

# HEARD IT THROUGH THE GRAPE VINE

1 JULY 2009

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## THE WINE SOCIETY CELEBRATES ITS 13<sup>TH</sup> BIRTHDAY,

### "SOUTHWEST STYLE" AT HAAK VINEYARDS - BY

#### ELIZABETH LUTTON, STATE PRESIDENT - WINE SOCIETY OF TEXAS

The Wine Society of Texas celebrated its 13th anniversary, "southwest style" in the beautiful Haak winery and vineyard on May 2, 2009. The winery is a replica of an old Texas mission and is located in a tranquil, rural setting in Santa Fe, Texas, which is near Galveston. Wine Society members from the Houston, Permian Basin, Dallas Fort Worth and Hill Country Chapters started their evening with an exclusive, personal tour of the winery by Raymond Haak. During the tour, he discussed wine-making techniques for the unique South Texas maritime climate and delighted the group with a story about his "underdog" Texas Madeira. This Haak Jacquez Madeira "held its own" in competition with some very expensive and top ranked Madeira's from the rest of the world. Later on, the group was delighted as the Haak Madeira showed up as the wine served with dessert. After the exclusive tour and tasting, the Wine Society members entered the Haak barrel room, where they were treated to a four course meal paired with wines from the estate.

The first course, an appetizer, paired the Haak dry Blanc Du Bois with toast points, smoked mozzarella and tomato marmalade. The Haak winery is known for its Blanc Du Bois, which it releases in both dry and off dry (semi-sweet). The Blanc Du Bois grape is an excellent grape for Texas, because it grows well in hot climates and is very aromatic and crisp to pair well with the hot Texas summers and bountiful seafood near the gulf coast. The Blanc Du Bois reserve was served with a spring mix salad containing goat cheese. The reserve Blanc Du Bois is similar in style to a Chardonnay, so it went very well with the goat cheese. For the main course, the Haak Tempranillo was perfectly paired with garlic peppercorn crusted pork loin. The tempranillo grape is also fairly new to Texas, but will eventually find its perfect expression here because of the Texas Mediterranean climate. Finally, for the last course, the Wine Society

members were treated to a completely unique dessert, which looked exactly like a cigar in an ashtray with a cup of coffee. Of course, the dessert tasted a lot better than a cigar and coffee, plus it provided a showcase for the Haak Madeira. The Haak winery was also kind enough to provide an extra sip of their Texas White Port for everyone, which put a great nightcap on the entire evening.

Besides the wonderful food and wine, the Haak event also featured a silent auction to benefit the Wine Society Scholarship fund. Several Wine Society members were happy to bid on some nice wine items, including a vintage bottle of the Madeira, kindly donated by the Haak family. All in all, the evening was a great success. If you see Houston members who helped with the event, including Chapter Chair Ed Dent, thank them all for a fantastic evening!

Elizabeth Lutton, State President  
- Wine Society of Texas

**HOUSTON CHAPTER WINE EVENT**

The Houston Chapter of The Wine Society of Texas will be celebrating fall in the Falls, which is Marble Falls, Texas, on October 10, 2009 at Flat Creek Winery and Estates. Listed below are the details of the event plus cost.

6 p.m. – Tour of winery along with tasting of select wines

7 p.m. – Wine and Food pairing

*Flat Creek Estate*

*fine food in the Texas Hill Country*

***hors d'ouvers***

caprese bruschetta, curried egg salad crisp, goat cheese & tapenade, prawn cucumber, prosciutto wrapped asparagus and liver pate on toast point paired with Buckin' Horse White:

This wine is a very versatile wine that will work well with all of the appetizer selections. The lightly sweet and flintiness of the Viognier make Buckin' Horse White an excellent starter wine. It's full body will also appeal to the red wine drinkers.

***first course***

butternut squash soup with crème fraiche  
paired with our Pinot Grigio 2008 (new release)

***second course***

mixed baby greens candied pecans, red onion confit, & goat cheese; champagne vinaigrette  
paired with Pinot Blanc 2008: This is the perfect wine for the salad.  
The sweetness of the pecans and onions match the fruitiness of the wine.

***main course***

pork peposa: slow roasted pork with peppers & three cheese polenta  
paired with Super Texan...may be 2006 or a preview of 2008:  
The spice in both the pork and peppers will bring out the spice in the Sangiovese based wine.

***variety of breads with three flavored butters******sweets***

lemon tart with citrus chantilly cream paired with Mistella.  
lemon tart and Mistella both have an intense citrus sweetness that will make them pair well.

