

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



**Monthly Tasting
Theme: The Valley's "Run for the REDS"
April 27, 2014, 3:00 pm
Hosted by Linda & Steve Pierce: Margaret and Paul Fall**



Grab your Derby HAT and Bow Tie; let's head to the races! We are encouraging Derby Hats for the ladies and Bow Ties for the men!

Come join us and participate in our April AWS Wine Tasting "Run for the Reds", only spin taken from the Derby's "Run for the Roses" with a horse to represent each wine we will be tasting; no Kentucky Wines. We are going to have a great time; Linda and Margaret has picked out some very good wines that fit well with April AWS Wine Tasting "Run for the Reds".

We will start off with an aperitif (not to be scored) to kick off "Run for the Reds" followed by two flights; Red Blends & Pinot Noirs.

EDUCATION SECTION

European and American Grapes: What is the difference? (Edwin Núñez, Education Chair)



Introduction

The Kentucky Derby is famous all over the world. Even those of us who would never bet on horses are aware and follow this American classic. I am one of those who rarely follow the sport until that time of the year. Although the Kentucky Derby has its roots in the European horse sports, it has evolved into an icon of American culture. What better opportunity then to show how humble North American grapes saved the classic European varieties.

The world overwhelmingly prefers the wines made from *Vitis vinifera*, the European grape species. About 99% of all the wine consumed worldwide comes from these grapes. Examples of these grapes will be quite familiar: Cabernet Sauvignon, Cabernet Franc, Pinot Noir, Sauvignon Blanc, Viognier, Riesling, and many more. The American Wine Society (AWS) originated in the Five Finger Lake region, an area well-known for its plantings of American grapes. The AWS actively promotes knowledge of the American grape species. Amongst the most popular is *Vitis labrusca*, but *aestivalis*, *riparia*, and *rupestris* also have different uses. Among the *labrusca* we can find grapes like Concord, Catawba, Niagara, Isabella, and many others. Norton, a grape widely planted in the South, has a large *aestivalis* component.

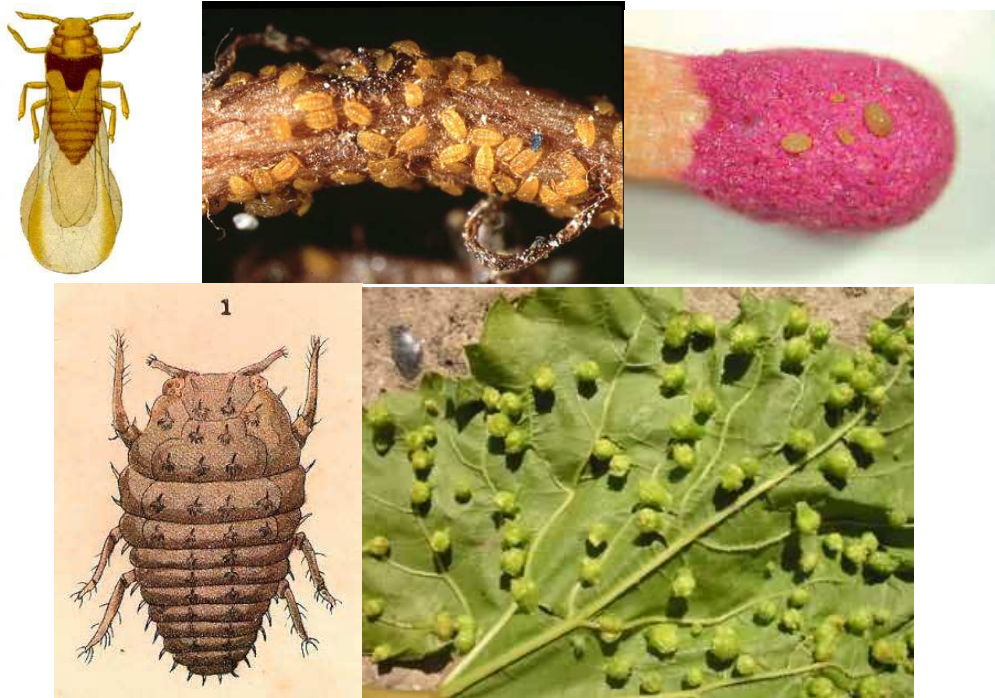
Early History

As Europeans colonized North America, they were pleasantly surprised to find many vines growing wildly in the forests. They were sweet but had an unfamiliar and strange taste later denominated as “foxy.” The wines crafted from these grapes, especially when technology was rudimentary, similarly showed a foxy aroma and taste. Colonizers quickly realized they could import the European species and make wines in the style they were familiar with. The result was great disappointment. The European vines quickly wilted and died. Unknown diseases also affected them due to the high summer humidity. Many planters persisted, blaming themselves for the failures. George Washington and Thomas Jefferson were among them, puzzling about what was wrong with what they were doing. Little did they know it was not their fault. *Vitis vinifera* did not take in the New World and nobody knew why. In the middle of the 19th century botanists collected specimens of the American grape vines and took them to Europe. They wanted to see, among other things, how it would respond to the European climate and conditions. Maybe they could find

