

National Capital Sommelier Guild

www.sommelierguild.com

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When I read about the evils of drinking wine, I gave up reading.

~ Rob Hutchison ~

Moderation is a sign of good taste

The National Capital Sommelier Guild strongly supports moderate and responsible consumption of wine and spirits. Most 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 Tasting

Thursday, 30 March 2006, 7:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.

Chelsea Club, 236 Metcalfe St. (at Somerset)

Join those who have made this Guild Signature Event a regular feature of their wine life. VPRs 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. VPRs 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 + \$1.75 (GST) = \$26.75

Sweet Decadence

Thursday, 9 March 2006, 7:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.
Chelsea Club, 236 Metcalfe St. (at Somerset)

Dessert wines are some of the greatest wines in the world. Some of them are legendary. Since the 1800's, Sauternes have been among the celebrities of Bordeaux, demonstrating rich, concentrated flavours and almost unlimited aging ability. Other wines that share these characteristics, like Niagara Ice Wines, have come to world prominence only recently. In both cases, unfermented sugar and high acidity beautifully compliment some foods, and the classic matches, like Sauterne and foie gras, define epicurean decadence.

Guild Director Joe Hatz has planned a bonanza of botrytis and residual sugar, served with a few classic food matches. We have an international mix of wines from Italy, Hungary, Chile, Australia, and Canada; including deBartoli's Black Noble and a Canadian Ice Wine. One flight of five wines will be devoted to Sauternes and its neighbours, including a Loupiac, the 1997 Chateau Coutet (Barsac), and the 1994 Chateau d'Yquem. The Sauternes flight will be served blind. A range of food matches will be served (foie gras, blue cheese, a sweet dessert) to refresh and challenge the palate throughout the evening.

Members and Sponsored Guests: \$65 + \$4.55 (GST) = \$69.55

Four Continents Merlot Challenge

Thursday, 16 March 2006, 7:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.
Chelsea Club, 236 Metcalfe St. (at Somerset)

Forget about what Miles said in the movie Sideways, you will be drinking Merlot at the Four Continent Merlot Challenge.

Please join us as our search continues for the ultimate wine continent with a Merlot challenge. Again, we will compare wines from four continents in three price ranges and you will decide who wins.

Will Europe win or does the New World rule when it come to Merlot. You'll be the judge.

Members and Sponsored Guests: \$30 + \$2.10 (GST) = \$32.10

Dinner at “ambiente” in Beautiful New Edinburgh !

Sunday, 19 March 2006, 6:00 p.m. reception, 6:30 p.m. dinner
Ambiente Restaurant, 18 Beechwood (corner of Charlevoix)

Here's an opportunity to discover a new chef and a new restaurant in town. Chef Michael Guy formerly of Vancouver, where he worked at several restaurants, and of late, Chef to the Canadian Ambassador in Rome, Italy, has now chosen Ottawa to demonstrate his culinary skills.

Join Guild VP Martin Carrière and Guild Director Antonio Mauriello at this newly opened restaurant. This evening will include a four course dinner with wines to complement each dish.

Reception

Bortolomiol Valdobbiadene Prosecco 'Bandarossa', Veneto

First Appetizer

Inama Soave Classico Superiore, 2004, Veneto

Second Appetizer

Il Conventino Vino Nobile di Montepulciano Reserva, 1998, Tuscany

Main Course

Rocchetta 'Sant Emiliano' Barbera d'Asti, 2000, Piedmont

*Masi 'Serego Alghieri' Valpolicella Classico Superiore
 'Anniversario 650 Anni', 2000, Veneto*

Dessert

Montellori Vin Santo, 1997, Tuscany

The intention of this tasting is to demonstrate that Italian wines are truly international wines by using regional products to create a 'global' menu to complement the wines. Come for a comfortable and enjoyable evening prepared by Antonio and Chef Michael.

The menu will be selected closer to the dinner so that the courses will best reflect what is available then.

A vegetarian option is available for this evening. Please specify at time of registering if a vegetarian option is required.

Only 32 seats available. Please reserve early to avoid disappointment.

Members and Guests: \$100 + \$7.00 (GST) = \$107.00

Designated Drivers: \$80 + \$5.60 (GST) = \$85.60

Scuola Italiana? The Italian Northwest Wine Regions

Monday, 27 March 2006, 7:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.

Chelsea Club, 236 Metcalfe St. (at Somerset)

Did you know that Italy showcases over 355 native grape varieties? What is the difference between Barbera d'Alba and Barbera d'Asti? What is the difference between DOC and DOCG? Join Antonio Mauriello in this educational series of wine tastings to learn more about that intriguing world of Italian wines. We start with the north-western regions of Piemonte, Liguria, and Valle d'Aosta.

Members and Sponsored Guests: \$45 + \$3.15 (GST) = \$48.15

The Wines of Mountain Road

Sunday, 2 April 2006, 2:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.

Chelsea Club, 236 Metcalfe St. (at Somerset)

What could be better than spending an early spring Sunday afternoon sipping wine with friends? An afternoon tasting wine in the company of Steve Kocsis, the owner of Ontario's award winning Mountain Road Wine Company!