***coffee service***

## HOUSTON CHAPTER WINE EVENT



### *Cost*

\$75 per person, gratuity included, plus tax of \$5.44

**An additional charge of \$10 per person will be required for all non Wine Society of Texas Members, payable by cash or check at the door**

**Reservations must be prepaid by calling 512-267-6310**

**Credit card number must be given to hold reservation and must be made by October 4, 2009**

Plans are to hold a raffle or silent auction to make a contribution to Wine Society Scholarship fund

**For those who will need hotel reservations group rates have been negotiated at the following hotels:**

**La Quinta Inn, Marble Falls, TX - \$109 Friday or Saturday night stay. Complimentary breakfast included, 830-798-2121, 501 Highway 2147 West. Cut off date September 9<sup>th</sup>. 10 rooms available**

**Hampton Inn, Marble Falls, TX - \$105 city view, \$115 lake view for Friday or Saturday night stay. If lake view rooms are available, you can be up graded to lake view at city view price. Complimentary hot breakfast included. 830-798-1895, 704 First Street. Price only available until September 5<sup>th</sup>. 10 rooms available**  
**October is a busy month in Marble Falls and both hotels are practically sold out. After cutoff dates, reservations will be made on a space and rate available basis.**

**There are other hotels in Marble Falls. Rates and availability is on your own.**

## THE EVOLVING PALATE

## KELLY MESSENGER

I get asked almost daily what my favorite wine is. I used to try to answer this question until it finally occurred to me, it really depends on the day, season, and mood what my favorite bottle is. That has not always been the case though.

In my years in the retail wine business, I have found the wine consumers typically fall into two categories. Those that know what they like and will only consume that – whatever it may be, and those that in their own words are “clueless” and prefer guidance through their wine selecting process. Now, that’s not to say that there aren’t some in the middle, there are, they are just much fewer in quantity than the other two sides. Even though the self-proclaimed “clueless” are often less clueless than they think and with a few quick questions we can usually pick out selections that will make them happy, I am going to target the other category, those that know what they like and there is no way no how you are going to change it. More often than not this is the group who has a little more wine experience but have in turn fallen into a wine-drinking rut. It is time to evolve.

At some point in all our wine-drinking lives we all fall into this hard and fast category, usually because we find something we know we like and it’s a safe bet. I have seen this within my own household and for the first time in 10 years I recently heard my husband mutter while standing over the wine cooler, “Nah, I don’t feel like a Cab tonight”. That was music to my ears, finally he is evolving! So I am going to challenge you to get out of your comfort zone and find something new (or at least new to you) and exciting that just may open some doors into wine that you never knew existed.

It’s a little difficult at first, just like anything that takes you out of your comfort zone but there are many easy and painless ways to go about it. Start at your local wine shop. Tell them what your real favorite is and ask them if they have something similar but not exactly like it. Find out what is new, read bottle labels, ask questions and take samples if available. Open your horizons, especially if it’s complimentary.

Taste, taste and taste again, nothing evolves a palate more than sampling different wines. Flights are a good way to do this, you are not stuck with a full glass of anything but in order to get your monies worth, you must try at least a little of each glass.

Take baby-steps. I am not saying you have to go from a big heavy cab drinker to a Burgundy aficionado. Look for the same grape varietal from a different region, that’s the easiest step, or maybe even try a nice blended wine. I will use those Cabernet drinkers as an example again, have a Cabernet, but try something from South America or Australia. If it’s a warm day, and this is Texas, and you’re a heavy red drinker...try a nice chilled dry Rosé or even heavy bodied Chardonnay. You may just be surprised.

Food is also a great place to start expanding your palate. Traditionally we were taught that wine can make or break certain dishes and over time we have become a society that drinks what we like, with whatever we are eating, and that’s great, but take a few steps back to the basics with a traditional paired meal, you may be surprised at how much you enjoy a glass of something you never thought you would. For example, for those of you who are “ABCers”, that’s Anything But Chardonnay drinkers, try a stainless steel fermented, unoaked chardonnay with some grilled chicken or salad with goat cheese. Or if a medium rare filet with a California Cabernet is your thing, swap out the Cabernet for central California Syrah or Argentine Malbec.

Some other suggestions for motivated palates would be a Spanish Albarino for traditional Pinot Grigio or medium-bodied dry white drinkers. Argentine Torrontes for those who like a touch of sweetness on their white might be a good bet or Chilean Sauvignon Blanc for those who like the citrus character with a touch of old-worldliness. On the red side, swap out your dusty Rioja for something more fruit driven from the Ribera del Duero, try a glass of Spanish Garnacha instead of Pinot Noir or pass on your Merlot for a tasty Mendoza Malbec.

Now go forth, evolve your palate and enjoy yourself as you do! Cheers!

*Kelly Messenger*

*Proprietor and Sommelier*

*VINO 100 The Woodlands*

*Sterling Ridge Village Center*

*[www.vino100woodlands.com](http://www.vino100woodlands.com)*

## TEXAS GOLD – FROM ED DENT

Listed below are the Gold medal winners from Texas at The 26th Annual Lone Star International Wine Competition held June 8-9 in Grapevine, Texas. International wines were judged in a blind tasting by sommeliers, owners of restaurants and wine experts. The winners were as follows:

Driftwood Estate Winery winning two gold medals for its Lone Star Cab

Georgetown Winery for its Kona Reserve-Chocolate Cherry Port

Haak Winery for its Madeira Blanc du Bois

Kiepersol Estate for its Texas Merlot

McPherson Cellars for its Grenache/Mouvedre

Red Caboose Vineyard & Winery for its Cabernet Sauvignon

San Martino Winery and Vineyards for its Tempranillo

FYI - This information was on their website and in an article by Ron Saikowski in the Houston Weekly.

