

HEARD IT THROUGH THE GRAPEVINE

Introduction

By Ed Dent & Meril Markley

In this quarter's Newsletter we look back at the 2019 annual meeting (page [3](#)), hosted by the Dallas-Fort Worth Chapter, and forward to the 2020 annual meeting (page [6](#)) to be hosted by the Permian Basin Chapter. It is exciting that there are so many interesting Texas wineries to visit as part of these annual meetings.

The Wine Society of Texas Scholarship Application Form for 2020 is now available and reproduced on pages [25](#) and [26](#). Please share the application with anyone who may be interested. It is also available on the Wine Society's [website](#).

Now that the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo is in progress, we include an article by Houston Chapter member, Helena Cheng, describing what it is like to be a judge in the Rodeo International Wine Competition.

Updates on events in this edition include the meet-and-greet with board members. Raymond Haak of WST member Haak Vineyard & Winery has contributed an article about Madeira, including how the winery came to make this style of wine and to obtain the exclusive right to use the name "Madeira" in America. Look for details in upcoming editions about a visit to Haak Winery this year.

Paul Bonarrigo from Messina Hof Winery commented on some wine news.

The travel article is about Scotland where there was a recent unsuccessful attempt to grow grapes and produce white wine. Failure was blamed on insufficient global warming. The opposite effect, across the North Sea in Germany, has resulted in no ice wine being produced this year due to temperatures failing to go low enough! "If warm winters become more frequent over the coming years, ice wines from Germany's regions will soon become an even more expensive rarity than they already are," said Ernst Buescher, spokesman for the Wine Institute of Germany. According to the Houston Chronicle, Canada's Niagara Peninsula is one of several other places where ice wine is produced, thanks to its cold winters. It's also made in northern Michigan and Ashtabula County, Ohio near Lake Erie.

In the coming pages we'll be more focused on spring and how warming helped to turn vintage Port into prized Madeira.

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WST Update

By Ed Dent

There are still several spots available on the trip to Burgundy, France (May 27 to June 3) organized by the DFW Chapter. Anyone interested should contact Elizabeth Lutton (elalutton@hotmail.com).

The Greater Houston Chapter will hold a planning meeting at the home of Dawn and Ross Asher on March 14 (see, below). We will be discussing events for the balance of 2020 and through January, 2021 (including a scholarship fundraiser) along with plans for the 25th State Annual Meeting in June of 2021.

Events



*We planned it through
the grapevine...*

Greater Houston Chapter Planning Meeting

Saturday, March 14 at 5 pm

Home of Dawn & Ross Asher

5835 Cartagena, Houston 77035

Please RSVP to [Ed Dent](#) by March 12 and bring a potluck dish plus a bottle of wine.

New Wine Bar in Houston

The [Mutiny Wine Room](#) has opened in the Heights area as a natural outgrowth of its owners' love of sailing and sipping wine. Wines on offer include some from [AWI Wines](#) (owned by WST members Jill and Conrad Johnson).

Board Meeting and Tasting

See page [10](#) for an article about the meeting in Houston with board members Shirley Choate and Dexter Harmon followed by tasting wines from WST member Haak Vineyards at the home of Helena and John Adams.

New Members

The following individuals have joined since the last Newsletter:

Permian Basin

Wade & Dona Colburn

Eric & Christy Hudgins

Don and Jamie Meek

Dallas Fort Worth

Harriet Bonds

Laura Gilbreath

Kathy Mahdak

Jean Ann Tinsley

Greater Houston

Giorgio Caflisch

Wine Society 2019 State Annual Meeting

By Elizabeth Lutton, President of the Dallas-Fort Worth Chapter

Members of the Greater Houston Chapter and the Permian Basin Chapter of the Wine Society of Texas joined the host DFW Chapter in celebrating the “Legacy of T.V. Munson, Past, Present and Future” at the Lone Star Resort near Pilot Point in North Texas.



To start the conference, the Wine Society members brought wines to compete in a massive “Texas v. the World” blind tasting. Texas wines did well in the competition and several Texas wines won their categories.

As some of you know, Thomas Volnay Munson was a viticulture expert who

saved the French Wine industry by grafting French vines onto native Texas rootstock. To celebrate his legacy in Texas, the chapter members traveled to “the source,” T.V. Munson’s [house](#) and vineyard in Denison, to hear about the life of an unsung hero of Texas.



Since the Wine Society of Texas emphasizes wine education, the group toured the house with Grayson College representative Cynthia Perez. The house looked like it was right out of the 1800s and looked as though T.V. Munson could walk through the door at any time. After the tour, the group went to the vineyard to hear Ross Hull speak about the unusual Munson native Texas grape varieties.



Wine Society 2019 Meeting (cont'd)



After experiencing the past, the group enjoyed a wine pairing lunch at the [Homestead Winery](#) tasting room in Denison, which represents the present in Texas winemaking.



After lunch, the group enjoyed a highly educational tasting at [Square Cloud Winery](#), led by winemaker, Jackson Anderson, which culminated in the vineyard where a variety of grapes were tasted off the vine.

To celebrate the future of Texas winemaking, the chapter members honored the Wine Society scholarship winners at a gala dinner featuring wines from [Eden Hill Winery](#), located in nearby Celina, Texas. Chris Hornbaker, the winemaker, introduced each wine to the group.