Many Guild members fondly remember tasting Steve's gold medal winning 2001 Maréchal Foch and 1999 Vidal Ice Wine at last November's Ottawa Wine and Food Show. Well this is *the* opportunity to experience a winery style tasting without the travel, as Steve and Ottawa representative Sylvie Lemans, have put together an exquisite tasting for the Guild of more than a dozen wines including 4 medal winners, 3 ice wines, and a red from the winery's library collection.

In return for sharing his insight and perspective, Steve has asked to leverage the expertise of the Guild in providing feedback on two new wines that will be making their first pre-bottling public tasting. Both are limited production, and, yes, this is your opportunity to taste it here first! (Who knows, perhaps we will also get to order it first!)

This will be a try-and-buy event: Steve and Sylvie will be available afterwards for orders. Bring your friends, fill a case, but don't miss out on this one!

Members and Sponsored Guests: \$25 + \$1.75 (GST) = \$26.75

The World of Big Red

Wednesday, 19 April 2006, 7:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.

Chelsea Club 236 Metcalfe (at Somerset)

Fourteen wines. All red. Average retail cost per bottle: \$65. One year in the collecting. Burgundy, Okanagan, Northern Rhone, Stellenbosch, Southern Rhone, McLaren Vale Bordeaux, Aconcagua, Tuscany, Napa/Sonoma, Piedmont, Mendoza, Douro, and Niagara.

Interested?

Members and Sponsored Guests: \$60 + \$4.20 (GST) = \$64.20

Champagnes, Sparkling Wines, and Fine Dining! *Part Two*

Sunday, 23 April 2006, 6:00 p.m. reception, 6:30 p.m. dinner

Beckta Dining and Wine, 226 Nepean Street, Ottawa (between Bank and Kent)

Bubbles, bubbles, and more bubbles !

Guild VP Martin Carrière is again organizing a dinner revolving around premium sparkling wines of the world with an emphasis on champagnes. If you participated in the last champagne dinner in June of 2003, no explanation is necessary in describing this culinary event. For those not familiar with this concept, here's the proposed structure of this dining experience:

Canapés

'Steller's Jay' Brut 2001, Sumac Ridge, BC

Duck Consommé

Foie Gras "Bon Bons", Banyuls, and Scallion
Domaine Carneros, Brut 2000, Taittinger, Napa

House Smoked Atlantic Salmon Mignon

Poached Salsify and Shaved Fennel
Champagne de Saint-Gall, Brut Premier Cru

Slow Roast Veal Striploin

Tomato Confit, Boccancini Cheese, Organic Fingerling Potatoes,
and "Broken" Brown Butter-Champagne Vinegar Jus
Champagne Duval-Leroy 'Cuvée Design Paris' Brut

Peanut Butter Praline Dome

Vanilla Gelato and Chocolate Wafer
Sauternes Château Partarrieu 2001

Only five wines will be served. Emphasis is not only on quality of these wines but also on providing larger pours from each bottle selected.

Here is the selection criteria for the sparkling wines:

1. Must be a Vintage catalogue product.
2. Must use 'Méthode Champenoise'.
3. Must use at least one of the three classical grapes of Champagne.
4. Preferably a vintage year product vs. a NV product.

A vegetarian option is available for this evening. Please specify at time of registering if a vegetarian option is required

Only 20 places available. Please reserve early to avoid disappointment.

Members and Guests: \$130 + \$9.10 (GST) = \$139.10

Designated Drivers: \$95 + \$6.65 (GST) = \$101.65

NCSG Annual General Meeting

Monday, 15 May 2006, 7:00 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.

Chelsea Club, 236 Metcalfe St. (at Somerset)

Note the date, time, and venue of our Annual General Meeting.

The National Capital Sommelier Guild is a non-profit member-run organization, led by a volunteer Board of Directors. Please plan to participate in the running of the Guild by coming to the AGM, voicing your views, and electing the Board members. The agenda normally calls for reports on membership, finances, Guild achievements, the consideration of any proposed amendments to the By-Laws, and the election of the Board of Directors. By-Law amendments must be submitted to the Board in advance of the meeting. If you have a specific item you would like added to the agenda or if you would like to submit a By-Law amendment, please contact our President, James Bertrand, at james.bertrand@sommelierguild.com or call 830-6994.

As always, wine and appetizers will be served after the meeting.

Looking forward to seeing you there!

Please register for this event.

Members: Free

Guests: \$10 + \$0.70 (GST) = \$10.70

It's Wine Fair Season

The NCSG is proud to be a partner in these great events.

South African Wine Tasting

Wednesday, 8 March 2006, 7:00 p.m. – 10:00 p.m.

Drawing Rounds Room, Fairmont Chateau Laurier

Nose ... bouquet ... smell ... colour ... all words to describe two things the Cape is famous for: stunning flowers and delicious wines.

The Cape winelands are some of the most breathtakingly beautiful in the world and are today producing some of the best wines in their 350 year winemaking history. Come out and taste through a range of wines fit for the collector, the wine enthusiast or the South African wine 'newbie'.

Come out and uncover the Hidden Gems of the Cape.

