



Monthly Tasting
Theme: Merlots from Around the World
March 29, 2015, 3:00 pm

Come join us and participate in our March Tasting, taking place at the home of the Luvenders

DIRECTOR'S SECTION
(Tim Suttles, Director / Bob Garay, Director Elect)
North Alabama American Wine Society



The snow is gone and Spring is upon us and another great Wine Tasting awaits at the Luvender's Sunday March 29. This year's tasting are off to a great start and following the Young's fantastic Phifer Pavitt feast, we are ready to embrace warmer weather and more great wine. As most member have learned, our Chapter is growing by leaps and bounds and it is more important than ever to go to our Chapter website (www.naaws-hsv.com) and create an account if you have not already done so. This year we will slowly migrate all correspondence and tasting signup to this site. Once on the site you will be impressed with all the information and support it can provide.

Anniversary Wine Glasses

We still have a few of the 20th Anniversary Wine Glasses remaining for those who wish to buy extras for \$5 per glass. To buy a glass please e-mail Tim Suttles at director@naaws-hsv.com. If you did not attend the wine dinner and have yet to pick up your glass, they will be available for pick up at next few monthly tastings.

Chapter 2015 Board of Directors

Director – **Tim Suttles**, director@naaws-hsv.com
Director Elect – **Bob Garay**, director.elect@naaws-hsv.com
Secretary – **Steve Peirce**, secretary@naaws-hsv.com
Treasurer – **Jodi Stephens**, treasurer@naaws-hsv.com
Programs – **Walter Collier**, 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

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

The membership signup on the website has taken off and have accounts for about 50% of the Chapter membership. If you have not yet signed up for an account, please remember to do so at your earliest convenience. While we have imported the newsletter email list into the website so that everyone should be receiving a newsletter sent by the website, having your own account will allow you to change your email at any time should you need to do so.

If your AWS membership is for two people in your household, feel free to sign up both members under separate accounts if you wish. And as always, after creating your account, you should receive a confirmation email within a few minutes. Please click on the verification link to confirm your account within 3 days. This extra step helps to verify that email sent from the website can reach your inbox and also helps me to automatically delete accounts created by spammers and internet bots.

NOTE: If you do not get a verification email within 2-15 minutes of creating your website account, you may want to check your spam and junk mail folders to see if it was classified improperly.

NAAWS Facebook Page



Our North Alabama Chapter has its own Facebook page: American Wine Society – North Alabama Chapter. This is a “closed” group to keep it for our members only, so click on the “Join Group” button at the top and we’ll add you to the group. This is our page --add info about wine events, photos from your wine trips, comments on a great new wine or winery you’ve discovered, etc. Check out all the pictures from previous tastings, too! Feel free to email me at Kristen@lindelowkoon.com with any suggestions, comments, or questions about the FB page.



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

How Much Should a Wine Cost?

Upon visiting a wine store, we find wines with a wide variety of prices. Every purchase requires a decision on our part: is the price justified? Many factors influence the price of wine and our perception of the wine itself. As we will see, even our psychology is intricately linked with how much we value and enjoy the wine.

Land. An extremely important factor affecting price is the cost of land. Even if climate and growing conditions were similar, wines from Burgundy or Napa Valley will cost substantially



more. The cost of an acre easily surpasses a quarter of a million dollars in these regions. That is, if you can find somebody selling the land. In Burgundy, for example, you can find owners of just a couple of vines. This was due to the Napoleonic Code of Law that ensured all children, and not only the first-born, would inherit. As years passed, vineyard ownership became more and more fragmented. The situation is so extreme in Burgundy that there is a special word for a vineyard or climate owned by a single person or winery: a *monopole*.

Bordeaux avoided this fragmentation problem by incorporating its vineyards and providing inheritors with shares. As a consequence, such small owners in Burgundy cannot afford to produce wine. How could you, if you just own three or five vines? As a result, the role of *négociants* is especially important in Burgundy. These are people with deep pockets that can buy complex and costly equipment. They get the grapes from the many mini-owners and can make high quality wine.