Haak also received silver medals for their Blanc du Bois Port and their Blue Label Blanc du Bois

## RAVIOLI WITH SPINACH AND BACON

### 20-MINUTE MEAL FROM MAY ISSUE OF REAL SIMPLE MAGAZINE

1 pound ravioli (fresh or frozen)

6 slices bacon

2 tablespoons olive oil

2 cloves garlic, sliced

2 bunches fresh spinach, thick stems removed (about 8 cups)

kosher salt and black pepper

1. Cook the ravioli according to the package directions. Drain and divide among bowls.

2. Meanwhile, cook the bacon in a skillet over medium-high

heat until crisp, 6 to 8 minutes; transfer to a paper towel-lined plate. Crumble.

3. Wipe out the skillet and heat the oil over medium heat. Add the garlic and cook, stirring occasionally, until golden, 1 to 2 minutes. Add the spinach, 1/2 teaspoon salt, and 1/4 teaspoon pepper. Cook, tossing, until just wilted, 1 to 2 minutes.

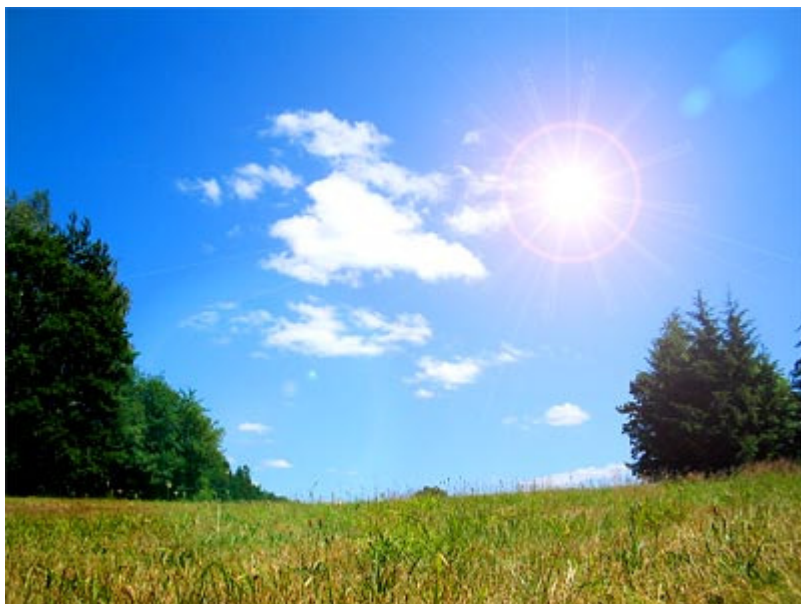
4. Stir the bacon and lemon juice into the spinach. Spoon the mixture over the ravioli.

Served with 2007 Savannah Chardonnay from Spiers Wine in South Africa. The wine is fermented in stainless steel tanks and has vanilla and orange blossom aromas. The cost was less than \$15.

This recipe is quick and light for the summer months and the wine was a find. We totally enjoyed it.

Sandra and Ed



**SOME LIKE IT HOT!****A SIMPLE GUIDE TO PAIRING WINES WITH SPICY FOODS**

By Russ Kane

The Texas WineSlinger @

[www.vintagetexas.com/blog](http://www.vintagetexas.com/blog)

There is one thing that can be said about Texans, both native and naturalized. They generally like both types of food: Hot and Spicy!

These culinary delights can take many forms from BBQ to Tex-Mex. Nowadays, in Texas these favorite flavorsome foods may even include a wide array of Pan-Asian delicacies as well.

Many years ago, there was a simple answer for this situation.....Beer, and lots of it! But increasingly (probably with the advent of reality TV), people are becoming more “libatiously adventurous” and asking, what wines can I really enjoy with spicy dishes.

Personally being of the persuasion and fortitude to indulge in the piquant, I have explored these territories with gustatory abandon. Consequently, I have found a few simple and useful approaches that can be used to maximize the pleasure of the moment.

**First: Stay away from tannic red and white wines**

This precludes many of those much loved Cabernet Sauvignons and Big-Ass Chardonnays that do so much for Haute French cuisine and, in an even bigger form (e.g. more oak, tannins and alcohol) work well with the local fare in California. REMEMBER.....with the hot and spicy, these wines combine to make even more heat!