The South African Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) and Wines of South Africa cordially invite Guild members to an exclusive tasting of South African wines. Admission price \$40.00. To register for the event, please visit www.winesofsouthafrica.ca/canadashows.cfm or call Sean Moher at 613-715-9399. Please taste responsibly.

Wine Fair Wine Tasting – Riesling Rising

Thursday, April 6 2006, 5:30 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.

National Arts Centre

The German Wine Fair comes to Ottawa for the first time on Thursday, 6 April 2006!

The German Embassy in Ottawa in co-operation with the Deutsches Weinstitut have announced an exclusive tasting of Wines of Germany, taking place at the National Arts Centre from 5:30 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.

- Taste from over 100 great wines from several wine regions of Germany – featuring the elegant and versatile Riesling – and other varietals;
- Meet winery principals and winemakers;
- Presented with the stylings of light jazz.

Guild members are eligible for the \$45 ticket price, a \$5 discount off the regular ticket price. Tickets are available by mail or fax. For more information or to register visit www.GermanWineCanada.org.

California Wine Fair – Celebrate Liquid Sunshine

Friday, April 7 2006, 7:00 p.m. – 9:30 p.m.

The Westin Hotel

The United States Consul General and the Wine Institute of California proudly invites you to uncork California's diversity and sample the energy and dedication of the wonderful wineries and vintners that have made California one of the most cherished places on earth. This tasting showcases the vineyards, wines and stories from the Golden State's famous growing regions including Napa, Sonoma, Mendocino, Sierra Foothills and Paso Robles among others. This celebration of wine toasts California's storied and dynamic history of bringing its passion for the grape to Canadians across the county. Join owners, winemakers, agents and friends from the vineyards at the 26th annual California Wine Fair. This is the largest tasting of California wines in Canada !

Tickets are \$50 for Guild members. There will be no general admission at the door.

To register or for more information on the 2006 California Wine Fair Tour, please contact the California Wine Institute at 905-336-8932 or 1-800-558-2675 (CORK) by fax at 905-319-4211 or by email at calwine@sympatico.ca or visit us as www.calwine.ca.

Guild Business

Looking for a Few, Very Special People!

The lifeblood of the Guild is its membership and its heart is the volunteer Board of Directors. If you are the type of person who seeks out and acts on solutions, work well both independently and within a team, and are not afraid of a little hard work, this may be a great opportunity for you. It is the membership that votes to put people on the Board, for a one year term, and voting takes place at the Annual General Meeting in May (See the event announcement above.). There are eleven positions to be filled. Some have set responsibilities, such as Treasurer, Secretary, President, and Communications Director, and these positions are decided each term by the new slate of Directors. Others are called Directors-at-Large. Those positions with responsibilities, e.g., Treasurer and Membership Director, have set position descriptions. These positions are often, but not always, filled by returning Directors. For most new Directors, their responsibilities include running 4 or 5 events per annum, assisting one of the other Directors with large projects from time to time, and familiarizing themselves with the working of the Board with an eye to taking on more responsibilities in the next term. If you are interested in running for the Board of Directors, please contact our President, James Bertrand, at james.bertrand@sommelierguild.com or call 830-6994.

The Guild's Trade Membership Category is Changing

The Guild has been receiving feedback that the number of "Trade only" events in the calendar doesn't justify the extra \$25 for a Trade membership. We agree. So effective immediately, the fee for a Trade membership will be \$50, the same as a General membership.

The membership category of **Trade** will be maintained and the criteria remain unchanged. Trade members must demonstrate that they are either currently working in the trade, or are a student or graduate of a Sommelier program. General members who meet these criteria can request that their membership be converted to Trade by sending an email to membership@sommelierguild.com.

Items of Special Interest to Guild Members

FREE Wine Newsletters

Nat Decants

Guild member Natalie MacLean, recently named the World's Best Drink Writer, offers a free newsletter with wine picks, tips, articles, and humour. The newsletter was named one of the three best wine and food newsletters in North America at the James Beard Foundation Journalism awards. There are no ads and all e-mail addresses are kept confidential. To sign up, visit www.nataliemaclean.com

Worlds of Wine

Worlds of wine-newsletter is a free monthly e-newsletter hosted by our very own Guild member Rod Phillips, wine columnist for the Ottawa Citizen. His newsletter contains articles and reviews. You can subscribe to it through his web site at www.worldsofwine.com.

Winecurrent.com

Receive analytical and straightforward wine reviews for Ontario wine-lovers. Receive a newsletter prior to every Vintages Release alerting you to the best wines without folksy chatter or clutter. Rod Phillips and Guild Governor Vic Harradine review wines new to the LCBO, Vintages, Ontario wineries, Ontario restaurants, and by consignment. Subscribe at www.winecurrent.com.

Special Offers to Guild Members

For special offers to Guild members, please visit www.sommelierguild.com and click on the Special Offers link.

Passing Scene

February 2006 Vintages Pre-release

Thursday, 2 February 2006

Reported by Mark Kilpatrick

On this February night, members of the National Capital Sommelier Guild met to taste the upcoming Vintages February 4th release. As usual, the wines were tasted blind.