Grape Varietals. Another factor influencing price is the cost of the grapes themselves. Cabernet Sauvignon grapes and vines are in greater demand, so they command a greater price. Wine produced from such grapes will cost more. Some grape varietals are more prone to different diseases and will require additional treatment and labor to prevent them. Varietals also differ in the time they flower, set and ripen. The longer a grape cluster hangs in the vine, the more exposed to hazardous weather events. If the varietal flowers early, it may face the hazard of late spring frosts. On the contrary, if it takes a long time to ripen, the danger of early fall frosts can diminish or ruin the fruit.

Yields. We must also consider yields. Some grape varieties are more productive and give more fruit while others provide fewer bunches. Old vines also produce less fruit when compared with younger vines. Although scarcer, the fruit from old vines generally results in wines that are more complex in flavors and aroma.



Cultivation Practices. Many growers reduce the yield of their vines on purpose. They eliminate many of the grape bunches so the vine concentrates all its energies on the remaining fruit. Too much fruit may result in wines with an unremarkable and plain flavor. Some growers use machines to pick grapes while others pick by hand. More labor-intensive practices require a greater monetary investment. Similarly, organic grape cultivation practices result in lower environmental impacts but higher impact on the wallet.

Appellations. Many appellations control the yields by setting limits on the quantity of grapes allowed per acre. The appellation allowed on the label will depend on following such strict rules concerning yields.



Oak. There are several ways to age wine in oak and give it an oak taste. The classic one is through the use of oak barrels. Barrels are made by hand from different kinds of oak, French oak being one of the most expensive and sought after. The oak for the barrels can also come from the US, the Czech Republic and several other European countries. Their price for such barrels is well above a thousand dollars. Adding to the cost is the fact that they can only be used for a couple of vintages. To reduce such an expense, some winemakers use oak dust, oak chips or oak planks. Those obviously cost less and do not produce as rounded a wine as possible.

Production. If a winemaker produces only a very limited number of bottles, they can set a high price for them. After all, it will be a scarce product and it will command a high price. If the winemaker produces a very large number of bottles of wine, they will have to set a lower price on the bottles to ensure the product moves in the marketplace.

Winemaking Equipment Usage. To produce wine, a lot of very expensive equipment is used. BUT, it will be used only ONCE per year. This expensive equipment lies idle until the next vintage. If the production is low, the price per bottle will necessarily be higher to recover the equipment costs in a reasonable time.

Weather. You can only produce wine once per year. For that to happen, the weather has to cooperate. Inclement weather can ruin most of your effort as a winemaker by damaging the fruit, reducing the flavor of the grapes or advancing the aggressiveness of diseases.

Psychology. Research indicates that if we pay more for a product, we enjoy it more. We are already predisposed to the idea that the product is exceptional because we paid more. Marketing then uses that knowledge to ask a higher price for a bottle of good wine.

So, setting the price of a wine bottle is a process that reflects many different factors. Set your sights on regions and producers and you will find the right kind of price and an enjoyable experience.



Chapter Member Section:

The Traveling Wine Judges' Winter Adventures (Kristen Lindelow, Chapter Member and AWS Certified Wine Judge)

The North Alabama Chapter's four wine judges and three wine judge students have been busy this winter and the last weekend of February saw them scattered around Alabama, Tennessee, and Kentucky

Edwin Núñez (and Marisol Núñez) along with Marj Ducoté (McCulley) traveled to Paducah, Kentucky to judge for the [9th Annual Heartland Wine Competition](#). The organizers were very pleased to have American Wine Society judges this year and included that fact in their press releases. Edwin and Marj judged commercial and amateur wines from the West Kentucky/Illinois/Missouri areas and did a great job ---we've already been invited back for 2016.



