Letter from the Host
By Ron Banaszak, CCM

Dear Fellow Wine Society Members:

It’s hard to believe this is my last Host letter for Wine Society News, but the year has flown right by. Suddenly its Conference time again, where we’ll come together for our business meeting, our annual wine dinner and the great live and silent wine auctions this year in Orlando, FL. A summary of Conference events relevant to the Wine Society will be available in the spring issue of this newsletter under “Society Happenings,” however, I hope we’ll see many of you there!

CMAAA has put together what promises to be a fantastic wine trip to Australia in this fall, September 20-30. There are only 25 spaces available, so be thinking about this now so you can make your decision early. The workshop will be presented by Chip Brennan, CCM, and The Greatful Palate (www.greatfulpalateimports.com). You should have received this brochure by mail, it is also available online.

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Update from the Greater Cleveland Chapter of Club Managers
By Stanley R. Owoc, CCM

On Tuesday, November 13, 2007, the managers of the Greater Cleveland Chapter held a meeting at the historic and majestic The Country Club in Pepper Pike, OH. Our host member, Mr. Robert C. Josey, CCM, put together a spectacular educational and social evening. Mr. Josey had additionally coordinated a culinary appetizer extravaganza with eight club chefs to create and demonstrate many unique and tasteful hors d’oeuvres that paired incredibly well with the champagne and sparkling wines.

The topic of our educational portion of the evening was called “Bubbles 101,” presented by Marianne Frantz of the Cleveland Wine School. This was an educational champagne and sparkling wine session just in time for the holiday season. Managers had the pleasure of starting with a Cantine Maschio Prosecco Brut with a fruit forward and with a hint of peach and almond flavors.

Our second flight was the Mumm Napa Valley Cuvee M with its subtle hints of black cherry.

The third tasting flight was the Methode Traditionelle Champenoise from Covides Cava Grand Gesta.

Then we finished with the elegant and famous Perrier Jouet Fleur.

Ms. Frantz was engaging and informative and assisted us in the discovery of the difference in flavor profile and gave us a better understanding of the production techniques and grape selection used to create sparkling wines.

Ms. Frantz is a Certified Wine Educator, holds a Diploma in Wine & Spirits from the Wine & Spirit Education Trust of London and has earned the Advanced Sommelier qualification from the Court of Master Sommeliers. Marianne is currently a candidate for both Master of Wine and Master Sommelier. In addition to teaching, Marianne has produced culinary events across the U.S. and in France with the world’s top chefs and wine makers. Guest lecturers at the school include noted wine makers, wine writers, visiting Masters of Wine and Master Sommeliers.
America’s First Wine District

By Joseph F. Basso, MCM

When American wine-making becomes the subject of any conversation, discussion invariably turns to California and perhaps the Pacific Northwest. Wine making in other parts of the country, like upstate New York or Michigan, is often viewed deferentially to the heart of the West Coast wine industry. But America’s very first recognized wine district, and much of the history of the upstart of American wine making, is actually located a little over two thousand miles due east of Napa and Sonoma Counties – the Augusta (Missouri) AVA.

**America’s First Appellation**

The United States Federal Government enacted legislation in 1978 which provided for the establishment of American Viticultural Areas (AVA). On June 20, 1980, Augusta, Missouri became the first recognized AVA. It was not until almost three years later – on January 1, 1983 – that America’s second AVA, Napa Valley, would be registered. So it was here, in the dense rural countryside west of St. Louis, where American wine making has its origins.

An AVA is an AVA, so the rules for wine making are the same – as in the requirements for estate bottling. The bottling winery and the vineyards where all of the grapes are grown must be located in the same viticultural area. The winery must own or control the vineyards where the grapes are grown and the wine must be produced in one continuous process, having never left the premises of the bottling winery. So what gave this area of the Heartland a head start on the storied wine makers of California?

The landscape in this part of Missouri resembles that of the German Rhineland in both beauty and topography.

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The Bluffs along the Missouri River act as a natural barrier and protect the three valleys that make up the Augusta appellation – Schlueersburg, Augusta and Emke – from the extreme elements of the region. Estate grown grapes are farmed on the surrounding hillsides of these valleys. The entire viticultural area is unique with its deep, dark topsoil. Like other American appellations, each vineyard location is different in makeup and lends itself to different taste profiles.

The fields of river bottomland are susceptible to frosts and floods, forcing the establishment of vineyards to the hillsides. Hillside plots allow optimum sun exposure and access to the prevailing southeasterly breezes. Small plot hillside farming involves some of the most expensive agricultural techniques in the world, yet provides the highest quality fruit year to year.

