

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



**Monthly Tasting
Theme: Annual Wine Dinner
October 19, 2014, 6:00 pm**



Come join us and participate in our Annual Wine Dinner, taking Place at the Creekside Plantation in Historic Mooresville AL.

We will celebrate 20 years since the founding of NAAWS; enjoy the wines of fellow members with a fabulous catered buffet in the covered Pavilion next to the vineyards. The cost for this event is \$45.00 per person, attendance is limited to 60 and each person is required to bring a bottle of wine of his/her choice to share. Appetizers will be served promptly at 6:00 PM with dinner at 6:30 PM. The menu is on the next page of the newsletter (accommodation will be made for vegetarians, so please indicate on your Reservation Form your desire for a vegetarian meal):

NAAWOS October Wine Dinner

Appetizers

Tomato Bruschetta w/ fresh basil & balsamic glaze
Olive Tapenade on crostini w/ Fresh Parmesan cheese

Sides

Caesar salad w/ croutons & Parmesan cheese
Baby mixed greens w/ Asian-ginger vinaigrette, tomatoes, toasted pecans, bell peppers, onion and Mozzarella cheese
Sweet potato biscuits w/ butter

Main Course

Beef tenderloin, sliced w/ Shitake mushroom demi glaze
Chicken Gordon Bleu w/ smoked red pepper cream sauce
Vegetarian side (spinach & Shitake mushroom creamed)
Scalloped potatoes w/ chives & garlic
Marinated grilled mixed vegetables

Desert

Chocolate Roulage w/ Chantilly cream & raspberry coulis
Peach Semifreddo

DIRECTOR'S SECTION
(Jay Wilson, Director)
North Alabama American Wine Society



**Celebrating the North Alabama Chapter of the
American Wine Society 20th Anniversary**

Our 20th anniversary wine glasses have been ordered and should be in by 15 Oct. Every member will receive one free glass. If you want extras over the one you will get for being a member, please e-mail Tim Suttles. We order a few extra to sell in case someone changes their mind and always have the option to order more if needed. If you are not available to receive your glass at the Wine dinner on 19 October, the glasses will be available for pick up at next few monthly tastings.



EDUCATION SECTION
(Edwin Núñez, Education Chair)

What the Heck is *Terroir*?

As we progress in our knowledge of wines, we will frequently find reference to a somewhat mysterious French term: “*terroir*”. The term is a little easier to understand when we realize it derives from the word “*terre*” meaning “earth.” *Terroir* is widely used describing wines deemed excellent or superior because they express the unique characteristics of the geography, soil and climate where the grapevines were planted.

To understand what is meant by *terroir*, we should look into what its components are. *Terroir* has three basic components: **geology**, **pedology** and **associated landscape**. (Please, don't flee in horror as you read these technical terms. We will keep this article at a basic and easy-to-understand level. Reading the next few paragraphs will enhance your knowledge and ability to appreciate wine quality.)



In this context, geology refers to the type and structure of the basic rock matrix under the soil.

A rock matrix under the soil? What am I referring to since I only see dirt when looking at a vineyard? Well, over most places, if you dig a few feet or meters under the soil you will encounter solid rock. Just travel over any interstate or local road and look at the profile of hills cut by the road. You will observe a few feet of soil and then layers of solid rock. These layers of rock and their characteristics yield the main components of the soil.

Pedology is just a technical term used to refer to the characteristics and nature of the soil. The soil is for the most part just the result of the action of weather on the rock matrix. Over eons, the weather breaks up the upper part of the rock matrix into increasingly smaller particles. This process results in the particular soil and pebbles you see in the vineyard. Of course, there may be contributions of silt and other components from floods and various events, but we will keep it simple here. Soil texture, mineral nutrition, porosity, particulate size, water retention characteristics, etc., are important to produce a good wine.

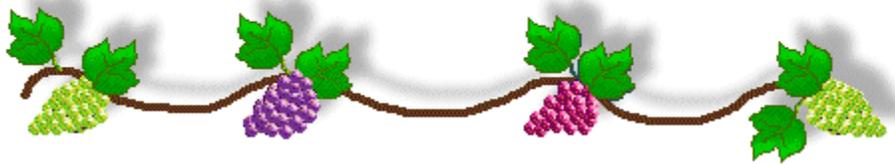
The characteristics associated with the landscape around the vineyard also provide an important contribution to the growth of the grapevines. This refers to things like the elevation of the vineyard, its slope, its exposure to drying or cold winds, its latitude, its exposure to sunlight, etc. For example: higher vineyards will experience colder temperatures than lower ones; vineyards on mountain slopes will drain water faster;

slopes facing south will receive more sunlight throughout the year; vineyards in higher latitudes are subject to colder weather and the grapes will take longer to mature; the presence of seas, lakes or rivers near the vineyard will moderate temperature ranges; the existence of nearby mountain ranges may result in protection from harmful winds or may generate harmful storms depending on the particular conditions.



