

# June 2016 Newsletter



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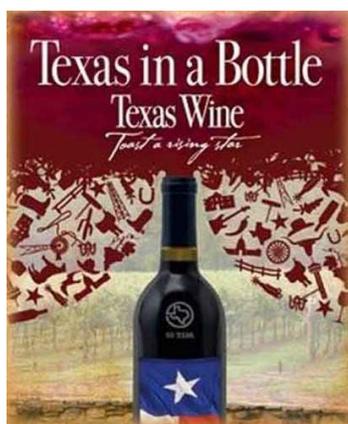
## June Event: Texas Wines

*Hosted by The Garzas*  
*June 26, 2016, 3:00 to 5:00 pm*

Please join the Garza's in tasting some excellent wines grown in the Great State of Texas. We will be tasting wines from the Lone Star State region of the Texas Hill Country also known as Central Texas or the Edwards Plateau. The limestone peaks of the Texas Hill Country make up a large part of Central Texas and the major soil texture include clay loam, clay, and sandy clay loam.

We will pair food dishes with the chosen wine in order to enhance the tasting experience sure to please the distinguished palette. Come gather around to smell, swirl and sip various Texan wines accompanied by and matched perfectly with delicious meats and Mexican food pairings of the region prepared by a born and bred Texan.

Texas has over a three-hundred year history of winemaking and the sunny and dry climate of the major wine making regions in the state have drawn comparisons to Portuguese and Spanish wines. Some of the earliest recorded Texas wines were produced by Spanish missionaries in the 1650's near El Paso. Come and join us for a fun filled afternoon!



## Director's Section: Robert Garay



This month I want to provide you with a sneak peak of our July tasting. It is our recent tradition to host our July tasting at a local venue, and this year we are fortunate to secure the expertise in both food and wine of Eric, General Manager and Sommelier of *Cork & Crust Pizzeria and Wine Bar* in Madison.



Eric is an International Sommelier Guild Certified Sommelier who has worked and studied in some of the world's finest vineyards in Germany, France, and Napa Valley. In discussing a theme for the tasting with him, we both agreed that, as the weather gets warmer no summer evening on the patio would be complete without a wonderful Rosé.

So we settled on a "Pink Party," which will include both old and new world Rosé wines accompanied by small plate food pairings prepared right there in the restaurant. Some of you may have attended Eric's Wine Dinners before and know you're in for a treat. For others, if this is your first experience with the restaurant, you really should plan to attend on 17 July at our normal time of 3:00 pm. Details that include the wines we will taste and the cost of this tasting will be announced in the July newsletter.

Bob  
NAAWS Director

## Chapter 2016 Board of Directors

<b>Director</b>	Bob Garay	<a href="mailto:director@naaws-hsv.com">director@naaws-hsv.com</a>
<b>Director Elect</b>	Walt Collier	<a href="mailto:director.elect@naaws-hsv.com">director.elect@naaws-hsv.com</a>
<b>Past Director</b>	Tim Suttles	
<b>Secretary</b>	Tom Gainey	<a href="mailto:secretary@naaws-hsv.com">secretary@naaws-hsv.com</a>
<b>Treasurer</b>	Jodi Stephens	<a href="mailto:treasurer@naaws-hsv.com">treasurer@naaws-hsv.com</a>
<b>Programs</b>	Augie Hernandez	<a href="mailto:programs@naaws-hsv.com">programs@naaws-hsv.com</a>
<b>Education</b>	Edwin Núñez	<a href="mailto:education@naaws-hsv.com">education@naaws-hsv.com</a>
<b>Newsletter</b>	Paula S.W. Laurita	<a href="mailto:newsletter@naaws-hsv.com">newsletter@naaws-hsv.com</a>
<b>Webmaster</b>	Chip Boling	<a href="mailto:webmaster@naaws-hsv.com">webmaster@naaws-hsv.com</a>

## *Education Section: Edwin Núñez, Certified Wine Judge* *Forty Years Ago: The Judgement of Paris*

It has been praised as the equivalent of the Copernican Revolution in wine. Probably no other event has had such a great impact on the wine world in modern times. Books have been written about it, magazine articles have underscored its importance and even Hollywood has deemed it worthy of movies. Just as the Big Bang generated space, time and our ever-expanding universe, this event created a new vision of wine and expanded its frontier. It was baptized with a mythical name:

The Judgement of Paris. It happened forty years ago on May 24, 1976. But, when it happened, hardly anybody took notice. Its impact was only realized with the passage of time.