History of the Region

Augusta has more in common with its Rhineland counterpart than just the scenic vistas. German immigrants from the Rhine River Valley relocated to the Missouri River Valley in the early nineteenth century. In 1824, Gottfried Duden and Louis Eversmann, two of those German immigrants, found themselves in the company of one Nathan Boone, who was the grandson of Daniel Boone and the local government land purveyor. Duden and Eversmann were led on a tour of the valley and the two ended up purchasing adjoining tracks of land from another German immigrant who housed and fed the pair until their own farmland became established. Duden studied the local weather and growing conditions and published his findings back in Germany in hope of attracting other settlers to the area.

Fortunately for Missouri wine making, he was successful. German settlers immigrated to the river valleys by traversing the Ohio River from Cincinnati, and navigating the Mississippi River to the French fur trading settlement of St. Louis and the mouth of the Missouri River. Their journey ended in 1836 when the settlers establish the new fatherland just west of St. Louis on the south bank of the Missouri River at Hermann.

The settlers had brought with them carefully wrapped clippings from their Old World vineyards back home. Although too rocky for many crops, Hermann’s surrounding farmland was well suited for growing grapes and wine making began in region in the 1840s. The year 1846 produced the first wine from locally cultivated grapes. By 1855, more than 500 acres of vineyard were in production and the wines from these vineyards were shipped to St. Louis and beyond. American wine making was alive and well. America’s new railroad system provided a further boost to the country’s wine industry, bringing California wines to the eastern United States. Missouri wine production continued to flourish, remaining a close second to California.

In the late 19th century, Missouri wines began receiving considerable attention for winning national and international wine competitions. Missouri wines took 12 gold medals at the 1851 Vienna World’s Fair. Stone Hill Winery, producing a million gallons of wine each year, won eight gold medals at World’s Fairs between 1873 and 1904 for its Hermannsberger, Starkenberger, Black Pearl wines.

Perhaps Augusta’s greatest contribution to wine making came in the late 1870s. With the international recognition of Missouri wines, France began importing root stock from the region, mainly the Norton/Cynthiana vines that were producing most of the award winners (and that would later go on to be named the official grape of the Missouri wine industry). Unfortunately for French wine makers, the root stock contained the phylloxera louse. While this vineyard pest had no effect on the vines in the Ozarks, it was devastating in enormous proportions to French vineyards.

Winemakers and university professors from Missouri developed the grafting process that put French vine cuttings on heartier American root stock that were resistant to the phylloxera and put the French wine industry back on its feet. This same rootstock was then imported from France by California wine makers suffering the same fate. Heaven forbid that Californians take root stock from the lesser Missourians!
The enactment of the 18th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution dealt a near fatal blow to the Missouri industry. Before the establishment of Prohibition, there were wineries in 48 of 114 counties. The Weintrasse region alone had grown to include more than 100 wineries, and America's number two winemaker, Stone Hill, was the third largest winery in the world. Long before anyone heard of Harry Truman, Independence, MO was known for their wine production. Ottmar Stark ordered all of Stone Hill’s vineyards destroyed, devastating the local economy. When Prohibition was repealed 13 years later, Missouri wine making was nothing but a memory.

Wineries and their Wines Today

Ironically, it was Jim Held of that same Stone Hill family that helped to resurrect Missouri wine making in 1965. The rebirth began with the restoration of several original wineries and the process to regain the former stature of the region’s wine industry had begun.

Today, with 73 wineries across the state, the Missouri wine industry packs a powerful punch. The state established the Missouri Wine and Grape Board in 2005 to direct the marketing and research efforts of the industry. The economic impact of wine and grapes in 2007 was over $70 million, growing 70 percent since 2001. The grape and wine commerce, along with other related industries, is responsible for 6,200 jobs in the region with a $150 million payroll.

The area boasts several award-winning wineries, including Mount Pleasant, Stone Hill and Montelle. Smaller wineries (boutique wineries by Missouri standards) have found a home in old town communities, similar to the Winery of the Little Hills in Old Town St. Charles (the author’s personal favorite). The Katy Trail, a nature trail developed from a converted rail road right-of-way, runs through the Valley and connects big city with rural countryside and provides unlimited access to Missouri Wine Country and its tours, specialty shops and bed and breakfasts.

The traditional European grapes used in California don’t grow well in Missouri. The winters are too cold to reliably grow these popular varietals. The most widely grown fruit is the Cynthiana/Norton, considered by many to be the only native American grape that can produce good dry table wine.

Winemakers spent 150 years determining what grows best in the rich soil of Missouri’s river valleys. Baco Noir is a red wine grape variety that produces a medium body, deeply tinted wine with good acidity. Chancellor, Chambourcin, Chelois and Cynthiana are the principle varietals used in the production of red wines. Chelios fruit are small blue-black berries, which appear in compact, medium-sized clusters. Chambourcin produces a deep colored red wine with a medium-body. Cynthiana and Norton are usually used interchangeably. While very similar, it is believed that Cynthiana is a mutation of Norton. Norton is likely a hybrid of one or more native varieties and one Vitis vinifera grape. It is the best grape for making Missouri red wine and produces a slightly spicy, berry-like, medium-bodied award-winning dry red wine.

