

Society of Medical Friends of Wine



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

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NEWSLETTER JULY 2022

President's Message

Greetings, Society of Medical Friends of Wine members. I wish you and your families a most festive Independence Day – 4th of July celebration as we reflect on our country's history and our freedoms. I am proud to be a part of the 83-year history of one of the oldest wine societies in the U.S, and continue to learn so much about what it takes to lead our organization!

PETALUMA GAP WINE TOUR

July 23, 2022

As of the date of this letter, June 28, 2022, the executive committee is finalizing important details for our "live tour" of the Petaluma Gap AVA on July 23rd. I believe that the quality and variety of wines from this newer American Viticultural Area in the Bay Area will amaze your palate and other senses. We are aiming to create an event that is enjoyable, educational and as reasonably priced as possible given current economic realities. Please contact Claire Bloomberg Keiser to indicate interest in attending. Here is a **Petaluma Gap Tour** update:

Our first tour will begin at 10:30am at the Keller Estate in rural Petaluma, and will proceed at lunchtime to downtown Petaluma for presentations from two additional winemakers: Brooks Note Winery and Thirty-Seven Wines. The estimated wrap-up time will be 3:30pm, with options for dinner on your own. Downtown Petaluma is a pleasant place to gather in July to enjoy riverfront dining and the marine breezes that blow eastward through the Petaluma Gap.

Keller Estate, in “the heart of the Petaluma Gap and gateway to Sonoma County wines” is located at 5875 Lakeville Highway in southeast Petaluma. The original vineyard was planted in 1989 by Arturo and Deborah Keller. German-born winemaker Julien Teichmann brings a European sensibility to Keller Estate’s sustainably certified vineyard. Estate Director Ana Keller was instrumental in establishing the Petaluma Gap AVA in 2018. The estate tour will begin with a brief walking loop on the vineyard property with sweeping views of the San Pablo Bay, followed by a comfortable, seated private wine tasting in a second-story gallery room with Bay views. Argentinian born Jose Cruz, Director of Hospitality and a graduate of the Court of Master Sommeliers, will lead an informative introduction to the Keller Estate wines and viticulture. Varietals will include at a minimum: Brut Rose “Bubbles”; an Alsatian-style Pinot Gris; “Rotie” a Syrah-Viognier blend; and a Pinot Noir.

Brooks Note Winery will be the venue for a catered, Water Street Bistro picnic lunch in the barrel room, followed by presentations from Garry Brooks, proprietor and Brooks Note winemaker, who has invited Lisa and Al Brayton, proprietors of **Thirty-Seven Wines**, to pour their wines in his barrel room as well. The newly constructed Brooks Note Winery and Tasting Room that opened in August 2021 is located at 426 Petaluma Boulevard North. Garry is a veteran of Acacia, Ravenswood and Kosta Brown wineries and a graduate of the UC Davis Viticulture and Enology program. He will pour tastes of the following varietals: Rose of Pinot Noir; Riesling; Azaya Ranch Pinot Noir; Marin County Pinot Noir and Petaluma Gap Pinot Noir.

Al Brayton and Lisa Corenti-Brayton established **Thirty-Seven Wines** at 3000 Sears Point Road in Sonoma in 2007, in the southeastern point of the Petaluma Gap where their vineyard meets the San Pablo Bay wetlands with moderate temperatures and cooling breezes that move quickly through the coastal hills. Their Paradise View Vineyard, one-hundred plus acres planted in 1999, provides estate grapes to produce varietals including: Albarino, Grenache, Pinot Gris, Riesling, Chardonnay, Pinot Noir, Cabernet-Franc, Petit Verdot and Merlot, overseen by renowned winemaker Shane Finley. We will taste a Saint-Emilion style blended Merlot & Cabernet-Franc; Grenache; Albarino; a Reserve Chardonnay and Petit Verdot.

Petaluma Gap Tour Driving Loop and distance estimates: Keller Estate is a 32-mile drive from the Golden Gate Bridge. Brooks Note Winery is a 7.5-mile drive from the Keller Estate to Petaluma Blvd North. Brooks Note Winery to the Golden Gate Bridge is a 33-mile drive. Additional event related cost and logistical details will be sent to members in early July.



