

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



**Monthly Tasting
Theme: Sparkling Wines
November 23, 2014, 3:00 pm**

The Final NAAWS Event for 2014 is the Sparkling Wine Tasting on November 23, 2014 at 3:00 pm, once again hosted by Walt and Therise Collier at their Creekside Plantation in Historic Mooresville AL.

We will end 2014, as is our custom, getting ready for the Holiday's with a fabulous selection of Sparkling Wines and food pairing. This always proves to be a fun and popular event, and one in which members generally like to bring guests, so get your check in early as it is limited to 48 people. The cost for this event is \$36.00 per person



Reservation Form is on page 10 of the newsletter

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

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

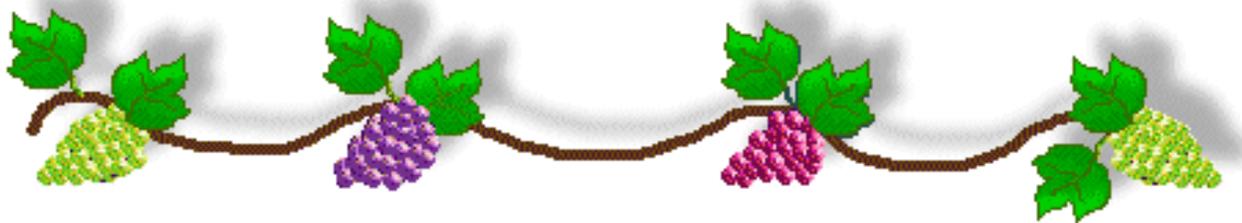


Where do I start? The 2014 North Alabama Chapter of the AWS Annual Dinner has to go down as the best Annual Dinner in our history. It was a very fitting evening as some 50 members and guests gathered at Walt and Therise Collier's home and beautiful Creekside Plantation under a warm, clear Alabama sky to celebrate our 20th year as an American Wine Society Chapter. As guests arrived, violinist Winslow Davis filled the surrounding vineyards with the beautiful sounds of his electric violin. Everyone was seated by 6:30 pm as we started with a few administrative announcements and the introduction of our special guests Jane Duralia, President of AWS, and her husband Rege. Just a note, Jane is the first AWS president to attend one of our functions. Both she and her husband marveled at the quality of our event, the passion of our members to enjoy good wines and our demonstrated commitment to having a good time. I'm sure we will see more of the National AWS staff in the future as word spreads of our tasting events. The slate of new officers for 2015 was presented to the membership and unanimously accepted by a voice vote. The only changes for the 2015 Board, set to start on 1 January 2015, are Tim Suttles as the new Director, Bob Garay as the new Director Elect and Walt Collier as the new Programs Director. The caterer was Chef Scott Curry of Curry's Restaurant and Catering, Decatur AL. With appreciated efficiency and timing, Chef Curry's buffet included Beef Tenderloin and Chicken Cordon Bleu, and was nothing short of fantastic. As an added feature, the two desserts were to die for. The members brought an eclectic mix of wines, which were shared between tables. Three members, who hosted tastings during the 2014 year, each won a \$50 gift certificate as an incentive bonus for hosting. A live auction was held for a top shelf wine aerator, donated by Marge McCulley, and was auctioned off for \$67 and added to our Chapter's donation to the AWS Educational Foundation. This year's Annual Dinner was one for the record book. Please give a huge measure of appreciation to those members who made it all possible: Bob Garay, Programs Director, who spent several months researching and selecting the venue site, caterer and menu; Walt and Therise Collier for offering up their facilities and helping to finalize the menu and Chef; Tim Suttles for securing the 20th anniversary wine glasses that were presented to each member; and Chip Boling for creating the beautiful NAAWS logo design that was etched onto each glass. By the way, Jane and Rege Duralia ensured their glasses were packed for safe travel as they headed home on Monday morning. As the evening came to a close, and members carried their prizes, glasses and memories home, there was already talk about how to do this again next year. Stay tuned to your newsletter.

Anniversary Wine Glasses:

Our 20th anniversary wine glasses were provided to members that attended the wine dinner on 19 October 2014. A glass was ordered for every member. We ordered a few extra to sell in case someone changes their mind and always have the option to order more if needed. If you want extras over the one you will get for being a member, please e-mail Tim Suttles at

suttlest@gmail.com. If you did not attend the wine dinner, the glasses will be available for pick up at next few monthly tastings.



