2000, Saltram Wine Estate, Barossa Valley, South Australia	906677	\$19.95
Solanes, 2000, Cims de Porrera, DO Priorat, Spain	930388	\$29.95
Amarone Valpolicella, 1998, Cantina Valpentena, DOC 'Falasco', Veneto, Italy	922161	\$48.95

The Ports tasted were:

Flight 1

Chip Dry White
Special White

Flight 2

Taylor's First Estate Ruby
1997 LBV

Flight 3

1997 Vintage Port
1988 Quinta de Vargellas
2000 Vintage Port

Flight 4

10-Year-Old Tawny Port
20-Year-Old Tawny Port
30-Year-Old Tawny Port
40-Year-Old Tawny Port

Flight 5

1970 Vintage Port

Month) was typical of a New World Cabernet, even though it is Old World, obviously the result of the Mondavi influence. It had a nose of cassis, black cherry, and spices with good tannins and an acid finish.

The third flight started with the Chateau St. Didier-Parnac from Cahors. It was the new style of Cahors, with a medium-light body, nose of dried plums, and a very dry finish. The Assisi Rosso, a 50/50 Sangiovese/Merlot blend, had a raspberry, cherry, cedar nose with good body and a long finish. The third wine, the Saltram Mamre Brook Shiraz (LCBO Wine of the Month) was the second most popular wine of the flight. It was a typical Aussie Shiraz with berries, plums, and a touch of pepper on the nose, and a soft finish, albeit somewhat short. The Solanes Priorat was the new style of Priorat, bright red, with good fruit, a medium-full body, and good tannins. The favourite of the flight (by one vote) was the Valpentena Amarone. It had tobacco, coffee, chocolate, and floral notes on the nose, and was well-balanced with a long finish.

Overall, it was an interesting tasting, and Peter Collis is to be congratulated for yet another job well done.

Aussie Reds Times Two *Reported by Mike Cowen*

Aussie wines have taken the world by storm and their successes continue to mount. Last year they pushed ahead of the US to become the number four wine exporter in the world and at the same time jumped ahead of both Germany and South Africa to claim the #6 spot in terms of total wine production. This success has been echoed in Canada where imports were up by 42% last year. Similarly, the amount of space accorded to Australian wine at your local LCBO and in the Vintages and Classics catalogues has skyrocketed over the past five years. This was our chance to see for ourselves if the quality was there in the wines to back up these numbers.

It was a cold winter's eve—perfect timing for a sampling of hearty Australian red wine. The tasting covered a wide range of Aussie red styles, varietals, and price points (\$29 to \$299!). As usual, there were surprises—and disappointments. The two Clarendon Hills wines (a Merlot and Grenache) bombed—both were stewed, overripe, skunky—just plain awful. Perhaps something happened during shipping as both wines were highly rated by Parker and Wine Spectator. However, the remaining dozen wines wowed our senses and created considerable buzz around the room. In the first flight, the Penley Cab Reserve was the near unanimous favourite; lush, well balanced, nice acid, and a great finish. The only other wine of the evening that virtually everyone voted as being “best of flight” was the Charles Melton Nine Popes in the third flight. It garnered

kudos for intense and exotic fruit flavours, reminding me of the Cline old vine series of wines from California. In flight two, another Penley product dominated the field, though not exclusively. This time it was the Shiraz Cabernet that elicited a strong reaction from the crowd.

The last flight contained the blockbusters, both in terms of price and ratings from the wine critic gods. With two wines rated 98 or better and one wine checking in at \$299, it would prove to be a fascinating blind comparison. Guild members would not be at all surprised to learn that neither the Grange 1998 (\$299, both Parker and Wine Spectator scores of 99) or the Dead Arm Shiraz (Parker 98+) rated as the number one wine of the flight. That title went to the last wine of the evening—the Craneford Shiraz which clocked in at a stunning \$29! Talk about a bargain. I will admit that the Grange was a close second, but as frequently happens in these tastings, the Grange which exuded refinement, finesse, and elegant structure, was overwhelmed in the minds of most tasters by the luscious fruit and structure that exuded from the Craneford. Not a single person chose the Dead Arm as number one despite rating a 98+ from Parker. It was a wonderful wine unto itself—it was just facing intense competition in this flight.

So once again we learned that the wine critics don't know everything, that we should trust our own palates, and it is possible to find wine that costs less than \$30 that tastes like, or is even better than, a \$300 wine.