Thus, the grapevine roots are the *terroir* interface between the geology and pedology since they interact with the rock matrix and the soil. The grapevine canopy is then the *terroir* interface with the soil and surrounding environment. The vine canopy integrates these into the final fruit.

The concept of *terroir* is important because it is the basis for the AOC classification (*Appellation d'Origine Contrôlée*) of wines. Thus, when you see the Napa Valley or Bordeaux classifications, it means that the wines express in their flavors and characteristics a sense of place or *terroir* of that particular location. Of course, there are other important things that influences wine taste and characteristics: grape type, winemaker style, technology used to elaborate the wine, etc. Early on, Europe emphasized the *terroir* concept, while the New World stressed the influence of the winemaker and grape. Over the years, the debate—not always amicable—moved both sides to recognize the importance of all these elements in the production of great wines.



Chapter Member Section: Wine Judges in Training

By Kristen Lindelow

Within our North Alabama Chapter, we have three members who are also students of the Wine Judge Certification Program (“WJCP”) through the American Wine Society. Scott Montgomery is preparing to take the Year 2 exam, and Jaime Zapata and JudithAnn Ortiz are studying hard to take the Year 1 exam. These exams will be given during an all-day class of lectures, practice, and exams on the Thursday before the conference starts. By the time we see them at the conference’s opening reception on Thursday evening, they will have been in class all day.

Preparation for the WJCP exams requires intense book studies along with learning to differentiate the various components of wines (alcohol, acid, sugar, tannins) and how to evaluate wines based on AWS criteria. Yes, this involves a lot of wine tasting! It also involves tasting a lot of not-so-good wines and some really bad wines ---how can you tell a good wine unless you’ve had some bad wines for comparison?

The certified wine judges in our chapter, Kristen Lindelow, Steve Young, and Edwin Núñez, have been following the example set by Marj McCulley, our chapter’s first certified wine judge, and have been holding study classes for the new students. Marj helped each of us with our studies by setting up component tasting and various wine evaluation studies as we worked toward final certification. Scott, Jaime, and JudithAnn have been attending work sessions with us since the summer to learn to detect out-of-balance components, identify faults in wines, and evaluate wines. We are hosting one more study session prior to the conference during which we will present them with a mock exam: each will have numerous wine glasses in front of them with a variety of wines. There will be faults in some of the glasses, out-of-balance components, a base or “control” wine, and several for evaluation. So far, I am happy to say, Steve, Edwin and I have been impressed with “our students” –they have been studying hard and are doing great. We’re looking forward to celebrating their successes at the conference!



As always, our wonderful spouses have been very helpful in making these sessions happen. Thank you, Marisol, Beth, and Phillip!

Note: if you have an event or other interesting item that you think would be of interest to our chapter members and would like it included in the newsletter, please send it to me. We will vet it with the directors and if it is appropriate we will include it in the member section of the news letter. Ideas – wine events, trips to wine regions, wine educations events, etc.

NAAWS Facebook Page



Are you new to Facebook? Or do you have a page already? If so, join us on the [American Wine Society – North Alabama Chapter](#) page. Go to the page by clicking the link in the previous sentence then click the “Join Group” button and, very shortly, one of the page administrators will approve your request. We must keep the group as “closed” to keep out hackers and solicitations. Once you are a member, please remember, this is your page!



Add info for wine events, pics from wine trips, comments on a great wine you’ve just discovered, etc. Our newsletter is still our primary source of communication for the Chapter, but FB is an easy way to share more info during the rest of the month.

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

2014 - 2015 Programs

(Bob Garay, Programs Chair)

Below is the calendar for the remainder of 2014, and for 2015: Thanks to all who have helped to fill out next year’s program – now let’s start thinking about the theme for those that have yet to be selected.