Wine Society 2019 Meeting (cont'd)



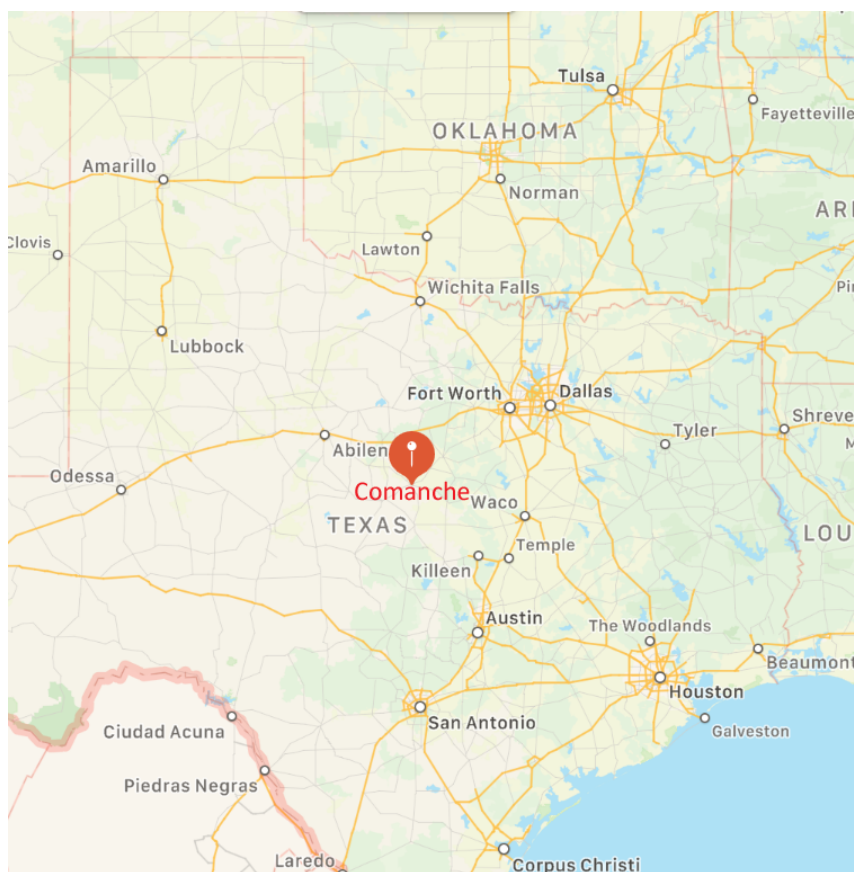
On the last day of the conference, Eden Hill Winery again hosted the group with a tasting which included gourmet specialty foods in the barrel room. This was the capstone of a weekend of good food, good wine, and good friends to continue the 200 year legacy of Texas wine.



Plans for the 2020 State Annual Meeting

By Shirley Choate, President of the Wine Society of Texas

The 24th State Annual Meeting will be held June 12-14, 2020 in Comanche, Texas. On Friday, June 12th, we have tastings set up for those traveling from the east at [Lucky Vines Vineyard](#) and Winery, Dublin, Texas, and for those traveling from the west, [Spirit of Texas](#) located in Early, Texas. Of course if you have time, you can do both. Spirit of Texas Winery is located 29 miles West of Comanche and Lucky Vines is 23 miles East of Comanche. At 6:30 PM a bus will depart from the host hotel for the Stone Eagle Beer Garden where you will be treated to heavy appetizers and a choice of 3 White Chicks, Comanche Rosé and Austin St. Red Wine. They have an extensive selection of Draft Beers, bottles and cans, which can be purchased at your own expense. The bus will head back to the hotel at 9:30 PM where we will have our cork pull.



On Saturday, June 13th, the bus will depart for Veldhuizen Cheese in Dublin, Texas where we will have a cheese tasting paired with wine followed by a tour of the production and cheese caves. Lunch will be at [Cockrell Vineyards](#) and there will be a tasting paired with smoked brisket sandwiches with all the fixings. Back on the bus, we arrive at the host hotel around 3:30 PM.

We depart at 5:00 PM for [Brennan Winery](#) where we will have traditional low country boil appetizers, wine, and a tour led by Dr. Brennan, Todd Webster, winemaker, and Rebecca Conley (one of our former scholarship winners).

We then move into the event center for the main event, with several wines selected for the Shrimp Boil and end

with a traditional banana pudding pie pairing. Dr. Brennan and his wife, Trellise, are happy to host and give us some background of a traditional Lowcountry boil as it is a nod to their childhood and heritage from South Carolina. A live auction and raffle drawing will end the evening.

The host hotel will be the [Best Western Comanche Inn](#) (1505 E. Central Ave., Comanche, TX 76442). Telephone 325-356-2300 (Reservations are open – ask for Wine Society of Texas Block). Doubles & King Bed rooms are \$99.99 + tax per night.

Rodeo Wine Competition Judge

By Helena Cheng

Every year I struggle with the decision of whether to volunteer to judge in the [Rodeo Wine Competition](#). For someone like me with a few wine certifications, this is a great (free!) opportunity to taste hundreds of wines in a highly systematic way. The commitment of two full days with an unknown ending time is definitely stressful. The judging is conducted by the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo Education Fund (HLSR) to raise funds for education. More than 800 scholarships are awarded to Texas students each year. The Rodeo has granted more than 19,000 scholarships valued at \$230 million since 1957, making it one of the largest scholarship providers in the U.S.



Our pledge is to choose the best wine for the Texas consumers (remember- it's not for ourselves), and decide which ones go to Rodeo Uncorked! Champion Wine Auction & Dinner to raise scholarship funds.

For 2020 we received almost 3,600 entries – most selling for under \$15 per bottle. The competition judging took place on November 12th and 13th, with 120 judges divided into 24 panels. It doesn't take long to figure out how many wines we need to taste within two days. The plan is to complete at least 100 different wines on day one, and finish

the rest of 50 on day two. The wines are grouped into different categories by varieties and the price ranges and then split into flights for tasting. The flights assigned to each panel are randomly selected. The categories our panel judged this year are: Imported Dry Rosé \$16 and above; Non Vitis Vinifera White; Petite Sirah \$11 to \$30; Syrah/Shiraz based blends; and Fruit Wines.

We assess the quality of the wine by medals given below:

Gold Medal: 100 points, wine of outstanding quality.

Silver Medal: 10 points, wine of great quality.

Bronze Medal: 1 point, wine of good quality.

No Medal: wine of inferior quality, or lacking balance.

As one of our top tasks is to choose wine for consumers, we try to find a Gold in every flight, and the wine will become a **"Double Gold"** when 5 judges all award a Gold Medal to it!

