

# Society of Medical Friends of Wine



*A Non-Profit 501(c)(3) Corporation, FEIN 94-6088159*

[www.medicalfriendsofwine.org](http://www.medicalfriendsofwine.org)

1038 Redwood Highway, Suite #9, Mill Valley, CA 94941

Telephone: (415) 309-4079, Email: [societyofmedicalfriendsofwine@gmail.com](mailto:societyofmedicalfriendsofwine@gmail.com)

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## NEWSLETTER: SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 2021

### SAVE THE DATES

We have two exciting events coming up. Please mark your calendars and save the dates. Details will follow in e mail announcements

We return to the French Club, site of some of the Society's most celebrated events, on Friday evening October 22. This will include the theme of "bring a bottle, share a bottle", where members will be asked to bring a bottle of wine from their cellars to share with those around them. This has always produced a fascinating array of diverse wines and generates the camaraderie and discussion that is such a part of French Club events for our Society. Look to the announcement to follow and the menu description to help you plan a wine to bring.

And on Sunday afternoon November 14 our annual cheese and wine event with Janet Fletcher will return to an in-person format at the Mill Valley Community Center. Our theme for this year will be holiday favorites. Janet will choose a variety of cheeses to pair with our selections of sparkling wine, sherry, port, and Madeira. We plan on this being an event to cheer everyone into the holiday mood. You won't want to miss it.

## **A RETURN TO IN-PERSON DINING PIPERADE SEPTEMBER 18, 2021**

By Robert Blumberg, Cellar Master and Editor

Last Saturday night an interesting thing happened. I actually saw my tie rack. There it was, with about 50 different ties hanging from it in a corner of my closet. It hadn't moved. It's been there the whole time, but somehow for the last 18 months or so I looked straight at it and didn't see it. There had been no occasion to, and I guess somehow, I just put it out of my mind.

But that night was different. There was an occasion to get dressed up. Ties weren't required, it just felt right to put one on. We were going out to a Medical Friends of Wine dinner. To see friends we had not seen for far too long. We were going back to Piperade to enjoy the food created and prepared by Gerald Hirigoyen at his Basque--inspired establishment. This would be the Society's third visit, and the first two had been spectacular. We were overdue for our third visit, and the menu and wines promised an exciting evening.

We had been scheduled to go to Piperade on March 14, 2020. The dinner and wines had been carefully planned by Elizabeth Kass during her Presidency year, but as you may recall, March of that year was when things really started evolving fast in this country with the pandemic. Regulations and recommendations were in constant flux, but just a week before the planned dinner, indoor gatherings of up to 50 people were still allowed and there were no mask mandates in San Francisco. The executive committee wrestled with whether or not to proceed and came close to doing so, considering all the preparation that had already been done and wines purchased. In the end, day by day, it was becoming more apparent that this was not just a bad flu and that senior citizens were at much greater risk of severe adverse outcomes, so we decided to cancel. Fortunately, we did so, because within another week it was very clear that this was the only responsible decision we could have made.

This year we again debated whether we could proceed, and with the fluctuating number of cases and reports of breakthrough cases despite vaccinations, the decision was again not easy. But with vaccinations preventing serious illness and a smaller crowd and more space, we decided to take a step back towards normalcy. Those of us who attended are glad we did. A number of members told us they felt uncomfortable and decided not to attend, and we certainly understand and respect that decision and can only hope that the situation continues to improve and allows more of these activities we have enjoyed so much through the years.

**289th Dinner Piperade Restaurant 1015 Battery St., San Francisco, 94111 Saturday, September 18th, 2021**

**RECEPTION: 6:00 p.m.**

Almond Stuffed Medjool Dates with Bacon and Honey Gastrique  
2015 Can Mayol Loxarel "Refugi" Reserva Brut Nature Classic Penedes

**DINNER: 6:30 p.m.**

**First Course:** Basquaise Salad, Frisée, Piquillos, Goat Cheese, Pine Nuts, Warm Bayonne Vinaigrette **Wine:** 2018 Château Calabre Montravel Blanc

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**Second Course:** Seared Sea Scallops, Menestre of Spring Vegetables