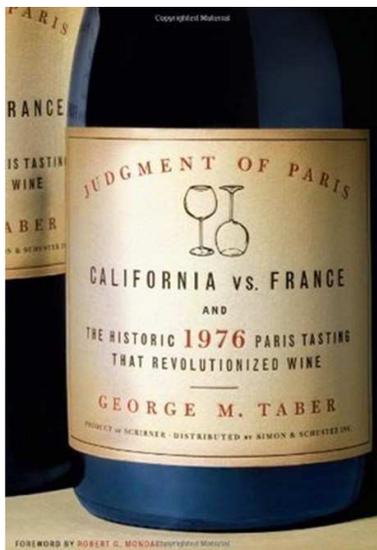
### **The Planning Stage**

It was planned as a blind tasting to mark the celebration of the Bicentennial of the American Revolution. It emphasized the historical ties between the French and American people. As we all know, the French had provided important support to the colonies in their war against England. Curiously enough, it was planned by an Englishman: Steve Spurrier. He owned the respected *Académie du Vin* and one of the best wine shops in Paris.



**The panel of judges at the Paris blind tasting of May 24, 1976. This tasting of French and American wines came to be known by the moniker The Judgement of Paris.**

Among Steve Spurrier's assets were his contacts and relations with the who's who of the French wine world. He was respected for his work and for his love and knowledge of French wines. But, just as important for this event, he was well familiarized with California wines. Since he also had a non-conformist streak to his character, he had been thinking about what to do that would shake the French wine establishment.



**Cover of George Taber's book describing the historic Judgement of Paris blind tasting and its consequences for the wine world.**

The idea originated with Patricia Gallagher, the manager of Spurrier's wine store. She was enthusiastic about California wines. She had vacationed in California and toured many of the state's wineries. She talked to the vintners and tasted many of their wines. Curious about the enthusiasm, Spurrier visited California in April 1976 with the idea of selecting some of the wines for the upcoming tasting.

Spurrier assembled a top-notch panel of nine judges that were very well-known in the French gastronomic world. A list of its French members gives an idea of the quality of this judging panel:

- Odette Kahn, editor of the iconic *Revue du Vin de France*,
- Pierre Brejoux, member of the Institut d'Appellation d'Origine Contrôlée
- Raymond Oliver, Paris restaurant *Le Grand Bèfour*
- Pierre Tari, *Château Giscours*
- Christian Vanneque, *sommelier* of *Tour d'Argent*
- Aubert de Villaine, *Domaine de la Romanée-Conti*
- Jean-Claude Vrinat, restaurant *Taillevant*

## *Education Section Continued*

The list was completed by two non-French judges, Steve Spurrier (British) and Patricia Gallagher (American), who were the tasting's organizers.

Our AWS members will be gratified to know that wines were judged on a 20-point scale, just like the maximum we currently use in our evaluation forms. However, we have a set of criteria supporting the points given in different categories like aroma, appearance, taste, aftertaste, etc. In this competition, no specific criteria were set so the judges gave points based on their overall impression of the wine.

Spurrier and Gallagher also decided the points given by the French judges would be the **only** ones to count. Both would judge the wines but their scores would not count.

### **It is Wise not to Show All Your Cards**

In the red wine category, California and Bordeaux wines made from Cabernet Sauvignons would be tasted. Chardonnays from Burgundy and California would be included in the white wine category. Everybody "knew" the French wines would win both in the white and red wine competition. Big, famous Bordeaux wines like Château Mouton-Rotschild were amongst the reds and Burgundies like Batard-Montrachet Ramonet-Prudhon were amongst the Chardonnays.

