

July 2007

O.P.E.S. NEWS

Newsletter of the Olympic Peninsula Enological Society

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Greetings from the new president

Following in Bob Bentley's footsteps, as the president of OPES, is a mighty big step for this retired schoolteacher. After all, Bob founded the organization, for which I am extremely grateful, and he is the most knowledgeable person regarding wine that I've ever met. He's a CWE (Certified Wine Educator) for goodness sake! So... what is it that I, the incoming president of OPES have to offer? Well.... I like to drink wine. That's a qualification, isn't it? And I'm really good at making lists. So following is a list of possible OPES programs for the near and distant future. This list was generated at a recent board meeting/brainstorming session, and constitutes by no means all of our possibilities.

1. Program featuring organic wines
2. How to pair foods with wines
3. Good wines that cost less than \$15 per bottle
4. Varietal tasting
5. Blind tasting
6. How to taste wine/wine analysis
7. Featured winemaker
8. Oregon winemakers
9. Okanagan wines
10. Wines from Vancouver Island
11. Local winery
12. Wines with a 90+ rating
13. Greek wines
14. Italian wines
15. "Field trip" to taste wines
16. Columbia Gorge wines

In order to make these events happen it will take some effort and planning by many of us in OPES. If you feel you have a little time, energy, and/or expertise to help bring these plans to fruition, please contact our events chairs, Smitty and Vicki Lebkeucher at vickey123@msn.com, tel. (360) 698-0070. Thank you.

Jane Floyd, President of OPES

+++ Upcoming OPES Events +++**OPES #54*****Walla Walla's Rock Star of Syrah—Charles Smith of K Vintners***

Hosted by: Randy Riggins

Date: Friday, August 17, 2007**Time:** 6:00 to 9:00 PM**Cost:** \$58 per person (members) and \$68 (guests)**Location:** C'est Si Bon restaurant, Port Angeles

Two Walla Walla area vintners have been called the "Rock Stars of Syrah." One is the Frenchman Christophe Baron who produces the remarkable wines of Cayuse Winery and the other is Charles Smith of K Vintners.

I, past OPES President Randy Riggins, am proud to host a memorable evening with Charles Smith, owner and winemaker at K Vintners, Magnificent Wine Company and Charles Smith Wines. Charles has been producing wine since 1999, and his current production comes from three different viticulture areas: Walla Walla Valley, Red Mountain, and the Columbia Valley. Lately he has been a very busy boy; on Delta Airlines to JFK and Alaska Airlines to Chicago I was recently served his House wine to prove it. I was blown away with my first taste of 2002 House Wine back in December of 2004 and proceeded to purchase five cases of Charles 2003 vintages. But don't just take my word on it, *Wine Spectator* has rated 12 of his wines at 90 and above and *Wine Enthusiast* 14 wines at 90 and above with more than a few in that magical 92-94 range.

See www.kvintners.com/index.htm

C'est Si Bon is the Peninsula's premier French Restaurant with beautiful gardens, spacious European décor, and a warm ambiance on a par with any fine restaurant in the Northwest. Owners Norbert and Michelle Juhasz' classic French cuisine has been featured and highly rated in *Sunset Magazine*. See www.cestsibon-frenchcuisine.com. The amazing five-course menu for this event derives from the sunny, herb-infused cuisine of southern Rhone and Provence and is sure to delight.

Attendance is limited to 90 persons.

Advanced reservations are required; mail check to:

OPES, PO Box 4081, Sequim, WA 98382.

C'est Si Bon is located east of Port Angeles on Hwy 101 directly across from the Deer Park Cinema. For further information please call Randy Riggins (360) 457-8596 or Carol Peet (360) 457-4318 and visit our web site at www.opes.info.

