**King George Chapter of the American Wine Society** 



**August 13, 2011**

**General Discussion:**

Old News: None

New news:

The RSVP process was a great success! A big thank you to all of you for sending in RSVPs!

Please try and remember to put your e-mail address on the RSVP; especially if you have questions/comments. The Form that gets sent back does not include an e-mail address from the sender.

**Presentation:**

*“7 Couples, 7 days, 7 Wineries. A Presentation of Italian Wine and Olive Oils from Italy”* – Such’s, Church’s, Gibson’s, Buchanan’s, Lefeave’s, Adkins’ and Loudin’s

The Seven couples took a wonderful journey through Tuscany and the Chianti Classico region of Italy, and graciously brought back some samplings to share with the King George Wine Society, for a very special tasting. The couples also were generous enough to also bring some Olive Oil from the trip, which was also shared along with a presentation and tasting of the different types of Olive Oil. It was an enlightening presentation; a learning experience and a generous opportunity for those who were not able to take the trip to experience what they did.

This was the most attended meeting in years! There were over 50 in attendance, including 7 guests.

The group was treated to a ‘starter’ wine prior to the meeting. Proseco was poured while the presenters set the stage for the Tour of Tuscany. The Proseco that was poured can be found at Wegmans or Total Wine.

The first presentation was the Olive Oil tasting/demonstration.

Diane <Church> presented seven different olive oils; two of which came from Italy. The other five were purchases at different retail stores in the area. Diane demonstrated that true Italian Olive Oil; especially pure Extra Virgin Olive has so much more flavor and character than the ones found in random retail stores. Some important notes and information were:

Olives only go through ONE pressing. The oil extracted is quickly bottled to get top grade and to be labeled ‘Extra Virgin’. Oils with an acidity level over 1% are labeled ‘Virgin’; this is usually a lower grade olive oil. The highest qualities of most olive oils only have .3%.

Olive Oil should be treated like wine; they should be stored in a cool, dark location and the bottle should be dark. The main enemies of Olive Oil are light, oxygen, time and heat.

Accompanying the olive oil tasting, the group was also given focaccia bread, Italian bread and also Rosemary Herb bread that was prepared two ways; one with the extra virgin olive oil and one was done with regular vegetable oil. It was very interesting to taste the Rosemary bread that was prepared with the extra virgin olive oil dipped in the extra virgin olive oil. There was a definite difference in the taste.

After the tasty Olive Oil presentation, appropriately, was the wine presentation. So far the meeting started off to a special and unique start; it was certainly turning out to be a ‘Special Tasting’! Not only was this meeting exceptional because of the wine but the group was treated to some awesome homemade Italian specialties to accompany each pouring.

The group began with the standard cheese and bread. To accompany the cheese and bread was a homemade spicy Tomato Basil salad/Bruschetta mixture. This tomato relish paired really nice with the whites on the semi-sweeter side as with the Rose; it was yummy (this term might be used a bit redundantly throughout this newsletter – apology requested..)

The wines presented along with the ‘yummy’ treats were:

1. *’09 Barone Ricasoli Torricella*

Chardonnay blend with a small amount of Sauvignon

One interesting note about the process of this wine is that it aged in the bottle for 3 months prior to releasing. This winery has an organic farm producing both organic wines as well as olive oil. The food that was paired with this was a spinach, ricotta cannenoli with white cream sauce; very yummy! The notes from the Sauvignon complimented the spinach and ricotta and the Chardonnay characteristics rounded out nicely with the creaminess from the cheese and sauce; it was a very nice balance.

<http://www.ricasoli.it/etichette/Wines/Torricella/>

1. *’09 Visila Della Marronaia*

90% Vernaccia di San Gimignano, 10% Chardonnay

An interesting note about this winery is that they do organic wines. The food paired with this was a pasta carbonara with pancetta and olive oil.

1. *’08 La Castellina Chianti Classico*

90% Sangiovese, 10% Canaiolo

This was the house wine at the hotel the group stayed at. It is very well balanced; an exceptional Chianti.

The accompaniment to this wine was lasagna; perfect for Chianti. Chianti is light enough not to overpower the sauce of the lasagna, yet mellow enough to blend nicely with all the Italian flavors on the palette.

<http://www.lacastellina.it/english/degustazioni.html>

1. *2006 Castello di Volpaia Chianti Classico Riserva*

100% Sangiovese

One interesting note from the visit to this winery, there are some barrels in the cellar that were so large, they had to be constructed inside the building! The food offered to pair with this wine was a delightful spinach, ricotta soufflé with a spicy tomato/Bruschetta type relish. It paired very well with this wine and there were several comments around the room that this would have also paired well with one of the whites as well. The soufflé had the richness of the cheese and the little bit of spice in the sauce accompanied the spice of the Sangiovese very nicely.

<http://www.volpaia.com/sito/inglese/index.php>

1. *2007 Vignamaggio Castello di Monna Lisa*

80% Sangiovese, 10% Merlot, 10% Cabernet Sauvignon

The interesting notes from this wine/winery is that the winey has a 500 to 700 year old cellar, and it is thought to have been the birthplace of Mona Lisa (hence the name). One unique feature the tour group noted, and showed pictures of, was the interesting air locks on some of the processing wine bottles. They were much different looking than those that are found in the US. Leonardo Di Vinci invented the air lock.

The tasty treat offered for pairing with this wine was Ragu; this was not a typical Ragu and was definitely not the ‘Ragu’ you find in the store! The Ragu made in Italy is meatier; it is all about the meat, not the sauce. This Red blend holds up very well to this hearty food. The Sangiovese and Merlot are bold enough to add to the richness, and the Cabernet rounds all the flavors out with a touch of spice.

<http://www.vignamaggio.com/>

<http://www.snooth.com/winery/vignamaggio-greve-in-chianti-italy/>

1. *2005 Montefioralle Vin Santo*

This wine is a rose; a blend of Malvasia, Trebbiano, and San Colombano.

*Vin Santo* is considered Tuscany’s “Holy Water”. Although this wine is considered a ‘Rose’, the color had a golden hue. The unique feature of this wine is that it is processed in 7cycles and the barrels are only filled 2/3 full and then sealed with cement. The wine is basically made from raisins. Here is a link that tells about the interesting process.

<http://www.aziendamontefioralle.com/vinsanto.html>

With this wine, homemade almond biscotti was paired. This was a great combination. The Vin Santo has some sweetness and the almond and vanilla flavors from the biscotti really rounded out the experience.

1. *La Marronaia Grappa Riserva*

This Grappa was from the same winery as the ’09 Visila Della Marronaia. This was an intense spirit! It is stronger than port; it was more like drinking brandy. This makes for a wonderful after dinner drink; it would be great for sipping by the fire in the winter! It has a wonderful golden color and a nose of dark honey and apricots. Here is a link on how Grappa is processed, although this is NOT from the same winery/distillery.

<http://www.guadoalmelo.it/english/grappa-bolgheri.asp>

**Favorites and prices of the presentation:**

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| **Wine #** | **Votes** | **Price** | **Purchased** |
| #1 | 30 | $20 | Italy |
| #2 | 5 | $12 | Italy |
| #3 | 7 | $? | $17.99 Wegmans |
| #4 | 23 | $? | Italy |
| #5 | 15 | $28 | Italy |
| #6 | N/A | $? | Italy |