## PAIRING WINES WITH SPICY FOODS – CONTINUED

### Second: Find wines that QUENCH!

By and large, these are the wines that tend to be lower in alcohol, tannin and oak, which really makes this advice a corollary of the first rule. Examples of white wines that fulfill the above criteria are a zippy, New Zealand-style Sauvignon Blanc and, one of my personal little known favorites, Albariño from Spain, and maybe in a few years, due to new plantings on the High Plains, from Texas, as well. These wines go with lighter dishes, mostly fish or fowl.

For heartier preparations, dry wines rich in fruit flavors and light on the oak such as Beaujolais and fruit-forward Merlots are wonderful with BBQ chicken, links and ribs. Don't forget Syrah, especially the big-fruit, Shiraz-style made so popular by the Aussies). Another often overlooked Mediterranean varietal is Grenache. Like Syrah, it can be made in a fruit-forward, low tannin style that drips with luscious fruit flavor.

### Third: Get comfortable with wines with a little sweetness

Nothing goes better with the hot and zesty than a wine with a sweetness gained from a couple percent of residual sugar. German-style white wines like Riesling and Gewürztraminer are a safe haven in this regard, especially for dousing the fiery heat of Asian or Indian cuisine. Riesling is a particularly good selection since it often is made in a style with lower alcohol content.

SIDE-NOTE: If you have problems remembering the 14 lettered, “umlauted” German style wine mentioned above (Gewürztraminer) just ask for it as the “G” wine. If they have it, they’ll know what you are talking about.

### Fourth: Pink wine ain't so bad

If you can keep a secret, I'll tell you something, “pink wine ain't so bad”. Some Texans do not think that pink wines are in keeping with their macho image. But frankly, there are many outstanding easy drinking, food-friendly Rosés available that combine excellent fruit, and can be made dry or with a little sweetness, balanced with brisk acidity.

Dry Rosés have been the perennial summertime favorite with Europeans, are now becoming more popular in the Southern USA and are more available in wine shops. My personal favorites are Dry Rosés made from red Mediterranean varietals such as Grenache, Syrah, Mourvedre, Tempranillo or Sangiovese.



### Fifth: Don't forget the frontal attack – Use spice with spice

Some wines have a natural spiciness and, as long as they carry good fruit favors and do not have too much alcohol and tannin (Rules 1 and 2), they can work wonders with sizzling Texas cuisine. Examples include, reds like the previously mentioned, big-fruit-forward style Shiraz or a luscious down-home (Made-in-the-USA) Zinfandel. These are two of the best wines to combine with all the myriad types of BBQ that I can think of. They have a blend of richness, spiciness (black or white pepper in the finish) and smokiness obtained from their varietal character and light oak aging that pairs well with spicy meat rubs, tomato-based BBQ sauces and smoked meats.

**NEWS FROM MESSINA HOF**

By Merrill Bonarrigo

We are quickly approaching the middle of another hot Texas Summer, which means Harvest season is right around the corner at Messina Hof Winery and Resort. Paul and I are proud to share this time honored tradition with all of our family and friends as we celebrate our 32<sup>nd</sup> anniversary. The five-week celebration of wine and food, which kicks off July 17, 2009 and runs through August 16, 2009 is one of our favorite times of the year to meet wine lovers from across the state.

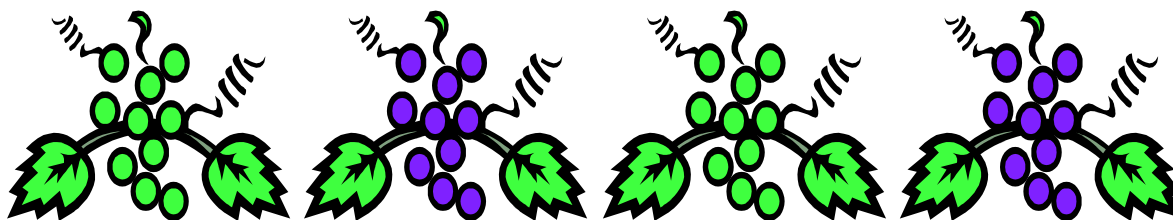
Harvest is a time when guests can experience the century-old tradition of making wine by picking and stomping of the grapes. Wine lovers, including special guests and local celebrities, will roll up their sleeves and pants and partake in the first phase of winemaking with the Messina Hof Family.

Seeing the expression of each guest as they experience the tradition of wine making is such a joy for both Paul and myself. We're predicting that this will be one of our best crops in twenty years due to the heat wave and lack of rain in our area - which

results in increased intensity of the color, flavor and sugar in the fruit. The varietal cherry chocolate flavors will be so intensified, our vintage 2009 will certainly be one to remember.

New this year, we will host not one, but two Moonlit Harvests. This romantic evening is the initial kick off for the first harvesting of grapes as guests pick from the vineyards, and then stomp under a beautiful sunset on Friday, July 17, 2009 and Friday, August 7, 2009. We look forward to meeting you all, so come out and "join the family" at Harvest 2009!

Seeing the expression of each guest as they experience the tradition of wine making is such a joy



**AWARDS FOR FLAT CREEK**

Here are some of the awards for Flat Creek for 2009. See the article about their winery on page 7.