out why those vines thrived in North America but their *vinifera* died quickly. Along with the specimens, an unwanted insect also made the voyage to England: Phylloxera.

The Plague

European grape growers and winemakers paid an enormous price for importing the North American grapevines. First, vineyards in England were affected. The blight then moved to France and the rest of Europe. Vines in France were particularly attacked by the tiny Phylloxera insect. More than 40% of France's vines perished. There were regions that never planted vines again. In a mere fourteen years, from 1875 to 1889, French wine production tumbled from 84.5 million hectoliters to 23.4 million hectoliters, a 72% reduction.



The Phylloxera parasite at different stages of its life.

Phylloxera has a very complex life cycle of up to eighteen stages. At different times it can affect the leaves, the stem and the roots. They pierce the roots with their mouthparts to get their nourishment. In the process they inject a poisonous secretion that does not allow the root to heal. This eventually robs the vine of its ability to nourish the leaves and fruit. It also allows other diseases to penetrate through the root.

The Solution

Jules Émile Planchon, a French scientist, discovered that the Phylloxera parasite was responsible for the scourge. Through evolution the American vines had evolved resistance to the poison in the insect's bite. This clearly explained why the classic grapes withered when brought to North America and why the European grapes suffered this blight after the American vines were imported.



Jules Émile Planchon, shown here, discovered that the Phylloxera insect was responsible for the devastation of the European grapes.

Two French wine growers, Leo Lalliman and Gaston Bazille, came up with an ingenious idea: use the Phylloxera-resistant American vine rootstock and graft into it the European classic vines. If the roots were resistant, Phylloxera's life cycle would be interrupted. With much skepticism the wine growers started to plant vines using their suggestion. This started a period known as the Reconstitution which saved the French wine industry.

Even today, no insecticide has proven reliable against Phylloxera and the rootstock of the immense majority of European grapes trace back to the North American continent.

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@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



2014 - 2015 Programs (Bob Garay, Programs Chair)

You can talk to me during the tasting or contact me at any other time at programs@naaws-hsv.com

Believe it or not, we need to start thinking about hosts for 2015, so please contact me and pick a month! January and February have been filled, so let's start filling the rest of 2015. There are plenty of people who can assist with wine selections, food pairing, or both. Please don't hesitate to open your home if you have never done so; and if you have done so, you know how rewarding it can be (and it makes you eligible for a special drawing at the annual wine dinner in October).

Below is the calendar for 2014 and Jan 2015:

2014			
April	27	Derby Party	Falls/Peirce's
May	18	Southern Hemisphere	Garay's
June	22	Interesting Blends	Sihwa Sussman/Mike Campbell
July	27	Wines of World Cup Winners	Lindelow/Coddington's
Aug	24	At the Auction Celebrating our Members	Wilson's
Sep	28	National Tasting	Scott's
Oct	TBA	Annual Dinner	Programs
Nov	16	Sparkling Wines	Collier's
Dec	N/A	No Tasting	N/A
2015			
Jan	25	Frances Beaujolais Region: this ain't Nouveau	Nunez's
Feb	22	Vertical of Date Night Cabernet	Young's
Mar	29	TBA	Open
Apr	26	TBA	Open

Notes from the March Beer Tasting



The NAAWS Annual Beer Tasting, which focused on stouts this year and was attended by about 22 members and guests, was held at the home of Jim and Cathy Baltar in Madison on 23 March. The tasting included stouts from 5 of the 6 sub-styles of stouts as defined in the BJCP (Beer Judge Certification Program) style guidelines. In order to keep to a limit of 9 beers, the tasting started with an “aperitif” of Jim’s home-brewed oatmeal stout that was highly acclaimed.