Spurrier was smart enough to know that none of these famous French wine personalities would have participated if he had presented this as an American versus French wine competition. The stakes were too high for them to participate in such an event. They came to evaluate American wines. Only **after** they had all arrived did he inform them that he had added "some French wines" amongst the ones they were to evaluate. He did NOT tell them the quality of the French wines in the group.

To give you an idea of the stakes, just think of the composition of the panel: A co-owner of one of the great estates of Burgundy, the Secretary of the Grand Cru Classés of Bordeaux, a member of the national Institut d'Appellation d'Origine Contrôlée, the editors of two of France's most respected wine magazines, and two three-star Michelin restaurateurs. Hubris prevented them from refusing to participate after Spurrier announced that French wines would be included. They were convinced the French wines would win over the American *parvenus*. It would be an easy task to distinguish the French wines, or so they thought. What they didn't know was that there were really important French wines included.

Although many journalists were invited to the blind tasting, only one showed up: George Taber of Time Magazine. It would be his lucky day. Not only it resulted in a widely-read article in Time, but he later wrote one of the most famous wine books: *The Judgement of Paris: California vs. France and the Historic 1976 Tasting that Revolutionized Wine*.

### **The Aftermath**

When the wines were discovered and the results announced, the two favorites turned out to be American. The winning Chardonnay was the California 1973 Château Montelena and the winning red was the 1973 Cabernet Sauvignon from Stag's Leap Wine Cellars. As was to be expected, the French judges took umbrage at the results. Ms. Kahn tried to retrieve her card to destroy it. Another wanted to change the scores in his card. Another insisted he had been tricked through deception into participating in an activity "treacherous" to France. The French press failed to report the results and remained silent for a long time.

# Education Section Continued

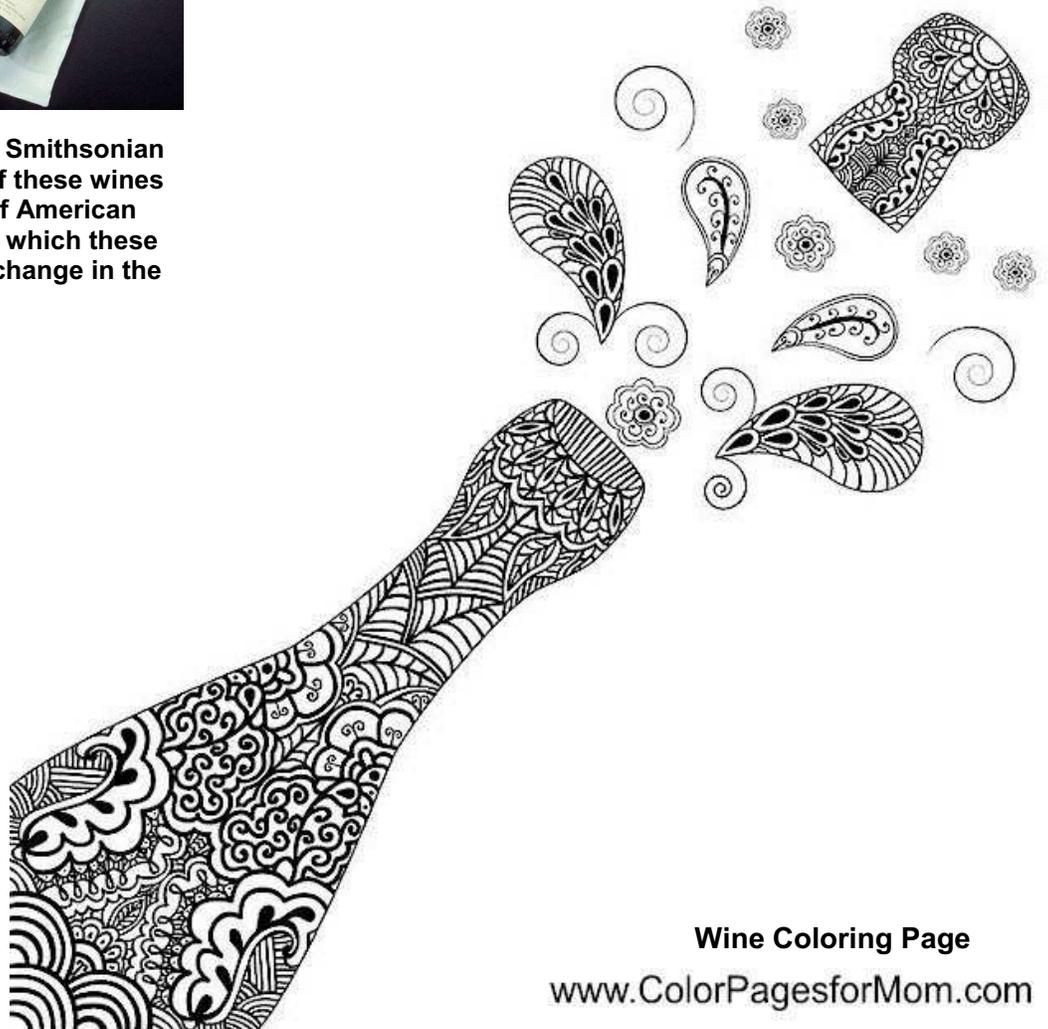
The wine world changed dramatically from then on. Other places could and did make wine that was at the same level as the big châteaux from France. Suddenly, people started to buy and taste wines from other countries, especially California's wines. If California had beat the master winemakers at their own game, other regions and countries could do so. Winemakers started to see that effort and innovation could be rewarded. This event changed all.