Quick Picks

Lingfelder 'Bird Label' Riesling 2004

Torres 'San Valentin' Garnacha 2004

Prieure St. Jean de Bechain 'La Chappelle de Bechain' 2001

RH Phillips Toasted Head Cabernet Sauvignon 2003

Flight #1: All the whites presented showed well, each aromatic, with nice fruit and well priced. The winner for most attendees was the Lingfelder Riesling, with a touch of petrol, good fruit, and nice length. For the oaky Chardonnay fans out there, the Wolf Blass was quite lovely, elegant, true to type, and a nice dash of vanilla and oak in the nose and finish. The d'Arenberg 'Hermit Crab' Viognier/Marsanne was quite unusual, with attendees having really no hope of guessing the grapes. It had a big spicy nose, with some honeysuckle aromas, and continued to improve throughout the flight. The Soave was all Anjou pears in the nose and mouth, and well made.

Flight #2: In the second flight, the Henry of Pelham Pinot Noir was nicely done, with fresh raspberries on the nose, obvious Pinot flavours, and good acid and red berries in the finish. It will improve for a couple of years. The Torres Garnacha was well liked, done in a youthful, carbonic maceration style, with a nose of berries, and ripe fruit. The Prieure St. Jean de Bechain "La Chappelle de Bechain" was a nice ruby red colour, with a nose of sweet cherries, and dark, tart fruit, with a touch of tannins in the mouth. The last wine of the flight was the Quinta da Lagoalva Castelao Touriga Nacional, a deeply coloured red wine, with a mouth of nice dark fruit and finish that was quite dry.

Flight #3: The wines in this flight were all good, you won't go wrong by choosing any of them, but the RH Phillips Toasted Head Cabernet Sauvignon showed very, very well and carried the day. It was a nice, deep purple red colour, some spice and plums, with a touch of cedar in the bouquet, and ripe plummy fruit and sweet vanilla in the mouth and finish. The Bonny Doon Domaine des Blaguers 'Syrah Sirrah' was recognized as Syrah, a nose of spices and coffee, with big juicy fruit, but no obvious oak. The Tedeschi Ripasso was nice, with earth and raisins in the nose, full bodied, with typical ripasso flavours and long length. If you like serious Valpolicella, you will enjoy this one. The Fattoria dei Barbi Brunello di Montalcino was a well-structured wine, with a nice, deep red colour, some spice and sandalwood in the nose, sweet fruit, and some nice mushroom and earthiness too, with a long, lingering finish.

All in all, the wines showed nicely this evening, with choices for everyone's wine interests and pocketbook.

Flight 1: Whites

Bolla 'Tufaie' Soave Classico, 2004	70969	\$14.95
Lingfelder 'Bird Label' Riesling, 2004	568634	\$13.95
D'Arenberg 'Hermit Crab' Viognier/Marsanne, 2004	662775	\$15.95
Wolf Blass Gold Label Chardonnay, 2004	606186	\$21.95

Flight 2: Reds

Henry of Pelham Pinot Noir Unfiltered, 2003	268391	\$19.95
Torres 'San Valentin' Garnacha, 2004	673541	\$13.95
Prieure St. Jean de Bechain 'La Chappelle de Bechain', 2001	669572	\$15.95
Quinta da Lagoalva Castelao Touriga Nacional, 2002	938449	\$12.95

Flight 3: More Reds

Bonny Doon Domaine des Blaguers 'Syrah Sirrah', 2003	951848	\$15.95
RH Phillips Toasted Head Cabernet Sauvignon, 2003	969873	\$19.95
Tedeschi 'Capiel San Rocco' Ripasso, 2003	719294	\$18.95
Fattoria dei Barbi Brunello di Montalcino, 1999	928028	\$41.95

Madeira! Care for a glass of Dog Strangler with your Rainwater

Sunday, 5 February 2006

Reported by Rutha Astravas

The Madeira tasting is one to be remembered. Upon entry, tasters were greeted by alluring travel brochures about the island of Madeira (February is a cruel month) and by a perfumed tasting room. It was also a tasting of thirteen wines and cheeses chosen by Natale Lofaro and Marc Rollin, true gourmets. All in all, we knew this would be something special.

This blockbuster tasting began with a concise but stimulating introduction to Madeira and its wine over the centuries. Where else can you find bananas and pergolas side-by-side?

The aperitif, a light 5 year Cissart Girdibm Fine Dry, made of the noble grape Sercial matched well with the creamy and spicy cow's milk Casa Matias. Aromas of dried apricots combined with caramel and sherry notes, zippy acidity, warmth and juiciness in the mouth. Great balance! This is the "dog strangler" because of its racy acidity.

The next flight of four Tinta Negra Moles whet the palate and introduced four 3- to 5-year-old wines representing best values and four styles of Madeira. It started with "rainwater Madeira," glints of terracotta, rancio, intense orange characteristics and floral notes. Some initially wondered whether it was musty or corked. On the palate it felt rather sweet, but was backed with good acidity and went well with the sweaty Emmenthal Vielli en Grotte, intensifying the wine. The golden Henriques & Henriques Finest Dry showed vanilla and yellow fruit, was a bit salty/minerally with a short finish, and had great acid and good focus. Justino Jenriques, Justino's Fine Rich, an amber-coloured wine, had appealing aromas of caramel, brown sugar, and cola. Flavours were described as sweet orange with good acidity and very interesting mouth-feel. It was the favourite. The Vieux Chimay à la Biere (washed rind orange cheese) really brought out the orange! In contrast, the extra old Mimolette felt creamy and enhanced the caramel notes of the wine. Lastly, the Broadbent Reserve (initially accused of volatile acidity) exhibited citrus/orange aromas and molasses with an excellent bitter orange palate tempered by sweetness. It was not as balanced as the previous wine. The St-Jorge cheese from the Azones suited the first, third, and last wines of the flight.

