



## The Spokane Enological Society

### WineMinder

### Message From the President!

It's February – we're supposed to be celebrating "LOVE" – *oh gosh, why do I remember this so vividly:* a LONGGG time ago I bought a "Kissometer" (or kiss-o-meter maybe), which was all the rage that Summer...it was supposed to measure how thrilling your kisses were – you put your lips on the bottom of this fat plastic tube and some sort of liquid (paraffin oil?) would rise up to a mark on the attached cardboard box to tell you (and all of your friends) if your kisses were ice cold, sweet, exciting, passionate, naughty or, if you're lucky, 100% HOT STUFF! Well, if I think about it, my wine glass is sort of like a "Kissometer" – look how sexy the process is of selecting just the right glass for that bottle of wine: first you GRAB IT, then you HOLD IT between your thumb, forefinger and middle finger, then you rest your hand on its welcoming base; you carefully pour the wine from way up high and watch it as it tumbles into your glass with a gurgle and gasp of air, then you throw the wine around in the glass into a swirl to unlock all the aromas; then you smell them, and anxiously put your lips to the glass to sip the emotion that wine is going to give to you; the anticipated passion that you will LOVE what's inside. Now THAT is what I call **100% HOT STUFF!** **Enjoy what you love in February!**

### **REGISTRATION REMINDERS**

#### **RIEDEL GLASS DEMO AND WINE TASTING – WED. FEB. 13 – 6:00 to 8:00 PM**

Southside Community Center – event host is the charismatic territory manager for Riedel Crystal of America, MariBeth Baumberger – registration fee is \$50.00 per person and includes four wines specially selected for this unique "sensory" tasting, and a RIEDEL EXTREME glassware set for the tasting

and to take home with you (retail value is \$99.00). Seating is limited to 60 people so please register early if you'd like to attend.

***Paul and I participated in last year's Riedel event and we can tell you the experience and the glassware is well worth the cost of this event – MariBeth's presentations are dynamic!***

#### **FEBRUARY TASTING "LOOKING DOWN THE RABBIT HOLE - CURIUSER AND CURIUSER!" – MON. FEB. 18 – 7:00 to 9:00 PM**

Southside Community Center – event host is the seriously enthusiastic **Eric Sloane**, wine steward of Yoke's Fresh Market on Argonne Road in Spokane Valley. This tasting includes a welcome wine from Greece, the first flight wines are from France, and the second, third, finale, and bonus wine flights are all from Italy.

***I've sampled these wines and think you too will be so surprised at how good they are - this Tasting is going to be a dreamlike adventure in the wonderland of Eric's wines!***

Registration for both events is now open so reserve your seat at the table and we look forward to seeing you soon! Go to:

[www.spokaneenologicalsociety.org/events](http://www.spokaneenologicalsociety.org/events)

**2018/2019**

**EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

Club President	Claudia Hersey*
Vice-President – Food Committee Chair	Sharon McHugo*
Secretary	Jack Leininger*
Treasurer	Darren Digiacinto*

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Special Events Committee Chair	Eva Roberts
Board Member	Patricia Schultz*
Board Member – Extra Special Events Committee Chair	Michael Simonson*
Education Director	Jeff Snow
Web Master & WineMinder Co-Chair	Dave Whipple

\* Indicates Board Member

**Events:**

There are ten events per year, with July and August off. Dinners are in December and April (dates TBD), and all tastings are on the third Monday of the month.

Dinners are at the Spokane Club at 6:30, and tastings are at the Southside Community and Senior Center at 7:00.

**About the Spokane Enological Society:**

The Spokane Enological Society is a not-for-profit organization governed by an elected 18-member board of directors. The purpose of the society is to provide its members with opportunities to gain further knowledge and appreciation of wine. Functions are social and educational, usually centered on tasting, comparing and evaluating wines.