Flight 1

1. Vasse Felix Cabernet Sauvignon, 2000, Margaret River, 14.5%	\$35.00	JH94 & WS90
2. Clarendon Hills Merlot Hickinbotham, 1999, McLaren Vale, 14%	\$53.00	RP91
3. Penley Estate Cabernet Sauvignon Reserve, 1999, Coonawarra, 14%	\$59.00	JH94

Flight 2

1. Penley Estate Shiraz Cabernet, 1999, South Australia, 14%	\$29.95	RP90 & DL91
2. Elderton CSM, 1999, Barossa, 14%	\$39.95	RP90 & DL91
3. Parker Coonawarra Estate Terra Rossa First Growth, 1998, 13.5%	\$99.00	RP95-97

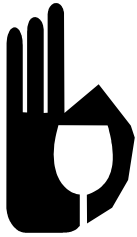
Flight 3

1. Cape Mentelle Zinfandel, 2001, Margaret River, West Australia, 15%	\$28.95	DL91
2. Clarendon Hills Romas Old Vines Grenache, 1999, McLaren, 14.5%	\$69.00	ST93 & WS92
3. Charles Melton Nine Popes, 2000, Barossa, 14.5%	\$47.00	WS90

Flight 4

1. Penfolds Grange, 1998, South Australia, 14.5%	\$299.00	RP99, WS99 & DL98
2. Elderton Shiraz Command, 1999, Barossa, 14.5%	\$69.00	WS94
3. Two Hands Shiraz Bad Imposter, 2001, Padthaway, 14.5%	\$59.00	WS91
4. D'Arenberg Dead Arm Shiraz, 2001, McLaren Vale, 15%	\$49.95	RP98
5. Craneford Shiraz, 2001, Barossa, 14%	\$29.00	RP92

JH: James Halliday
DL: David Lawrason
RP: Robert Parker
WS: Wine Spectator



National Capital Sommelier Guild

www.sommelierguild.com

Registration – February 2004

Please note that:

- You will not normally receive confirmation of your reservation.
- You will be contacted only if we cannot accommodate you.
- Your cancelled cheque or credit card statement will serve as your receipt.
- If paying by cheque, send a separate cheque for each event with name of event on the cheque.

Cancellation Policy

- Cancellations must be made by informing the Registrar at least 5 days before the event. If you do so within this time frame you will not be charged for the event.
- If you cancel less than 5 days before the event, you will be charged for the event and you will be responsible for finding an alternate to fill your seat and for advising the registrar of your alternate's name at least 12 hours prior to the event.

The King is Back Again

Wednesday, 25 February 2004

Members' & Sponsored Guest's Names:

Member(s) & Sponsored Guest @ \$45 = _____
Total _____

The King is Back Again

Thursday, 26 February 2004

Members' & Sponsored Guest's Names:

Member(s) & Sponsored Guest @ \$45 = _____
Total _____

Pillitteri Estate Dinner

Sunday, 29 February 2004

Members' & Sponsored Guest's Names:

Member(s) & Sponsored Guest @ \$85 = _____
Total _____

March VPR

Thursday, 4 March 2004

Members' & Sponsored Guest's Names:

Member(s) & Sponsored Guest @ \$25 = _____
Total _____

Chocoholics Anonymous

Wednesday, 10 March 2004

Members' & Sponsored Guest's Names:

Member(s) & Sponsored Guest @ \$45 = _____
Total _____

A Wine Tour of Tuscany

Thursday, 18 March 2004

Members' & Sponsored Guest's Names:

Member(s) & Sponsored Guest @ \$50 = _____
Total _____

Preferred method by E- Mail with credit card: Send your reservation to events@sommelierguild.com. If *VISA of MasterCard Pre-authorization* has been submitted, no cheque or registration form is necessary. Your credit card will be debited **after** the event. Otherwise immediately mail **one cheque per event** with your registration form.

By Phone: Call the Guild's answering machine at (613) 237-7911. Please speak clearly, identify the event(s) you wish to attend, the persons attending and immediately mail the registration form and **one cheque per event**. If *VISA or MasterCard Pre-authorization* has been submitted, no cheque or registration form is necessary. Your credit card will be debited **after** the event.

By Mail: Mail the registration form and **one cheque per event**.

Cheques are to be made out to: National Capital Sommelier Guild or NCSG

Mail to:

National Capital Sommelier Guild, 99 Fifth Avenue – Suite 130, Ottawa, On K1S 5P5

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: _____

It's time to renew your Guild membership!

As you may know, all guild memberships run on a calendar year, thus all 2003 memberships end in December. In 2003, Guild members enjoyed a diverse program of over 50 events reflecting the broad perspective and interests of Guild members. The 2004 program will be every bit as rewarding, so please join in and renew your membership. **Note that membership fees remain unchanged for the 12th year in a row.**

For the fastest renewal: If you have a credit card pre-authorized with the Guild, just send an email to joe.hatz@sommeliorguild.com, specify the type of membership you want and we will bill your card.

Or: Complete the form, make a check payable to *National Capital Sommelier Guild*, or *NCSG*, and forward to:

National Capital Sommelier Guild

99 Fifth Avenue – Suite 130
Ottawa, Ontario
K1S 5P5

Membership Renewal Form

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ Province: _____ Postal Code: _____

Telephone:

Home: _____ Fax: _____

Home: _____ Fax: _____

Email: _____

Type of Membership (please circle one):

General (\$50)

Trade (\$75)

Corporate (\$150)

Corporate Members, please identify your Establishment. **Trade Members**, indicate your Occupation or the Field in which you work:

Or indicate (if applicable) if you are a Student or Graduate of the Sommelier or Hospitality Program:

Program: _____ Graduation Year: _____

Other Information: *The Guild is a non-profit, member-run organization. Please indicate below if you can assist in any way—from helping out at tastings to presenting seminars. If you have expertise in a particular wine, food or beverage field, please also indicate below your field of expertise.*