The third flight highlighted noble grapes. The 10 year Henriques & Henriques Sercial was nutty and creamy, with caramel and vanilla on the nose. It had a great, long finish, but also felt a bit hot. Truffled Pecorino brought out a walnut taste, but was an odd match (though a tasty cheese). Overall, this cheese cut through the sweetness of this flight. The 15 year Verdelho by the same producer had curious smoke and wood touches, intense orange, and a long finish. It came second in preference. Leacock's 5 year Full Rich Malmsey was darker in colour, duller, with marmalade, caramel, ale, and apple juice aromas. It was spicy with great sweetness, some acid and brandy-like mouth feel—the definite crowd-pleaser. It paired exceptionally well with the Montagnard Goat Cheddar—another favourite. Lastly, the dark 10 year Henriques & Henriques Malmsey had a complex ale, tea, citrus, and honey nose with a surprisingly short but warm finish. The Beaufort d'Alpage was a challenge to match—depending on the wine it could seem sweet, spicy, or bring out bitterness or acidity. Use with caution.

Finally, the vintage flight elicited superlatives in describing the 10- to 111-year-old wines. Henriques & Henriques 1995 single harvest, fine rich Colheita was perfumed with vanilla, mineral, and raisin touches and felt very sweet, soft and round in the mouth. Next was Pereira d'Oliveiras Terrantez Reserva 1977. My tasting notes say “wow, super-complex” with orange, tangerine, melon, musk, and smoke on the nose. Its palate was vivid and long, keeping people in the room. Henriques & Henriques's 1957 Boal was another aromatic treat showing tea and orange on the nose, amazing acidity, fruit, honey and a loong finish. It was especially aromatic and pleasing when sampled with the 7 year Cheddar du Silo (must-buy). Last, but not least, was the historic 1895 Pereira d'Oliveiras Malmsey Reserva. Priced at \$895, it was beyond most people's means and imaginations. Deep brown notwithstanding, it was clearly the favourite and was still very much alive, with demarera sugar, bergamot, orange, molasses, and floral notes on the nose, amazing sweetness and racing acidity, citrus, drawing uncontrollable “yums” from the tasters. (Standing ovation). The St-Julien (cow's milk with walnuts) matched very well with the first and last wines. All but the boal suited the Highland Blue, while the crumbly, salty and scotch-smelling Fiore Sardo only barely matched with the first wine. Everyone enjoyed Natale's home-made chocolate cake which put us all over the edge.

All in all, madeiras are excellent value because of their price, aging potential, and versatility. A large round of applause goes to Natale and Marc for assembling this delightful and memorable tasting. One can only guess what the 1895 has seen in its lifetime.

Apéro

Cossart Gordon, Sercial, Fine Dry, N/V, 5 Years Old, 19.20% alc. \$21.95

Cheese: Casa Matias, Portugal (cow's milk)

Tinta Negra Mole Flight

Leacock's, Rainwater, Medium Dry, N/V, 3 Years Old, 19% alc. (375 ml) \$9.95

Henriques & Henriques, Finest Dry, N/V, 5 Years Old, 19% alc. \$19.95

Justino Henriques, Justino's, Fine Rich, N/V, 3 Years Old, 19% alc. \$13.95

Broadbent, Reserve, N/V, 5 Years Old, 19% alc. \$26.95

Cheeses: Vieux Chimay à la Bière, Belgium (cow's milk)

Emmenthal Vielli en Grotte, Switzerland (cow's milk)

St-Jorge, 8-month old, Portugal (cow's milk)

Mimolette, Extra Old, France (cow's milk)

Noble Grapes Flight

Henriques & Henriques, Sercial, N/V, 10 Years Old, 20% alc. \$29.95

Henriques & Henriques, Verdelho, N/V, 15 Years Old, 20% alc. \$43.95

Leacock's, Malmsey, Full Rich, N/V, 5 Years Old, 19% alc. \$19.95

Henriques & Henriques, Malmsey, N/V, 10 Years Old, 20% alc. \$39.95

Cheeses: Rassembleu, Québec, Canada (cow's milk)

Le Montagnard Goat Cheddar, Québec, Canada (goat's milk)

Beaufort d'Alpage, France (cow's milk)

Truffled Pecorino, Italy (sheep's milk with truffles)

Vintage Flight

Henriques & Henriques, Single Harvest, Fine Rich, 1995, Colheita, 19% alc. (500 ml) \$23.95

Pereira d'Oliveiras, Terrantez, Reserva, 1977, Vintage, 20% alc. \$110.00

Henriques & Henriques, Boal, 1957, Vintage, 20% alc. \$299.00

Pereira d'Oliveiras, Malmsey, Reserva, 1895, Vintage, 20% alc. \$895.00

Cheeses: Cheddar du Silo, 7-year old, Québec, Canada (cow's milk)

Highland Blue Raw Ewe Milk, Ontario, Canada (ewe's milk)

St-Julien, France (cow's milk with walnuts)

Fiore Sardo, Italy (sheep's milk)

Y'All Ready To Try Some North Carolina Wines?

