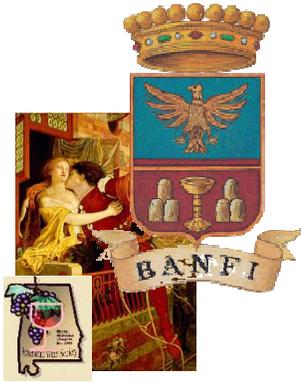


**January 2014 Newsletter
North Alabama Chapter
of the
American Wine Society (AWS)**



**Monthly Tasting
Theme: Italian Wines
January 26, 2014, 3:00 pm
Hosted by Rick & Lane Fabby and Tom & Suzzane Gainey**

Please join the Fabby's/Gainey's in tasting some of their favorite white and red wines from Italy. We will be tasting Italian wines from regions such as Veneto, Alto Adige, and Tuscany. We will pair food dishes with the chosen wine in order to enhance the tasting experience. Come swirl, sniff, and sip various Italian wines accompanied by and matched perfectly with delicious food pairings.



**Special Tasting
Theme: Banfi Wines
February 10, 2014, 7:00 pm (Monday)**

Come enjoy a Veneto Tasting via the Web Through a partnership with Banfi, and the American Wine Society chapters around the country.

Our Chapter has been selected to participate with 23 other Chapters. We will be able to enjoy a tasting of the wines of Veneto (5-6 wines from this Northern Italian region) combined with a remote presentation with wine educator Bill Whiting, Monday, February 10 at 7 pm.

In time for Valentine's Day, Bill's Feb. 10 presentation will be based loosely on the Romeo & Juliet theme. The story of the forbidden love is set in the Veneto region. The line-up of wines for "From Veneto with Love: Wines of Romeo & Juliet" is not final, but will include an Amarone, Soave Classico, Prosecco and other wines from this diverse region.

Questions, thoughts and reactions may be submitted through text message or e-mail during the presentation, allowing participating members around the country to interact and share.

Directions: From east of Madison via US 72, turn left on Slaughter Road, go 1 mile and turn right into Highland Lakes. Clubhouse is immediately on your left. If coming from west of Madison, turn right on Slaughter Road and follow directions above.

From east of Madison via I-565, take exit 13 and turn right on Slaughter Road, go 3 miles and turn left into Highland Lakes. Club House is immediately on your left. If coming from west of Madison, take exit 8 and turn left on Wall-Triana and then a right on Madison Boulevard. Take a left on Slaughter Road and follow directions above.

If you have any questions on directions, call Robert Garay, 256-xxx-xxx

Using the resignation form below, mail your check today for \$10 per person and send a quick email to RSVP to programs@naaws-hsv.com This tasting will have an assortment of cheese and fruit.

Reservation Form is on page 9 of the newsletter

Results of the November Tasting

“Too much of anything is bad, but too much Champagne is just right.” -Mark Twain

Thirty-eight members of the North Alabama Chapter of the American wine Society arrived at the home of Tim and Joy Suttles determined not to have the same dying regret as John Maynard Keynes: "My only regret in life is that I did not drink more Champagne." Steve Young put together an aperitif and three flights of sparkling wines that were both unusual and educational to further everyone's enjoyment and knowledge about the bubbly stuff.

We started off with a sparkling Mauzac from Southwest France that was a little sweet and a great value at less than \$22. Next was a flight of sparkling Sauvignon blancs. The first was donated by Allan Scott wines of New Zealand and the second from Sonoma was a petillant (half the pressure) skin fermented sparkler where the secondary fermentation occurred in bottle using only ambient yeast. The sediment was left in the bottle leaving the wine hazy. While most people thought the California wine out grapefruited the New Zealand wine, the haziness was not to everyone's liking and the Allan Scott won this flight.

The second flight compared a rosé from Champagne to a sparkling Shiraz from Australia. The rosé was delicate and complex, the Shiraz “The Black” from St Hallett was big, bold and dark. Since we were five wines into the afternoon it was no surprise when The Black won this flight.

Our final flight of the evening was a flight of vintage sparklers. We started with a 2005 Gran Reserva Cava, moved on to a 2003 Vintage Champagne and finished up with the 2001 Argyle Extended Tirage from Willamette Valley Oregon. We had a bad bottle of the Gran Reserva, which was quickly replaced from a reserve bottle Steve brought. Everyone agreed that all three wines were wonderful, but the Argyle (with lots of support from Ron Sikes) won the flight.