Rodeo Wine Competition Judge (cont'd)

Below is the shortlist of the Gold Medal and above wines from our panel for your reference:

Dry Rosé Imported

Fleur de Mer Rosé, Côtes de Provence AOP, 2018 – Double Gold/Class Champion

Domaine Cecchin Rosé, Mendoza – Gold/Reserve Regional Class Champion

Famiglia Pasqua 11 Minutes Rosé, Trevenezie IGT, 2018, Gold/Reserve Class Champion

Susana Balbo Signature Rosé, Valle de Uco, 2018, Gold/Regional Class Champion

Vanderpump Rosé, Côtes de Provence AOC, 2018, Gold

Non Vitis Vinifera White

Threshold Vineyards Blanc Du Bois Semi-Dry, Texas, 2018, Double Gold/Class Champion/Texas Class Champion

Blue Mule Hijinks White, Texas, NV, Gold

Enoch's Stomp Blanc Du Bois Dry, Texas, 2018, Gold

Los Pinos Ranch Vineyards Blanco Grande, Texas, 2018, Gold

William Chris Vineyards Mary Ruth White, Texas, 2018, Gold/Reserve Class Champion/Reserve Texas Class Champion

Haak Vineyards & Winery Amnesia Blanc du Bois Madeira, Texas, 2015, Double Gold/Class Champion/Texas Class Champion

Haak Vineyards & Winery Blanc du Bois Madeira, Texas, 2012, Double Gold/Reserve Class Champion/Reserve Texas Class Champion

Petite Sirah

Concannon Vineyard Petite Sirah, Livermore Valley, 2016, Gold

McManis Family Vineyards Petite Sirah, California, 2017, Gold/Class Champion

Mettler Petite Sirah, Lodi, 2017, Gold

Michael David Petite Sirah, Lodi, 2017, Gold/Reserve Class Champion

Rodeo Wine Competition Judge (cont'd)

Syrah/Shiraz based blends

Bell The Scoundrel Red, California, 2017, Gold/Reserve Class Champion

Fruit Wines

Gekkeikan Plum Wine, Kyoto, NV, Gold/Class Champion

Kinsen Plum Wine, California, NV, Gold/ Reserve Class Champion

Seven out of seven top awards in Non-Vitis Vinifera are all from Texas, and clearly Blanc Du Bois is our State White! I highly encourage you to grab one or two bottles from the local wine shop while they are still available.

If you have the credentials and are thinking of signing up for next year just for fun – bear in mind that spitting is not optional, but **required**! If you're willing to sacrifice a weekend to learn more in-depth about wine, this is absolutely worth your time!



Meet the Board and Tasting

By Ed Dent

The Greater Houston Chapter on January 18th held an event at the home of Helena and John Adams after the WST board meeting where chapter members had the opportunity to meet board members, Shirley Choate and Dexter Harmon, who were present. Also, we had the opportunity to taste some of the



award-winning wines from [Haak Winery](#). The tasting was narrated by Haak's Winemaker Tiffany Farrell, the 2019 Russ Kane WST Scholarship recipient. We were surprised at the last minute when the Haak family (Raymond, Gladys and Bridget) honored us by attending. Their presence was very well-received and enjoyable.

The donated Haak wines that we enjoyed are listed below along with information and comments from Tiffany. In addition, we enjoyed a bottle of Haak's 2009 White Port that I donated.

Tiffany did an excellent job of explaining the different Haak wines that we tasted. She also discussed the difference between their 2018 and 2019 Blanc du Bois which is listed below. Of course, Raymond supplied a lot of commentary about each wine, especially his award winning Madeira. More about the Madeira on page [12](#).

We want to thank Jim and Shirley Choate and Dexter and Susan Harmon from the Permian Basin Chapter for attending and fellowshiping with members of the Greater Houston Chapter.

Comments from Tiffany pertaining to 2018 and 2019 Blanc Du Bois

In 2018, I chose the QA23 yeast because it is tolerant of an elevated SO₂ environment. For some reason that year (it was a very HOT year), our volunteers to help harvest the vineyard were nominal. It took our team 3 days to harvest the crop. With that, we added a slight extra SO₂ into the harvest bins to protect the grapes in our cold room as they sat waiting to be sent to the press.

In 2019 we had record help harvesting the vineyard. We had over 300 volunteers and it took less than 45 minutes to harvest the entire vineyard! What a blessing that day was. All week we had the threat of Tropical Storm Barry that, however fortuitously, 'decided' to head east of us creating a beautiful environment for us to harvest our estate Blanc du Bois. I chose to use one of my favorite yeasts, Be Thiols, which provides an opportunity for precursors found in Blanc du Bois to be converted to fruity thiols creating gorgeous grapefruit, pineapple and other tropical fruit characteristics.



Meet the Board and Tasting (cont'd)

2017 Haak Touriga Nacional

Production: 290 gallons

Awards: Gold-2019 San Francisco International Wine Competition

Silver/Texas Class Champion-2020 HLSR Uncorked International Wine Competition

Silver-2019 San Antonio Stock Show and Rodeo

2018 Estate Dry Blanc du Bois

Production: 518 gallons

Awards: Not Entered

2019 Estate Dry Blanc du Bois

Production: 323 gallons

Awards: Not Entered



2012 Blanc du Bois Madeira

Production: 180 gallons

2012 Blanc du Bois Madeira	Bronze	2015 SF Chronicle Wine Competiiton
	Silver (Light Madeira)	2015 SF Chronicle Wine Competiiton
	Gold	2015 TexSom Dallas Morning News Wine Competition
	Gold/Best of Class/91 Points	2015 Los Angeles international wine competition
2012 BDB Madeira (enagrarafado 2019)	Silver	2019 Lone Star International Wine Competition
	silver	2020 San Antonio Stock Show and Rodeo
	Double Gold	2020 HLSR Uncorked
2012 Thomas Jefferson BDB Madeira	Bronze	2015 SF Chronicle Wine Competiiton
	Gold	2014 Jefferson Cup Wine Competition
	Silver	2015 Texsom Dallas Morning News Wine Competition

Have some Madeira, M'Dear?