**Wine:** 2018 Laventura Viura Rioja

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**Third Course:** Roasted Lamb Loin, Piperade, Romesco Sauce

**Wine:** 2000 Chateau Mayne Lalande, Lustrac-Medoc, Cru Bourgeois

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**Fourth Course:** Breast of Duck, Parsnips, Chanterelles, Dried Fruit Gastrique

**Wine:** 2010 La Rioja Alta "Viña Ardanza – Selección Especial" Reserva Rioja

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**Fifth Course:** Meyer Lemon Roll, Berries Compote, Crème Fraîche

**Wine:** 2016 Charles Hours "Clos Uroulat" Jurançon Doux

As we gathered in the private room at Piperade, we were served glasses of 2015 Can Mayol Loxarel "Refugi" Reserva Brut Nature Classic from the Penedes region of Catalonia, Spain to accompany hors d'oeuvres of Almond Stuffed Medjool Dates with Bacon and Honey Gastrique. I have to admit that my experiences cause me to favor Champagne over sparkling wines from elsewhere in France or from other countries, but I can honestly say this was the best Cava I can ever remember tasting, and it would hold its own against many wines from France's most noteworthy sparkling wine region. The aging on the lees contributed depth and richness to the wine; the absence of dosage led to a clean palate, and the good acidity tasted fresh and stimulated the palate to accompany the richness of the dates. What a way to start as we congregated to renew friendships and get caught up on recent travails!

Pairing wine with a salad course is seldom easy, but in this case the combination of Piquillos, goat cheese, and pine nuts added much more than just greens to the dish, and the 2018 Chateau Calabre Montravel Blanc did not at all clash with the Bayonne Vinaigrette dressing.

Chateau Calabre and the Montravel appellation lie just west of Bergerac in the Dordogne region, and an hour or two drive due east of Bordeaux, and not far from the Saint Emilion region. Though outside of the greater Bordeaux appellation, the cepage of the region is truly Bordelais, with Sauvignon Blanc, Semillon, and a little Muscadelle for the whites, and predominantly Merlot, with a little Cabernet Franc and Cabernet Sauvignon for the reds. The wines for the most part are meant to be served young and though their pedigree is not of the same level as classified Bordeaux chateaux, they are lovely in their own right and much more affordable.

The Chateau Calabre was a light, clean wine with no oak. The lightly herbal nose of Sauvignon blanc was tempered with the ripe fig character of Semillon, and these aromatic components were a perfect foil for the goat cheese. Light medium in body with excellent acidity and freshness; overall a very pleasing wine.

The second course wine was a white Rioja, the 2018 Laventura Viura Rioja. And what a great food wine it was. Made from the Viura grape, indigenous to Spain, the wine had layers of richness and complexity, and again freshness of acidity to accompany food without being cloying or heavy. Some white Riojas are said to age magnificently, and this one still seems capable of delivering pleasure for several years.

The wine accompanied the seared sea scallops. Being allergic to scallops, I was served a mushroom tartlet with Maitake, Royal Trumpets, thyme and crème fraiche—and I had no complaints.

Roasted lamb loin followed, accompanied by Piperade, the Basque sauce of peppers, tomatoes, onions and garlic that is the restaurant's signature and source of its name. Delicious lamb and red Bordeaux are a classic pairing, and to help us experience this our Treasurer, Dr. Maynard Johnston, generously donated from his cellar the 2000 Chateau Mayne Lalande, from the Listrac-Medoc region.

At 21 years of age, the wine showed maturity, but not a hint of senescence. The nose and palate showed oak along with classic Cabernet weediness and herbs, along with black pepper spice and a bit of earthiness and rustic qualities so reminiscent, to me, of traditional French red wines. This sample transported me back to my year of university studies in Bordeaux where I first discovered the delights of many wines of this style. Thank you, Maynard, for sparking my memories and helping to contribute to the education of our members.

Another delicious meat course awaited us, this time featuring duck breast served with a parsnip puree and Royal Trumpet mushrooms. Parsnip is an underappreciated and not often served vegetable that contributed richness, earthiness, and sweetness to the dish. When is the last time you cooked duck and parsnip? Isn't going out to a great restaurant for this kind of experience a real treat?