Thursday, 16 February 2005

Reported by Dawn Harvie

Girvan Patterson and Janet Duggan led a fun and educational look at North Carolinian wines. We were treated to a short, but interesting, history of the North Carolina wine industry, an audio-visual presentation including some wonderful pictures of Girvan's and Janet's trip as well as some rockin' music, and a wide range of different wines to taste.

North Carolina has a long history of grape growing and wine making. Scuppernong, a native Muscadine grape, was the U.S.'s first cultivated wine grape and is the official fruit of North Carolina. It was first recorded in North Carolina in 1524 by a European explorer. Sir Walter Raleigh's explorers were credited with the discovery, in the late 1500's, of the Scuppernong "mother-vine" on Roanoke Island—a vine with a 2 foot thick trunk and a canopy covering half an acre, which until recently, still produced grapes. (Girvan and Janet had an picture of the incredible, gnarly mother-vine.) Scuppernong and other Muscadine grape varieties were used to build the wine industry in North Carolina. In 1819, the American Farmer reported that "many farmers near Fayetteville, North Carolina have for years past drunk excellent wine of their own making from the native grape. ... It is common for a farmer to make 8-10 barrels of wine annually for his own use, and many sell considerable quantities." The first commercial winery, Medoc Vineyard, was founded in 1835 by Sidney Weller in Halifax County. Paul Garrett, who's father purchased Medoc Vineyard in 1865, became a powerhouse in the wine industry in the early 1900's. He developed the label "Virginia Dare" (white and red). Virginia Dare became the leading selling wine in the nation and in 1904 won the grand prize in the Louisiana Purchase Exhibition. According to the 6th federal census, North Carolina was the leading wine producing state in the U.S. By 1950, all of the wineries in North Carolina had closed due to the effects of Prohibition. The industry slowly built up again in the 1950's and 1960's. The Biltmore Estate opened their winery to the public in 1985. In 1986, The North Carolina Grape Council was established to encourage the growth of the grape and wine industry through research and marketing. In 2003, Yadkin Valley was designated as an American Viticultural Area—North Carolina's first AVA. As of 2004, there were 48 wineries, and North Carolina was ranked in the U.S. as 12th in wine production, 10th in grape production and acreage. Interestingly, there are still dry counties in North Carolina. For a more detailed history, as well as information on the various wineries, visit www.ncwine.org.

Okay, now to the wines! Flight one featured four whites. The Raffaldini Pinot Grigio had lots of lemon on the nose along with some floral and herbaceous notes. In the mouth, there was quite a bit of lemon acidity with some floral notes. A refreshing wine. The Shelton Vineyards Chardonnay had some butter and caramel and smokiness on the nose, which all came through on the palate. Many enjoyed it as an easy drinking Chardonnay. It was preferred over the Westbend Chardonnay, which had a slightly oxidized nose with a hint of cheese. On the palate, it was smoky, oaky, and cheesy. The Rockhouse Viognier was a deep gold colour with some oxidized and floral notes, and a hint of canned peaches. On the palate, the canned peaches came through with a full mouth feel.

Flight two featured three very different Cabernet Francs. The Raylen Cabernet Franc was very grapey, with some hints of blackberry and some earthy notes. On the palate, there was good acidity, with juicy grapes and some earthy qualities. It was more Gamay-like than Cabernet Franc-like. The Shelton Vineyards Cabernet Franc had some nice light fruit on the nose, but seemed rather closed. However, it showed some complexity on the palate with light red fruit, some earthy components, and a little rosemary. A very nice wine for the price. Many of us wished that we could purchase both it and the next wine, the Barbourville Cabernet Franc. The Barbourville was also very nice with deep dark fruit and some tobacco. It was a bigger, deeper wine than the two other Cabernet Francs. In the mouth, there was super concentration of fruit, with tobacco, pencil shavings, a little greenness, and good tannin/acid balance. And surprise! It was from Virginia!

Nobody would have guessed the grape variety of the first wine in flight three. It was a Chambourcin from Westbend Vineyards. It had some dark fruit, wet leaves, and a bit of tar on the nose. On the palate, the dark fruit came through along with the wet leaves, and some cedar and licorice. The Martin Vineyards Meritage had an unusual nose of cucumber and ashes. In the mouth, it came off as a fairly light wine with some of that cucumber, some strawberry fruit, and lots of green pepper. It contained a blend of Merlot, Cabernet Sauvignon, Cabernet Franc, Petit Verdot, and Malbec. The Raylen 'Carolinus' Bordeaux blend (Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Cabernet Franc) was earthy with notes of cedar and tobacco. Some thought it may have been slightly corked with a bit of cardboard on the nose. In the palate, it was very pungent, with earth, tobacco, some curry spices, and lots of acidity. The Shelton Vineyards once again impressed us with their Merlot (92% Merlot, 8% Syrah). It was a little closed on the nose, but swirling the wine around the mouth gave us some light red fruit and spice. It was a very good wine for vines that are still quite young. It was the favourite of the flight. The Windy Gap 'Fat Basset Red' was an unusual blend of Chambourcin and Touriga Nacional. On the nose, there was some really earthy flavours: cabbage, sweaty dog, and leather saddle. In the mouth, there was a burst of sweet fruit, strawberries and cherries. Everyone agreed that it tasted much better than expected given the aromas on the nose.