By Raymond Haak, [Haak Vineyards & Winery](#)

I suppose most of us are familiar with the expression, “Have Some Madeira, M'Dear,” from the song written by Flanders & Swann during their stage repertoires in the fifties. We are all, for the most part familiar with this expression but until tasting Madeira wines, we gave it little thought. I suppose that I personally just thought of Madeira as the Portuguese Island off the west coast of Africa. I had no knowledge of just how magnificent, enchanting, and captivating was this wine with the same name.



So my epiphany with Madeira wine occurred during a winemaking summit, hosted by Ed & Susan Auler, at Fall Creek Winery some 20+ years ago. At that time, there were only about 25 bonded commercial wineries in Texas and we had all been invited to a meeting to discuss our fledgling wine industry and to, of course, sample and share our best wines with all who attended. Also invited was D.C. Flynt, MW, from Lake Charles, Louisiana, who has an incredible palate and wine tasting skills envied by many. His assignment at this

meeting was to sample all of the wines that were brought that day and then to give all of us his critique and feedback on how we could improve, flavor-wise and stylistically.

The morning session was spent discussing, viticulturally, problems unique to Texas growers. After lunch, we (about 25 winemakers present) gathered around at our assigned seats to taste and listen to D.C.'s tasting notes on each wine, as a group. When he got to my fortified Port, made from Black Spanish/Lenoir, he said, “Raymond, your Port was very nice and balanced and reminded me of a fine old Madeira wine. Have you ever considered making a Madeira wine from this grape?” I replied that I had not, but that I would certainly give it some serious thought. I naturally did not share with D.C., as well as the entire group, that I did not know what a Madeira wine was! However, at that moment, the Madeira wine seed was planted and growing even though I wasn't aware of it at the time. During my drive back to Santa Fe, Texas from this meeting, I couldn't stop asking myself, “What is Madeira wine?”



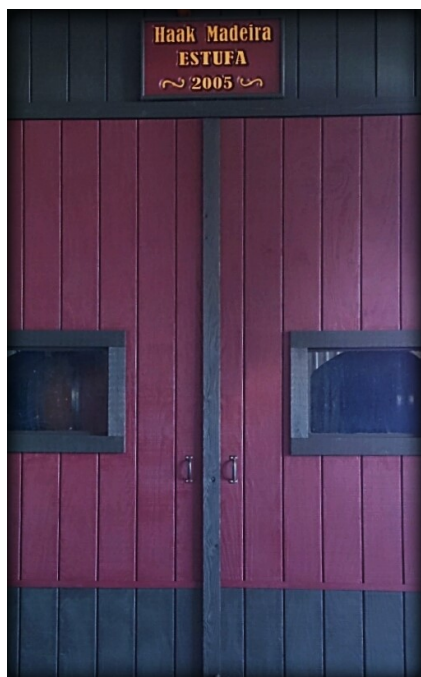
Madeira (cont'd)

So, after doing some research online, and identifying some publications on Madeira wine, I purchased several of them and began my study and journey. I read that America had a love affair with Madeira wines even before our independence. Madeira wine was served to celebrate the signing of the Declaration of Independence in 1776.

At that point I was hooked! What I learned was that Madeira wine was actually discovered accidentally by the Port wine producers on the Island of Madeira. This has been explained, in the publications, in several almost mythical tales. The one I usually share, and I will share it with this reading audience, goes something like this.

Back in the early 1700s, the island's wine producers were selling their fortified Ports to America and England. The ships' journeys would take them through warm tropical waters and last anywhere from 6 to 8 months to arrive at the buyer's destination, that being America or England.

It has been reported that when the Port wine buyer visited his cargo at the dock and tasted his Port, he was quoted as saying that this was not what he had purchased, but it was far better than anything he had ever tasted. This amazing discovery eventually made its way back to Madeira Island, setting off the search for what exactly had happened to improve on the Port wine.



It was ultimately determined that this profound change was a result of the slow warming and heating of the barrels of Port in the bottom of the ships while passing through the warm tropical waters. This had oxidized the Port wine and caramelized the residual sugars to produce Madeira wine's caramel, coffee, toffee, nutty flavors that are so beautiful. The Madeira Island wine producers began to fine-tune the process and ultimately built ovens (*estufas*) to slowly heat the barrels of Port for periods of 6 months to one year at temperatures around 120 degrees Fahrenheit.

Once I determined the process and the controlled variables, I designed the first Texas *estufa* at Haak winery. Our *estufa* held a little over 32 barrels of fortified wines (Port) and the first fruits of our labor were outstanding. So while our Port wines were slowly going thru the madeirization, I embarked on the hardest part of this whole process — applying for and receiving a certification of label approval (COLA) from our BATF, labeling division.

Madeira (cont'd)



While I was still considering what the label would look like, I received an email from Wine America, of which I am a member, stating that our government had just signed an agreement with the European Union to not allow any American wineries to use the words Sherry, Port, or Madeira on any future labels. This was to take effect two weeks from the date of this email. So, in a panic, I hurriedly put together a label design, sent it off at the speed of light (email) to BATF. At this point, my future Madeira producing and labeling were in the hands of my Creator.

Much to my happiness, I received an email from BATF notifying me that my label had been approved! Shazam! We were and still are the only grandfathered Madeira producer in Texas.

I guess, we all have a little skepticism in us and I was not really believing that I had just accomplished this feat the first time I applied? Sure enough the second vintage year of Madeira I applied for another Madeira label, and it was rejected with no explanation. So, going back to my original skepticism, I reapplied a second time using the name of the wine as, "My Deara." In two weeks, I received a second rejection from the BATF. I was ready for them this time because I was expecting this to happen (remember skepticism?). I resubmitted it again, a third time with the name, "Mad Era." Guess what? It was rejected also. By this time the hard-headed Dutchman in me kicked in. I called the labeling division to speak with a supervisor and ultimately the president of the USA, if I needed to. The supervisor, after some conversation, asked me if I had included the serial number of my first Madeira label when I applied the second year? I was dumbfounded and said, "why do I have to tell you that it was previously approved since you are the ones who approved it?" This was one of my many lessons learned.