In the first flight the world standard of Oatmeal Stouts from the Old Brewery in Tadcaster, York-

shire England was the clear favorite. In the second flight, the surprise late entry from Alagash Brewery of Portland Maine was the winner. This Belgian-style dark stout had excellent dark roast flavors to go along with the uniquely Belgian flavors. The last flight of Imperial Stouts was the favorite, with the winner proving that nothing beats a good Bourbon-barrel Russian Imperial Stout. The Dragon’s Milk was the overall winner of the tasting.

Food to accompany the beers consisted of lamb stew, smoked Tri-tip, 4-cheese macaroni & cheese with pulled pork, various cheeses and crackers, and cheesecake, flourless chocolate cake and homemade Swedish truffles for dessert. Email Cathy if you want the lamb stew recipe.



<i>Flight #1 (Milk & Oatmeal Stout)</i>		
Beer	Cost	Votes
Left Hand Milk Stout Nitro	\$10.99	4
Samuel Smith Oatmeal Stout	\$13.48	9
Anderson Valley Oatmeal Stout	\$10.99	2
<i>Flight #2 (American & Foreign Extra Stout)</i>		
Bison Brewery Chocolate Stout	\$11.99	0
Alagash Black Stout	\$11.49	10
Guinness Foreign Extra Stout	\$14.23	7
<i>Flight #3 (Imperial Stout)</i>		
North Coast Rasputin Russian Imperial Stout	\$8.99	5
Old Goat Brewery Pan’s Imperial Stout	Priceless	2
New Holland Dragon’s Milk Bourbon Barrel IS	\$22.48	10
Beers were purchased at Total Wine in Atlanta or locally at Wish You Were Beer in Madison		

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!

March Raffle (Stephen R. Peirce, Secretary)

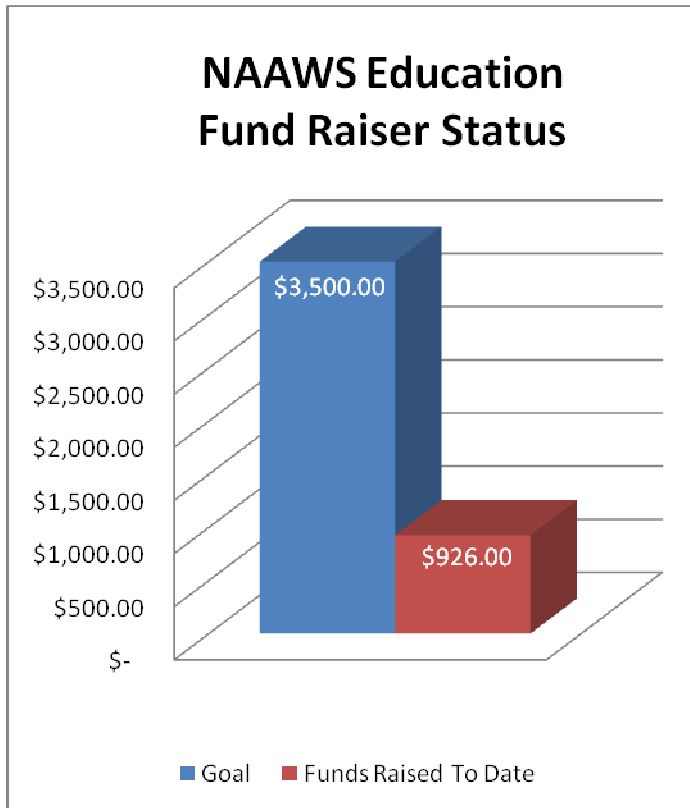
We had a great raffle this month with five (5) donations. Special thanks to the following members who donated items for the raffle: Phillip Koon donated Old Goat Pan's Gale (home brew), Jay and Gisele Wilson donated 2006 Tiger Mountain Vineyard Norton, Jim and Kathy Baltar donated Espresso Oak Aged Yeti Imperial Stout, Steve and Beth Young donated 2012 Reid's Livery Winery Norton and Edwin and Marison Nunez donated La Joya Resever Merlot - Bisquertt Family Vineyards.

Winners were: Alan Nicholson, Jim and Kathy Baltar, Tina Nicholson, Jodi Stephens, and Kristen Lindelow.

We raised \$95 for the AWS Education Fund which is a very good amount for this month's raffle activity. Ten (\$10) in tickets were donated to the hosts Jim and Kathy Baltar. Thanks all who participated in this raffle and again special thanks to those members who donated wine for the raffle.

Chapter AWS Educational Foundation (AWSEF)

<http://www.awsef.org>



For the February 2014 tasting, \$95 was raised from the raffle. The balance in the chapter's AWSEF fund is \$926.

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.