And speaking of treats, for our red wine to accompany the duck, Elizabeth chose a 2010 La Rioja Alta, “Vina Ardanza, Seleccion Especial” Reserva. Made from 80% Tempranillo and 20% Grenache (Garnacha) and aged for 36 months in four-year-old American oak. My glass had a little funkiness in the nose initially, but this quickly cleared demonstrating the value of letting red wines breathe. The nose that followed was redolent of spice and raspberries; the palate showed red cherries and curry. The wine was lovely and drinkable, though still youthful, with medium full body and acidity and moderate tannins.

Dessert was a Meyer Lemon Roll with Compote of Berries and Crème Fraiche. Sweet, tart, and delicious!

The dessert wine, for me, was a very special one. It was a 2016 sweet Jurancon (Jurancon doux), the “Clos Uroulat” from Charles Hours. Jurancon is produced from the appellation of this name in the southwest of France, near the town of Pau. Several grapes are grown there, with the Gros Manseng and Petit Manseng being the principal varieties. The dry white is usually a blend of both, with the sweet wine coming primarily or exclusively from the Petit Manseng.

The sweet wine is made in small quantities from very ripe grapes that are harvested late (even into November some years), allowing the berries to dry out on the vine and concentrate their sugars. These are not usually botrytized wines like Sauternes, but are perhaps more analogous to the vins de paille (straw wines) of Jura, although the grapes dry out on the vine, rather than on mats of straw.

The drying out process concentrates both the sugars and the acid of the grapes, resulting in a medium sweet to sweet wine with juiciness from excellent acidity. Different in flavor from Sauternes and lighter in body, but sharing that wine’s facility to accompany foie gras or dessert. This sample had a deep straw color, a honeyed nose, medium sweetness, excellent tartness, and a layered glycerine mouth coating finish.

Wines from Jurancon used to be imported regularly into this country, but they are now quite hard to find, especially the sweet ones, and I was so pleased Elizabeth found this one. I spent the first 8 weeks of my university year in France in Pau. The city is modest in size, with the allure of a wall, a river coursing outside the wall, and a medieval castle where Henry the IV, the “Good King” was born in 1553. There is a street on the edge of the city called the Boulevard des Pyrenees, where cafes and restaurants have a charming view of the rugged snow-capped Pyrenees. One could sit there for hours and enjoy glasses of Jurancon while feasting on the view—something this then young American enjoyed immensely.

What a night. We enjoyed wines from unusual and lesser-known grape varieties—Xarello in the sparkling wine, Viura in the white Rioja, Tempranillo in the red Rioja, and Petit Manseng in the Jurancon doux. Our “young” red wine was 11 years old, and our “mature” one 21 years old. All to accompany a delicious five-course dinner, the chance to get out and dress up, and to see good friends.

Thank you, Elizabeth, for planning such a wonderful event. Thank you, Maynard, for the red Bordeaux donation. And thank you to Gerald and his staff at Piperade, who have always made us feel so welcome.



Members and guests await wine and dinner at Piperade



Some of the evening's wines



Last year's President Elizabeth Kass M.D. "belatedly" passing the gavel to this year's President, Jim Gallagher, PhD.



Piperade owner and chef Gerald Hirigoyen discusses the dinner with our group

### **Three Sticks Visitation by members of the Society of Medical Friends of Wine**

Jim Gallagher, Ph.D.

After more than a year and a half, the Society was able to offer an in-person event. I was able to negotiate with Ben Draper, the Assistant Hospitality Manager at **Three Sticks**, a gathering for a small number of our members at their Adobe tasting facility just off the Square in Sonoma. The date agreed upon was Tuesday, August 24, 2021. The midweek date was necessary because of the persistent limitation for indoor tastings and the demand for available outdoor space that could be used—a lovely tented area in the rear of the Adobe.



Three Sticks was founded in 2002 by Bill Price III. The winery name is derived from Bill's nickname of Three Sticks, which comes from the three roman numerals at the end of his family name. Price, a successful financier, had previously acquired premium vineyards throughout Sonoma. Three Sticks was established to complete his farm to glass goal. Presently, his vineyard holdings include Alana Vineyard, Durrell Vineyards, Gap's Crown Vineyard, One Sky, Walala Vineyard, and William James.

