

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



**Monthly Tasting
Theme: Southern Hemisphere Wines
May 18, 2014, 3:00 pm
Hosted by Bob and Beth Garay**



Come join us and participate in our May AWS Wine Tasting from some of the finest growing regions in the Southern Hemisphere, like that of Chile (pictured above). We will taste wine from Marlborough, New Zealand; Mendoza Argentina; Limari Valley, Chile; and finally, Stellenbosch, South Africa. You'll notice that Australia is not on the list, only because its wines are well know and well represented in the U.S. We wanted to provide an opportunity to taste wines from less familiar areas of the globe. We hope you join us in celebrating some of the world's finest wines south of the equator, while gaining an appreciation for what are perhaps the least familiar wines from some of the world's best growing regions. Surprisingly, all the wines you will taste are actually available at reasonable prices in Huntsville.

Reservation Form is on page 8 of the newsletter

EDUCATION SECTION

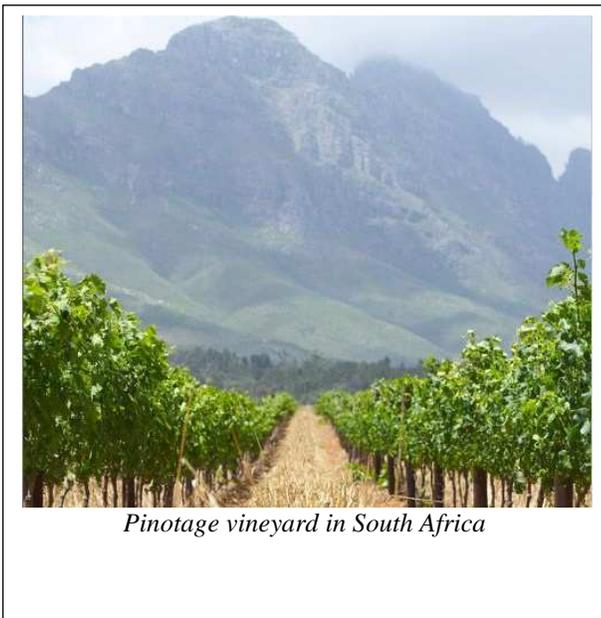
(Edwin Núñez, Education Chair) PINOTAGE and TORRONTÉS

Our tasting this month will present wines from four Southern Hemisphere countries: from South America, we will taste wine from Argentina and Chile; from the South Pacific, we will taste wine from New Zealand; and from Africa, we will taste wine from South Africa. Several flagship grapes from those countries will be represented by the wines. Rather than just writing a few cursory remarks concerning each of those regions and grapes, I will concentrate on two of the least known grapes presented in the tasting: the *Pinotage* and *Torrontés* grapes. Not many people are familiarized with these two grapes and their wines. We hope this short article will lead you to seek wines from these grapes and expand your wine-tasting horizons.

PINOTAGE, A GRAPE SAVED BY CHANCE

There are a couple of reasons why we don't see many Pinotage wines in Alabama:

1. The grape is cultivated almost exclusively in South Africa;
2. South Africa is distant and has not been as effective marketing its wines.



It has not helped that elites in South Africa used to consider locally-produced wines as inferior to foreign and more prestigious labels. Our experience with Pinotage wines shows the opposite. South Africa has some very good wine makers that make a high-quality product. The 2012 AWS Rochester Conference had a session on Pinotage wines that allowed us to confirm the elegance and sophistication of those wines.

The Pinotage grape originated in South Africa in 1925 as a result of research conducted by Prof. Abraham Perold, the first person appointed as Professor of Viticulture at Stellenbosch University. He crossed two classic French grapes: Pinot Noir and Cinsault, known locally as Hermitage. He wanted to produce a grape that could yield wines as excellent as those from Pinot Noir but with the cultivation sturdiness of the Hermitage grape.