Nowhere is the German influence more noticeable than in Missouri’s whites in both taste and style. Seyval Blanc and Vidal Blanc are the two principle grapes used to make white wines. The Vidal Blanc possesses tremendous grapefruit and pineapple notes. It typically produces high sugar levels while maintaining good acid levels. The signature white wine of the region is Vignoles. The fruit makes a wine with a sweet, floral bouquet and a clean crisp sweet flavor balanced with some acidity.

The region also produces a wide variety of casual, blended wines, fruit wines and late harvest ports. Visitors enjoy everything from vineyards with large production facilities to tiny boutique wineries, along with stunning vistas steeped in history and easily confused with the German countryside. The German influence in the region is undoubtedly strong. And there is always the Adam Puchta and Son Wine Company, that turned 150 in 2005. It is the oldest continually operating family winery if you count a few years of illicit wine making. Or visit Oak Glenn, which features a cellar from the 1850s built by George Hussman, the man who first shipped American rootstock to France.

Even if you know wine, you’ll likely find a trip to a Missouri winery a new experience.

For a map and complete listing of Missouri’s wineries, write the Missouri Grape and Wine Program, P.O. Box 630, Jefferson City, MO 65102 or visit www.missouriwine.org or call 1 (800) 392-9463.
Grapevine

Napa Sonoma Workshop

By Dolly Ammann, CCM

Any serious club wine professional should consider a pilgrimage to the Napa Valley as a mandatory part of professional development. I would suggest that even one trip to Napa is not quite enough. Napa is perhaps the most famous and prestigious wine appellation in the United States and no wine list is complete without selections from this fine wine producing area.

The CMAA International Wine Society 2007 Napa/Sonoma Wine Workshop was a great opportunity to visit a select group of extraordinary wineries in Napa and Sonoma as well as one in Marin County. The workshop coordinators, Matt Oggero, CCM, and Chuck Walter, CCM, did a fabulous job of providing a workshop with strong educational content that was also lots of fun. Thank you to Matt and Chuck for another great experience! It was a trip that those of us who participated will long remember.

Stubbs Vineyard

Our first stop was Stubbs Vineyard in Marin County. This was indeed a very special treat. The winery is located out in the countryside, a few miles inland from Tomales Bay, where zoning specifies that the land cannot be subdivided into plots less than 500 acres each. The dramatic landscape consisted of rolling hills covered in golden-brown grasses studded with clumps of trees here and there. It is a cool-climate viticultural area where evening fog rolls in from the coast to keep acid levels high in the grapes. The climate allows for long hang time and produces small intensely flavored fruit. Stubbs Vineyard is a family owned micro-winery producing only 2,300 cases a year. Tom and Mary Stubbs are the owners. They have 11 acres of estate vineyards planted in 1996 to Chardonnay and Pinot Noir. Tom is the vineyard manager while Mary does the marketing. They are very proud of the fact that they have the only certified organic vineyard in Marin County. Everything about their ranch is environmentally friendly. They have a small tractor for the vineyard that uses bio-diesel for fuel. Solar panels and a wind turbine produce energy for the property. They have also planted 1000 olive trees that are a mix of Tuscan varieties. They make some very fine olive oils. We tasted some of them when we sampled their wines.

I found Mary Stubbs to be a charming lady and a gracious hostess. The winery has no tasting room and is not open to the public. We were probably the only trade group that has visited there considering the fact that Matt had to provide wine glasses from his club for the tasting. Mary was kind enough to invite us into her home to taste their wines. The Stubbs home is an intriguing piece of architecture. The interior is decorated with an eclectic collection of fascinating pieces of art from around the world. We gathered around the dining room table while Mary poured their wines for us. The 2005 Estate Chardonnay made in a European style was crisp and well balanced. The 2005 Estate Pinot Noir had a bit of tar on the nose and luscious red fruit with a hint of cinnamon on the palate. The wine that I found quite remarkable was the 2005 Marin County Merlot. It has spice on the nose, bright acidity and flavors of strawberry and raspberry. It was so unlike the Merlot wines that I am accustomed to with big black cherry flavors. Mary explained that the difference comes from the cool climate of Marin Country and the winemaking preferences of their winemaker Dan Goldfield. I thought that all three wines were fabulous. It would be a real coup to have these limited production wines on a club wine list.

Wilson Daniels, Ltd.

Wilson Daniels, Ltd. is a marketing company that specializes in high quality family-owned wineries. Their portfolio includes 30 premium wineries from abroad as well as the United States. I noted some of my all time favorite producers in their portfolio such as Mastroberardino from Italy’s Campania region, Ponzi from Oregon’s Willamette Valley and Burgundy’s Domaine LaFlaive.