EDUCATION SECTION (Edwin Núñez, Education Chair, AWS Certified Wine Judge)

Some of Champagne’s Surprises

Champagne’s History: Some Surprising Facts

This month we will concentrate on sparkling wines from different regions and countries. Rather than covering the usual details related to the fermentation and elaboration of sparkling wines, we will concentrate on Champagne. We will present several curious and seemingly impossible events related to that marvelous wine.



Champagne’s Open Fields

The word champagne means “open field.” It derives from the fact that this area lacked forests due to the composition of its soil. Was this openness a blessing for its inhabitants? Not quite! Throughout history this lack of forests proved an ideal region to move large armies. The Romans first came in to mine for chalk and conquer its Celtic tribe population. As Rome lost its power, Vandals, Teutons, Franks and Huns traversed the open fields. Battles during the devastating Hundred Year War took place there. In more recent times, Napoleon marched through Champagne to wage war on Austria, Prussia and Russia. In World War I, the First and Second Battles of the Marne took place on its fields. Needless to say, none of that was very good for the inhabitants of Champagne.

Association with Royalty

How then did Champagne become associated with celebrations and royalty? For an answer we must look at its history. Vines were planted in Champagne as early as the first century. This region was part of Gaul,



as France was known then. In the fifth century, Clovis became King the Franks (tribes of Germanic origin) after uniting the region under his power. From then on, the whole region became known as France. To achieve this feat Clovis converted to Christianity under Bishop Remi of the city of Reims in Champagne. Its wines—none of them sparkling then—were prominent during the celebrations. After that, twenty-seven French kings were crowned at the Cathedral of Reims. This gave the wines of Champagne, sparkling or not, the luster of royalty and wealth.

Origins

Who crafted the first sparkling wine? Dom Pérignon? Not! Some one hundred years before Dom Pérignon was even born, the monks of the Abbey of Saint Hilaire, near the town of Limoux in the Languedoc-Roussillon region of southern France, made a white sparkling wine called Blanquette de Limoux. The problem was that they used a method to arrest fermentation that depended on when the cold of winter set in. As you may imagine, this method, called the “*méthode ancestrale*,” was very unreliable. Dom Pérignon is credited with other things like creating a cuvée or blend for the Champagne where he fermented together Chardonnay, Pinot Noir and Pinot Meunier.

England’s Navy and Strong Bottles

Dom Pérignon’s real contribution to the elaboration of a reliable method of achieving good Champagne wines was his recognition of the advantages presented by two emerging technological advances. The first was strong English glass bottles. Since sparkling wines develop between 50 and 70 lbs/in² of pressure, it was quite common to have exploding bottles. This caused serious losses and injured workers, many of them monks. Workers used fencing masks to prevent injury to their eyes. Interestingly enough, England’s decision to become a naval power, greatly helped the production of Champagne wine. To become a naval power, England required extraordinary amounts of wood to build its ships. Admiral Robert Mansell persuaded King James I to prohibit the use of wood in the elaboration of all glass products. Glass blowers started to use coal instead of wood in their furnaces. This produced hotter furnaces which by chance resulted in much stronger bottles. Dom Pérignon recognized the utility of using the stronger bottles in the production of Champagne.

Dom Pérignon and Spanish Cork Seals

Champagne bottles were sealed with a wood plug. A wooden cork is not a good seal. To help reduce the escape of CO₂ gas from the bottle, a wrapping with hemp soaked in oil was also used over the plug. Oil and sparkling wine bubbles are great enemies. Oil causes them to dissipate quickly. Enter Dom Pérignon. He recognized that Spanish cork could provide a great seal and preserve the sparkling nature of the Champagne wines. Cork quickly became the preferred method to seal all wines.



Champagne and Other Names

Not all sparkling wines are Champagne. Only wines made in a specific region of France called Champagne can have that name on their label. In addition, these wines must be made using what is called the “champagne method” (*méthode champenoise*.)