Being a non-profit organization allows us to get a special event license from the Washington Liquor Control Board, which allows us to buy wine at wholesale prices directly from Washington distributors or wineries. These savings help keep our costs low and are passed along to club members. The tastings are an exceptional value.

**Board Meetings:**

The SES board meets at 7:00 PM on the second Monday of every month except July and August. Attendees are asked to provide a bottle of wine and a snack to share.

Location: Southside Community and Senior Center, located at 3151 E 27th Ave, Spokane.

Board meetings are open to club members with prior notice to the President, Claudia Hersey at [claudia@thinklakeside.com](mailto:claudia@thinklakeside.com).

Next meeting: February 11<sup>th</sup>, 2019

**Membership news:**

Remember to spread the word about the Enological Society to your friends and neighbors.

Dues are \$25 for a single and \$40 for a couple. New members pay an additional \$5 setup fee.

## Down the Rabbit Hole “A Journey That Gets Curiouser and Curiouser”

**Presented by Eric Sloane**

Wine Steward, Yoke's Fresh Market (Montgomery near Argonne Location)

Almost all of us begin our wine journey on a bunny trail from something else in life. I was putting myself through university on the way to becoming an investment banker when I first came upon this mysterious and bottomless “rabbit hole” called **vitis vinifera**. The longer I am in the pursuit and profession of wine, the more I am interested in finding its obscure reaches. In my job, I try a lot of wines with friends, at trade events, etc. There is an inexhaustible amount of great wine made around the world and I love those wines. The only catch is that many of them taste the same. They are clean, well-made, correct wines, but they taste like the last Cab Sauv and the Cab Sauv before that. If you are not in the profession or an avid taster, but simply a wine drinker, these wines are probably exactly what you're looking for. But I love it when a wine surprises me and (what I term) “**defibs**” me. It gets my wine heart going again. It wakes me from my vitis slumber. I hope you find some of that same electrification in the wines I present to you.

Vitis vinifera can be grown in two bands of latitude around the world: one north and one south. There is a theoretical possibility to grow wine grapes anywhere in those bands as long as a few other criterion are met. That means there are lots of choices out there.

Our “welcome” wine, ([Domaine Spiropoulos, “Ode Panos” Brut Rose](#)), comes from one of the most ancient wine regions; Greece. It is a sparkling wine made from the **Moschofilero** grape. This grape is native to the Peloponnese region of Greece. The grape has a grey/pink skin but is most often made into a white wine. The version here is actually made into a rose sparkling wine with a slight amount of skin contact. It is known for being aromatic like a Viognier and crisp like a dry Riesling. It has quite a few layers aromatically, and on the palate it presents dry and crisp. This is the perfect combination to open-up your taste buds for the rest of the tasting.

The next two wines, a white and a red, are made from grapes that are cousins of familiar varieties that we know and love. The first wine is **Aligote** ([2017 Domaine due Priure Bourgogne Aligote](#)), a white wine, which is a cousin of Chardonnay that is also grown in Burgundy. A few centuries ago, it was deemed not worthy and thus banished to the hinterlands of the region. Today, there is only one village in Burgundy in which this grape must be used by law. It shares many of the characteristics of Chardonnay like apples and other tree fruits. It does bring an elevated level of acidity to the table. The best examples have a chalky minerality on the palate that is most reminiscent of a great Chablis. I believe that in the coming years, this grape will make a triumphant return to the upper echelons of renowned grapes. Our next wine is **Gamay Noir** ([2015 Domaine Les Fines Graves, Chenas](#)), a red wine, which is a cousin of the more famous Pinot Noir. Many years ago, a French nobility did not believe it held the same quality as Pinot and relegated it to the southern lands of Burgundy in a place called Beaujolais. While the producers of Beaujolais made a commercial name for themselves with Beaujolais Villages and Beaujolais Nouveau, they held back the great wines of that place. After a renaissance of quality winemaking, they created a classification system based on a few villages. Those villages are allowed to use their name to make wine called Cru Beaujolais. I believe these are some of the most undervalued wines in the world. While no Gamay in the world can achieve the silky perfection of its cousin, Pinot Noir, some can come very close. What is often not close is the price. These wines are often available for \$20 or less and way over deliver the same red fruited, hi-toned acidity found in Pinot Noir with perhaps a little more depth and tannins. Both the Aligote and Gamay Noir are great wines to go with food.