At Wilson Daniels, the team of Chef John Ash and winemaker John Beechenstein lead our group through an extensive education program on wines made from Sauvignon Blanc. The first exercise was a blind tasting of five Sauvignon Blanc wines from different regions of the world. Our job was to identify the wines as Northern or Southern Hemisphere
and as New World or Old World. There was also room on our tasting card to record the year, producer and our personal tasting notes. Chef Ash described Sauvignon Blanc as a kaleidoscope wine with many flavor nuances, and our tasting illustrated this point very well. Chef Ash said that he loves Sauvignon Blanc because it is a food friendly wine that seems to pair well with just about everything. That was the lead-in to lunch – a tasty buffet of salmon with red pepper coulis, pasta with pesto, grilled vegetables and fingerling potatoes. There was also a table full of an exciting group of different Wilson Daniels wines, both red and white as well as foreign and domestic, for us to choose from and enjoy with our lunch. After lunch, wine educator John Biechsenstein discussed the flavors and versatility of Sauvignon Blanc. He explained how their team had explored the world to find the best Sauvignon Blanc wines. A great Sauvignon Blanc exhibits Typicité, the true expression of the grape, and Originalité, expression of its terroir. He discussed the differences between Old World and New World styles.

Old World vs. New World Styles

Old World styles are based on tradition and precisely defined appellation regulations. The cultivars used are defined by law. There are regional styles and legally prescribed viticultural practices that have been developed over time with little room left for experimentation. Vintages are distinct because of variances in weather from year to year. Old World wines tend more to be blends rather than single varietals.

In New World wines, you find more experimentation. Many times you find grape varieties planted in the wrong areas. Site selection and viticulture is highly variable. Winemaking practices tend to be more uniform because the winemakers go to enology school to learn the nuts and bolts. Appellations have less significance. Most vintages are good because of less variation in weather conditions. Mono-varietal wines dominate.

These differences produce wines with different flavor characteristics. Old World wines have less ripe fruit flavor and seem more austere. They express minerality and have lower alcohol. These wines are considered “reductive.” New World wines have riper rich fruit flavors, less minerality, dense structure and more body. These wines are considered “oxidative.”

Some of the world’s best regions for Sauvignon Blanc are Russian River Valley, France’s Sancerre and Pouilly-Fumé, Italy’s Colio and Friuli d’Isonzo, Austria’s Sidteier-mark, New Zealand’s Marlborough, South Africa’s Stellenbosch, and Chile’s Valle de Casablanca.

Silverado Vineyards

Our first day concluded with a traditional Santa Maria Barbecue at the Silverado Vineyards in the Stags Leap District of Napa Valley. Our dinner was not on the commercial side of the property where most guests are accommodated but rather on the lawn outside the original residence on the property. It was a casual setting with a three-piece combo and tasty buffet. Round banquet tables of eight were each set with five different bottles of Silverado wine to enjoy with dinner.

Silverado Vineyards is owned by Ron and Diane Miller. Diane is Walt Disney’s daughter. The couple began acquiring vineyards in the early 1970s and established the winery in 1981. Since then they have been known for producing world-class age-worthy wines that are rich and elegant. They have 565 acres of vines in seven vineyards and produce around 83,000 cases of wine annually.

The 2006 Miller Ranch Sauvignon Blanc had grapefruit aromas and was crisp and clean on the palate with grapefruit and tangerine flavors. The 2006 Chardonnay had apple and pear aromas with a touch of orange zest on the palate. The wine was barrel aged and 23 percent of the blend had gone through malolactic fermentation. Despite this, the wine did not exhibit the butter flavor of diacetyl because they perform bâtonnage twice a week. Bâtonnage is the wine-making process of lees stirring in the barrel.

It was a real treat to try the Silverado Vineyards 2002 Cabernet Sauvignon Limited Reserve. While the company has

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been making Cabernet Sauvignon wines since the beginning in 1981, only 11 vintages were considered good enough to merit the Limited Reserve label. For me, this wine was an outstanding example of a Napa Cabernet. Another excellent Cabernet was the 2004 Cabernet Sauvignon \textit{SOLO}. It was a big peppery wine with blackberry flavor and a hint of cocoa. The 2003 \textit{Merlot} was a blend with 12 percent Cabernet Sauvignon from the Mt. George vineyard site in the hills east of Napa. This is a site where the grapes ripen more evenly and gravelly volcanic soils provide dark color and structure.

When we drove through the vineyards as we entered the property, we noted that the vines had been sprayed with a substance that made the leaves appear bluish. Our hosts explained that the vines were sprayed with an organic sunscreen developed in Bordeaux to repel deer. Two years of drought left the local deer population without food making grape vines an appealing food source.