Initially, only four seeds of this crossing were planted by Prof. Perold and eventually forgotten. When he left the university the vines were going to be uprooted. By sheer chance, a young lecturer named Charles Niehaus happened to pass by at that moment. Niehaus knew about these vines and requested they be saved. Perold's successor, Prof. Theron eventually grafted them into new rootstock and selected the best for additional cultivation. The vines grew vigorously and ripened early with high sugar levels. Pinotage marked the beginning of a new era in the production of South African wines.

Prof. Theron and Niehaus decided to take part of the names of both original grape parents and named the new grape as Pinotage. This marriage of a Burgundy (Pinot Noir) and a Rhône varietal (Cinsault) yielded a beautiful offspring in South Africa.

Pinot Noir **Cinsault (Hermitage)** **Pinotage**

The Pinotage grape was obtained by crossing two French grapes: Pinot Noir and Cinsault. At that time, Cinsault was known as Hermitage in South Africa. The Pinotage name is a combination of the Pinot Noir and Hermitage names.

TORRONTÉS: A TRULY ARGENTINIAN GRAPE



On more than one occasion we have encountered people that are surprised to know that Malbec is not an Argentinian grape. Many are not aware that Malbec—known as Côt in the Loire Valley—has been used for centuries alone and in blends to make French wines. However, if you want to name a grape that is as Argentinian as the tango, you must say Torrontés.

Torrontés is a white grape that originated in Mendoza, Argentina. It is the result of crossing Muscat of Alexandria and the mysterious Mission grape. That grape’s name originated from the fact that it was usually found around the Missions settlements in the New World. Jesuits and Franciscan priests and monks cultivated the grapes around abbeys to produce sacramental wine and for their own consumption. It was only in 2006 that DNA studies determined that this grape imported from Spain was the largely-unknown Spanish variety called Listán Prieto. Nobody has been able to trace the origin of the name Torrontés. The earliest references appear in records from the middle of the 19th century. Although there is a grape from Spain with the name of Torrontés they are not to be confused since they are genetically unrelated.

The Torrontés grape produces a white wine with golden and greenish hues. It inherits its powerful nose from the Muscat and yields wines with complex white flower and citrus aromas. You can also detect peach and apricot tastes and a refreshing acidity.



Just as the Argentinians turned the Malbec grape into their flagship red grape, they are doing the same for Torrontés. They are making this grape synonymous with excellent Argentinian white.

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 occurred in February since 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)

At the last tasting and in the April Newsletter I made a pitch for members to sign up to host in 2015 – still need some takers, so check your availability and let’s start filling up next year’s calendar.

Also, due to an unforeseen commitment, Sihwa Sussman and Mike Campbell will be unable to host the June Tasting, so I have arranged to conduct the tasting on 22 June at The Wine Cellar in Huntsville. We are working with them to select the wines for that event, so more information to come.

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	TBA	The Wine Cellar /Programs
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



The Valley’s “Run for the REDS” April Tasting Notes

The second annual “Run for the REDS” crossed the finish line with the consensus: “Let it Breathe!”

*This wine needs to breathe...
It needs more time...
This wine is really tight...
It needs some air...
Honey! Where’s the decanter?*

On April 27, we revisited a technique from a 2005 National Tasting Project; we chose two wines from a past tasting, and used them in the following experiment:

The First Flight: Cline Cashmere (\$17.00) three different ways: 1) Cashmere 1 – straight out of the bottle; 2) Cashmere 2 – carafe aeration; 3) Cashmere 3 – aluminum interaction

Second Flight: Meiomi (“a club favorite” - \$19.00) three different ways: 1) Meiomi 1 – straight out of the bottle; Meiomi 2 – carafe aeration; Meiomi 3 – aluminum interaction