Before moving on to the overall favorite, a couple notes on the food. Tim grilled pork loin to perfection; Beth Young made a Brie and Walnut cake as well as a crab dip and some honey roasted tomato bruschetta. There were also several different cheeses, nibbles and sweeter things. Because of the wide range in wines different things paired better with the different wines and everyone enjoyed experimenting. Several people mentioned that they were surprised that the corn nuts went well with the sparklers.

Back to the overall favorite – the winning wines from the three flights and the aperitif all received votes for peoples favorites, but the overall favorite was the one that has been the highest scoring sparkling wine from any US winery – Argyle Extended Tirage.

By the end of the evening I think we all agreed with wine writer and importer Willie Gluckstern: “In a perfect world, everyone would have a glass of Champagne every evening.”

Italy and its Wines (Edwin Núñez, Education Chair)

Wine has played an important role during the history of the Roman Empire. The vine was actively cultivated and planted in the newly conquered territories. Native grape varieties did not escape the attention of the Roman authorities as to their role in making good wine. Centurions frequently received

part of their payment in wine. By the time it reached many of them, it had deteriorated substantially or converted to vinegar, much to the chagrin of the soldiers.

This Italian wine tasting presents wines made from different grapes, produced in diverse styles and representative of different regions. Since covering such a variety of topics is not feasible for this newsletter, we will provide information on a couple of the wine styles and regions.

Bubbly Prosecco

We will start with a wine that has become quite popular in the last 20 years or so. Some 50 years ago, the Prosecco wine was quite different from the one we drink now. For the most part it was fermented to produce a sweet sparkling wine that would be essentially indistinguishable from Piedmont's Asti Spumante. This wine was associated since antiquity with the Prosecco village near Trieste, not far from Venice. The Prosecco name also was given to the grape that made the wine. In the last forty years, the winemakers made a concerted effort to improve their production techniques. The wine continuously increased in quality. Shortly thereafter, not only the Italians but also world-wide drinkers took notice. Initially, there was great confusion since the village, the wine, and the grape were known as Prosecco. As the wine's appeal increased, the winemakers and Italian authorities decided to eliminate the confusion. It was then that the grape became officially known as *Glera*. Prosecco became a top geographical indication, a DOCG (*Denominazione di Origine Controllata e Garantita*). The wine elaborated in the region retained by association the Prosecco name.

There are two styles of Prosecco: *spumante* and *frizzante*, aka *gentile*. The *spumante* is fully sparkling and the *frizzante* is lightly sparkling. Since the Prosecco Spumante has undergone a full secondary fermentation, it is more expensive. Although Prosecco begins its life in the same manner as Champagne, the second fermentation is NOT made in bottle. They use the "charmant method" rather than the "methode champenois." Winemakers have realized that bottle fermentation and aging "sur lies" does little for this type of wine. The second fermentation takes place then in large pressurized stainless steel tanks. This bulk method is a factor contributing to its excellent price.

Prosecco is classified, as "Brut" which is the driest variety, when it has only up to 12 grams residual sugar per liter. It is then followed by the "Extra Dry" with 12-17 g/l of residual sugar and then the "Dry" with 17-32 g/l of allowed residual sugar in the final product. (They didn't make it easy for us since the "dry" is the one with the most sugar! Go figure!) Blending with some Pinot Bianco or Pinot Grigio is allowed. The wine can be classified according to its place of origin as Prosecco di Conegliano, Prosecco di Valdobbiadene, and Prosecco di Conegliano Valdobbiadene.

The Bold Amarone Wine

Amaro in Italian means bitter. Thus, *Amarone* means "the large bitter." Don't let yourselves to be fooled by the name for it will generally prove misleading. This wine can have velvety well-integrated tannins that are very pleasant to the palate. Both Amarone and Recioto (a similar sweet wine from the region) are considered as the top of the production pyramid in Valpolicella.

Amarone is elaborated by an interesting process from Corvina, Rondinella, and Molinara grapes. After harvesting, the grapes go through a drying process called *appassimento*. This process is very important to give the wine its characteristics. It shrivels the grapes, concentrating their juice. In the old days the *appassimento* was done by setting the grapes in straw mats. Now the process is done in large rooms under

controlled drying conditions. The dryness prevents the growth of *Botrytis cinerea* and metabolizes the grape acids. It also works on the tannins by polymerizing them and helping to provide the wine's smoothness and body.