\textbf{Burgess Cellars}

The following day we headed for Burgess Cellars on the slopes of Howell Mountain. Tom Burgess is a Napa Valley pioneer who purchased an old winery property in 1972 that had been originally built in the 1880s. Burgess Cellars is somewhat unique in Napa Valley today because it remains a family-owned and operated winery.

We were met at the winery by Tom’s son, Steve. Steve gave us a tour of the winery and vineyard. They keep deer out by fencing the vineyard. Wild turkeys are another problem as they also like to eat the fruit. The top soil in the vineyard is six inches deep over volcanic rock. The vines put down roots through fissures in the volcanic rock. 30 to 40 years is the maximum age for hillside vines because of the stress of hillside growing. Hillside vineyards have smaller vintage variations. The soils drain faster and soil temperatures rise faster at the higher elevation. This allows for complete fruit maturation. All of the fruit is hand-picked and sorted in the vineyard. We came prepared to help with the harvest only to find out that they had finished picking the previous week. Steve told us that this vintage will be an excellent year for Burgess Cellars.

After Tom Burgess bought the old stone winery, wooden tanks were replaced with stainless steel vats. Today barriques are used for ageing instead of large wood barrels. State-of-the-art equipment includes rotary fermenters. This equipment is superior to horizontal fermentation tanks for extracting flavor and color. The goal is to get the fermenting juice away from the seeds as soon as possible to avoid bitter tannins. The grape skins fill up with CO2 during fermentation and float to the top of the fermentation tank. Air bursts are injected through a valve on the side of the tank during the beginning stages of fermentation to overcome an anaerobic environment. Burgess has five custom built vertical fermenters and three horizontal tanks outside the building that are insulated with two inches of foam. Cabernet and Merlot are aged in 100 percent French oak while 50 percent American and French oak barrels are used for the Syrah program.

Tom Burgess joined us for lunch on the patio. It was a beautiful afternoon to enjoy some great wines and get to know our hosts Tom and Steve Burgess. Tom gave us some information on the wines we were tasting that afternoon. For me, the most interesting wine of the day was a 1994 \textit{Cabernet Sauvignon, Library Release}. Every year they hold back 10 percent of the bottled Cabernet Sauvignon and then release it as a Library Selection. This wine had layers
of aromas and flavors. It was very complex with a long lingering finish.

The 2004 Napa Valley Syrah was a blend with 6% Mourvedre from a vineyard on the Eastern side of Howell Mountain. It seemed much like a good Côte du Rhone. The 2004 Napa Valley Merlot is a 100% varietal wine that was very elegant and packed with delicious cherry and blueberry flavors. The 2004 Cabernet Sauvignon is a Bordeaux blend of 70% Cabernet Sauvignon, 8% Merlot, 7% Cabernet Franc, 4% Petit Verdot and 2% Malbec. Tom said that their current direction is to make more traditional style wines.

Far Niente

Far Niente was founded in 1885 by a John Benson who came to California with the Gold Rush. The winery was built against the hillside as a gravity flow winery. Like many other California wineries, Far Niente did not survive the onset of Prohibition and closed its doors in 1919. The winery was purchased by Gil Nickel in 1979. Gil and his wife set about restoring the winery, vineyards and gardens on the property. The first vintage was 1982 when a Cabernet Sauvignon was produced. The first Chardonnay came in 1983.

The Far Niente philosophy is to produce the best quality Cabernet Sauvignon and Chardonnay wines possible. Grapes are hand-harvested in small lots and hand-sorted. They produce 24,000 cases of Chardonnay and around 12,000 cases of Cabernet Sauvignon. Far Niente was the first company in California in the 20th century to build underground caves for storing and ageing wines. Caves are ideal for making wine. Caves have the advantage of low energy and high humidity. Chardonnay wines are fermented in the barrel. The Cabernet Sauvignon wines are aged 16 months in 100 percent new oak barrels. Dolce is a late harvest wine that stays in the barrel for three years.

When we arrived at Far Niente we began the evening with a reception in the carriage house where there is a collection of classic cars that was assembled by Gil Nickel, who was a champion vintage auto racer. Two Ferraris, an XKE Jaguar and an Alfa Romeo Spider caught my attention. Gil Nickel passed away in 2003 after a battle with cancer.

After touring the winery, we had a lovely dinner prepared by Far Niente Executive Chef Abi Martinez.

Duckhorn Vineyards

Dan Duckhorn meet our group on Wednesday morning at the Paraduxx Winery in St. Helena. Dan started Duckhorn Vineyards in 1976 after returning from a trip to Bordeaux. He began by producing 1,600 cases of Merlot and Cabernet Sauvignon in 1978. He said his focus was to produce Merlot in the style of a great St. Emillon or Pomerol. About 10 years ago he developed the Goldeneye winery in the Anderson Valley to produce Pinot Noir. The winery is named after the Goldeneye migratory duck. This winery, Paraduxx, was the next project. The name is a play on words “pair of ducks/paradox.” Here the production is a blend of Zinfandel and Cabernet Sauvignon.