The telegram that reached Chateau Montelena announcing the results of the blind tasting.



The California winners! The Smithsonian has two bottles in display of these wines at the National Museum of American History. The competition in which these wines won marked a great change in the wine world.



## May Tasting: Augie Hernandez, Programs

Over 40 NAAWS members gathered on 15 May 2016 at Jay and Gisele Wilson's house for the popular wine auction. It was a beautiful day, with beautiful wines and of course, beautiful people. With 21 wines to sample and members providing the food pairings, there were plenty to go around. The success of the auction was demonstrated by the \$641 raised for the AWS Scholarship Fund. There was an additional \$29 in donations.

I should also say the empty wine bottles and food dishes were also a very strong indication of success as well. Jennifer Drake's spicy Schezwan Chicken won the prize as the tastiest dish, but there were many dishes that came in a close second. The generosity of the members in bidding for the wines and helping to make this tasting a special event is greatly appreciated. So you don't miss out, mark your 2017 calendars around the May time frame, for next year's Wine Auction.



### TENNESSEE VALLEY WINE ACADEMY

**This Class is Filling Up  
And The Early-Bird Discount Expires June 30th!**

**Tennessee Valley Wine Academy is very pleased  
to be able to offer the  
Italian Wine Specialist® course offered for the  
first time in the Southeast.**

An in-depth exploration of Italian wines –from the terroir (geology, geography, climate), culture, history, tradition, nuances, and uniqueness of character of all 20 regions one by one—  
taught by an Italian sommelier.

This intense course will be taught in four classes over two weekends:  
September 10 and 11 and October 15 and 16  
and will include over 20 examples of some of the best wine Italy has to offer.

The classes will be held at Church Street Wine Shoppe in Downtown Huntsville.

Complete information available at:

<http://www.nasommelier.com/courses/italian-wine-specialist/#huntsville>

or contact Kristen Lindelow at [Kristen@emailtwa.com](mailto:Kristen@emailtwa.com)  
Tennessee Valley Wine Academy 256-200-5901

**Discount for sign-up by June 30.  
Class space is very limited.**

## Programs: Augie Hernandez

Included here is the list of 2016 and 2017 Programs so that you can see what is available for a month that you would like to host. Please consider hosting a month in 2017 in order to support our mission to provide scholarships for those that seek to educate themselves on the basics of viticulture. The Lauritas are looking for a co-host couple for 2017. They live in Athens and would like to partner with someone in Madison County.