The methods used were: 1) Open the bottle, and immediately pour and serve by the glass; 2) Carafe aeration with the use of two carafes [pour one bottle into one carafe then the other carafe, repeat six times. Using a funnel, then pour wine back into original bottles, then pour and serve by the glass]; 3) Aluminum interaction [pour one bottle into an aluminum cake pan and allow sitting for one hour. Using a funnel, pour wine back into original bottles, then pour and serve by the glass]. With all three glasses side by side, the group then tasted and rated the wines. After the votes, which were very close between the second and third method, the winner in both categories was the wine that had been aerated. Try this at home, and see whether you agree with the group consensus of April 27! 🍷

In addition to a fun and interesting tasting, we have to thank the Falls’ and the Pierces’ for the fabulous food that included: Kentucky Hot Brown Bites; Derby Benediction Sandwich Bites; Turkey Nibbler Bites; Turkey Triangles; Kentucky Derby Cheese Spread; Brie w/Apricot; Brie w/Raspberry; Derby Pie Bites; and Asst Chocolate & sweet tray. All offerings fit with the Kentucky Derby theme, and all were delicious.



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!

April Raffle (Stephen R. Peirce, Secretary)

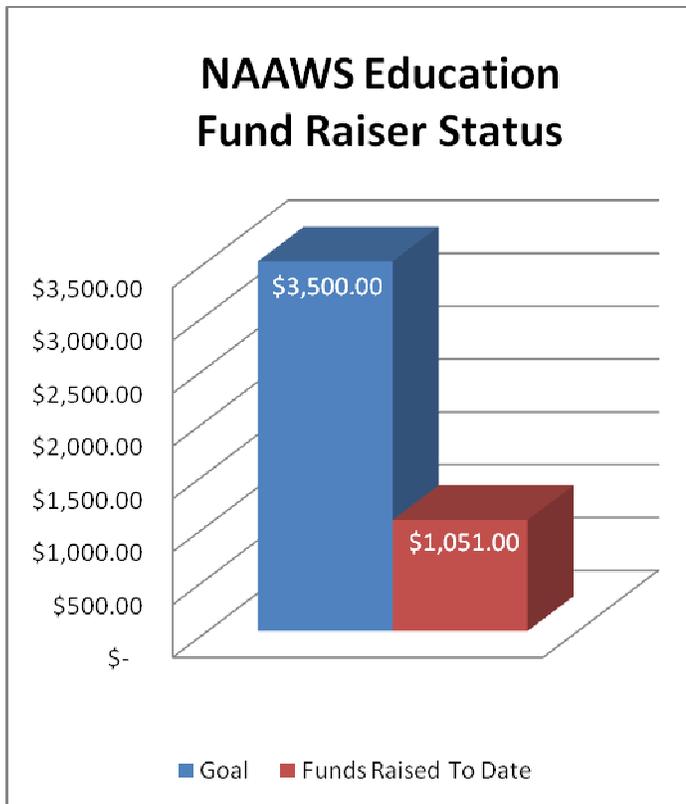
The run for the Derby raffle was outstanding this month with six (6) donations. Special thanks to the following members who donated items for the raffle: Steve and Linda Peirce – Evodia 2012 Calatayud - Red Wine-Old Vines Grenache, Steve and Beth Young – Curran 2010 - Grenache Rose-Santa Ynez Valley, Paul and Margret Fall – OXO Softworks - 4 Piece Bar Starter Set. Also from Paul and Margaret Fall - Cashmere 2010 - from Sonoma Ca. Edwin and Marisol Nunez – Mohua 2007 Central Otago Riesling from New Zealand, Jay and Gisele Wilson – Tiger Mountain Vineyards – Norton 2006 Georgia Red Wine.

Winners were: Jay and Gisele Wilson, Jaime Zapata, Jim and Cathay Baltar, Tom and Suzanne Gainey and Jodi Stephens.

We raised \$125 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 Linda and Steve and Paul and Margaret Fall. We all had a great time and I want to thank 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 April 2014 tasting, \$125 was raised for the chapter education fund. 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.