Dan said that since the movie “Sideways,” Merlot sales have increased and the sales of Pinot Noir have skyrocketed!

Dan offered us a glass of rosé wine and then took us on a tour of the winery that was at this time in full production. The grapes come into the winery in half ton bins. The grapes are dumped and then hand sorted. After de-stemming, they are pumped into stainless fermentation tanks. Fermentation takes 8 to 10 days. Whole berry fermentation gives the wine more fruit character. Instead of the traditional methods of pumping over and punch down they are experimenting with a new aeration and pump over process. Using this method, wine spews out of a valve in the lower part of the stainless steel tank into a container on the floor and is then pumped back into the top of the tank. This process adds air and softens the wine. The wine will remain in the tank for about a month before being transferred to oak barrels. Merlot is aged one year in oak and the Cabernet Sauvignon two years. Rosé wine is made by drawing the wine off the skins when the desired color is reached.

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Grapevine

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In the tasting room, we sampled first the Duckhorn 2006 Napa Valley Sauvignon Blanc. It is a blend in the Bordeaux tradition of Sauvignon Blanc and Sémillon. Duckhorn is one of my favorite Sauvignon Blancs and this one did not disappoint with its vibrant acidity and rich mouthfeel.

Next we tasted the Goldeneye 2004 Anderson Valley Pinot Noir. My first impression was WOW – very polished, elegant and well balanced with lots of raspberry and strawberry fruit.

Paraduxx 2004 Napa Valley Red Wine was next in the lineup. Each vintage, a new label is designed by a different artist representing the artist’s interpretation of a pair of ducks. The 2004, the 11th label in the series, is a pair of Wood Ducks painted by Andrew Denman. The blend is 65 percent Zinfandel, 28 percent Cabernet Sauvignon, and 7 percent Merlot. All of the lots are vinefied separately and the blending is done by a tasting panel of 12. Lots that don’t make the blend are bottled as second under their labels Migration and Decoy.

The Duckhorn 2004 Napa Valley Merlot contained a splash of 5 percent Cabernet Franc. The wine was well balanced with rich fruit flavors. The Duckhorn 2004 Napa Valley Cabernet Sauvignon was a blend with 10 percent Cabernet Franc, 5 percent Petit Verdot and 4 percent Merlot. It was a full-bodied complex wine with firm tannins and a long finish.

Dan began talking about the wine industry and how things have changed over the last 30 years. When it was first bonded, Duckhorn Vineyards was only one of 40 wineries in the Napa Valley. Today there are around 350. There are a lot more folks selling wine out of tasting rooms directly to consumers. The number of people drinking wine has greatly increased. Today large chains are selling great wines at discount prices. In the 1960s, there were only two rootstocks and one clone of Merlot available. Today Duckhorn uses 15 clones of Merlot, and there are 10 to 15 different rootstocks available. The goal now is to match the rootstock to the terroir. In the 1960s, there were 28,000 acres of vineyards in Napa and today there are 45,000. One acre in Napa in 1968 cost about $7,000. Today an acre of vineyard land can run $275,000.

Larkmead Vineyards

Larkmead’s history goes back to the late 1800s. A gentleman named Felix Salmina immigrated from Switzerland to the Napa Valley. He purchased an old wooden winery and vineyard in 1892 and set about making improvements in the property. Prior to Prohibition, Larkmead was considered one of the big four in Napa along with Beaulieu, Inglenook and Berringer. Larkmead was one of the few wineries in California that survived Prohibition. Felix Salinas passed away in 1940 and the property changed hands several times. It was purchased in 1948 by Larry and Polly Solari and has remained in their family since then. The present owners are Kate Solari Baker and her husband, Cam Baker.

When we arrive at Larkmead, we were met by Colin MacPhail, the winery’s general manager. Colin is a colorful character to say the least. Born in Scotland, he speaks with a slight Scottish brogue and has a witty sense of humor. The winemaking team also includes winemaker Andy Smith, also from Scotland, and vineyard manager Michael Lewis. Larkmead has 120 acres of vineyards. One third of the grapes are made into estate wines and the rest are sold to other producers. Annual production is between 7,000 and 8,000 cases. Red wines are aged in 99 percent French oak. Sauvignon Blanc is produced in a 560 case lot. Most of this wine is fermented in stainless steel. They also ferment a small portion of this wine in one new oak barrel and one neutral oak barrel to add complexity. Oak barrels cost between $800 and $1,200 each. Buying barrels is a big financial hit each year at the time of crush.

The Larkmead 2006 Napa Valley Sauvignon Blanc was the first wine that we tasted. This is their second vintage for Sauvignon Blanc, and it is the only white that they pro-
duce. What a great wine! It was very complex with fabulous varietal aromatics and a chalky acidity.