Now I was ready to hit the market with the only Texas Madeira ever produced, and probably the only to ever be produced in Texas. I reached out to my mentor, D.C. Flynt to solicit his assistance in promoting my unique Madeira wine. I suggested to D.C. that I purchase a few old bottles of Madeira from the island with the same name, invite a few wine experts and wine writers to blind-taste my Madeira against the originals, and publish the results. There was a short silence, and D.C. said, "Raymond, you don't put racing wheels on a bicycle!" He then laid out his plans and, the next thing I knew, I had purchased two bottles each of five very old and prestigious bottles of Madeira from the Rare Wine Company. The oldest bottle was an 1863 Barbeito Bual. The invoice for these wines was a little over \$5,000. Yep, \$5,000. It doesn't hurt if you say it fast.

Madeira (cont'd)

We assembled about 35 wine judges, wine buyers, wine writers from all across Texas and invited them to Masraff's restaurant in Houston to sit and swirl and sniff and taste some fabulous Madeira wines. I also invited a CPA from one of the Big Four accounting firms to tally the tasting scores and make the results official.



D.C. Flynt M.W., Judy Wright, Adrienne Kingslyn, Amanda Symmank, Gladys and Raymond Haak, Teresa Haak Love, Cecilia and Paul Gabba, Bridget Haak, Vicki Parker

Rank	Score	Madeira Identification
1	91	1920 Favilla Viera Malvasia (WS95)*
2	86	1885 Barbeito Verdelho (ST95)
3 (Tie)	85	New York Malmsey Historic Series
3 (Tie)	85	1863 Barbeito Bual (WS90)
4	83	Boston Bual Historic Series (WS90)
5	82	1977 D'Oliveira Terrantez
6	81	2003 Haak Madeira Jacquez
7	80	1937 D'Oliveira Sercial (WS93)
8	79	Charleston Sercial Historic Series (WS91)

*WS = Wine spectator; ST = Stephen Tanzer

This was a wine tasting I will never forget.



Messina Hof Breaks Ground in Richmond

From the Houston Chronicle (article by Rebecca Hennes on January 24, 2020)

Construction has started on a new winery in Richmond that once completed will become the largest winery in the Houston area and southeast Texas.

[Messina Hof](#) broke ground Jan. 17 on its fourth location in the master-planned farming community Harvest Green in Richmond, according to a news release. Owned by the Bonarrigo family, Messina Hof is the largest wine producer in Texas and boasts three other locations in Bryan, Fredericksburg and Grapevine.

The Richmond location is expected to open within the next 10 to 12 months and will feature a tasting room and bar, open-kitchen restaurant with seating for 130, 2,600-square-foot covered patio for private events and tastings and a wine production and barrel room where guests can taste wine in process.

Harvest Green is a 1,300-acre Johnson Development master-planned, farm-centric community anchored around a 12-acre "Village Farm." Residents are encouraged to grow their own food and produce in optional backyard gardens or the community farm. Weekly farmers markets are also offered near the farm. The restaurant will offer hyper-local vineyard cuisine made with items from the community gardens.

"We are very excited about the [Messina Hof Harvest Green Winery](#)," Jerry Ulke, General Manager of Harvest Green said in the release. "The Bonarrigos' plans for the winery perfectly align with our vision to create a community that values our natural resources and wants a closer connection to Mother Nature."

A large indoor event space is also planned for the space, but details on that are still sparse. Messina Hof hopes to use the location to promote educational programming and work with farmers on seasonal tastings.

The Richmond location will serve as the company's largest production facility, with vineyard harvesting, wine processing aging and wine shipping operations all on-site.

Messina Hof has more than 70 Texas wines available for distribution and to ship to 40 states.



The Growth of Texas Wines

By Paul Vincent Bonarrigo, [Messina Hof Winery and Resort](#)

2019 was the first year in 40 years when sales of California wine declined.

Buy-Local, Farm-to-Table, and the explosive growth of Texas Wineries have moved sales from traditional retail to Direct-to-Consumer.

Texas wine clubs are growing exponentially with Small Lot and Special Cuvées. Retailers are not taking advantage of the tremendous growth of Gold Medal Texas Wines. They are not expanding Texas wine selections in their wine departments.

Texas has the greatest number of corporate headquarters of restaurant chains, yet [Saltgrass Steak House](#) is the only restaurant chain that features Texas Wine nationwide.

Messina Hof's *Texas Hold'Em* is proud to be featured at Saltgrass nationwide.

Messina Hof has supported the movement in Farm-to-Table by breaking ground for our new winery at [Harvest Green](#), a Farm-to-Table community in Richmond, Texas. We have also developed two vineyard lifestyle subdivisions within one mile of Messina Hof Winery Bryan. Each home receives a VIP Membership and is part of our Messina Hof Family. Messina Hof Estates consists of 24 Lots and three cul-de-sacs which have vineyards at the entrance of the cul-de-sacs.

The future growth of Texas wines will be in Farm-to-Table — it stimulates the growth of Texas Wine.



Scotland in the Footsteps of her Queen

By Meril Markley

Now that I have been there twice, I can attest that Scotland in the flesh is every bit as enchanting as Scotland in the state of mind conjured by movies, TV shows, and hauntingly beautiful melodies. Its wine industry, however, has not fared as well.

On my first trip to Scotland in 2015, to speak at a conference in Aberdeen, the day's headlines heralded a wine venture located not far from the city. Anticipating increased global warming, an Aberdonian had planted grapevines in Upper Largo. The hope was to yield 1200 bottles of dry white wine annually.

It took several more years before my husband, Michael, and I managed a vacation trip to Scotland. Hoping to visit the winery, we learned that the vines had succumbed to years of cold, rainy weather resulting in the venture being abandoned. We still drank many enjoyable wines, but they were mainly from France.