We've enjoyed so many contributions of time, talents and treasure from our members and those who serve in leadership positions to guide the Society through a variety of challenges and opportunities. I thank our members for your patience as we navigate the extensive effects of the Covid-19 pandemic in the planning of Society events. We will hopefully exit the pandemic era better prepared to meet uncertainties, yet persevere and adapt within the values and activities that hold us together as a voluntary organization. I also thank our Board of Directors and executive committee members for their diligent and multifaceted contributions as we face the need for membership growth, the cost of insurance to safeguard our events, the importance of financial security for our non-profit operation, and the commitment to network within our social circles to promote the Society and invite others to share in our remarkable story.

Looking back to our 83rd Annual Dinner on March 5th at Poggio Trattoria in Sausalito, we began the year with a focus on unusual Italian varietals that add to a successful wine and food celebration. Our May 14th Virtual Tasting with a focus on California Rhone-style varietals was enjoyed by many, including two members new to the society, Gianna Fugazzi and Henry Kim, whose participation was greatly appreciated. Please see the detailed notes on our Virtual Tasting later in this newsletter.

I wish you a very happy and restorative summer, and hope to see you at the July wine tour.

Cheers,

David Schwartz, M.D.

President



MARK YOUR CALENDARS for these Upcoming 2022 EVENTS

Petaluma Gap Wine Tasting Tour

Saturday July, 23rd

Dinner at the French Club, San Francisco

Friday, September 23rd

Annual Cheese & Wine Event, Mill Valley Community Center Sunday November 13th

1970 Bordeaux Dinner

By Jim Gallagher, Ph.D.

While in Golden Gate Park for my bi-weekly walk, I met my friend Chef Thom Fox who was riding his bicycle engaged in his training. After chatting for a bit Thom said that he was free Saturday evening and we set up a dinner at my home. Upon his confirmation, I placed a call to Bob Blumberg to see if he and Marion would be able to join us. The short is that we were all available and decided to have a few wines that would lend themselves well to a dinner. I told Bob that I had set up two 1970 Bordeaux: **Chateau Lascombes, Margaux and Chateau Leoville Las Cases, St. Julien.**

Bob replied that sounded good, and that he would complement the group with a 1970 Chateau Giscours, Margaux. Hurray, our dinner wines had been selected. Later, in a discussion of the menu with Thom, I decided a Chardonnay was in order for the first course. Browsing my cellar, I came across a 2006 Marcassin Estate Chardonnay. Perfect I thought.



Since we were thinking a tasting of these wines presented a great opportunity for a report in this newsletter, a simultaneous comparison seemed appropriate. I set four glasses for each guest. This way all wines would be available for both appetizer and entrée. I decanted wines in the early afternoon, starting about 2:30 and finishing before 3pm, about four hours prior to the dinner-tasting.

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The first course was a cheese ravioli with a Thom Fox sauce. Guests and I alike began with the Marcassin, which proved to be even greater than I had anticipated. It was as if this was the ultimate time for the wine to have been enjoyed. Needless to say, the raviolis were wonderful and played well with the Chardonnay.

I did taste the Bordeaux with the raviolis and once again concluded excellent wine can be readily enjoyed with a great range of food. All of the Bordeaux elevated the experience of the meal. The Leoville, having the finest mouth feel, was my favorite of the reds with the raviolis. The Giscours seemed the most youthful, in that it showed a brighter bouquet and firmer tannins. In general, the tannins had settled down so there was no astringency in any of the wines. There was light bricking to the rim of color in all three Bordeaux, while the depth of the glass maintained a good color tone of dark to medium dark red.

The entrée consisted of pork chops that had a rub prepared by Thom and based on a gift from Joel Weinstein M.D., a wine loving doctor friend who foraged for wild Porcini Mushrooms, dehydrated, them, and then ground them to perfection. The powder is readily blended with many foods and sauces and provides a rich mushroom flavor. So, with that digression, we had pork chops treated with a Porcini rub and grilled and served with roasted potatoes. A meal tremendously enjoyed by all.