The second wine that we tasted was the 2004 Firebelle Merlot Meritage. Colin told us the somewhat racy story of a wealthy lady named Lillie Hitchcock Coit who was known as “Firebelle Lil” for her attraction to firemen. Lil lived in an adjacent property in the late 1800s. Colin described Firebelle Lil as a cross between Oprah Winfrey and Paris Hilton. This wine is named in her honor. Like Firebelle Lil the wine was soft, full-bodied and spicy. This is a wine made in a Right Bank Bordeaux style that will age well.

The Larkmead 2004 Napa Valley Estate Cabernet Sauvignon is a stunning Left Bank Bordeaux style wine that is easy to drink now but needs more time in the bottle to express its greatness. The wine is intensely aromatic with black fruits dominating the palate.

Another great wine was the Larkmead 2004 LMV Salon. This too was another Bordeaux blend made from estate grown grapes. The blend is 60 percent Cabernet Sauvignon, 19 percent Cabernet Franc, 10 percent Petit Verdot, 8 percent Merlot and 3 percent Malbec. The nose is dominated by black fruit and violets. The wine has a mineral character and luscious cassis and blackberry fruit.

Girard

Our next stop was at Girard for a tasting and lunch. Our bus took Sage Canyon Road climbing up the meandering roadway on Pritchard Hill to the winery. Girard sits in a secluded rustic setting some 2,000 feet above the valley floor. This location is excellent for growing Cabernet Sauvignon grapes. The gorgeous panoramic view of the Pritchard Hill vineyards and the Napa Valley below are well worth the trip to this bucolic location.

Pat Roney, the principal owner and managing partner, was able to join us for lunch. Pat acquired Girard in 2000. He renovated the old winery on Pritchard Hill and acquired new vineyards. His dedication is to quality.

We tasted five excellent wines with lunch. The 2006 Napa Valley Sauvignon Blanc, 2006 Russian River Chardonnay, 2005 Napa Valley Old-Vine Zinfandel, 2004 Artistry, and 2005 Napa Valley Petite Sirah. My favorite was the Old-Vine Zinfandel. The grapes for this wine come from the Blue Ridge Vineyard on the top of Mt. Vaca at an elevation of 2700 feet, the highest elevation in Napa. The vines are 75 to 100 years old and have trunks as thick as trees. It is a very complex wine with layers of dark fruit flavors, good acidity and a long lingering finish.

St. Clement

That evening we stopped at St. Clement, the oldest winery in Napa Valley, for a tasting and hors d’oeuvres. Over the years, this property has changed hands since the time it was a land grant from the Mexican government. It was purchased by Berringer in 1999.

We sampled four wines. The first was 2006 Sauvignon Blanc, Bale Lane. This is an interesting Sauvignon Blanc, crisp and fresh with a hint of honeysuckle coming from the Hungarian oak in which a small portion of the wine was aged. The 2004 OROPAS is a massive block buster wine full of intense dark fruit, earth, spice and cedar. It is a blend of Cabernet Sauvignon with 13 percent Merlot from mountain vineyards. Two of the wines we tried are only available to wine club members. The 2003 Star Vineyard Cabernet Sauvignon is a blend of 78 percent Cabernet Sauvignon, 17 percent Merlot and 6 percent Cabernet Franc. The Star Vineyard is located on the Rutherford Bench. On the palate there are flavors of blackberries, black cherry and a touch of chocolate. The 2003 Progeny Vineyards Cabernet Sauvignon is a full-bodied wine with aromas of dark fruit and rich flavors of blackberries and spice.

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Berringer

Berringer is the oldest continuously operating winery in the Napa Valley, and it has always been one of the prestige names in California wine. It was founded by two German brothers, Fredrick and Jacob Berringer in 1876. When the winery was being built, Jacob Berringer took up residence in a house on the property built in 1848 by David Hudson. Hudson was involved in the Bear Flag Revolt of 1846, which was instrumental in California gaining independence from Mexico. Our dinner at Berringer was held in the Hudson House which today serves as Berringer’s culinary arts center. Executive Chef David Frakes prepared an outstanding dinner for us with each course designed to showcase the accompanying wine.

The first course was a millet crusted filet of Alaskan halibut with banana-lemongrass and Thai red curry sauces and fondue of organic white corn and baby leeks. This was paired with a 2005 Berringer Private Reserve Chardonnay.

Roast tenderloin of Painted Hill’s beef with garlic roasted yellow finn potato, late summer mushrooms and smoked paprika oil paired well with the 2002 Berringer Private Reserve Cabernet Sauvignon, Napa Valley.

Dessert was warm black mission fig clafouti, Maripousa plum sorbet, citrus cookie, coulis of berries and mint syrup. With this, a late-harvest dessert wine was the final touch to a lovely dinner. The wine was a 2004 Berringer Nightingale Semillon/Sauvignon Blanc, Napa Valley.