No French wine made outside this specific region, even if it is made using the same method can be named Champagne. In that case, those sparkling French wines must be called *Crémant* or *Mousseux* (frothy) and the method used to craft them must be specified as the “traditional method” (*méthode traditionnelle*). An example of this is *Crémant de Bourgogne*, a sparkling wine made in Burgundy using the same techniques as in Champagne.

All other sparkling wines made outside of France must use other words to describe the product. The Italians call their sparkling wines as *Prosecco*, *frizzante* or *spumante*. Spaniards use the words *Cava* and *vino de aguja*. English-speaking countries use the common term sparkling wine or bubbly, while Germans can use *Sekt* or *Perlwein*. Some Do Not Abide by the Champagne Name Four countries do **not** recognize the exclusive use of the term Champagne for French wines from that region: Russia, United States, Brazil and Argentina. But, you may say: “I have seen Champagne made in the United States!” Since some of our sparkling wine producers used the term for about



one hundred years prior to the adoption of international commercial restrictions, they were grandfathered in. No other recent or new producer is allowed the use of the term.



Chapter Member Section:

French Wine Scholar Program

(Steve Young: NAAWS Chapter Member, AWS Certified Wine Judge and Recent French Wine Scholar Graduate)

Last November four intrepid souls started the French Wine Scholar program developed by the French Wine Society (www.frenchwinesociety.org). The course is a detailed look at the fourteen different wine regions of France – from Champagne in the north to Corsica in the south. The course requires you to study and know the history, the grapes, the sub regions, the soils, and the Grand Crus of each region.

Steve Young, Kristen Lindelow, Edwin Nunez and Lou Reinish (former North Alabama member that moved to Long Island and joined the group via video chat) formed the Rogue Anonymous Tasters (RATS) and once or twice a month they got together to taste wines from each of the 14 regions of France. They studied a little and drank quite a bit. Since they were sampling 7-8 wines from each region, their spouses (Phillip, Marisol and Beth) eagerly agreed to help taste the wines. A good time was had by all, but the exam loomed ahead of them!

With the help of flashcards that Steve developed (on www.quizlet.com – search for French RATS if interested to see the level of knowledge required), chapter summaries that Edwin developed, mnemonics (Some Japanese Chefs Marry French Chefs Making Really Beautiful Babies – the AOC Crus of Beaujolais from north to south: Saint-Amour, Juliéna, Chénas, Moulin-a-Vent, Fleurie, Chiroubles, Morgon, Régnié, Cote de Brouilly, Brouilly), and short-term memory, Lou passed the exam with Honors and Steve passed the exam with Highest Honors. Kristen and Edwin plan on taking the exam after the Annual Conference in November.

Thanks for Sharing Steve!

North Alabama Chapter AWS Conference Participation (Kristen Lindlow, Certified AWS Wine Judge, Regional AWS VP and NAAWS Chapter Member)

Once again, the North Alabama Chapter was well-represented at the American Wine Society's annual conference, in Concord, NC, with 26 Alabama members in attendance. The AWS Amateur and Commercial



Wine Competitions are held the Tuesday through Thursday prior to the conference. Our chapter had three certified judges participating: Edwin Núñez, Steve Young, and Kristen Lindlow. Scott Montgomery and Jaime Zapata were also busy pre-conference, taking the Year 2 and Year 1 Wine Judge Certification exams... and passing with flying colors! Congrats, guys!

The conference, as is customary, opened on Thursday evening with a welcome reception and this year's topped all others. The Embassy Suites hotel offered traditional North Carolina barbecue in the form of whole suckling pig, pulled

chicken, pulled pork, and barbecue turkey plus traditional sauce and accoutrements. I can attest to the fact that North Carolina wineries are producing some very nice wines, many from *vinifera* grapes.

The line-up of workshops and speakers was excellent, as always. The food pairing workshops with Chef Tony Lawrence are always special; ask Tim Suttles about Bubbles & Bacon. With wines from Lisbon, Mendoza, Virginia, Republic of Georgia, Bordeaux, the Rhone Rangers, and more, there was something for everyone.

Our own Kristen Lindlow led a session on the Muscadine grape for all the certified wine judges. Kristen did a great job telling the history of Muscadines and presented wines from Florida, Georgia, North Carolina, Tennessee, and of course Alabama for the judges to understand their different styles and varieties. The last wine was a very respectable Muscadine port that surprised the audience for its quality. It was a great session! The judges that attended may not like Muscadine anymore than they did before, but they understand what a good one should taste like.