Marj Ducoté and Edwin Núñez

Thank you to Marisol for these great photos.



Kristen Lindelow traveled to Kingsport, Tennessee to present two workshops for the Tennessee Viticultural & Oenological Society's (TVOS) annual conference. The workshops were titled, "What a Wine Judge is Looking For" with a beginner session and an advanced session. Scott Montgomery, a 3rd year WJCP student, was her very able assistant and helped answer specific questions from a winemaker's point of view. Thanks again, Scott, and especially for the pouring expertise!

Vineyard of Purple Toad Winery, Paducah, KY

as the emcee trivia contest in Wine Week. to guess the Young, Joy and wine



Meanwhile, Steve Young stayed in Huntsville to act for Church Street Wine Shoppe's first annual wine conjunction with Downtown Huntsville's first Winter Steve read trivia questions to the crowd as they tried correct answer and our "home team" won ---Beth Tim Suttles. I think Beth has absorbed some of the knowledge that Steve's been studying.

Steve Young at the Church Street Wine Shoppe

More Wine Fun!



Last year's Big Spring Crush was so popular, the City of Guntersville has convinced HomeGrownHuntsville to put on a similar event for them on Saturday, June 6. There will be over 150 different wines to sample –all along the water's edge. Check out City Harbor Crush here <http://www.homegrown.events/>

Save Saturday, September 26 for Huntsville's 2nd Annual Big Spring Crush festival in Big Spring Park. Last year was a sell-out so watch for tickets to go on sale at the homegrown.events website. This year's festival will be even better. There will

be more volunteer opportunities this year and the format will be different. Check back with me in the summer for more information. ---Kristen Lindelow

Judging at the AWGGA Amateur Wine Competition

Edwin Núñez, AWS Certified Wine Judge



Our North Alabama Chapter of the American Wine Society was very well represented at the Alabama Wineries and Grape Growers Association (AWGGA) Annual Amateur Wine Competition held on Saturday, March 7 at White Oaks Winery in Anniston, AL. Braving the cold snap, our wine judges Kristen Lindelow, Marj Ducoté, Edwin Núñez and Steve Young led the Huntsville contingent. Accompanying them were Judith Ann Ortiz and Jaime Zapata, Chapter members currently training to be full-fledged judges. They gladly took advantage of this

unique opportunity to hone their judging skills.

**Near Table: Kristen Lindelow, Edwin Núñez,
and Jaime Zapata**
**Far Table: Marj Ducoté, Steve Young Judith
Ann Ortiz**

The group was very well impressed with the skill shown by the Alabama amateur wine makers. Gone are the days when many of the wines made from American species showed overpowering foxiness. The winemaking techniques used by most of the competitors resulted in wines of great flavor and fi-

nesse, without eliminating the characteristics of the grapes.

Scott Montgomery, another of our Chapter members, was the Director of the AWGGA competition. Although he is on his final year before being certified as a judge, for obvious reasons he could not participate in that function. The whole group was very pleased with the experience and the competition's organization. They were rewarded with a delicious lunch by the organizers.

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.

2015 Programs (Walter Collier, Programs Chair)

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

Below is the calendar for the remainder of 2015:

2015			
Apr	26	Willamette Valley wines	Collier's
May	17	Wines of the Iberian Peninsula	Gainey's
Jun	28	TBA	Williams's
Jul	26	Wine Rep Event (Local Venue)	Programs
Aug	23	At the Auction Celebrating our Members	Wilson's
Sep	20	National Tasting	Kilbey's
Oct	19	Annual Dinner	Programs
Nov	15	Sparkling Wines	Garay's
Dec	N/A	No Tasting	N/A

Tasting Notes from the February 2015 Chapter Tasting

On a dreary February Sunday twenty four members met at Steve and Beth Young's house to sample a vertical of Cabernet Sauvignon from Napa Valley. The wine was Date Night (it was just a few days past Valentine's Day after all) from Phiffer-Pavit www.phiferpavittwine.com. Steve has been a member of their wine club (the Verona Society – a reference to Romeo and Juliet of course) since they started and he and Beth have visited them when they were in Napa.