Pacific Rim International Wine Competition 2009

Buckin' Horse White Gold

Houston Livestock Show & Rodeo 2009

FCE Shiraz Silver (Reserve Champion TX)

San Francisco International Wine Competition 2009

Buckin' Horse White Silver

FCE Super Texan 2006 Bronze

Pinot Blanc 2008 Bronze

FCE Muscato Blanco Bronze

Pinot Grigio 2008 Bronze

FCE Pinot Grigio 2007 Bronze

## OUT FOR THE COUNT IN LANGUEDOC

BY MERIL MARKLEY

A Paris antique fair as a great place to discover wines of small producers from all around France? Surprisingly, the answer is “yes” as my husband, Michael, and I have discovered during our regular business trips to the French capital. As lovers of French food and wine will know, the country is dotted with delights of regional origin, whether wine, cheese, meats, fruits, or for us, antique furniture. It was at a Paris antique fair a few years back that we discovered a producers’ cooperative based in Cahors (southwestern France) which had brought its wine and food selections to the fair.

The day we happened by, the offering was a lunch-time “value meal” consisting of a sandwich (yes, the French use the English word) and a glass of white wine. The sandwich consisted of slices of duck foie gras arranged on a baguette and accompanied by a ¼ liter glass of a *Vin de Pays du Comté Tolosan*. Instead of the unctuous Sauternes served reverently on New Year’s Eve with foie gras of goose liver, the pale and fruity wine on offer was light and refreshing, boasting a heady finish of pear and apricot. It was the perfect complement to the sweetish duck liver. We bought several bottles to drink while we were in Paris and hoped to track it down in Houston when we returned home.

As we learned later while researching it on the Internet, *Comté de Tolosan* is, in addition to the designation for the wine grown in the area, the ancient term in the Occitane language for the “county” ruled by the Counts of Toulouse. They are particular favorites of ours since in the 14<sup>th</sup> century they helped found the first limited liability companies, that lasted 600 years, and gave corporate law such seminal concepts as the board of directors, independent auditors and shareholders’ rights. If only modern shareholders had adopted their model, Enron plus the current financial crisis would have been avoided!\* Who knew that they played a leading role in viticulture as well.



Carcassonne

Regrettably, the wine was nowhere to be found in the U.S. That left us no alternative but to head for the cooperative in Cahors. So on a trip to visit some of the medieval architectural monuments of southwestern France, such as the walled city of Carcassonne and the redoubts of the Cathars, from our base at the Hotel Chateau de Floure, we planned a day-trip to Moissac with a “detour” to Cahors.

The cool October morning started out dry and partly sunny as we headed north through farmland and vineyards as far as the eye could see. Suddenly, the hills gave way to the deep valley carved by the Lot River, along whose banks the city of Cahors grew from medieval times when it was renowned for its “black wine,” as English traders dubbed the dark red liquid made from the Malbec grape and now enjoying a resurgence with its own designation pending.

With great anticipation we reached the cooperative, on a steep hill outside the city, hopeful that our quest would soon be at an end and we could ship a case of the treasured white wine back to Houston. Yes, the sales lady knew the wine well, but “*il n’y a plus.*” Such were the words we had heard too often in France and had come to loathe. There was no more left. The final case on hand had been sold a few days ago! Limited production. We should come back next year. She offered some other white wines for us to taste, but nothing compared to our memory of the one we’d drunk in Paris. As a consolation, why not try the restaurant next door, she suggested, since we had come so far and it was lunch-time anyway. Skeptical, we headed across the tarmac past parked cattle carriers and oil tankers to what looked like a glorified truck stop. What we found was rural France’s answer to fast food – a sandwich of sliced duck breast, raised locally, and smothered in a sauce of wild mushrooms harvested nearby that morning. For dessert, a freshly baked tart of forest berries. Accompanied by a *pichet* of local red wine, a fabu-



Cahors

lous lunch cost about \$8 a head! Utterly delicious, it was like so many of our serendipitous finds in *la France profonde*, beyond our expectations – but normal for the food-loving French folks living there and enjoying it all the time.

Amply refueled, we headed for Moissac. The sky turned darker and the countryside seemed ever more deserted while we drove past lofty escarpments with medieval villages perched on top and ancient stone farmhouses with satellite dishes pointed heavenward. By the time we got to Moissac, it was cold and pouring rain. Not the best way to view the Romanesque carvings over the door at St. Pierre, but they are a reminder of how important the 12<sup>th</sup> century artwork of the church and cloister were in the development of western culture and as a vital stop-over for pilgrims making their way to Santiago de Compostela. How arduous travel was then, compared to zipping back to Floure in our rental car through the ancient city of Toulouse, now also France's ultra-modern capital of the aerospace industry.