The close trading relationship between Scotland and France dates back to the Auld Alliance of 1295, assuring regular supplies of claret for thirsty Scots. Two centuries later, in the aftermath of the Hundred Years War, Scottish merchants edged out the English in garnering first dibs on the best output of Bordeaux. Mary, Queen of Scots (1542-1587), embodied the enduring relationship of these two countries whose alliance against the English united royal families, and their palates, for centuries.

For both Michael and me a trip to Scotland marked the realization of a lifelong dream. Our fascination crystallized in Los Angeles, three decades earlier, where I sang annual concerts of Scottish music conducted by a Scottish transplant, John Currie. His choral arrangements of traditional tunes were accompanied by bagpipes and drums with tartan-clad performers flown in by British Airways for the occasion. Michael enjoyed especially the post-concert receptions, for performers and audience, hosted and well-lubricated by the makers of Drambuie liqueur (scotch whisky blended with honey, herbs and spices). The unforgettable melodies born of legendary battles, fog-enshrouded castles, and glorious landscapes of lochs and mountains, cemented our intention to travel there one day.



Our friends and hosts for the first leg of our trip, Ian and Fiona (transplants from England), live out in the hilly countryside in a home stocked with excellent wines from their extensive travels. Nestled amidst pastures with lambs gamboling about and with a front yard where Highland cattle graze, their house was the focus of delicious meals conceived and executed by Ian, reflecting the bounty of the Scottish larder.

We took in several sites connected to Queen Mary within a short drive from Ian and Fiona's home. Mary was, both figuratively and literally, a towering figure. Like her French mother, Marie de Guise, she was almost six feet tall in a time when most people barely cleared five. Crowned Queen of Scotland as an infant after the untimely death of her father, she was betrothed to François, eldest son of King Henri II of France, and sent abroad at age five to be raised at Henri's court.



Scotland (cont'd)

Mary married at Notre Dame Cathedral in Paris in 1558, at which time François became King Consort of Scotland. She became Queen of France when François II was crowned at the age of 15 in 1559 after an accident at a jousting tournament led to the death of King Henri II. François and Mary took up residence at the [Chateau of Blois](#) in the Loire Valley, although not for long. The young king followed his father to the grave barely a year later, felled by an illness thought to have been provoked by an ear infection.



Widowed and no longer Queen of France, Mary headed back to Scotland, the land she had last seen as a little girl. Rebellious clans, religious strife, romantic intrigue, marriages, betrayals, English plots, the birth of a son (and future king of England), imprisonment, escape and more imprisonment, were all in store for her there.

Visiting some of the places she lived, one can grasp how bleak life in Scotland may have seemed to Mary, compared to France. Perhaps this is why the TV series about Queen Mary, [Reign](#), devoted only the last few episodes to her time in the British Isles even though more than half her life was spent there. Like so many people we queried in Scotland, we are not ashamed to admit that we enjoyed watching Mary's romanticized exploits on this series. Having supplied some of the French antique furniture used for the sets, our curiosity had intensified about the tragic life of this legendary monarch as we strove to separate historical truth from Hollywood fiction.

With Ian and Fiona, we visited [Falkland Palace](#) where Mary had resided and excelled at something called "real tennis," more akin to modern squash. Her tennis court remains on the grounds and open to visitors. Our next stop was [Loch Leven](#) and lunch including our first taste of *cullen skink*, the rich and creamy soup made from smoked haddock, potatoes, and leeks. From the restaurant's dock, we peered across the loch to the ruins of the castle where Mary was imprisoned before escaping in 1568 and fleeing into the arms of her enemies in England.

On a sunny and blustery Sunday morning we visited [Saint Andrews](#), the university town and hallowed bastion of golf. In the early years after Queen Mary's return to Scotland, she visited Saint Andrews often to escape the intrigues of courtly life in Edinburgh. It was there that she determined to marry Lord Darnley, a fateful decision leading to his murder as well as her eventual abdication and execution.

Saint Andrews' attractions included the array of Scottish farmhouse and artisan cheeses at [I.J. Mellis](#) and our introduction to the ideal vehicle for their consumption – the oatcake in all its variations (especially "rough"). We stopped for lunch just outside town, at [Balgove Larder](#), a butcher, farmers' market, and restaurant offering all manner of Scottish treats including fluffy, buttery scones to consume on-site or to take home.

We will always be grateful to Ian for introducing us to the Maris Piper variety of potato (or what the Scottish call a "tattie") that we consumed at every opportunity. Not available in the U.S., the Maris Piper was introduced in the U.K. in 1966 and is the most widely grown of any variety. Intensely flavored in a buttery way its American cousins can only dream of, the Maris Piper delights – whether mashed, as chips (French fries), as crisps (potato chips), and especially when oven-roasted. Had they existed in her time, we are confident Mary would have enjoyed tucking into a plate of Maris Pipers, washed down with a glass of claret, after a match of real tennis or a round of golf.

After our days in the countryside, headquarters for the next phase of our Mary-themed quest shifted to Edinburgh and the [Macdonald Holyrood Hotel](#). A few steps away, the [Palace of Holyroodhouse](#) is still a royal residence where Queen Elizabeth II stays for a week each year. The building sits within a verdant park that backs up to a mountain, giving the visitor a sense of a rural haven amidst a thriving city.

Scotland (cont'd)

Mary lived at the palace during some of the most tumultuous times of her reign, including the murder of one of her courtiers in her private quarters. Included among the artifacts in the museum dedicated to Mary's life are examples of her needlework, created during years of imprisonment in exile. They offer a touching and intimate peek into how she filled those days of seemingly interminable monotony in contrast to the fullness of her former life at court in Paris and Edinburgh.

We struggled against the incessant wind and cold to make several strolls up the steep Royal Mile from Mary's palace at Holyrood to her other residence, [Edinburgh Castle](#), where her crown jewels are on display. A bagpiper in traditional dress was stationed opposite [St. Giles' Cathedral](#), serenading tourists like us on the final leg up to the castle while stoking a reverence for the romance and history all around us.