***As we go down the rabbit hole, things get a little curiouser.*** The next two grapes, again, a white and a red, are from Italy. The first one, a white, ([2011 Vernaccia di San Gimignano](#)), Vernache is the grape.

One of the most unusual facts about this grape and place is this was the first DOC in Italian history. Yes, that's right. Not Chianti, not Barolo, not Barbaresco, but Vernaccia. To me, it resembles something like a wonderful Northern Italian Pinot Grigio blended with a dry Riesling. Many citrus fruits and crisp tree fruits abound. The red wine ([2016 Masseria Li Veli, Susumaniello](#)) is perhaps even more rare. There are only about 30 hectares of Susumaniello grape left in the world. It has aromas and a taste profile reminiscent of a mix between Pinot Noir and Grenache. It has beautiful red fruits and a savory element that is very appealing on its own, or with food. Both wines are medium bodied with great acidity.

As we remain in Italy for the next flight, we discover that neither of the grapes technically come from the land mass that is Italy. They are both grapes from the islands off of Italy's coasts. The first, a white wine, is called **Carricante** ([2015 Benanti, Etna Bianco](#)). Carricante is the grape. It is grown on the slopes of Mount Etna on the island of Sicily. It is a fuller bodied white with a rich texture yet great acidity, reminiscent of a good Chablis. The red varietal is called **Carignano** ([2012 Santadi, Carignano Del Sulcis](#)). Carignan is the grape. This is the same group as Carignan from the south of France. This example is grown on the island of Sardinia. Carignan as a grape can be quite rustic, but this example shows its prettier side. A mix of red and dark fruits with a salinity that tells you it was grown near an ocean. Both the places and grapes here are not mainstream, but maybe they should be.

Our final two wines will each come on their own for varying reasons. The first is an **Aglianico** ([2012 Piano Del Cerro, Agliancio Del Vulture](#)), from the south of Italy near a place called *Vulture*. Aglianico is the type of grape that makes Cabernet Sauvignon look like a wimp. The tannin structure of this grape is one of the **most intense of any red wine in the world**. This example sees 24 months in oak barriques and so packs a double wallop of tannin, fruit and wood. This is the type of wine that makes you wish you had a beautifully marbled piece of Waygu rib-eye in front of you.

Onto the last wine...***we are so far down the rabbit hole now that we may never get back!*** This wine ([2015 Francesco Intorcia Heritage, Grillo](#)) is made in the Marsala section of the island of Sicily. The grape is called **Grillo**. While it is not fortified it does resemble other Marsala wines. It is made like a Sherry or other oxidized wine. You will notice the nose is just like a Sherry you may have drank or cooked with. The palate is very complex with a lot of nuttiness, a bit of golden raisin, and a lot of bright acid. This is not a wine to pair with everything or drink as a cocktail. It is, however, a wonderfully complex wine that would pair perfectly with certain foods.

***That concludes our travels down the rabbit hole.*** My hope is that after this tasting you will be my ambassadors for some new grape varietals around Spokane's newly burgeoning food scene. All of the wines we sampled will make great accompaniments to many of the fabulous dishes you'll find on menus around town. Their names or places of origin may be a little outside of the known wine universe, but their tastes are wonderful and their structure is perfectly suited for food.