The cold and rain had had their effect on our mood and our appetites. We were anxious to return to the hotel for dinner by the roaring fire and Chef Poirier's version of the legendary Cassoulet (casserole of sausage, duck and white beans) originating in nearby Castelnaudry (where the autoroute exit signs show a steaming pot!). It was at Floure that we made two other discoveries that have proved less elusive than the wine of the County of Toulouse – Maury, a fortified red wine that is a terrific aperitif from the Roussillon area, and Domaine de l'Hortus, a complex red wine from a wild area of Languedoc still bearing the name given by the ancient Romans who strove to tame it.



Moissac

History, art, food and wine – are at the heart of France. And while Provence gets a lot of attention as a destination for vacationing and eating and drinking, we were delighted to discover that the Languedoc-Roussillon region next-door is no slouch. Less traveled but rich in agricultural bounty and natural beauty, it is every bit worth the visit. For wine lovers, the Languedoc has been gaining in reputation beyond its traditional association with the *vin ordinaire* that populates grocery store shelves, as small wineries focus on the traditional grapes of the region with new dedication and superb quality. The good news is that there is a huge selection of wonderful wines to try, but the bad news is that you will not be able to find them back in the U.S. or even as relatively nearby as Paris. And while we never did find the white wine we remembered so fondly, we had a great time in the countryside creating new memories and reasons to return again.

Next time, a rare bad meal leads us to find a cure where Vincent van Gogh also sought one.

\*See “No Time Toulouse? The Origins of Modern Corporate Governance in Medieval France” at <http://www.businessintheeyeofthestorm.com>.

## OUR TRIP TO NAPA VALLEY

## ED DENT

Sandra and I along with six friends from the East Coast visited Napa Valley from May 16-23. As usual, anytime you visit Napa and surrounding regions it's a great trip. Listed below is a recap of some of the wineries visited and our impression.

**Gustanvo Thrace** – We visited this tasting room on Sunday and it wound up being a wonderful experience. They were celebrating a belated Cinco de Mayo. There we met the owners Gustavo Brambila and Thrace Bromberger. Thrace Bromberger has a son who attends Rice and frequents Houston every so often. Gustavo is spotlighted in the feel good wine movie [Bottle Shock](#) which loosely tells the story of the 1976 Paris Tasting in which wines from several Napa wineries won this now famous blind tasting. The movie will be released in August. Their Zins, Pinot Noirs and something called 3<sup>rd</sup> Bottle White and Third Bottle Reds were excellent. The 3<sup>rd</sup> Bottle, is a fun little table wine designed to be that 3<sup>rd</sup> bottle you SHOULD have drunk after opening a couple of your great wines.

**V Sattui** – This is one our favorite wineries. We've been drinking their wines since 1988. We introduced one of our WST members to their Gamay Rouge and I think she now has half of her church drinking this wine. This winery was California's state fair Winery of the year in 2007, 2006, and 2004. Their wines are only available in California.

V Sattui has one of the prettiest tasting rooms and picnic grounds in Napa. For \$5 you can taste 6 wines, but because we were purchasing wine and had a long time relationship we tasted 12-15 wines. For white wine drinkers their Dry, and Dry Dry Riesling along with their Chardonnays and Sauvignon Blancs are winners. For reds take your pick. I loved their Old Vine Zin and Merlot. In addition they also have winners with their Madeira and 1999 Vintage Port.

**Vincent Arroyo** – This winery is in Calistoga and we've purchase their futures for 4 years. Their known for their Petite Sirah, of which they have four. Their Petite Sirah Port is a favorite along with their Zin and Chardonnay, the only white they offer. The special arranged barrel tasting of the Port and Chard was super. This winery only offers 8,000 cases a year and you can only buy from the winery.

**Castello di Amorosa Winery** – This winery is owned by the owners of V Sattui and is recreated, in the form of a Tuscan Castle along with moat, drawbridge, tower, dungeon and torture chamber. Each brick, stone, door, beam, or nail is either an antique original, or hand hewn just as it would have been in medieval Tuscany. We enjoyed our 30 minute tour and one hour of free wine tasting. The winery was opened in 2008 and features 17 wines. Even though they had not won any Gold Medals like V Sattui, we enjoyed their whites, particularly their two Gewurztraminers and Il Passito, Reserve Late Harvest Semillon.

**Isley Winery** – We met these folks at Gustavo Thrace and they were very kind to us. They invited us to a private tasting at their winery in the Stags Leap district. This winery only bottles about 500 cases a year of 100% Cabernet and Seis Primas, a blend of Malbec 58% and Cabernet 42%. The majority of their Cabernet grapes are sold to Shafer whose Hillside Cabernet sells for over \$200 a bottle. When we arrived cookies and fresh picked strawberries laid out under a gazebo. The father was there and he gave us a history of their relationship with Robert Modavi. He also let us try some of his private stock of Chardonnay, which is not sold commercially. The two reds were just outstanding. The Isley's indicated that Wine Enthusiast was there last week and rated their Cab a 93.