Our first meal in Edinburgh was at the [Scottish Café & Restaurant](#) in the [Scottish National Gallery](#). Michael fell in love with the *buttery* (a traditional Aberdeen butter pastry) topped with Connage Clava Brie and Ramsay of Carluke smoked ham with dark muscovado and Glengoyne Whisky marmalade. I enjoyed the Bellhaven smoked salmon with celeriac remoulade accompanied by artisan bread. With these we drank cider from [Thistly Cross](#) in East Lothian. When the Little Ice Age halted the wine industry in the British Isles in the 14th century, cider made from apples and other fruits prevailed as the low-alcohol beverage of choice for those who could not afford wine imported from France. Thistly Cross carries on this tradition, including a tangy cider made from apples, and with other varieties such as strawberry and elderflower.

Later that day, our friend Fraser phoned from Glasgow to propose that we meet Carina and Victor Contini, scions of two legendary Italian families involved in the food business in Edinburgh for generations. United in marriage as well as commerce, they have three restaurants: [Contini George Street](#); the Scottish Café and Restaurant we had visited earlier in the day; and the [Cannonball Restaurant & Bar](#) near Edinburgh Castle.



We met up with the Continis at their flagship restaurant on George Street. It occupies a magnificent stately building that was formerly a bank, and before that the region's corn exchange, dating back to the 19th century in this part of Edinburgh known as New Town. A Mediterranean vibe, with a nod to Carina's passion for art, emanates from frescoes channeling Raphael and Tiepolo. The food too combines Scottish and Italian influences and ingredients, including vegetables and herbs from the restaurant's kitchen garden, and especially the Italian wines.

We enjoyed a bottle of one of Victor's favorites called [Imprint](#). A Primitivo Appassito (old growth Zinfandel made from dried grapes), its winemaker is a Californian, Mark Shannon, who fell in love with and married an Italian woman. They moved to Puglia in Southern Italy to make remarkable and intense red wines.

Consuming various dishes, we never decided which one was our favorite, although oven-roasted new potatoes (Maris Piper, of course) with wild garlic could have been the default choice. Other things we enjoyed were fried baby squid (with homemade mayonnaise), asparagus (with mint, yogurt, chili and Parmigiano-Reggiano cheese), Isle of Mull scallops (with peas, wild garlic, and *speck di prosciutto*) and sea bass (with Pachino tomatoes and Taggiasca olives). We were captivated by the Continis' passion for their business as well as the food and wine comprising it.



Scotland (cont'd)



No visit to Scotland could omit a tour of a distillery where scotch whisky is made. Amidst early spring snow showers blanketing daffodils on the hillsides and with mists shrouding the nearby mountains, we spent a morning with Ian at [Edradour](#), Scotland's smallest distillery dating back to 1825. The tour commenced with a wee dram and ended in the distillery's gift shop. Along the way we learned about the age-old processes in production, including the "angel's share." Early innovations included incentive compensation, in the form of a quota of

scotch, for workers willing to endure the hot and sweaty job of drying the barley with smoke produced from burning peat.

About an hour away by train from Edinburgh, and perfect for a day-trip, we visited Scotland's largest city, Glasgow. So different in terrain, history, and character from its long-time rival, Edinburgh, Glasgow has been the industrial and ship-building heart of Scotland for centuries.

Our day in Glasgow was capped by dinner with our friend, Fraser, at [Ubiquitous Chip](#). Dating back to 1971, "the Chip" was founded to feature Scottish seafood, game, and traditional offerings such as *haggis* (minced sheep's organs combined with onions and other savory ingredients boiled in a sheep's stomach). Our first taste of this iconic dish was an appetizer based on venison, rather than mutton, and accompanied by mashed Maris Piper potatoes. It was rich in meaty flavors and delicious. Michael followed it with venison, paired with a dark chocolate sauce and roasted beets,

an improbable combination that proved delectable. Fraser and I both opted for Barra scallops, perfectly seared and with their coral intact. The sweet, understated flavor of the sea was fresh and tantalizing. We washed it all down with a French Malbec, from Maison Castell, a gorgeous dark purple wine redolent of black currants.

Over dinner, we recounted our visit earlier in the day to the [Kelvingrove Art Gallery and Museum](#), an imposing edifice in the center of a park. Having arrived in the midst of the daily concert on the museum's awe-inspiring pipe organ, we were directed to the only two empty seats. We settled in

next to a gentleman who had a music score spread across his lap. When the music stopped, I leaned over and asked him if he knew what the piece was. "Yes," he replied. "It's the premiere of *Prelude on French* and I wrote it. I'm John Maxwell Geddes." We ended up visiting with him over tea in the museum's café. His career as a composer included a commission from his old friend and ours, John Currie, the conductor whose passion for the music of his homeland had inspired our trip to Scotland. It had all come full circle. The food, the drink, the scenery, and the history had merged into a grand finale of a musical link to a mystical land.



About the Wine Society of Texas

The Society was founded in Arlington Texas in 1996, and was established as a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. It soon grew to become a statewide organization as new chapters were chartered in Houston and the Permian Basin. All three chapters (DFW, Houston and Permian Basin) hold regular events such as wine tastings, wine and food pairing dinners and seminars, and travel to grape-growing areas of the world. Wine Society members are not “wine snobs,” but are people who enjoy learning about wine in a relaxed social setting. Persons with all levels of knowledge are welcome.

The WST mission is to: enhance the appreciation of wine, especially Texas wines; educate the experienced as well as the beginning wine taster; promote the winemakers and grape growers; foster the knowledge of oenology and viticulture; help in charitable activities throughout Texas; and promote the responsible consumption of wine.

Chapter Presidents are: Jim Choate (Permian Basin) - rrcontracting.jim@gmail.com; Elizabeth Lutton (Dallas-Fort Worth) - elalutton@hotmail.com; and Ed Dent (Greater Houston) - edent24@aol.com.

For a list of new chapter members, see page [2](#). To join or renew, see page [24](#).

The Wine Society of Texas

<http://www.winesocietyoftexas.org>

Wine appreciation through education.