On average, the length of the *appassimento* takes about 4 months. Fermentation is a slow process, lasting 30-50 days, and is carried out at low temperatures. Slow fermentation is risky since the wine can spoil or develop volatile acidity. If the winemaker has been careful, the fermented wine is then set to age in oak barriques.

The wine generally shows a ripe, raisiny flavor with a full, velvety body and controlled acidity. Aging can last 3-4 years, even though that is not required by law. **The legal minimum for the wine is 14% alcohol, but in general most wines show 15-16% alcohol or more.**

If the fermentation is stopped before completion the wine will be sweet and known as Recioto della Valpolicella. Recioto was known and produced in the region from the Roman times. Around the 1950s, Amarone developed from Recioto when winemakers decided to continue the fermentation process.

Chapter Web Site
<http://www.naaws-hsv.com>
(Chip Boling, Webmaster)

When you have time, check out the AWS web sites for both the National (www.americanwinesociety.org) and our local chapter (www.naaws-hsv.com).

Chapter 2014 Board of Directors

Director – **Jay Wilson**, director@naaws-hsv.com
Director Elect – **Tim Suttles**, director.elect@naaws-hsv.com
Secretary – **Steve Peirce**, secretary@naaws-hsv.com
Treasurer – **Jodi Stephens**, treasurer@naaws-hsv.com
Programs – **Bob Garay**, programs@naaws-hsv.com
Education – **Edwin Núñez**, education@naaws-hsv.com
Newsletter – **Dave and Kim Russell**, newsletter@naaws-hsv.com
Webmaster – **Chip Boling** webmaster@naaws-hsv.com

AWS North Alabama Chapter Logo

Our chapter logo has been digitized and ready to embroider items of your choice. You may either take or buy items at the shop. Logo can be 3 or 4 inches, cost for the logo is \$9.50 for your choice.

Madison Monogram LLC
Address: 181 Hughes Rd # 8, Madison, AL (same shopping center with Hartlex Antiques)
Telephone: 256-461-4198

2013-2014 Programs (Bob Garay, Programs Chair)

You can me during the tasting or any other time at programs@naaws-hsv.com or 256-xxx-xxx (home) or 571-xxxx-xxxx (cell).

AWS TASTING SCHEDULE			
2014			
January	26	Italian	Fabbys
*February	10	From Veneto with Love: Wines of Romeo & Juliet	Garays
February	23	Wines that make you say Oh!	Suttles
March	23	TBA	Baltars
April	27	Derby Party	Falls/Peirces
May	18	Southern Hemisphere	Garays
June	22	TBA	Open
July	27	TBA	Coddingtons
Aug	24	At the Auction Celebrating our Members	Wilsons
Sep	28	National Tasting	Open
Oct	TBA	Annual Dinner	Programs
Nov	16	TBA	Open
Dec	N/A	No Tasting	N/A
2015			
Jan	25	Open	Open
*Note: This is a special Banfi Tasting, which is a bonus for which an RSVP separate from the Jan newsletter will be sent.			

Chapter Bonus

The Wine Cellar, *The Wine Rack* and *Great Spirits* will give any North Alabama AWS member 10% off their purchase when you show your active membership card at the time of your purchase. So carrying your card is worth the room in your wallet.

We're holding a raffle at every tasting

We hold a raffle at each monthly tasting to help increase our annual contribution to the AWS Educational Foundation (AWSEF). The purpose of this fund is to assist graduate students in continuing their studies that support the American wine industry. We all enjoy the fruits (well, wines) of their labors! Just bring your raffle item(s) to the tasting each month and we'll raffle them off. Tickets are \$1 each or 6 tickets for \$5!! Remember, all money we raise through the raffle goes towards the AWSEF fund. Thank you!

November Raffle

We had a phenomenal raffle at our last tasting with 15 donations! Thanks to the following members for donating an item to our raffle: Jay and Giselle Wilson, Margaret and Paul Fall, Kristen Lindelow and Phillip Koon, Joy and Tim Suttles, Edwin and Marisol Núñez, Marj and Chris McCulley, Chip and Sheila Boling, Bob and Beth Garay, Frank and Jennifer Drake, Beth and Steve Young, guests Jake and Liz Luvender. (My apologies to whomever brought the Ravenwood Zinfandel; I missed when you added it to the table.)