My tasting notes of the wines benefited from a second sampling the following evening from the remaining portion of wine. I should start by drawing your attention to the fills that can be observed in the image above of the three wines. The ullage is at the top of the shoulder for both the Giscours and Leoville Las Cases, and low neck for the Lascombes. These wines have not been topped up or recorked, so that is a remarkable fill level for wines that have been in bottle for 50 years.

1970 Giscours: Chateau Giscours was classified as a Third Growth in the 1855 Classification of Bordeaux wines. Fortunately, the excellent quality observed by those able to taste this wine at the time it was presented locally in the early 1970's, together with a comparatively modest price, served as an incentive to purchase by myself and many of my "wine" friends. In addition, the 1970 vintage of Bordeaux was considerably more accessible than previous heralded vintages such as the 1966 and 1961. Among the many 1970 tastings I attended, the Giscours, when included, did well, often outshining first and second growths that were supposedly superior chateaux.

The wine's appearance was a medium dark red with some light bricking on the edge. The bouquet was showing highly scented cherry/raspberry character with a hint of tar melded in a sweet toast framework. Medium body, excellent fruit, balanced with an excellent finish; a wine which seemed to be much younger than its 52 years.

1970 Leoville Las Cases: Chateau Leoville Las Cases was classified as a second growth in the 1855 Classification of Bordeaux wines and has maintained that status since. The bottle we sampled was the consensus favorite of the evening and certainly benefited from its compatibility with our food preparations. Its appearance showed a medium dark red hue with a light bricking on the edge. A bouquet of cherry, plum, hints of roasted pecans, and toast; a medium light body, excellent fruit, and good balance. The finish was excellent-- long, lush and marked by a near velvet coat of lingering berry flavors.

1970 Lascombes: Chateau Lascombes was classified as a second growth in the 1855 Classification of Bordeaux wines. This bottle had been stored in my cellar(s) over the years since purchase. In early tasting in the 1970's, this was a wine that I found attractive and one that fit much of what I imagined to be structured for the long term. By that I don't mean highly tannic, but rather balanced with fruit quality and acids, so that I could enjoy it at present while also looking forward to its future development. The many years have confirmed this decision to purchase the 1970 Chateau Lascombes was a wise one. It showed the darkest red hue among the three wines and the least amount of bricking on the edge. The bouquet was more subtle than dramatic and showed modest levels of cherry, raspberry, and hints of blueberry couched in a medium level of toast; it had a medium body, excellent fruit and was still well balanced. The finish, while excellent, was more robust and less elegant than the Leoville, while softer and more integrated than the Giscours.

A great evening with food, wine, and dear friends. No one requested Port.

Some Thoughts on Aging—Wine and Otherwise

By Robert Blumberg, M.D., Editor and Cellar Master

At a recent dinner party featuring some lovely old wines, I was asked by one of the other guests whether, when I originally bought wines like the ones being served, I had any particular timeframe in mind for aging them. Quite an interesting question and one that made me think back in time.

When I first got interested in buying and cellaring wine it was the late 1960's and into the '70's. The wine market was nowhere as brisk back then as it is today, and there were some older wines still available. They showed up in tastings and special dinners and other events and really helped educate our palates. In our youth the wines seemed like they had been aging in bottle a long time. For the most part these were wines from the second half of the '40's—1945,1947,1949, and into the '50's, so they were 20 to 25 years old. We saw that some were tired, but most were still fascinating and complex and helped us recognize the value of a properly aged wine. And of course, good wines, even great wines, were much more affordable back then so putting a few bottles away of current releases, even the most famous, was very feasible.

Now at the recent dinner in question as elegantly described in the article above by Jim Gallagher, we were tasting three classified growth Bordeaux from the 1970 vintage—Chateaux Giscours, Lascombes, and Leoville las Cases. While I'm not really certain how long I had in mind to age wines from the 1970 vintage when first purchased, I am certain it was not to keep them for more than 50 years before drinking.

The dinner in question was at the home of Jim Gallagher. Jim and I started collecting wine around the same time, and we have cellars that often complement each other. So, if one of us has yearning for a particular bottle or two, the other often has something complimentary to add. This evening the Giscours came from my cellar and the Lascombes and Leoville from Jim's.