2014			
Nov	16	Sparkling Wines	Collier’s
Dec	N/A	No Tasting: Happy Holidays	N/A
2015			
Jan	25	France’s Beaujolais Region: this ain’t Nouveau	Nunez’s
Feb	22	Vertical of Date Night Cabernet	Young’s
Mar	29	TBA	Luvender’s
Apr	26	TBA	Williams’s

May	17	TBA	Gainey's
Jun	28	TBA	Collier's
Jul	26	Wine Rep Event (Local Venue)	Programs
Aug	23	At the Auction Celebrating our Members	Wilson's
Sep	20	National Tasting	Hernandez's
Oct	TBS	Annual Dinner	Programs
Nov	15	Sparkling Wines	Garay's
Dec	N/A	No Tasting	N/A

September AWS National Tasting Notes



The Northern Alabama American Wine Society (NAAWS) Chapter, on 28 Sep, participated in the 2014 National Wine Tasting Project, which was a blind tasting and held at Art and Susan Scott's house. Twenty-seven members and two guests participated in the tasting of six Spanish wines from three regions of Spain. First to be tasted was the *Cune Monopole* aperitif, followed by the white flight that consisted of two whites from the *Rias Baixas* region, with the *Ramon Bilbao Albarino* voted (13 to 12) as the preferred wine in this group. Then two reds from the Rioja region were compared, with the *Abadia Retuerta 2009* being the preferred wine (19 to 6). Lastly two reds from the *Ribera del Duero* were tasted, with the *2009 Muga Reserva* finishing as the groups preferred wine (15 to 10). The overall favorite wine was the *2009 Muga Reserva*. Thanks go to Art and Susan who took on the mission of blending flavors and textures of Southern cuisine to complement the secret Spanish varietals including: shrimp tartlets, pulled pork sliders, baked Brie, assorted cheeses; mini pesto toasts, relish plates, and desert items of chocolate and fruit topped mini cheese tarts. A featured cheese was the aged *Rivoire-Jacquemin Comte* from France; a hard cheese with fruity caramel notes that paired well with several of the wines tasted.

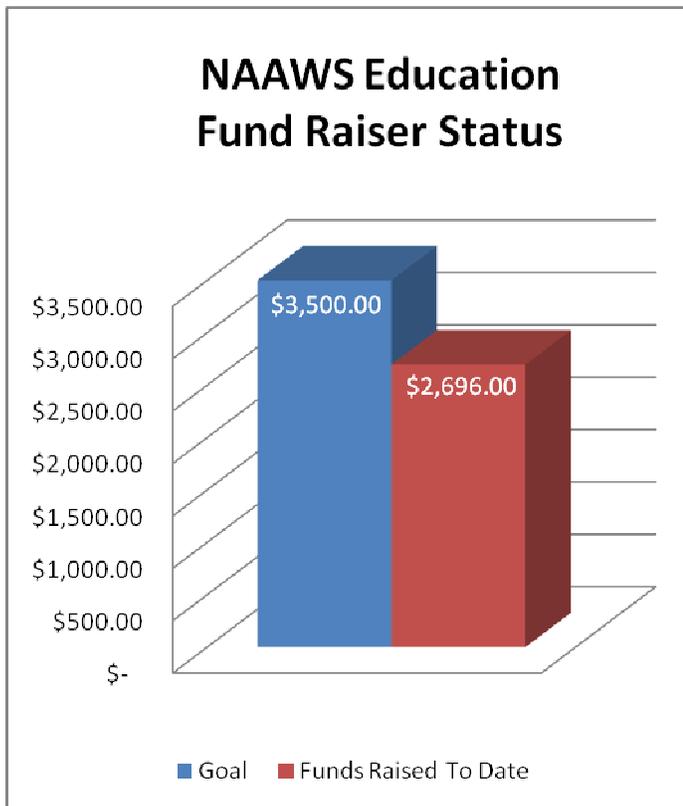
We hold a raffle at every tasting



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!

Silent Auction Results (Stephen R. Peirce, Secretary)

The auction raised \$70 for the chapter AWS Education Fund during the September tasting. There were 5 donations: Steve and Beth Young donated a desert wine, Cupid's Necter that was won by Judy Starkloff; Marj and Jack McCulley donated a drink mixer won by Jodi Stephens and a wine wall hanger won by Mary Patterson; Tom and Suzanne Gainey donated a 2012 Banti Chianti Superiore won by Chip Boling; Art and Susan Scott donated a 2009 Muga Reserva (one of the wines included in the tasting) won by Steve Young. Ten (\$10) in tickets were donated to the hosts Art and Susan Scott. Also, Steve Young received 5 tickets for winning the newsletter contest. 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>

A total of \$137 was raised during September bringing the new balance in the Chapter's AWSEF to \$2696.

Our chapter is committed to supporting the AWSEF. In August, we held a special silent auction event to support the Education Foundation. See the Section on Silent Auction Results for details.

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