Without going into the gory details of the Dirty Santa tricks and sneaks, bottom line is we raised \$144 + \$10 for hosts raffle tickets for the AWS Educational Fund – that’s nearly double what we typically bring in each month. Thanks to everyone!

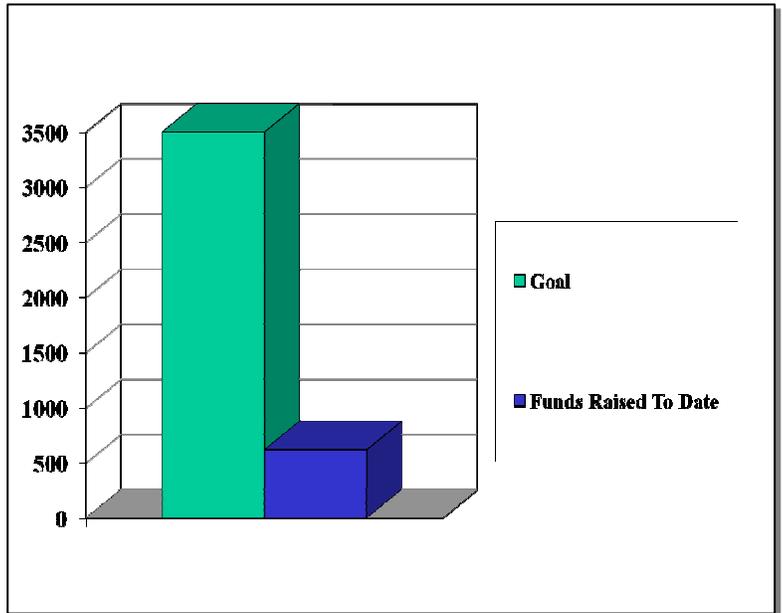
Chapter AWS Educational Foundation (AWSEF)

<http://www.awsef.org>

For the November 2013 tasting, \$154 was raised from the raffle, \$72 from the amount added to the tasting cost for a total of \$226. The balance in the chapter’s AWSEF fund is \$621.

Our chapter is committed to supporting the AWSEF. As most of you are aware, we add \$2 to every tasting and this money is designated for the AWSEF. At almost every tasting we hold a raffle of items donated by the members.

The AWSEF scholarship award amount is \$3,500; our chapter’s has started raising money for our 6th scholarship.



Reservation Form for this Month's Tasting

(January 26, 2014)

Reservations deadline Saturday, January 18th

AWS member names _____ Phone _____

Guests' names _____ Phone _____ Email _____

(Guests, is this your 1st _____, 2nd _____ or 3rd _____ time as a guest?)

Total number attending: _____ @ \$20. = _____. Attendance is limited to 42.

(NOTE: \$2 of this cost goes to the AWS Educational Foundation Fund and is Tax Deductible)

Additional contribution to AWS Educational Foundation: _____ (Add to amount above and include total in check; make check out to **AWS, North Alabama Chapter**)

Please mail your check and reservation form to:

not-available

Cancellation Policy: To receive a refund, you must cancel by 5 pm on the Wednesday prior to the tasting, unless you have a compelling emergency. To cancel, call our treasurer, Jodi Stevens (phone number and email are listed under AWS North Alabama Chapter 2014 Board of Directors paragraph).

Reservation Form for Veneto Tasting via the Web with Banfi

(February 10, 2014)

Reservations deadline Friday, Jan 31th

**AWS member names _____ Phone _____

Guests' names _____ Phone _____ Email _____

(Guests, is this your 1st _____, 2nd _____ or 3rd _____ time as a guest?)

Total number attending: _____ @ \$30. = _____. Attendance is limited to 32.

Make check out to **AWS, North Alabama Chapter**

Please mail your check and reservation form to:
not-available.

Cancellation Policy: To receive a refund, you must cancel by 5 pm on the Wednesday prior to the tasting, unless you have a compelling emergency. To cancel, call our treasurer, Jodi Stevens (phone number and email are listed under AWS North Alabama Chapter 2014 Board of Directors paragraph).

****NOTE: you must have already paid your annual membership**