In addition to Three Sticks and being a majority owner of Kistler, he is also the chairman of Gary Farrell Vineyards & Winery and was on the Board of Directors of Kosta Browne.

Price's Three Sticks Wine Director is Bob Cabral, the former winemaker at Williams Selyem. Ryan Prichard is the Three Sticks winemaker (see below). In addition to his passion for grape growing and winemaking, Bill Price has a major interest and is an ardent supporter of musical performing artists. He has hosted several (Zoom) benefit events to support local musicians during the COVID shut down.

Our day at the Adobe began at 11:00 am on Tuesday, August 24, 2021. Having spent much of my early summers in the region, I had been concerned that we could be troubled by very warm temperatures that can be well above 90 degrees in late August. But as a harbinger of what was to come, as we gathered the weather could not have been better. Definitely a short-sleeve day, but not excessive heat.

We were to taste ten wines (See below list); yes, not an easy job, but we were a highly

Vintage	Varietal	Vineyard
2019	Chardonnay	One Sky
2019	Chardonnay	Origin
2019	Chardonnay	Gap's Crown
2019	Chardonnay	Durell
2019	Chardonnay	Alana
2019	Pinot Noir	Gap's Crown
2019	Pinot Noir	Durell
2019	Pinot Noir	William James
2019	Pinot Noir	Walala
2018	Pinot Noir	Cuvee Eva Marie

committed and dedicated group. Each taster was provided two glasses so that we could compare wines as we proceeded. Dump buckets were placed at every tasting point. We tasted the five Chardonnays first and finished with the five Pinot Noirs. All wines were of the 2019 vintage other



than the 2018 Pinot Noir Cuvee Eva Marie and had just been released the previous Saturday to mailing list Club members.

Wines were poured by Ben Draper (See above) our host for the tasting, and we allowed approximately ten minutes to evaluate each pair of wines, then a discussion was held of the

characteristics and merits of each wine. The discussion was lively with much favorable to highly enthusiastic commentary by our members. During our period of commenting, Ben remained available to answer questions about the history of the winery, the rationale for using concrete egg fermenting vats, and other details of each wine being discussed.



One very interesting facet of the winery is their use of egg-shaped fermenters. While the use of these shaped vessels dates back to the earliest history of wine making, today's examples are made of concrete. One virtue of the egg shape results in the natural circulation producing a constant stirring so that the *lees* remain suspended, thus imparting greater flavor to the wine. Some of the added character is also due to the greater contact with surfaces of the cap, while also reducing the labor intense "punch down" procedure needed in vat

fermentation.

In a phone conversation with Three Sticks winemaker, Ryan Prichard (See below), I learned that the concrete egg fermenters were used mostly for Chardonnay harvested from the Durell Ranch and produced with the proprietary name 'Origin', and that fermentation was done serially for two batches of the Chardonnay grapes used to produce the non-oaked 'Origin'. Further, an important goal sought by using the egg is to produce a "creamier" finish than would otherwise be possible with either Stainless Steel or Oak fermenters.

A clear sense of terroir emerged from comparing five of the two varietals from the different vineyards located within different microclimates, elevation and soil composition. The wines showed differences in bouquet character as well as flavor profiles. While apple and citrus scents and flavors were present in most of the Chardonnays, the overtones of melon and baking spices varied a great deal. Also, the Durell 'Origin', an oak free wine, seem fresher and unrestrained with a more attractive mouth feel and less sharpness that of many typical non-oaked Chardonnays.

Among the Chardonnay, the Gaps Crown and Alana stood out for me, primarily because of



the richness of the fruit flavors on the palate combined with the mouth feel of the finish. Both wines showed long, luxurious, highly viscous aftertastes. The One Sky showed the most profound bouquet and is a wine that showed much promise for development of added complexity. My notes of the Gap's Crown are, medium golden straw; rich bouquet of apple, banana, melon, baking spice and toast; very good acid balance, with a long, lingering aftertaste of baked Gravenstein apples.