OPES #55 *September Treat*

Hosted by: Dale and Lori Wyngaert

Date: Saturday, September 15, 2007**Time:** 4:00 PM**Cost:** \$25 per person**Location:** At the home of OPES members Dale and Lori Wyngaert (see directions below)

Dale and Lori are welcoming us to their home and preparing several mouth-watering delights. After much consideration, and some testing(!), we have chosen a few wines from around the world. This was not an easy task but certainly enjoyable! Featured will be: sushi, northwest seafood and international wines!

Bring: Two glasses; one for white wine and one for red.

And: Layered clothing--we hope to be on the deck.

Limited to 50 people.

Directions: Address is 623 Palo Alto Road, Sequim.

Palo Alto Road is almost opposite the turn to John Wayne Marina. Turn south off Highway 101, then drive ½ mile; it's on the left.

OPES #56 *Wines of the Canadian Okanagan*

Hosted by: Anne Davidson, Kaleden, BC,
Don and Marilyn Brenner, Port Townsend, WA

Date: Sunday, October 21, 2007

Time: Greeter: 5:30 PM; Seating: 6:00 PM

Cost: yet to be determined

Location: Gardiner Community Center, Gardiner, WA

Attendance will be limited.

Some wonderful food pairings are planned for the following wines:

Gray Monk Odyssey Pinot Gris will be the greeter wine.

An unwooded **Chardonnay** with the appetizers.

Little Straw Sauvignon Blanc and a **Gewürztraminer** with the salad.

Arrowleaf Zweigelt, Church Mouse Merlot, Hester Creek Cabernet Franc, Church and State Syrah will accompany the Entrée, which will feature roasted loin of pork.

Mt. Boucherie Pinot Noir Ice Wine will accompany dessert.

+++ Reviews of Past OPES Events +++

OPES #51 The Wines of Southern Oregon

This event featured wines from all three southern Oregon AVAs: Rogue Valley, Umpqua Valley, and Applegate Valley. Besides some boutique wineries, Abacela, Henry Estates, Foris, and Spangler wineries were represented. The wines were paired with a buffet dinner of mild Creole food. It was all delicious. Participants now know, if they didn't before, why southern Oregon wineries are gaining ever more serious attention in the world of wine.

OPES #52 "Terroir--A Sense of Place"

We tried something different! Our greeter wine was a Samson Estate Chardonnay from the Columbia Valley. Guests were asked to try several combinations of foods with the wine. There was turkey, Red Delicious apples, goat cheese and cheddar cheese--all with water crackers and bread. Although all the foods went with the wines, some combos were very appealing--some were not; and of course everyone's tastes are a little different.

Then we had a flight of three Rieslings. An '06 Penfold Bin 51, from southern Australia: an '06 Barnard Griffin from the Columbia Valley and an '05 Selbach Zeltinger Himmelreich Kabinett from Germany.

With these wines we presented hand crafted Braunsweiger, D'Anjou pears, bleu cheese and black olives. The favorites here were the bleu cheese and the pears!

Next we had a flight of Merlots: an '02 Chateau des Anneroux from France: an '05 Falesco IGT from Italy and an '04 Frog's Leap from the Napa Valley. With these wines we presented beef, Gouda, dried cherries and cranberries, green olives and pecans! Several combos here were mentioned as very good.

As we enjoyed testing these different tasting delights, Mary Earl from Grape Expectations in Silverdale, went to each table and told about the "Terroir" of the wines we were tasting.

We want to thank the Cheesemonger's Shop in Leavenworth, WA, for the delicious Braunsweiger and the Old Amsterdam Gouda. It is a shame they are so far away!

OPES #53 "Willakenzie Estate: The Many Faces of Pinot"

Wine Educator Bob Bentley, our event chair, hosted Ronni Lacroute, owner of Willakenzie Estate winery, in a program that offered a range of this prestigious winery's very highly rated wines, including Pinot Blanc, Pinot Gris, Pinot Meunier, and three of their exceptional Pinot Noirs, one a prized "library" 1999 vintage. This was a wine dinner program with a wonderful French touch, featuring a rack of lamb entree and several delightful matching courses to the wines.