The friend who asked the question about aging goals is Thom Fox, a professional chef who prepared our dinner that evening. Thom has a great interest in wine and in pairing food and wine, and his preparation of dinner courses followed by a special selection of cheeses by Thom's wife Susan, kept us in heaven with food and wine for hours that evening. But that is what good friends, good food, and good wines are all about.

To that I would add good memories, for at an event like this, thanks to the cumulative years of experience present, tales of food, wine, adventures, bottles found and bottles drunk flow as easily as the second and third glasses do.

So how did these bottles escape being consumed earlier and why were they still around a half century after their vintage? Probably more luck than plan. I for one do not have a computerized record of my cellar, beyond that small element of a computer that still exists in my brain. Reality is that, as we age, our memories do tire and the risk is that wines may lurk hidden and undiscovered in the cellar crevices.

There's a lot to be said for computer inventories of cellars—a quick glance at a well-organized program tells you what you still have and you are much less likely to lose or forget a bottle in the cellar. For those with cellars larger and more valuable than mine, a computer inventory or well-tended cellar book is probably a necessity these days. On the other hand, I cannot discount the joy of coming across a hidden treasure that needs to be opened and thus provides an excuse for the assembly of good friends.

Realistically, not all old bottles will live up to our expectations. There is a thrill to the unknown—what lurks beyond the cork? That evening all three of our wines were wonderful; all definitely clarets to the nose and palate, all distinct, all drinking well, and all filling their glasses with changing bouquets and evocative memories.

Serving old wines is not easy. Extracting fragile old corks is hazardous, and almost always a bit of the cork crumbles and cork extractors and filters are helpful tools to have at hand. Do you open the wine hours ahead so the long-contained bouquet has time to blossom or just minutes before so the evanescent aromas can still be appreciated? Should it be decanted, or just carefully poured off the sediment. And what foods do you pair with a delicate old wine—you certainly don't want a mushroomy, cedary, earthy old Bordeaux compromised by a hot chili sauce!

Alas it seems I am reminded all too often these days that aging bodies have aches and pains, vision and hearing dim, and energy levels often leave much to be desired. But if being older means you have a few old wines in the cellar, to enjoy and offer a brief respite from life's challenges, let's hear it for being older. I for one am happy that I was able to put away some bottles way back then. Even though I probably had no idea at the time how long to keep them.

Review of a Scientific Article

Reviewed by Daniel Bikle, M.D., Ph.D.

Editor's Note: Our scientific expert reviewer, Dr. Dan Bikle, has found an interesting and a positive article on wine and health for us this month. It seems like if you are concerned about maintaining your memory of what is in your cellar, frequent visits to the cellar may be just what the doctor ordered.

Moderate wine consumption associated with lower risk of dementia

Schaefer SM, Kaiser A, Behrendt I, Eichner G, Fasshauer M. Association of alcohol types, coffee, and tea intake with risk of dementia: Prospective cohort study of UK Biobank Participants. 2022 Brain Sciences:

doi.org/10.3390/brainsci12030360

In this study the authors queried the UK Biobank to study the association between wine consumption, non-wine alcohol consumption, coffee, and tea consumption with the onset of dementia over time. They identified 4270 cases of dementia in a data base with 351,436 participants aged between 38-73 years old. Initial baseline assessment was performed between 2006-2010 and reassessed February 2022 for 4.2 million person-years of observation. Exclusion criteria were 1) preexisting dementia at baseline and incident dementia within 2 years after baseline; 2) missing smoking data; 3) missing socioeconomic status; 4) missing percent body fat; 5) missing information on beverage intake or higher than 0.1% alcohol, coffee or tea consumption. In the primary analysis all non-alcohol drinkers were excluded based on

the concept that non drinkers might include former drinkers and/or those who did not drink alcohol for health reasons, thus including a less healthy group at baseline. Two secondary analyses were also performed in which former drinkers but not life long abstainers were excluded (S1) or all non-drinkers were included (S2). The authors used ICD-10 codes to define dementia. The data were adjusted by sex, age, ethnicity, educational achievements (including test scores), physical activity, percent body fat, smoking status. No distinction between red and white wine was made, and the type of non-wine alcohol was not broken out in the report.