All in all, a most pleasant day in Sonoma. The opportunity to taste wines from so many different vineyard sources was most fun and educational, to say nothing of being delicious.

## A WINE FROM THE PAST

By Robert Blumberg

One of the casualties of Covid has been the dinner parties where wines from the cellar would be opened and enjoyed among friends. With cases from the latest surge starting to decline, and with all attendees vaccinated, we recently convened at Jim Gallagher's place to welcome a dear friend coming on a much-delayed visit from the east coast and to belatedly celebrate Jim's birthday. As you might expect, some memorable wines were opened, and I hope Jim will have the time to describe these to you in a future edition. One so struck me that I wanted to share my thoughts about it in this letter.



**Chateau Clos-Fourtet** is a Premier Grand Cru Classe from Saint-Emilion. We shared a bottle of the **1964** vintage from Jim's cellar. Nowadays Clos-Fourtet is again on the rise and commands several hundred dollars per bottle, but at the time this wine was made the property was in a decades long slump. On reading Edmund Penning-Roswell's celebrated book [The Wines of Bordeaux](#), he recalls the chateau reaching its peak in the 1920's, and recounts his notes from a 1921 tasted in 1964 at the age of 43 years, alongside the 1921 Cheval Blanc and he remarked "the Clos-Fourtet was by no means an inferior wine". In the same book, written in 1969, he wrote "Yet since the last war the vineyard's reputation has declined and I have not come upon a distinguished bottle since."

In 1991 Robert Parker in his formidable tome on Bordeaux wrote “It is unfortunate that the most interesting thing about the estate of Clos-Fourtet is the vast underground wine cellars, which are among the finest in the Bordeaux region. This winery, like a number of highly respected yet overrated St-Emilion Premiers Grands Crus Classes, has been making wine over the last two decades that is good, but not up to the standards of its classification. The wines have been plagued by a bland, dull, chunky, dry, astringent fruitiness, and a curious habit of getting older without getting better.”

The thing is I had not yet read nor known these opinions of the Chateau that night when the wine was opened and consumed. I did know that 1964 was an interesting vintage, and that the wines from Saint-Emilion were quite highly regarded from that year. 1964 had started out to be a very fine vintage throughout the Bordeaux region, thanks to a very warm summer and premature boasts from the French Minister of Agriculture. But in early October the rains came and buckets fell for the next two weeks. In the Medoc, quite a generalized critical distinction was made of those wines harvested before the rains versus those harvested afterwards.

In Saint-Emilion and Pomerol, where Merlot rather than Cabernet Sauvignon, is the dominant cultivar, the wines had been harvested before the rains, as Merlot blossoms earlier and thus ripens earlier than Cabernet. Early blossoming makes Merlot more susceptible to spring frosts than Cabernet, but in turn more likely to ripen than Cabernet in marginal or wet years. I remember with great fondness an absolutely delicious 1964 Cheval Blanc and an outstanding 1964 Vieux Chateau Certan (a Pomerol), so I had great anticipation as Jim poured the Clos-Fourtet.

And I was not disappointed. Both Mr. Penning-Rowsell and Mr. Parker are excellent writers with highly acclaimed palates, so I don't doubt the veracity of their general observations about Clos-Fourtet of this period. But what one might have expected to be a tea colored, dried out and astringent wine now that it was 57 years of age, instead still had a light crimson robe and a delightful bouquet of cedar, spice, and a hint of raspberry jam. On the palate it was slightly sweet, elegant, light in body, yet complex in flavors, and possessing that intriguing cedar and cigar box quality of well-aged Bordeaux.

Those of you who are sharp eyed may have already spotted on the wine's label the alcohol content of 11%. As we were tasting and discussing the wine, we commented that the style was much lower in alcohol than modern Bordeaux--it is not unusual for recent vintages of Saint Emilion to top 15%, but we were shocked to find it was that low.

I realize that many people, including a number of our members, love the big, rich, and ripe style of today's Bordeaux and California Cabernets, and might well find this wine more curious than delicious. Yet I am amazed that a wine of this age, from a Chateau without a great pedigree, and with such low alcohol could still provide such drinking pleasure to those of us with palates favoring traditional Bordeaux. Such are the mysteries and delights of the wine world.

