



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



Monthly Tasting Theme: Wines that make you say "OH"! February 23, 2014, 3:00 pm Hosted by Tim & Joy Suttles

Come join us for a provocative tasting of Naked Winery's romantic and daring selection of wines. This winery's mission is, "We Aim To Tease!". They produce premium class Oregon and Washington wines with exotic brands and provocative back labels that are just a bit risqué.

The Barringer and Michalec families hooked up at the turn of the century and have since formed Naked Winery. They have both Oregon and Washington wineries located within the Columbia River Gorge. The grapes for their red varietals (Syrah, Cabernet, Sangiovese, Nebbiolo, Barbera and Merlot) are "orgasmically" grown in the hot and dry Apple Gate and Columbia Valley regions of Oregon and Washington respectively. Their other varietals (Pinot Noir, Pinot Gris, Chardonnay, Muscat and Riesling) benefit from the cool pacific marine layers of the Willamette and Illinois Valley's to produce subtle and complex wines. The vines in Washington's Columbia Valley struggle with just enough drip irrigated water to produce exceptional fruit for their big bold Chardonnays.

Here's a list of the Naked Winery wines we'll be tasting in February just to "tease" everyone. Plus we'll have a special sparkling called "Amplexus" from the Toad Hollow Winery. There will be a special prize for the person that can give the correct definition of Amplexus:

"Foreplay" Chardonnay 2012

"Complicated" Viognier 2012

"Oh" Orgasmic Pinot Blanc 2011

"Penetration" Cabernet Sauvignon 2012

"Diva" Sangiovese 2009

"Oh" Orgasmic Barbera 2011

Reservation Form is on page 7 of the newsletter

NAKED WINES

(Edwin Núñez, Education Chair)

The term “naked wine” always creates interest. It may be interpreted in more than one way. It can refer to the wines of a specific wine maker The Naked Winery, located in the Rogue Valley, south of Portland, Oregon. This winemaker is not far from the state border with California. Our tasting this month will show wines from this particular winery. We don’t want, however, to reveal anything about those wines and their risqué names—a task that I am sure the host will elaborate on. We will concentrate on the educational mission the Chapter has entrusted me with, and talk about another meaning of the term. There are many other interesting aspects of naked wines, and those have little to do with the birds and the bees.

Naked wines refer to those wines that have been fermented and aged without being in contact with oak. Those wines are fermented and aged with a special emphasis on bringing out a fruit-forward character and a clean aroma unhindered by the vanilla character of oak barrels. In the United States, this wine style is a reaction to the previous emphasis placed in Napa on the flavors imparted by oak. But, let’s reflect a little on the history of how things got to this point.

In the 1970s, Chardonnay became a very important grape in California. Eventually, in the 1980s, Chardonnay became the most popular white grape in California, winemakers increasingly treated their Chardonnay with oak, fermenting and aging the wine in American oak. As this happened, this wine style was also changing in other ways. Grapes were picked with higher sugar content producing wines with sugar hints and the ever-present toasted oak flavor. Eventually, the experimentation became a fad. We distinctly remember tasting some wines and thinking we were biting an oak plank.

A reaction to the oak movement took shape at the beginning of the 90s. Australians started to ferment their wines, especially Chardonnay, without ever seeing oak. They labeled their wine as “unoaked” in order to make a clear distinction with the Napa style they thought had gone astray. In other words: they embraced and emphasized the distinction between their style and those that made heavily oaked wine. Later in the 90s, other wines made from grapes like Albariño, Grüner Veltliner and Riesling, none of which required oak also became popular. It did not take long for the public to see the merits of their technique in the crisp, fruity flavors and aromas of these unoaked wines. Many of these wineries also determined they had no need for malolactic fermentation, a secondary fermentation carried out by bacteria that changes the harsher malic acid into the softer lactic acid. In general, today most unoaked wines do not go through malolactic fermentation while most oaked wines go through it.

As we advanced into the 21st century, many wineries adopted this style for their reds. Their red wines were fermented in steel or even concrete tanks and then aged them in neutral oak barrels, just to get a hint of oak and prevent it from overpowering the wine flavors and aroma.

The movement to “go unoaked” has also benefited from the popularity gained in the last decades to produce organic wines and wines that result in a reduced impact on the environment. This desire for experimentation and more “natural” wines also resonates with the movement to no-oak wines.

One added advantage of unoaked wines is that they cost less to produce. Doing away with malolactic fermentation and avoiding the great expense of oak barrels allows for more attractive prices. Add to those savings the great expressiveness of the fruit flavors and aromas in naked wines and you definitely have a winner.

January Wine Tasting Notes

There is nothing better than Italian wines and Italian food! The food served to go with the wines included meat and cheese trays, 4-cheese pasta, artichoke dip, bruschetta, chocolate/lemon tiramisu, Italian cookies, etc. The food was a big part of the tasting success!

As people entered the door, we started off with an Aperitif Prosecco (DOCG) that was less than \$10.00. Guests mingled and sipped on the Prosecco before the formal tasting of 3 whites and 3 reds began.