Mean age was 57 for women, 58 for men. 96.7% of participants identified as white. Nearly all subjects reported as being in good to excellent health. Standard of living was well distributed from low to high as was educational achievement. Women had a higher % body fat (36.2) compared to men (25.3). Women had a higher % of never smokers (57.3) than men (48.4) but current smokers were low for both sexes (8.3 and 11.5, respectively). The mean wine intake was 5.7g/day, the same for men and women. On the other hand, the mean non-wine alcohol intake was 1.4g/day for women and 11.4g/day for men. Coffee intake mean was 2 cups/day for both sexes; tea intake mean was 3 cups/day for both sexes.

The major conclusion is that the hazard ratio (HR) for developing dementia was associated with a U-shaped curve of wine consumption with the nadir being between 21-23g alcohol/day. (22g alcohol amounts to approximately 5.5 oz of a 14% cabernet). For those with little wine consumption, (teetotalers were excluded from the primary analysis) the HR was 1.2 relative to the nadir. At higher levels of consumption, the splay is broad but trended upward. The secondary analyses (S1 and S2 as defined above) reach similar conclusions but with subtle rightward shifts in the nadir and a higher HR in teetotalers. The nadir was essentially the same for both men and women, not supporting the standard notion that women should drink less wine than men. In contrast consumption of non-wine alcohol showed no protective effect of alcohol consumption, with increased association with dementia the more non wine alcohol consumed. So forget the cocktail before dinner folks. Coffee consumption tended to show a nadir at 3 cups/day but did not reach significance. On the other hand, tea consumption showed a nadir at 4 cups or 7 cups for women and men, respectively.

So, what do we make of this? The authors invoke the usual suspects for the beneficial effects of wine, namely potential neuroprotective effects of resveratrol. But the data do not distinguish between red and white wine. However, this may be the first report suggesting a protective effect of wine vs other forms of alcohol. That said the study has a number of limitations. The data are from the Biobank of one country (UK) and nearly all participants are white. The data of beverage consumption is by self-report. Finally, this is an association study, although the authors did make a good faith effort to adjust for many of the variables we think of with such studies, such as wine consumption being associated with other aspects of a good life style. This is not the first study to suggest that moderate wine consumption is associated with a healthier brain, but possibly the first to suggest that wine might be a better way of drinking than other alcoholic beverages. This is good news. However, I suspect all of us in the SMFW knew this all along.

Daniel Bikle, M.D., Ph.D.

Some Further Thoughts on Wine Aging

Editor's Note: My article on wine aging referred to red wines. At that very same dinner, Jim Gallagher opened a 15-year-old Chardonnay. The wine, simply put, was magnificent, and Jim will tell you a lot more about it and I suspect, pique your interest in letting at least a few select white wines slumber away in the cellar before drinking.

2006 Chardonnay, Marcassin Estate

By Jim Gallagher, Ph.D.

This was an awesome wine that immediately compels the taster to recognize “an experience” is taking place. Color in the glass is a striking deep, rich golden hue exemplifying the purity of the grandest jewel. A bouquet explodes from the glass of honied baked apples couched within a citrus bath, baking spices and sweet toast. Medium to big in body, with mouth filling fruit and amazing acid structure knitted within a lingering velvet viscous finish. One of Helen Turley’s greatest Chardonnays.



2006 Chardonnay, Marcassin “Estate”

My earliest recognition of Helen Turley was when she was the winemaker for BR Cohn. The Cabernet Sauvignons she produced from 1984 through 1986 at BR Cohn were consistently consensus favorites in wine judgments at my wine seminars. In those days it was not typical for cabernets from a Sonoma winery to win out over prestigious Napa cabernets. The Proprietor, Bruce Cohn, previously known mostly for his success as the Doobie Brother’s business manager, had clearly become one of California’s top Cabernet Sauvignon vintners. Bruce often acknowledged his gratitude for Charley Wagner’s (Caymus) guidance and mentorship.