After telling the history of how clonal evolution of the different Pinot grape varieties has evolved, Ronni described how "dirt matters", an explanation of how Willakenzie's many innovative organic and sustainable viticulture and winemaking practices emphasize the precise use of terroir and blending styles. Bob noted how this winery has received national and international recognition, being featured in the *Wall Street Journal*, *Newsweek*, and nearly all major wine publications. Every wine of the six types we sampled has scored at 90+ ratings, a truly outstanding feat.

The dinner courses began with a newly issued 2006 Pinot Blanc, served with delicious Mt. Townsend cheeses, a relish tray & baguettes: An equally fresh 2006 Pinot Gris paired exceptionally well with a warm spinach & crabmeat salad touched with a balsamic reduction dressing. Next followed a salmon bisque served with a 2003 Pinot Meunier--a rarely produced varietal most often used to blend in French Champagnes--for many, probably the most unique and surprising wine discovery of the evening.

The entrée served was a rack of New Zealand lamb with Dijon bread crumb coating and a rosemary demi-glaze presented with Haricot Verts, sautéed julienne carrots and rosemary roasted red potatoes. Paired with this main course were a 2004 Kiana Pinot Noir and a 2001 Emery Pinot Noir. Ronni described the style differences as between a "feminine" and a "masculine" Pinot Noir, each with its own distinct character.

A triple chocolate mousse cake dessert followed, served with a library collector-quality, 1999 Pierre Leon Pinot Noir, just now at its prime.

Ronni explained how most of these older vintage Pinot Noirs have long been sold out by the winery and as a result can actually increase in market value. As the local Washington distributor was equally sold out and could only furnish one of these wines, several were ordered by Bob Bentley through the Willakenzie mail order club and a couple raided from his cellar.

These elegant food and wine pairings and Ronni's exciting and energetic program truly made this a highly entertaining and educational evening.

+++ Miscellaneous +++

R.I.P.

It has been noted by some of the "older" members of OPES, that two members from the early years have passed on. Buddy Brock's obituary appeared in the *PDN* a few months ago, and it was noted that his wife Carol had preceded him. Their passing is mourned by those who knew them.

Another benefit of OPES membership!

OPES members are entitled to attend Kitsap, Seattle and Yakima area wine events as members. To acquire information on their upcoming events:

The Kitsap group uses Email only for its newsletter.

To contact these groups:

Kitsap: kitsapwines.org.

Seattle: seattlewinesociety.org

Yakima: yakimawine.org

Wine at the Coast?

There is rumbling and fomenting to promote an OPES wine event at Ocean Crest (Moclips, WA) sometime in the first quarter of 2008. Of course it would be an overnighter. If you would be interested in attending such an event, or helping with its planning, please contact:

Vicki Lebkeucher

9505 Provost Road NW

Silverdale WA 98383

360-698-0070

vickey123@msn.com

Harvest of Hope Winemaker's Gala

Following is information about a non-OPES wine event. It is included here as a service to our readers and to the Cancer Center in Sequim.

Date: October 13, 2007

Location: Sunland Golf & Country Club

Winemaker: Walla Walla Vintners

Chef: Doug Seaver - owner of Cedar Creek Restaurant and the Port Townsend Tasting Room & Lounge

Presenting Sponsor: Seattle Cancer Care Alliance

Ticket Price: \$125 per person

This black tie optional evening offers the opportunity to enjoy fabulous food and fine wine among friends. We serve a five course dinner with a different wine poured for each course. As last year, we expect the event to sell out again this year. During the course of the evening we are raising money for a most worthy cause--all proceeds directly benefit the Cancer Center in Sequim.

If any of your members would like to be added to our invitation list or have any questions please ask them to contact me at 683-3300 or at saralmaloney@hotmail.com.