**St. Supery Winery** – This was our last tour. Through the local District Manager a private tasting, tour, and Barrel tasting was arranged. What a way to end our stay. The barrel tasting of the Cab, Cab Franc, and Merlot was great. We also enjoyed their oak free Chard and Moscato. I'm looking forward to working on a wine event with St. Supery and our chapter.

Other wineries and tasting rooms visited were Mahoney, Milat, Waterstone, Artesia, Robert Mondavi, Shug, and Ceja, a Hispanic owned winery.

## SHORT HISTORY OF FLAT CREEK ESTATE VINEYARD AND WINERY

**Flat Creek Estate Vineyard & Winery** is a destination winery located on 80 acres in the heart of the Texas Hill Country. Since our beginning in 1998, we have established 20 acres of vineyards and expanded the winery to a 12,000 case capacity with an emphasis on Italian varietals and wine style. Our wines have won numerous awards and accolades including a Double Gold on our Super Texan® Sangiovese. Food & Wine magazine (10/06) designated Flat Creek Estate as “One of the 50 Most Amazing Places to Taste Wine in America”. The venue has continued to expand with the completion of an outdoor pavilion and the Grand Opening in November 2008 of our new tasting room with windows overlooking the winery production area.



The evolution of Flat Creek Estate began when Rick and Madelyn Naber, a few years into an early retirement on Lake Travis, purchased the only agricultural property in their immediate area. Ag possibilities studied included peaches and pecans, but the planting of vineyards was the clear winner with the sloping fields and excellent water sources. The final plan for the property included both vineyard and winery development with the goal always to produce quality Texas wine.

The best varietals were chosen for the hot weather climate with the help of consultants, research and others already in the industry. Sangiovese, Primitivo and Tinta Madiera were planted in 2000 in Helen's Block. This Block produces consistent, quality red fruit with the 2003 vintage putting FCE on the map with the Double Gold Super Texan® that won the hearts of wine drinkers across the state.

A cadre of friends, family and associates along with Trooper, resident Doberman, participate in development. 'Grand Planting' days have included nearly 60 friends on 3 different occasions with vineyard plantings completed in record time with excellent results by our teams. From 2001 to 2003 plantings continued with Syrah and Tempranillo completing the selection of red varietals. The whites include Pinot Grigio, Pinot Blanc and, of course the signature Muscat Canelli. Our loyal friends keep coming back! Their ranks have grown and now many are included in our "Harvest Team" or belong to our Wine Club.

Vine selection, vineyard management and winemaking programs are taken very seriously at Flat Creek Estate. A full-time, trained and experienced winemaker has always been a key player. The first, Craig Parker, helped launch beautifully the Flat Creek brand. Charlie Kidd, who is in his second vintage here, is crafting exceptional wines. There is amazing character and depth in our Estate Pinot Blanc 2008. Additional whites currently released include Buckin' Horse White, 100% viognier and Mistella dessert-style Muscat Canelli. Several of Charlie's Flat Creek Estate wines have won prestigious awards at Pacific Rim 2009 and San Francisco International 2009.

When you join us at Flat Creek Estate, expect an experience. Our options have grown well beyond the offering of wine tastings, to include a musical Jammin' & Grillin' event every Sunday March-October. Scott Jorges, Flat Creek Bistro chef, is offering 3-course Saturday wine lunches and reserved seating brunches. Special wine dinners, receptions, weddings and corporate events can be hosted with ease. Come join us! [www.FlatCreekEstate.com](http://www.FlatCreekEstate.com).

At the recent 26<sup>th</sup> Annual Lone Star International Wine Competition, Flat Creek's Mistella Desert Wine received a Silver medal and their 2008 Pinot Blanc a Bronze.

**THE WINE SOCIETY OF  
TEXAS - HOUSTON**

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**EDITOR'S CORNER**

As you enjoy the lazy, dry summer heat wave our newsletter is just in time to tickle your wine loving taste buds.

The articles in this newsletter were created by members and friends of The Wine Society of Texas. Our first quarter publication was three pages long and we have jumped to 13 pages (not counting the pictures) in the third quarter. Thank you for your support and help.

What do YOU have to contribute? A good food and wine pairing you created? A favorite recipe with wine for under \$15? A wine trip that you took to the Texas Hill Country, California or France? Tell us about your favorite Houston restaurant's wine and food pairing experience. While you are enjoying summer think of which favorite wine you have quaffed so far.

What is your hot new Houston restaurant? It may be an old stand by, but you have never tried it before. Be our food and wine critic for a restaurant. Share with us fellow gourmands and wine enthusiasts your latest find.

Cheers—Tenley Fukui

**WINE AND FOOD PAIRING FOR EVERY DAY**

Our Summer Food and Wine Pairing Discovery—  
Tenley Fukui

Pizza dough or crust

Fresh figs

Maytag blue cheese

Caramelized onions

Olive oil

Brush the pizza dough or crust with the olive oil and then cover with a layer of the onions.

Next, add a layer of quartered fresh figs and then top with the crumbled blue cheese.