It was near this time that I was assisting a friend who was producing a benefit wine tasting for the Hemophilia Foundation in Fort Mason and in my role of securing winery participation, invited BR Cohn to pour at the event, and Bruce graciously accepted and brought his famed Cabernet Sauvignon to pour. While conversing with Bruce at the event, he pulled out a 1986 Chardonnay ‘Barrel Select’ that had not been released. He said it was sort of an experiment of his winemaker, Helen Turley, and was looking for some feedback. It was an extraordinary wine. And as was typical at the time, I circulated to others that they should try Bruce’s Chardonnay.

Again, the consensus was a similar, “Wow! That’s a great Chardonnay”.

Turley’s route to winemaking followed her study at Cornell University, Turley gained recognition from her work with Northern California vintners which included well-known producers such as BR Cohn, Bryant, Colgin, Martinelli, and Peter Michael, at a time when there were few outstanding female winemakers in California.

In the early 1990s, she and her husband, John Wetlaufer, founded Marcassin Vineyard along the Sonoma Coast and planted pinot noir and chardonnay grapes in their coastal property. Their Marcassin wines have achieved some of the highest praise from wine critics and consumers, and sadly, remain a very difficult label to access. Robert Parker has often been quoted for his ultimate compliment “In the autumn years of my career I have come to think this (Marcassin) may be the greatest chardonnay in the world.”

A Virtual Tasting of Rhone and California Rhone-style Wines

May 14, 2022

By Robert Blumberg, M.D., Editor and Cellar Master

I guess if there is anything good to have come from the Covid epidemic and forced lifestyle changes it would be the advancement and broad utilization of home video technology to allow one to partake in meetings, educational courses, concerts, and even wine tastings from the comfort and safety of your own home. Early on in the epidemic when we realized we were going to have to cancel our dinners and wine tours, we turned to “Zoom” technology to allow us to maintain contact with members and allow us to “share” a glass of wine together.

The early days of our use of the technology were punctuated by technical glitches, internet speed issues, and people “sharing” their voices for conversations not meant to be shared. It is actually gratifying to look back and realize how quickly our members adapted and how we can now hold meetings for our executive committee, our board, and for the entire membership with ease and comfort.

Although the severity and lethality of the pandemic is now much more in control, the number of cases continues unpredictable. We have started to resume in person activities such as our March 5, 2022 dinner at Poggio and our upcoming winery tour of the Petaluma Gap scheduled for this coming July 23, while at the same time realizing there is still a role for virtual events to allow for members to participate in the safety and comfort of their own homes and to allow members to invite guests to experience society activities at the same time.

Thus, was born the plan for our Virtual Tasting of wines from the Rhone and from California made from “Rhone” type grapes that was held on May 14, 2022. President David Schwartz, M.D. and immediate Past President and Event Coordinator Jim Gallagher, Ph.D. planned the event and each purchased a number of wines to taste and decide which made the “final cut” for the event.

I was privileged to be included in the initial tasting and of course attended the virtual tasting. My notes on the Virtual Tasting follow, so if you also attended you can compare your thoughts with mine. I then conclude with my notes of all the wines considered so you can appreciate what other wines were evaluated.

Wines Tasted at the Virtual Tasting May 14, 2022

We wanted to have white Rhone style wine represented in the tasting since so many are of interest and provide a bountiful taste experience to contrast with more commonly consumed Chardonnay and Sauvignon Blancs. The wine selected for the evening was **Margerum M5**, Santa Barbara County White Rhone Blend **2020**: Light yellow in color, with a honeyed, bananas and floral nose along with apricots. This is a rich wine, somewhat between dry and off dry in taste, with appealing fruit and adequate acidity. Medium full in body with a nice creamy finish. This is a lovely wine that is a blend of Grenache Blanc, Marsanne, Roussanne, Viognier and Picpoul Blanc.