Next was a 2012 Risata Moscato d'Asti (DOCG) that many members thoroughly enjoyed. This wine is very sweet and a bit addictive...it leaves you wanting more. This wine was approximately \$10.00 and can be purchased at your local Kroger or Publix grocery stores. This was the favorite of the white wines.

Next, the 2012 Kellerei Kaltern Caldaro Pinot Grigio that was refreshing and light with undertones of nuts and honey. This wine sells for less than \$15.00 and paired well with meat and cheese trays that were served.

The 2011 Soave San Brizio Barrique La Cappucina was a full bodied and made from dried Garganega grapes. This rich and well-structured wine with a deep straw yellow hue and golden highlights sells for around \$13.00 and was.

The Reds tasting began with a 2012 Bell'agio Chianti (DOCG) made from Sangiovese grapes in the Tuscany region of Italy. This wine is available locally (e.g. Class XI at Redstone Arsenal) and sells for less than \$13.00.

Next the 2008 Caparzo Brunello di Montalcino (DOCG) that is made exclusively from Sangiovese grapes and grown on the slopes of Montalcino; a classic hilltop village 20 miles south of Siena. The word 'Brunello' translates into "little dark one." This wine sells for around \$35.00, and was purchased at The Wine Cellar in Huntsville.

The best was saved for last, ending the tasting with a 2007 Amarone Classico Monte Ca'Bianca that is produced in the Veneto Region of Italy and is made from Rondinella grapes. Rich in history, this wine is also regarded as one of the top wines in the world. The color is garnet red with an intense, ethereal, spicy aroma. This wine is less than \$38.00 and it has a soft, dry, "warm", solid and robust flavor. This wine was indisputably the favorite red and the group favorite of all the wines tasted.

As an added treat, some tasted the Lemoncello that is made from the zest of lemons, stored in the freezer, and served in a shot glass. This proved to be a hit! We then finished the tasting with a few Espresso. Thanks again to our four hosts for a great tasting!

NAAWS Facebook Page!

Our Chapter has a Facebook page! Join us at "American Wine Society – North Alabama Chapter." We'll post pictures of tastings and other things our members are doing, and we'll share info about wine-related events in our area.

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

The North Alabama Chapter of the AWS website is currently being upgraded to a content based system to allow for easier administration and to support better display over a wider set of devices (tablets, smartphones, etc). The initial cutover to this new design will occur sometime in February once I have some of the basic features and layout complete. During this time of transitions, the website display and content will be undergoing work and a few hiccups can be expected.

The content from this archive site will be migrated to the new' site with priority placed on the monthly newsletters and upcoming chapter events. After the newsletter and event features are stable, I plan to work on implementing the past event archive to assist members in their planning of upcoming tastings and then turn my attention to Education articles, Event Pictures (galleries), and then Recipes. At the time that the Event Galleries is implemented, I will begin to accept website login/account requests as some content such as Event Pictures, will only be available to AWS Chapter members in good standing.

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 Elect – **Tim Suttles**
Secretary – **Steve Peirce**
Treasurer – **Jodi Stephens**
Programs – **Bob Garay**
Education – **Edwin Núñez**
Newsletter – **Dave and Kim Russell**
Webmaster – **Chip Boling**

2013-2014 Programs (Bob Garay, Programs Chair)

Below is the calendar for 2014 and Jan 2015:

AWS TASTING SCHEDULE			
2014			
January	26	Italian	Fabby
*February	10	From Veneto with Love: Wines of Romeo & Juliet	Garay
February	23	Wines that make you say Oh!	Suttles
March	23	Annual Beer Tasting	Baltar
April	27	Derby Party	Fall/Peirce
May	18	Southern Hemisphere	Garay
June	22	TBA	Sihwa Sussman/Mike Campbell
July	27	Wines of World Cup Winners	Coddington
Aug	24	At the Auction Celebrating our Members	Wilson
Sep	28	National Tasting	Open
Oct	TBA	Annual Dinner	Programs
Nov	16	Sparkling Wines	Collier
Dec	N/A	No Tasting	N/A
2015			
Jan	25	Open	Open
*Note: This is a special Banfi Tasting			

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!

January Raffle

We had a great raffle this month with seven (7) donations. Special thanks to the following members who donated items for the raffle: Tim & Joy Suttles – Bell Luna “Lot One”, Suzanne & Tom Gainey – Balsamic Vinegar & Olive Oil Gift Set and a Pasta & Vetri Serving dish, Bonnie and Wayne Gardner – Wine Journal, Jay & Gisele – Wine kitchen towel & Hot Pad Set, Frank & Jennifer Drake – Alvear Solera 1927 Sherry, Steve and Beth Young – Luigi Einadi Dolcetto, Kristen Lindelow and Phillip Koon – 2010 Karly Zinfandel.

Winners were: Steve & Beth Young, Karl & Judy Starkloff, Tom & Suzanne Gainey, Steve & Beth Young, Wayne & Bonnie Gardner, Freda Muncey and Phillip Koon.

We raised \$110 for the AWS Education Fund which is a very good amount for this month’s raffle activity. I want to thank all who participated in this raffle.

Chapter AWS Educational Foundation (AWSEF)

<http://www.awsef.org>

For the January 2014 tasting, \$110 was raised from the raffle. The balance in the chapter’s AWSEF fund is \$731.

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.