Shirley Choate, President

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By Shirley Choate

These are exciting times for the Texas Wine Industry. Our wineries are winning gold and double gold medals in prestigious competitions like the San Francisco International Wine Competition and the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo International Wine Competition. Our Texas vineyards and winemakers have discovered the Mediterranean varietals that thrive in Texas weather and it's starting to pay dividends.

The Wine Society of Texas, as a consumer group, helps play a large part in this. Our mission statement says it all, “Wine Appreciation Through Education.” Our chapter events feature and educate attendees on varietals like Albariño, Roussanne, Viognier, Vermentino, Tannat, and Tempranillo. Most people in Texas are not familiar with these varietals which are the future of the Texas Wine Industry.

Not only do we feature Texas wines but also Old and New World wines from all of the grape growing regions around the world.

Wine TV

By Meril Markley

Wine, like other items people collect and prize, makes it susceptible to fraudsters and crooks.

The TV series *American Greed* on CNBC has included three episodes devoted to wine fraud.

1. In *Wine, Women, and Fraud*, John Fox sold “pre-arrival” wine out of a warehouse in Berkeley, California. His schemes included selling wine he didn’t own and selling the same bottles to multiple buyers. When customers weren’t able to take delivery, the scheme unraveled and Fox went to jail. Estimates were that the fraud involved \$45 million in fake sales to over 9,000 customers.
2. In *Grapes of Greed*, Mark Anderson stored cases of his customers’ valuable wines in a storage facility housing a number of other businesses (including wine storage). Dipping into his customers’ cases, he sold bottles at auction and replaced them with bottles of *Two Buck Chuck* from Trader Joe’s. With the Feds closing in, he burned down the warehouse, destroying wines from his and other businesses totaling \$100 million.
3. In *Vintage Wine Fraud*, Rudy Kurniawan, a young and charming wine connoisseur, put new wine in old bottles. Doctoring labels and corks, he was able to sell millions of dollars of fakes at auction while garnering a reputation as a brilliant collector.

Editor’s Wrap-Up

By Meril Markley

Thanks to you, our contributors, for another lively collection of stories and photos for the Newsletter.

I enjoy reading your articles as I prepare them for publication, marveling at the range of backgrounds, interests, and passions of our members and of their commitment to the Society’s objectives.

I remain drawn to stories highlighting the interplay of tax law and wine. Raymond Haak’s story about the history of Madeira reminded me that this Portuguese autonomous region (consisting of the islands of Madeira, Porto, Santo, and Desertas) was long a popular tax haven through which investors made international investments using shell companies. This earned Madeira a place on the OECD’s infamous *Black List* of low-tax jurisdictions.

More recently, the publication of the *Panama Papers* in 2016 shone a light on wealthy investors’ use of warehouses in free ports and foreign trade zones to avoid taxes on art works and other precious assets such as vintage wines. I expect that some Barbeito Bual Madeira may be squirreled away for eventual tax-free consumption, perhaps the subject of a future episode of *American Greed*.

In the meantime, please be thinking about articles for the next edition of this Newsletter.

Submissions are due May 26.

Last, but not least, Ed Dent and I thank Tenley Fukui for her invaluable assistance on this edition.



MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

☐ New Membership ☐ Renewal Membership

PLEASE CHECK THE CHAPTER YOU WISH TO JOIN/RENEW:

☐ DFW ☐ Greater Houston ☐ Permian Basin (Midland – Odessa)

Name _____

Address _____ Apt. # _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Tel. # _____ Cell _____

Email _____

How did you hear about The Wine Society of Texas? _____

MEMBERSHIP LEVELS

- ☐ Young Adult \$25 (Age 21-30) – Includes membership; discount on events.
Year of Birth: _____
- ☐ Individuals \$40 – Includes membership; discount on events
- ☐ Dual \$75 – Two people at the same address; Includes membership & discount on events
- ☐ Supporting Member \$200 – Membership for two people, recognition online and link to corporate website
- ☐ Corporate Member \$400 – Membership for up to four employees, recognition online, banner advertisement with link to corporate website.

Make checks payable to: The Wine Society of Texas. Send payment or credit card information and completed application to:

The Wine Society of Texas
Shirley Choate
1009 South CR 1110
Midland, TX 79706

Visit the Wine Society of Texas website at: <http://www.winesocietyoftexas.org> To pay online, create a user account and pay through Paypal on the website.

AGE CERTIFICATION:

I certify that I/we are 21 years of age or older. _____ Date _____

_____ Date _____

CREDIT CARD INFORMATION

☐ VISA

☐ MASTERCARD

Card Number: _____ Expiration Date: _____

Cardholder Name: _____ Signature _____

Credit Card Billing Address: _____



WINE SOCIETY OF TEXAS SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATION - 2020

Name: _____

Street Address: _____

City, State, Zip: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Institution / Organization: _____

Field of Study: _____

Graduation Date: _____

Current Grade point: _____ (provide copy of transcript as applicable)

Is this application for continuing education ____, internship ____, field study ____, or other ____ (check one).

If more room is needed for response in any of areas listed below, please append additional sheets, resume or related information.

Before applying, please review the criteria and requirements attached.

Summarize the proposed use of the financial assistance as it relates to grape growing, winemaking, wine appreciation, wine marketing or wine education:

Summarize your personal long range goals and relative importance of wine education as it pertains to the state of Texas:

Provide a description of your relationship or experience with the Texas wine industry to date:

Summarize relevant background and experience (include resume & transcripts):

By applying for the WST grant you will be asked to provide a summary of the usage of the grant monies received. In addition, you may be asked to speak at a local WST event or write an article to appear on Wine Society of Texas website. Do you agree with these conditions? Please check a response. _____

Yes _____ No _____

If No List Reason: _____

If granted a scholarship would you give us permission to use your name and photo in a press release _____ Yes _____ No

Please fax or email completed application by April 6, 2020 to: The Wine Society of Texas, Ed Dent, Scholarship Committee Fax # - 281-379-4281 or direct email: edent1124@gmail.com.