We had three reds, two from California and one from France. The first is the **Neyers Winery, Sage Canyon 2019**. This is a blend of Mourvedre, Carignane, Grenache, and Syrah. Some of the grapes are from vines more than a century old grown on their own roots in the Evangelho Vineyard, near Antioch, in Contra Costa County. The color is medium dark garnet. The aroma is lively strawberry jam. The wine is very fruity with nice flavors and finish. Medium to medium full in body, with moderate acidity and tannins that produce nice balance. Additional aroma and flavor complexities of stems, spiciness, and that exotic blend of wild herbs and spices called garigue in France further engage the senses.

For our next wine we go down south to the Santa Ynez Valley, an area that has become quite known and celebrated for its white and red Rhone style wines. **Kunin Pape Star Santa Ynez Valley 2018** is the winery’s take on Chateuneuf du Pape, with a grape composition of Grenache, Mourvedre, Syrah, and Cinsault. The color is medium garnet, and the nose is that of ripe berries, cherries, and smokiness. A substantial wine with medium full body, medium tannins and body enhanced by notable alcohol and considerable spiciness. This wine is meant to accompany foods like rich stews and ripe cheeses.

Next, we are off to France where most of the southern Rhone wines are blends of multiple grapes. The one we chose for the final tasting, however, is 100% Grenache, and it showed so well in our initial tasting we could not ignore it. **Domaine Lafage “Cuvee Nicolas” Catalanes “Vielle Vignes” 2019** is medium dark garnet in color and has lovely sweet fruit on the palate that carries over into the finish. This is a big wine with abundant alcohol, yet at the same time it has a seductive softness and leaves your palate feeling impressed and satisfied. Medium full in body, with medium acidity and moderate tannins. Enjoyable now but certainly will age.

As I mentioned earlier, to help select the wines for the Virtual Tasting we got together for a tasting of a number of additional wines that David and Jim had selected. All wines were bagged and lettered so the tasting was blinded. For

completeness I am listing my notes on the rest of the wines that were not selected, but a number of which were still noteworthy. I hope this helps you appreciate the whole process of how the wines were evaluated and the hard “work” your dynamic trio were happy to embark on for your Society.

The Whites

Bonny Doon “Le Cigare Blanc” Central coast White Rhone Blend **2020**: Light to medium yellow. Aromatics of bananas and tropical fruits. This is a soft wine, not unpleasant, but rather adynamic. A blend of Grenache Blanc 60%, Vermentino 32%, and Clairette Blanc. 8%. I remember earlier vintages being more interesting.

Domaine Chante Cigale Chateauneuf du Pape Blanc, 2020: Pale yellow. An appealing nose with bananas and floral quality. Medium full in body, light medium acidity. A floral wine that is simple. A blend of 20% Rousseau, 20% Clairette, 20% Picpoul, 20% Grenache Blanc and 20% Bourblanc.

The Reds

Domaine la Garrigle “Cuvee Romaine” Cotes du Rhone 2020: Fresh, grapey and blackberry nose. Very fruity. The taste is strawberry like, with the finish syrupy and grapey. Medium plus body, low medium acidity, medium to medium full tannins. Put a chill on it and take it to a picnic.

Chateau de Montfaucon Lirac 2018: This is a fairly big, bold, and somewhat hot wine. Medium dark purple crimson in color with ripe cherries in the nose. Fruit forward on the palate, though some burn in finish due to the alcohol. Medium full body and tannins; light medium to medium acidity.

Domaine Roche “La Bousquette” Cairanne 2019: Dense black purple color. Big and tannic on the palate, as the color might indicate it would be. Somewhat musty also. Full body, light medium acidity, full tannins. A wine for pasta with a rich tomato sauce, a big stew like boeuf bourguignon, or to forget, depending on your palate preference.

Drew Grenache Syrah Mourvedre Mendocino Ridge 2018: Medium dark carmine (bright reddish purple) color. Very nice nose. A big and fruity wine, but alas also a bit flabby and needing energy. Plummy dark cherry flavors. Medium full body, medium plus tannins, medium acidity.

California Grown Italian Varietals

By David Schwartz, M.D.