On Friday afternoon, the results of the amateur competition were announced. We were all very excited to learn that our own Scott Montgomery had won one silver and three bronze medals for his wines. Huge congratulations, Scott!



Thanks for Sharing Kristen

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)

Now that all my Fall travels are starting to wind down, I will be focusing on adding new features to the website as well as importing some of the archived content (education articles, ...) from the previous website format.

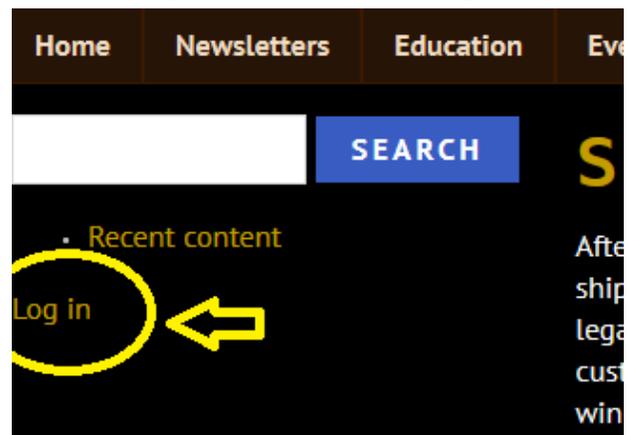
The first significant change is the enabling of user accounts for the website. The base software that powers the website has the capability to publish newsletters, send emails, and provide e-commerce capabilities

and much of this is provided through the user account system. For the time being, to log in or create an account, visit the *Log in* link located on the front page.

Your privacy is my primary concern and any email address that you use for an account will be kept confidential and will only visible to chapter board members. If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to send them to me at webmaster@naaws-hsv and I will try to respond to them as best I can. Over the next year, I hope to have newsletter or website articles describing the new capabilities of the website.

Besides enabling accounting, one new addition that I added last month is a section that will appear at the top

of the homepage on the day of each tasting (about 9AM) with directions to the tasting in case you are on the road and need the address. To help keep hosts information private, the information will only have directions (no phone numbers) and will automatically un-publish itself 2 hours after the event/tasting has



started. This will be available without having to log into the web-site since it is intended for people on the road. Just remember to pull over to a safe location before trying to type on your smart phone or tablet.

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)

Thanks to all who have made this a great year for me as your Programs Chair - but more importantly, a great year for the entire chapter. We sampled some excellent wines, added new members, and shared in our joint interest (maybe obsession) with wine. For those who have stepped up to volunteer to host in 2015, if you haven't done so, start planning your theme and let Walt Collier – our next programs Chair – know what you are planning.

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			
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

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!

Chapter AWS Educational Foundation (AWSEF)

<http://www.awsef.org>

The Board of Directors decided to present a check from the chapter AWSEF to the National AWS Education fund for \$2500.00 at the AWS National Conference. The check was presented at the member break-fast. After this donation, the current balance of the chapter AWSEF fund is \$288. In addition, another \$2500 was donated by Bonnie and Dennis Dilworth as part of the NAAWS Fund. Watch the AWS National Newsletter for more information. For more information on the AWSEF see the link above or the Facebook page:

<https://www.facebook.com/Awsef.org>

At the conference, a video was presented showing the students that are being supported with scholarships from the National AWS Educational Foundation. The student that received a scholarship, Stephanie Bolton, attended the conference and explained her research on the video. Here is the link to the video <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dLHyZydJR84&feature=youtu.be> and below is a thank you note from Stephanie.



537 Ogilthorpe Ave. N →
Athens, GA 30806

North Alabama Chapter-AWS
c/o Jay Wilson, Director
4007 Hawks Way
Huntsville, AL 35811

Dear AWS North Alabama
Chapter,

THANK YOU
from the bottom of my .
I am truly astounded by your generosity and inspired by your passion for wine!! Thank you so very much for blessing me with the 2014 AWSEF scholarship! The funds help immensely with my graduate studies in wine at UGA. Hope to visit you all again soon!
Love, Stephanie Bolton