Bake in a well heated oven following the instructions that came with the pizza crust

If you don't want to heat up the house a pizza stone on the grill works well.

We discovered that Conde de Valemar (2007), a Spanish White wine, went beautifully with our meal. It was \$11.99 at Spec's.

Bon Appetit

**Sangria Recipe**

This Sangría recipe is from our favorite restaurant in Madrid, where we sampled and raved about it daily, and so they finally just gave us the recipe -- Meril Markley

Mix together in a pitcher and serve chilled or over ice:

1 bottle red wine (preferably Spanish Rioja)

1 shot glass Spanish brandy

1 shot glass Cointreau or Triple Sec

1 shot glass Martini red vermouth

6 oz. Schweppes Bitter Orange or San Pellegrino Aranciata

6oz. Schweppes Bitter Lemon or San Pellegrino Limonata

½ sliced orange

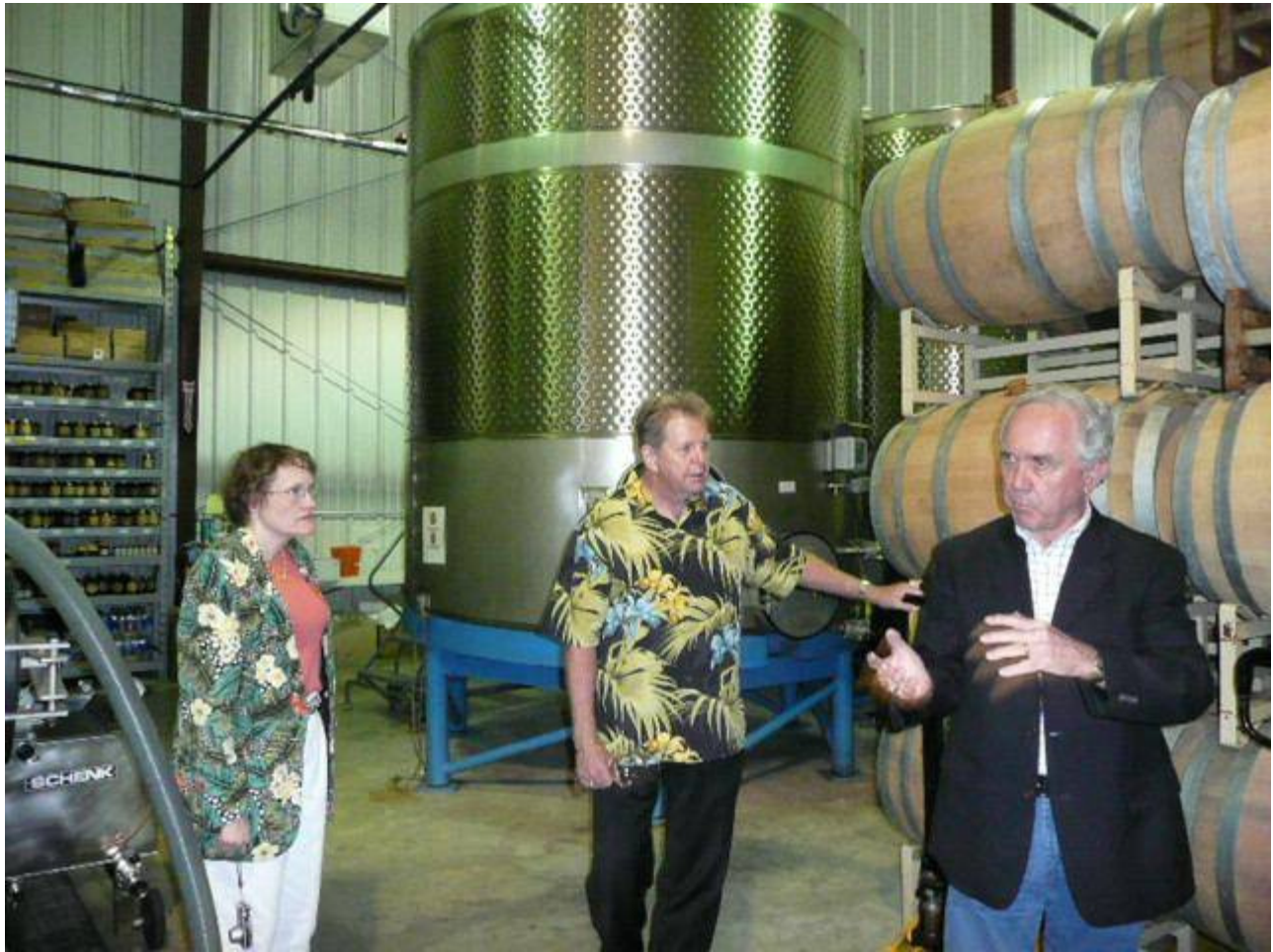
½ sliced lemon

4 tbsp. sugar

PICTURES FROM THE BIRTHDAY PARTY



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