# **Moderate Alcohol Intake May Curb Subsequent Diabetes after Gestational Diabetes**

## **A Brief Review of Recent Medical Literature**

by Robert Blumberg, M.D.

Women with a history of gestational diabetes (diabetes during pregnancy) are at increased risk of developing type 2 diabetes later in life. Previous research has shown an association between light to moderate alcohol consumption and reduced risk of type 2 diabetes. This question has not previously been studied for women who have gestational diabetes.

In a recent publication in **JAMA Network Open**, Stefanie Hinkle, PhD. and Cuilin Zhang, M.D. of the National Institutes of Health reported on a study of 4700 women with gestational diabetes in the Nurses' Health Study II Cohort. Those who drank one half to one drink daily compared to nondrinkers had a 55% lower risk for subsequent type 2 diabetes. The average age at enrollment was 38 and the median follow up time was 24 years. Those participants who drank less than one-half drink per day or more than one per day had less risk, but the results were attenuated.

When the patients' weight (body mass index) was taken into account, there was still a 41% lower incidence of developing diabetes among those who drank one-half to one drink daily. The most commonly consumed alcoholic beverage was beer, and when alcohol choice was compared only beer made a significant difference in this study. Other studies however have shown a stronger association of wine consumption versus beer in diabetic risk reduction, so the question of beverage choice remains unclear.

The strength of the study was the number of patients and the long-term follow-up. The weaknesses were the fact that alcohol consumption was self-reported and only every four years and that the population was primarily Caucasian women. Also, there was no data on binge versus consistent consumption and on whether or not alcohol was consumed with meals.

The authors and reviewers commented that, consistent with 2020 Dietary Guidelines for Americans, due to the health complexities of alcohol consumption, individuals who do not currently consume alcohol should not start solely to reduce their risk of type 2 diabetes. In women particularly the risks of breast cancer, especially in those with a personal or strong family history of breast cancer, needs to be factored into the equation. On the other hand, for women with a history of gestational diabetes or other risk factors for diabetes who are already drinking lightly without problems, there appears to be possible benefit from continuing to do so.

**Thank You Members for your support of the Society of Medical Friends of Wine.**

Susan Schwartz, Secretary

As you all know so well, the last 18 months have been a real challenge for all of us and for the survival of your Society. Thank you to all members who recently renewed—and for those of you who have not yet renewed it's not too late if you wish to join us at The French Club or to partake in our annual Cheese and Wine event. Please contact our executive secretary, Claire Bloomberg Keiser.

We are encouraging GIFTS to the society through charitable cash contributions to our non-profit organization. If your employer or business will match your gift, please contact SMFW.

DONORS may send checks or direct your representative to send payments directly to the society's postal mail address, or use the DONATE link on the SMFW website home page using PayPal or credit card: [www.medicalfriendsofwine.org](http://www.medicalfriendsofwine.org). Contributions are tax deductible.

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Questions? Contact Executive Secretary Claire Bloomberg Keiser at:  
[societyofmedicalfriendsofwine@gmail.com](mailto:societyofmedicalfriendsofwine@gmail.com)

Thanks to Dr. Elizabeth Kass for registering SMFW on AmazonSmile. Members do the rest!

The following announcement was distributed to membership in July, but we are repeating it now in case you missed it.

### **IN MEMORIUM**

The Society has learned of the passing of our dear friend, long term Board member, and past President, Dr. Tom Kenefick. Tom excelled in the worlds of neurosurgery at his San Francisco practice and wine growing, having purchased his ranch in the northern end of the Napa Valley in 1978.

Tom provided grapes to many celebrated labels in Napa Valley, as well as producing a small quantity of primarily Bordeaux style wines under his own label. Over the years his generosity led to our Society serving his excellent wines at many of our functions, and several years ago he hosted us for a delightful picnic and wine tasting at his ranch.

Tom will be much missed by the Society. Members who would like to express their condolences to the family may send messages to his son and daughter, Chris and Caitlin Kenefick, at 2200 Pickett Road, Calistoga, CA 94515