Steve set the vertical up blind for everyone. Each wine was poured and everyone was challenged to arrange the wines in order from oldest to youngest. Steve gave everyone winery note (not much help since they were all the same wine), Napa Vintage Reports (again not much help – since the differences from weather from one year to the next is subtle) and Wine Spectators Vintage Ratings for Napa Valley (very helpful in identify which years should be better than the others and which years were considered to be ready to drink or should be held).

After going through all the wines, one person got four out of the seven correct Jamie Zapata! Steve offered Jamie his pick of all seven vintages for getting the most correct and Jamie chose the most recent vintage - 2011.

Steve then took a vote as to which vintage everyone liked best and the winner was 2008 – which was an excellent vintage for all California and Oregon wines.

Everyone agreed that the exercise was challenging but that they learned something and enjoyed it. Steve and Beth spent several hours washing the 182 glasses that were used. ☺

Here is the recipe for Crostini with Mushrooms, Prosciutto and Blu Cheese

3 Tbsp. Butter

1/2 lb. shiitake Mushrooms, stemmed, caps only chopped

4 oz. Crimini Mushrooms, chopped

2 Garlic cloves, minced

1/2 Cup Whipping Cream

1/2 Cup crumbled blue cheese (about 2 oz.)

1/2 Cup chopped thinly sliced prosciutto (about 2.5 oz.)

18-20 1/2 inch thick diagonally cut bread slices from 1 sourdough baguette

Chopped fresh parsley

Melt butter in heavy large skillet over medium-high heat.

Add mushrooms & garlic. Sauté until liquid is completely absorbed, about 2 minutes.
Remove from heat. Add blue cheese & stir until melted.
Mix in prosciutto, season to taste with salt & pepper.
Transfer mushroom topping to bowl.

DO AHEAD - Mushroom topping can be made a day ahead.

Cover & Refrigerate

Preheat oven to 375 degrees, arrange bread slices on baking sheet. Bake until golden brown (about 5 minutes).

Mound 1 generous tablespoon mushroom topping on bread slices & bake about 6 minutes. Sprinkle with parsley & serve.

Chocolate Salami link that was served for one of the desserts:

<http://www.olympiaprovisions.com/pages/products>

Thanks again to Steve and Beth for hosting an amazing tasting!

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!

February 2015 Raffle Results (Stephen R. Peirce, Secretary)

The Date Night Vertical tasting at Steve and Beth Young's was another great month with five (5) donations. Special thanks to the following members who donated items for the raffle:

Steve and Beth Young - Laurentide 2013 Reisling and Laurentide 2013 Semi-sweet Reisling; Tim and Joy Suttles - Liganore Indulgence Sweet Red; Art and Susan Scott - Alambrado 2013 Malbec; Bob and Beth Garay - Ventisquero 2011 Carmenere.

Winners were: Steve and Beth Young, Tim and Joy Suttles, Art and Susan Scott, Jay and Gisele Wilson, and Bob and Beth Garay.

We raised \$65 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 Steve and Beth Young. 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 and gifts for the raffle.

Chapter AWS Educational Foundation (AWSEF)

<http://www.awsef.org>

For February, the chapter raised \$130.80 through raffle, donations, and tasting attendance fees for the chapter education fund. The current balance in the chapter's AWSEF fund is \$906.

Our chapter is committed to supporting the AWSEF. As most of you are aware, \$2 is added to every tasting attendance fee and is designated for the AWSEF. At almost every tasting we hold a raffle of items donated by the members. Additional donations to the AWSEF are accepted and can be added to the tasting fee as designated on the reservation form when you send in your reservation.

The AWSEF scholarship award amount is \$3,500; our chapter's has started raising money for our 7th scholarship.