August 2016 Newsletter

North Alabama Chapter of the American Wine Society

August Event: A Tale of Two Varietals— Cabernet Franc & Viognier

The August Tasting will be a "Tale of Two Varietals" - starring Viognier and Cab Franc. To add a bit of extra intrigue, we'll be sampling across the terrors of France, California and and Virginia in a blind tasting format.

Director's Section: *Robert Garay*

The July tasting at Cork & Crust Pizzeria and Wine Bar, hosted by Eric, General Manager and Sommelier of *Cork & Crust Pizzeria and Wine Bar* in Madison was a big hit, with five Rosé wines tasted along with a delectable assortment of food pairings.   By popular vote, the 34 attendees preferred the *Dom de Pallus Chinon Roase of Cabernet Franc*, followed closely by the *Alma Negra Sparkling Malbec*.

Additionally, at the July tasting, Eric generously donated a $100.00 gift card for the restaurant, and a bottle of Don Melchor Cabernet Sauvignon – one of Chile's finest wines. Also, a couple of books on wine were donated by Marge Ducote. Each was raffled with the proceeds going to the Scholarship fund for which over $125.00 was raised.

In other news, the NAAWS Board met recently and decided to implement a new two-part plan to simplify the process of pricing and reserving a place at each tasting. We looked at the average cost of tastings over the last two years and made a determination based on that data that we would standardize the cost of tasting to $32.00 a person for every tasting. We believe that this will balance out the cost of the tastings over the year, make it easier to get the newsletter out in a timely fashion (since we will no longer be waiting for the host to make a determination of cost), and eliminate the pricing guess work for every-one who desires to attend and reserve a place for the tasting. This part of the plan will be implemented right away starting with the August tasting. The second part of the two-part plan is to enable members to register and pay of line for every tasting, the cost of which (for on-line use of credit cards) is already factored into the new $32.00. We will let you know as soon as this is implemented and available for use.

Bob
NAAWS Director

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Education Section: Edwin Núñez, Certified Wine Judge
Cabernet Franc and Viognier: They Deserve More Respcet

This month we will taste wines from two grapes that are claiming greater attention: Cabernet Franc (red) and Viognier (white). As the wine world goes through changes and fashions, these grapes used to have greater popularity in the past. After losing a good deal of that popularity, wine enthusiasts are rediscovering the great wines they produce. Since I am quite serious about tasting and planting as many varieties as possible, I celebrate the theme of the August tasting.
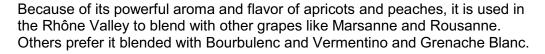
Viognier

This grape was well-known and cultivated in France. As a matter of fact, ampelographers trace its origin to France itself. The grape also shows a relation to the Italian Nebbiolo and Freisa grapes. Through the years and as white wine became more popular, *vignerons* and wine drinkers decided in favor of Chardonnay. The situation reached a critical point in France at the end of the 1960s, when only 80 acres were planted in Condrieu and the vineyards of Château Grillet. But this grape has proven to be a fighter due to its qualities and has made a remarkable and steady comeback. Helping this comeback were wineries in California and in Australia who saw the potential it had for wines. Now, the grape grows in many other countries like South Africa, Chile, Argentina, New Zealand, Spain and Italy.

It is an interesting comeback. One of the reasons that caused its decline is the same pushing its resurgence: it can be hard and unpredictable. Wine drinkers can appreciate a wine that takes a lot of work to bring quality to the glass.

The Viognier vine is hard to cultivate and prone to diseases like powdery mildew, especially in wet climates. It produces low yields per acre. On the positive side, it is resistant to drought. The *vigneron* must pick when it is optimally ripe to produce wines distinguished for their aroma and flavors of stony fruits like peach and apricot. A problem with its flavor profile is that it tends to have low acidity. If this grape is picked late, it will produce wines with have high alcohol content. This is due to rapid increase in its sugar content with time.

Because of its powerful aroma and flavor of apricots and peaches, it is used in the Rhône Valley to blend with other grapes like Marsanne and Rousanne. Others prefer it blended with Bourbulenc and Vermentino and Grenache Blanc.

Because the grapes can have such high sugar levels and low acidity, especially in hot weather, many use Viognier to produce sweet wines.

Education Section Continued

Cabernet Franc

One of the most interesting facts about Cabernet Franc is that it is one of the parents of Cabernet Sauvignon. The other parent is Sauvignon Blanc, a white grape. This crossing did not happen all that long ago. It is estimated to have taken place in the mid 1600s around the area of Bordeaux in southwest France. As we can see, Cabernet Franc precedes Cabernet Sauvignon by a long, long time. When compared with Cabernet Sauvignon, Cabernet Franc produces fruit that has thinner skins and ripens earlier. It also has lower acidity.