Another Local Wine Shop

Looking for a new wine supplier? For those living near Sequim you may wish to try out the Dungeness Bay Wine and Cheese shop located at 123 E. Washington Street within the small shopping center. Jean and Craig Haught have been in business several months now, and they offer a limited, but unusual, variety of very interesting wines you will not find at the state liquor store. There are some unique wines available at moderate prices.

Plus they offer a 15% discount for 6 or more bottles. They sell assorted cheeses and other similar food items which go well with wine. Their phone is (360) 681-2778.



NOTE

OPES hopes you will note the business cards pictured on our back cover. These merchants and individuals are helping support your newsletter by renting the space. We hope you will thank and patronize them.

A new card to appear this month is from **Harbinger Winery**—the Peninsula’s newest winery. This month an item appeared in the *Peninsula Daily News* about **Harbinger’s** most recent success in wine competitions: Three medals from the Sunshine and Wine Festival in Yakima—Dynamo Red (gold!) and 2005 Cab Franc and 2005 Syrah, both bronze. These awards are in addition to nine other awards at earlier competitions. Winemaker Sara Gagnon knows her stuff, and if you still haven’t tried her wines, you should! The **Harbinger** tasting room is a couple miles west of PA on Highway 101.

Editor’s Dregs

Every so often I think about the correlation between a wine’s quality and its price. It’s a complex issue. First of all, the definition of “quality” will inevitably be subjective and elusive. What Bob Parker says may not agree with *Wine Spectator*, and my humble palate may well disagree with both of them.

I have repeatedly noticed in *Wine Spectator* that they may rate, for example, an \$80 bottle of Shiraz at 91 and an \$18 cousin, perhaps even from the same winery, at 93. It’s not always that extreme, but you get my point.

And I find that in my endeavors to please my own palate, a more expensive wine isn’t necessarily going to be any better than a cheaper one, though it surely might be. The trick, as I’m sure most of us have discovered, is to taste a variety of readily available wines, and find which ones are the best for the price. This is of course a win-win situation, since it’s fun to try new wines, and it’s fun to drink the ones we already know will be good. (Incidentally, some wag has termed those of us who are always seeking the best wines for the lowest prices as “bottom feeders”. Well, la-di-dah!)

But then there’s travel.

I just recently returned from a 5-week trip to Europe. The first couple weeks were spent mostly in the capable hands of professionals, so wine selections were usually quite good and the price was unknown. But then, in Florence and in Germany, the challenge was to find decent wines that didn’t cost a fortune. Frankly, it pretty much didn’t work. In the short time I had to play this game, it turned out that the higher the price, the better the wine (for my palate). The one exception to this was Fürst von Metternich Sekt in Germany. My relatives there swooned with adoration for this relatively pricey bubbly. I couldn’t wait to try it. They told me it was made exclusively from Riesling grapes, and that should have clued me. Well, I found it cloying and almost undrinkable. There were substitutes from Spain at 1/3 the price which I far preferred. Then there was the time Jane and I were traveling and camping down the Baja California peninsula of Mexico. Jane wanted to sample the local wines as we moved slowly south. Each time she tried a bottle, it was dreadful, so the next bottle she upped the ante and paid more. This kept up until the price was borderline exorbitant and the wines still sucked. End of experiment; she switched to rum!

In summary: Wine---it is what it is.

Submission of Copy—If you have any wine-related info, stories, questions, etc. that you’d like to share with the other OPES members, please submit your copy to me by mid-September. We welcome more participation from a wider segment of the OPES spectrum. Your contributions will be appreciated by all. Thank you.

Ron Floyd, editor

360 452 1096

elwhakid@tfon.com

OPES Membership Application/Renewal Form

___New Member ___Renewal

Name 1 _____

Name 2 _____

Address _____

Phone: Home _____ Work _____

E-Mail _____

I am willing to be called to volunteer to help with an event.

Dues: _____ Individual (**\$24**) ^(SIGNED) _____ Couple (same address) (**\$42**)

Send this form with your check to:

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