## 2016 & 2017 Programs Calendars

2016			Capacity
July 17	Wine Rep Event at Cork & Crust	Programs	40
August 21		Williams	40
September 18	National Tasting	Hernandez	50
October 16	Annual Dinner	Programs	50
November 20	Sparkling Wines	Kilbeys/Peirces	40
December	No Tasting	N/A	
2017			Capacity
January	Cider	Minor	40
February	Bulgarian Wines	Starkloff	40
March	Portuguese Wines	Collier	40
April			40
May	At the Auction Celebrating our Members	Wilson	40
June			40
July	Wine Rep Event (Local Venue)	Programs	40
August			40
September	National Tasting	Hernandez	50
October	Annual Dinner	Programs	60
November	Sparkling Wines		40
December	No Tasting	N/A	

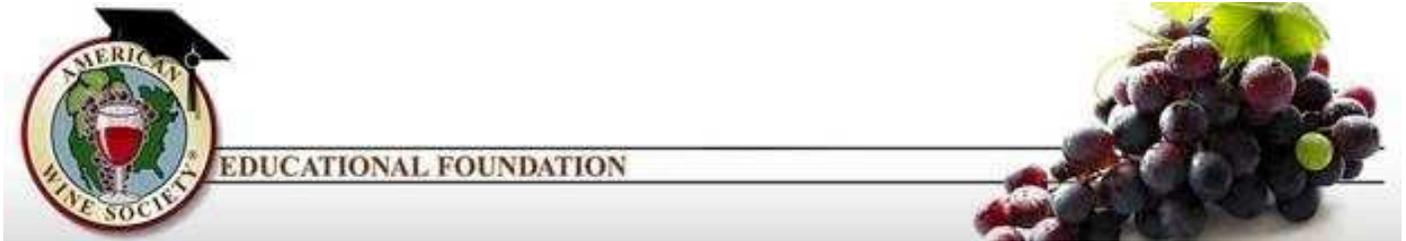
### Treasurer's Report

The Silent Auction in May was a huge success!  
 Our members were most gracious to provide \$671 to the AWSEF.

**Our current total is: \$3110.80.**

We have added almost \$1300 since Dec 2015!

## Scholarship Winner



Dear Andrej:

I'm very pleased to inform you by email that you are a winner of a \$3,500 American Wine Society Educational Foundation (AWSEF) scholarship for 2016! Your scholarship was funded by the North Alabama Chapter of the American Wine Society. Thus the name of your award is "North Alabama AWS Chapter Scholarship in Honor of Bonnie & Dennis Dilworth". The AWSEF Board of Trustees is proud of your accomplishments and wishes you the very best in pursuit of your M.S. degree at Auburn University, and the wonderful career ahead of you! A copy of this notification is also going to your academic advisor, Elina Coneva and Karl Starkloff & Kristen Lindelow of the North Alabama AWS Chapter [& also AWSEF Trustees] to pass along to other chapter members.

When you have a chance, we request that you send us three things: 1) a 2 minute video of yourself, 2) a photo of yourself, and 3) a short paragraph summarizing the nature of your research and its importance to the North American wine industry. The video will express why you are passionate about the wine industry and what your research/education will focus on during the upcoming academic year. These materials will be used to let others know of your selection, will be posted at our website ([www.awsef.org](http://www.awsef.org)) along with the other 2016 scholarship winners and used as a marketing tool for the AWSEF which will be shown to all AWS conference attendees in November – you can email them all to me.

Jim Rink, Editor for the AWS Journal, will also send you a note as well.

If there are any changes to that, please let me know. A hard copy official letter will go out to the address above by Jim High as soon as you confirm your address and a signed copy will need to be sent back to us before we can mail out your scholarship check.

If you could please submit the short paragraph and picture by June 30th and the video by August 15th [as we know this usually takes a little more time to complete!].

Congratulations, Andrej, and again - best wishes for your future!

Bonnie M. Lance  
President  
American Wine Society Educational Foundation