In France, it is the Touraine region of the Loire Valley is well known for Cabernet Franc as a single-varietal wine. In there, two appellations are considered to produce excellent wines from Cabernet Franc: Chinon and Bourgueil. In Bordeaux, the blend of Cabernet Franc and Merlot is a flagship blend of the Right Bank. These two facts make France as the largest producer of Cabernet Franc in the world.

After France, the second largest producer of Cabernet Franc wines is Italy. The best known region for its cultivation is the Tuscany, although Friuli-Venezia Giulia has a larger production. Since that grape is not recognized by the official DOCG appellation system of Italy, wines containing Cabernet Franc are found in the now famous Super Tuscans. These wines have their origin in the frustration of modern winemakers with the very slow pace of Italian bureaucracy. Changing the wine law took such a long time that the more modern and avant-garde winemakers decided to take matters into their own hands. They started producing wines that blended non-traditional grapes along with the Sangiovese. Thus, a Super Tuscan wine can be a blend of Sangiovese with one or more of the following grapes: Merlot, Cabernet Sauvignon, Syrah and Cabernet Franc.

The authorities finally responded in 1992 by creating a special category called IGT (Indicazione Geografica Tipica) for these wines. Their success has been extraordinary and now Super Tuscans command high prices. As an example, look for the price of the Tignarello Super Tuscan. It is a blend of 80% Sangiovese, 15% Cabernet Sauvignon and 5% Cabernet Franc. If you want one you will have to pay $80 and up. One problem with the Cabernet Franc grape is that yields have to be kept small. If the vine is allowed an abundant production, the wine from these grapes will be quite herbaceous and grassy flavors.

In California, the use of the Cabernet Franc grape has been to follow the style of the Bordeaux Right Bank. Washington State is also producing good quality Cabernet Franc wines. This varietal has also been making inroads into South Africa and New Zealand. In Spain, the Penedes region also produces well-rounded wines from this grape.

Viognier and Cabernet Franc bring a lot of flavor and value to the bottle. Dare yourself to try them regularly.

National AWS Conference

Are you planning on going to the National Conference? Want to go out early and see the Temecula wine region? Want to stay in a resort in a vineyard? There is one more room available in the room block Steve Young has set up at Carter Estates. Contact Steve for more information.

Big Spring Crush

Big Spring Crush Wine Festival, September 24th from 5 - 9 pm at Big Spring Park East.
We'll have over 150 wines from all over the world to taste, live music, local restaurants, food trucks, a grape stomping area and more!

Tickets & More Information: www.Homegrown.events

All American Wine Society members can use the PROMO CODE "aws" for $5 off general admission!

Promote Wine Events In the NAAWS Newsletter Send event news to newsletter@naaws-hsv.com to be featured in the newsletter and on the closed group Facebook page.

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.

2016 & 2017 Programs Calendars

2016			Capacity
August 21	A Tale Of Two Varietals	Williams	40
September 25	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	

National Tasting Project (NTP)

The NTP is a wine education and tasting opportunity for AWS Chapters across the US. Each year the NTP committee chooses a theme and selects several widely available wines that show different styles within the theme. Immerse your mind and palate in some of the best boutique wines of the Rhone Rangers. The Rhone Rangers are a group of roughly 150 wineries dedicated to making wines from the 22 grape varieties originally made famous in France's Rhone Valley. These varieties range from the better-known Syrah and Viognier to the up-and-coming Grenache, Mourvèdre and Roussanne, to more obscure, but delicious, varieties like Counoise and Picpoul. The NAAWS NTP date is September 25th.

Italian Wine Specialist Class:
Steve Young, Certified Wine Judge

I have organized the Italian Wine Specialist Course to be offered by the North American Sommelier Association (NASA) here in Huntsville in September and October.

To highlight a few things that I am excited about:

- In person instruction by a Certified Italian Sommelier
- Tasting of wines from ALL of Italy's regions
- Professional Book by the instructor in addition to study material

The course will be offered in two parts: Saturday/Sunday September 10 and 11, and Saturday/Sunday October 15 and 16. There will be a proctored exam at a later date to be decided by the class. Right now the plan is to offer the Course at Church Street Wine Shoppe, however that may change depending on class size.

To ensure the quality of the learning experience, the class is limited to 30 students. The price for the class is $650, which includes all materials and wine. I expect the class to fill up quickly.

For more information and to sign up for the course:
http://www.nasommelier.com/courses/italian-wine-specialist/
Look for Huntsville in the list of cities where the course is being offered. Please contact me if you have any questions.

Got Corks?

Jay Wilson was asked by a wine enthusiast if he could get wine corks. The individual is desiring to make wine trivets. If you have wine cork collections that are outgrowing your wine cork container, please provide them to Jay Wilson. Natural corks only please.

Don't Forget To Vote!

Deadline for the AWS election is September 15th!
It's your association, let your voice be heard.