The last flight was the sweet flight. None of these wines were cloyingly sweet and they all had a real hint of sweet concord grapes. I happen to love the smell of concord grapes, others don't. The wines were served with a strawberry, a delicious chocolate filled with Hatteras Red (a Southern Red Muscadine wine, which is slightly sweet), and absolutely the best pecan pie I have ever tasted (from Thyme and Again!). The 'Starlight White' (Muscadine) from Old North State Winery smelled like a basket of concord grapes and gooseberries on the nose. In the mouth, it was quite light bodied, with good acid, and concord grape flavours. The Duplin Winery 'Midnight Magnolia' again had some of that concord grape aroma with some earthy notes as well. The palate was quite light with good body that again showed some of the concord grape fruit and a touch of the earthiness. The last wine was the famous Scuppernong. The Duplin Winery Scuppernong had more of the concord grape aromas and flavours along with more body and good acid. These wines were very interesting and quite different from the sweet wines we are used to – perhaps an acquired taste.

Many thanks to Girvan and Janet for an incredible tasting. We're all looking forward to your next wine vacation!!

Here's the line-up.

Flight 1

Raffaldini Pinot Grigio, 2004, Yadkin Valley	\$11.00*
Shelton Vineyards Estate Bottled Chardonnay, 2002, Yadkin Valley	\$15.00
Westbend Barrel Fermented Chardonnay, 2001, North Carolina	\$14.89
Rockhouse Viognier, 2003, 'Hailey's Field', North Carolina (Mountain Region)	\$18.99

Flight 2

Raylen Cabernet Franc, 2003, North Carolina	\$15.50
Shelton Vineyards Cabernet Franc, 2002, Yadkin Valley	\$12.00
Barboursville Cabernet Franc Reserve, 2002, Virginia	\$18.99

Flight 3

Westbend Vineyards Chambourcin, 2002, Yadkin Valley	\$12.76
Martin Vineyards, 2001, 'Reserve Atlantis Meritage', North Carolina	\$18.14
Raylen, 2003, 'Carolinus', North Carolina	\$15.25
Shelton Vineyards, 2002, 'Estate Bottled Merlot', Yadkin Valley	\$15.00
Windy Gap, 2001, 'Fat Basset Red', Yadkin Valley	\$14.00

Flight 4

Old North State Winery, N/V, 'Starlight White', Yadkin Valley	\$9.50
Duplin Winery, N/V, 'Midnight Magnolia', North Carolina	\$11.99
Duplin Winery Scuppernong, N/V, North Carolina	\$6.99

*All prices are in U.S. dollars

The Search for the Great Zinfandel

Tuesday, 21 February 2006

Reported by Dawn Harvie

It's been quite a while since the Guild has done a Zinfandel tasting. Natale Lofaro, Product Consultant with the LCBO, and James Bertrand, Guild President, put together this wonderful tasting of Zins. Natale shared his vast wine knowledge with us by giving us the abridged version of the history of Zinfandel. Very interesting!

Four Zins were served in the first flight. The clear favourite of the flight was the second wine, the Pichierri Primitivo di Manduria. Many participants described this wine as having tons of fruit and being rather funky, almost a cross between Port and Sherry. Personally, I did not like this wine at all (I was definitely in the minority). I thought the oxidized notes overshadowed any notion of fruit the wine might have had. The Clay Station Old Vine Zin had lots of jammy fruit and some bubble-gum on the nose. It was a little Gamay-like. In the mouth, it had sweet blackberry fruit. The Cape Mentelle is apparently the gold standard for Australian Zins. On the nose, I found this wine to have too much apparent oak and not enough fruit. On the palate, some sweet berry fruit kicked in along with the oak. The Rief Estates Zin was very unique! It had some red berry fruit, some gamey notes, some greenness, and cedar. Because all the Zin vines died over one of our very cold winters, this was probably one of the last opportunities to taste this wine.

The second flight featured six wines. The Gnarly Head Old Vine Zin had some raspberry/blackberry fruit and some greenness on the nose. In the mouth, it had lots of big sweet fruit. It was a fairly simple wine. The Ravenswood Old Vine Zin had red cherries and plums and a little spice. It also had some of the same oxidized notes found in the Pichierri Primitivo di Manduria. The Alderbrook Old Vine Zin had bright cherry fruit and cedar that came through on the palate along with a slightly bitter aftertaste. It was quite a big wine. It tied for second favourite with the Frog's Leap from Napa Valley. This wine had berry fruit, some earthy notes, a touch of mint, and a little greenness. On the palate, there was lots of big black cherry fruit, some spice, and mint. The Kendall-Jackson Zin had a very sweet nose with a little nail polish remover thrown in. On the palate, it was a bit flabby, not quite enough acid. The favourite of the flight was the Hartford Russian River Zinfandel and many thought that had we not known it was a Zin, we might have guessed it as a Bordeaux. On the nose, it had coffee and caramel, some mushroom, and a bit of paraffin wax. This wine had more structure and more acidity than several of the others in this flight and it was quite extracted. It had nice fruit, a touch of earthiness, and some coffee.