Please come join us on February 18th as we taste through the curious and mysterious world outside the familiar borders of Cabernet and Chardonnay. **Please bring two wine glasses and one flute.**

<b>RESERVATIONS:</b> Spokane Enological Society / P.O. Box 31404, Spokane, WA 99223	
<b>Down the Rabbit Hole</b> <b>February 18, 2019, 7:00 P.M.</b>	CAPPED AT 150 — RESERVE EARLY! Southside Community and Senior Center 3151 E 27th Ave Spokane, WA 99223
COST EACH: Members: \$25, Guests: \$30	Glasses: 2 wine glasses and 1 flute
Enc. is \$ _____ for _____ (#) Members.	▶ NAME(S): _____ _____
Enc. is \$ _____ for _____ (#) Guests.	▶ NAME(S): _____ _____
<b>Space is limited. Reservations must be received no later than Monday, February 11th, 2019.</b>	
NOTE: Prospective Members may submit an application and become a member at this event. Membership fee is \$30 for a single member, or \$45 for a couple.	
<b>REMEMBER TO BRING A VALID WASHINGTON STATE IDENTIFICATION CARD WITH YOU</b>	

# SNOW ON WINE

## HOW QUICKLY WE FORGET

By Dr. Jeff Snow

Have you seen the You Tube video of two bright 16 year-old boys whose Uncle offers a big “payoff” if they can complete a simple phone call to a 7-digit number within 5 minutes **on a standard desk telephone with rotary dial (ca 1975)**? Their series of errors in using the dial, not lifting the handset, and not recognizing a dial tone are hilarious to anyone over 25. As technology changes many simple skills disappear. So as screw top wine becomes more prevalent, will there come a time when **cork removal becomes a lost art**? Soon it may be only the grand old bottles in our cellars which need to have a cork removed. And **intact** removal of old corks can be a challenge requiring a practiced skillset.

Of course, any fool can remove a new cork with any handy corkscrew. But with age, corks soften and loose tensile strength. And often they are more adherent to the glass with a higher coefficient of friction, requiring more pull to move them. This can lead to corkscrews pulling out, leaving the cork cored and crumbling, or worse, having the bottom part break off and remain deep in the bottle neck, blocking it.

Having broken off, crumbled, and otherwise screwed up more old corks than most people, I developed a plan. You all have your favorite device which works perfectly on bottles less than 10 years old, and will sometimes work on older corks. Great! Improve your odds by being sure the “business end” is a **screw, not an auger**. (see photo #1 & #2). The screw will usually hold onto a soft cork better. Also, some corks are **longer**, and if the screw doesn’t reach the cork’s end, it will often break off and remain in the neck. And of course, steady, smooth, and straight pull reduces the chance of cork crumble and breakage. You get this with various **leavers, jack screws** or mechanical devices. But if signs of cork deterioration such as softness, wetness, or wine stain are seen, consider **Plan B** or “gasp,” **Plan C**.

**Plan B** works by moving the pull-out of the cork center with one of two alternatives: A **two-pronged** opener, sometimes called an AH SO (see photo #3); the two prongs slide down the outside of the cork, then the cork is freed by rotating (breaking adhesion) and pulling up. Another alternative, called “**corkpops**” (see photo #4), pushes the cork out. A needle is inserted through the cork and injected pressurized CO<sub>2</sub> gas pushes the cork up and out. These alternatives will remove most “tricky old corks” intact, but neither work well after the cork has been damaged by a corkscrew.

After damaging a cork, **Plan C** is to push the cork into the bottle using a bamboo chopstick I saved from *Cathay Inn*. Then decant the wine while holding the cork back with the stick. If guests are present, I simply say, “the wine needed decanting,” and smile.

So, there is your plan: 1) make sure your usual opener is a screw, of sufficient length, with mechanics for a smooth straight pull; 2) inspect the cork first, and if it looks questionable go to **Plan B**; 3) if, like me, you screw it up, avoid cursing or gasping, go to **Plan C**, and thank God for the experience you gained, smile, and enjoy that bottle.



PHOTO #1



PHOTO #2



PHOTO #3



PHOTO #4