As many of you may know, I have a fondness for Italian wines and unusual Italian varietals. I recently attended a wine tasting at the San Francisco Ferry Building, one of the city’s most famous landmarks. **Giornatta**, a winery based in Paso Robles, served five of their Italian varietals. Brian Terrizzi is the owner and winemaker who started his career at Rosenblum Cellars in Alameda. After working in Tuscany, learning “old world” techniques and then returning to California, Brian attended the Enology program at Fresno State University where he met his wife, Stephanie, who currently manages their vineyard. After Fresno State, Brian founded Broadside Wines in Paso Robles with Chris Brockway. A few years later, Brian and Stephanie founded **Giornatta** in Paso Robles. The winery produces all Italian varietals sourced from California’s Central Coast. Wines featured at the tasting were:

- a 2021 Fiano, with fresh bright honeysuckle notes and good acidity – a nice alternative to Pinot Grigio
- a 2020 Barbera, with lush, well-balanced fruit, the aroma of mixed berry yogurt, good acidity and a low alcohol level with a long finish
- a 2018 Nebbiolo, with a lighter color, pleasant fruit and ready to drink (considering its youth) flavors. A fine representation of California Nebbiolo

- The 2018 Gemellaia, a blend of Sangiovese and Merlot with a hint of “Super Tuscan” to it. The wine was rich and balanced with good acidity
- The Aglianico 2019, French Camp, featured violet, dried blueberry and vanilla notes - a full bodied wine with good finish and moderate tannins for a strong varietal.

If you are planning a trip to Paso Robles in the near future, I recommend that you visit the unique Giornatta wines for a taste of Italy closer to home. Meanwhile, please contact me with your thoughts, feedback, wine notes and suggestions for the Society.

Welcome New Members!

Susan Schwartz, Secretary

The Society of Medical Friends of Wine is “rebuilding” our membership following the pandemic related disruptions to active social life as we knew it pre-2020, and also due to losing members to relocating out of area and other factors. We cherish each of our active members, and we welcome potential members - some of whom have attended prior events as guests, others who are friends, family and acquaintances of existing members, as well as anyone who shares interest in the goals and activities of the Society.

Welcome to new members Henry Kim, Dr. Dennis Noss, and Gianna Fugazzi. Mr. Kim joined SMFW after attending the November 2021 Cheese and Wine event led by Janet Fletcher and Cellarmaster Dr. Bob Blumberg. Ms. Fugazzi, winemaker at *Wander-Must Wines* in Sonoma, met President David Schwartz at a presentation of her wines at the California Wine Merchant shop in San Francisco,-subsequently joined the Society and participated in the May virtual Rhone-style wine tasting, as did Mr. Kim. Dr. Noss is also a member of the Société Mondiale du Vin, affiliated with The Chaîne des Rôtisseurs gastronomic society.

Each member has a story that has led him or her to be a part of the Society’s wine education mission with opportunities to learn together and experience the dinners, tours and tastings with congenial peers. Any person who shares an interest in the Society of Medical Friends of Wine purpose and values is welcome to join. Please direct prospective members to Executive Secretary Claire Bloomberg Keiser at societyofmedicalfriendsofwine@gmail.com, or to the member application form on the SFMW website.

Thank You to All Members for Your Active Support and Participation!

Thank You Donors!

Since February 2022, the month when the Society's annual budget cycle begins, nearly half of our members have contributed cash donations in addition to their annual member dues. These donations help to support the costs of operating as a non-profit organization at a point in time when membership dues do not cover all of our budgeted costs, but donations help to close the gap. Donations received through March 2022 were acknowledged in the April newsletter.

At this time, we thank Emeritus member Dr. Morton Rivo for his recent donation. Dr. Rivo is also a past president of SMFW. Please remember the Susan Guerguy Memorial Fund as you consider your donation, and also let the society know if you have a potential donor friend or associate in the business community who would like to make a donation. Contact Board Secretary Susan Schwartz through the society's e-mail (see above), for a donation request letter.

Finally, if you or a friend or family member shops through Amazon, please initiate your purchases through the no-cost *Amazon Smile* link on the SMFW website. The Amazon Smile program will donate one-half of one percent of total purchases to your selected charity; so a high value or high volume purchase activity can help to build credits, at no additional cost, to benefit SMFW.