Flight three featured four wines with a clear favourite. The Ridge Geyserville had lots of rich black cherry fruit, some medicinal notes, spice, and cedar, which all came through on the palate. It was balanced in terms of acid, tannins, and fruit. The first wine of the flight, the Ravenswood Dickerson Vineyard Zin was rather medicinal, almost tinny. It almost seemed to have some residual sugar on the palate. The Rosenblum Richard Sauret Vineyard Zin had lots of cherry and blackberry fruit with a bit of spice, which came through on the palate. Several people thought it was well worth the price. The Ridge Lytton Springs Zinfandel had black plums and cherries, some earthy notes, and licorice. On the palate, it was big, fruity with good tannin/acid balance.

It was a great tasting! Many thanks to both Natale and James.

Here are the wines:

Flight 1: Zinfandel of the World

Clay Station, 2004, Old Vine Zinfandel, Lodi, California	N/A	\$19.95
Pichierri, Primitivo di Manduria 'Tradizione del Nonno', 2002, Italy	718130	\$28.95
Cape Mentelle Zinfandel, 2003, Margaret River, Australia	556415	\$34.95
Rief Estate Zinfandel, 2001, Niagara Peninsula, Canada	N/A	\$29.90

Flight 2: California Zin Regions

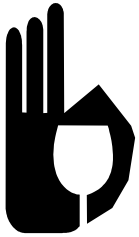
Gnarly Head, 2004, Old Vine Zinfandel, Lodi, California	N/A	\$17.95
Ravenswood, Old Vine Zinfandel, 2001, Amador County, California	732503	\$23.95
Alderbrook, Old Vine Old Clone Zinfandel, 2001, Dry Creek Valley, California	603696	\$29.95
Frog's Leap Zinfandel, 2002, Napa Valley, California	593525	\$39.95
Kendall-Jackson Zinfandel, 2000, Mendocino County, California	643999	\$35.95

Flight 3: The 3 R's

Ravenswood Dickerson Vineyard Zinfandel, 2001, Napa Valley, California	599183	\$49.00
Rosenblum Cellars Richard Sauret Vineyard Zinfandel, 2001, Paso Robles, California	746958	\$31.95
Ridge Lytton Springs Zinfandel, 2002, Dry Creek Valley, California	982413	\$44.95
Ridge Geyserville Zinfandel, 2002, Alexander Valley, California	723072	\$44.95

Flight 4: Port

Montevina Zinfandel Port, Amador County, California	953695	\$28.95
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National Capital Sommelier Guild

www.sommelierguild.com

Notes on Registration

Please note that:

- You will not normally receive confirmation of your reservation.
- You will be contacted only if we cannot accommodate you.
- Your cancelled credit card statement will serve as your receipt.

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.

To Register: Send your reservation to events@sommelierguild.com. If you have already submitted a VISA or MasterCard Pre-authorization, you do not have to do anything else. Your credit card will be debited **after** the event.

Visa or MasterCard Pre-authorization

Members who wish to make charges against their Visa or MasterCard must complete this pre-authorization. Please fill out the form below so that it is identical in all respects to that of the billing address used by your financial institution. Mail it to the Guild's address at 130-99 Fifth Ave., 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.

Name: _____

Address: _____
Apt. No. Street No. Street

City & Province: _____

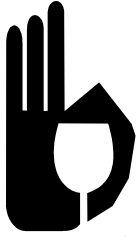
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Visa Account Number: _____ Expiry Date: Mo. _____ Yr. _____

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

Print Name: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____



National Capital Sommelier Guild

www.sommelierguild.com

Membership Form

As you may know, all guild memberships run on a calendar year, thus all memberships ended in December 2004. In 2004, Guild members enjoyed a diverse program of over 50 events reflecting the broad perspective and interests of Guild members. The 2005 program will be every bit as rewarding, so please join in and renew your membership. **Note that membership fees remain unchanged for the 13th year in a row.**

For the fastest renewal: If you have a credit card pre-authorized with the Guild, just send an email to membership@sommelierguild.com, specify the type of membership you want and we will bill your card. **Do not include credit card information in an e-mail.** See Notes on Registration (at the end of the newsletter) for Visa or MasterCard Pre-authorization if you have not already established credit card payments with the Guild.

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

National Capital Sommelier Guild
130-99 Fifth Ave.
Ottawa ON K1S 5P5

Membership Renewal Form

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ Province: _____ Postal Code: _____

Telephone:

Home: _____ Fax: _____

Work: _____ Fax: _____

Email: _____

Type of Membership (please circle one):

*General (\$50)**

Trade (\$50)

*Corporate** (\$150)*

*Note that these prices are reduced as half year memberships renewal in January.

**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.*