The dinner was elegant and beautifully served. The wines were showstoppers.

GlenLyon Vineyards & Winery

On the last day of the workshop, our first stop was at the GlenLyon Vineyards & Winery. Here we learned from vintners Squire and Suzy Fridell that wine is all about barrels of fun! How could it be otherwise when wines are named Hog Wilde Chardonnay and Blush O’the Boar? This is a micro-winery where wine bottles have striped stockings for capsules and are dressed up with ribbons and bows. At GlenLyon everything comes with a sense of humor except the quality of the wine, which is exceptional.

Squire and Suzy were a theatrical couple. Squire was an actor who taught high school drama. His claim to fame was a lucrative 10 year gig as Ronald McDonald. Suzy was a dancer. Their home at GlenLyon is filled with memorabilia from their theatrical careers. The couple decided to escape the hustle and bustle of the big city and moved to a 20 acre rural plot of land in Sonoma’s Valley of the Moon. They planted a vineyard and sold wine grapes. After 10 years of experimental home winemaking, they bonded the winery. The winery itself is a small barn. The estate has seven acres of Syrah grapes. They produce a Syrah, a small amount of blush and a Syrah port from their estate grapes. They also make a Chardonnay from purchased grapes. Their production is so small that if you want to buy their wines you will have to join their wine club, or Clan, as they call it.

Fisher Vineyards

Fisher Vineyards is best described as a family affair. It was founded in 1973 by Fred and Juelle Fisher. Today their children have taken over the business handling the winemaking, marketing and business management. What we visited was the original homestead ranch on Spring Mountain where the Fishers were married. It is a 100-acre mountain estate with 35 acres planted to vineyards. The winery was constructed of timber milled on the property in 1978. Caves for barrel aging were dug into the hillside under the winery. The vineyard in front of the winery is called the Wedding Vineyard because this was where the Fishers were married. This vineyard was replanted seven years ago using St. George rootstock after problems with Phyloxera. The vineyard is planted mostly with Cabernet Sauvignon. Here in the mountains of Sonoma it takes three weeks longer to ripen grapes than in the Napa Valley. The vines were covered with nets to protect the fruit from birds and wild turkeys. There is also a high deer fence around the property.
Fisher holdings also include 70 acres of estate vineyards in Calistoga. Soils there are alluvial, made up of cobblestones and loam.

Our hosts for lunch were Rob Fisher and his sister, Cameron. While sister Whitney was at the winery that day, she was not able to join us for lunch because she was too busy during crush making wine. The Fishers treated us to a tasty lunch cooked in an outdoor wood burning stone oven. First, there was a spicy handmade pizza with fresh figs and ham. Next was roast beef with cous cous and ratatouie accompanied by mixed greens vinaigrette with goat cheese.

With lunch, we tried a Rosé wine that was made for Whitney’s wedding. It was packed with strawberry flavor. After that, we tried their flagship wine, a 2005 Coach Insignia Napa Valley Cabernet Sauvignon. The wine is 99 percent Cabernet Sauvignon blended with 1 percent Cabernet Franc. It was highly aromatic with plenty of black currant fruit and a touch of tobacco. We also had the opportunity try a 2005 UNITY Napa Valley Cabernet Sauvignon. This is a wine made in 4,000 cases in the glass pour price range.

DuMOL

We ended our tour at the Mayacama Golf and Country Club where we met with DuMOL proprietor, Kerry Murphy. We met Kerry at his country club because he felt the winery was not an appropriate place to host guests during crush. We were all delighted to be able to see this beautifully appointed club in the middle of wine country.

Today in the wine business DuMOL is red-hot! These wines are Robert Parker favorites and sell out before they are released. They are made in sophisticated Burgundian and Rhone Valley fashion by winemaker Andy Smith who knows how to grow and handle fruit in Sonoma’s cool Russian River Valley. Andy is a winemaker who lets the vineyards dictate the wine. All the wines go through extended natural yeast fermentation. The wines are not filtered or fined, and lees stirring is held to a minimum. Andy is also the winemaker at Larkmead.

We tasted nine different wines from the 2007 fall release. Kelly explained that the wines are named after his children and grandchildren. The 2006 Viognier lila Russian River Valley is a classic Viognier, very apricot in flavor with minerality and good weight in the mid-palate. It was barrel fermented in 25 percent new French oak and 75 percent neutral oak. The fruit comes from a small hillside vineyard. Only 190 cases were produced. The 2005 Charbono carneros, 2005 Charbono lyel Green Valley, and 2005 Charbono chloe Russian River Valley were all hand harvested, whole cluster pressed, barrel fermented, and all went through malolactic. However, they were three distinctly different wines reflecting their terroir. The 2005 Pinot Noir aidan Green Valley was a light wine with good nose, cherry flavors and vibrant fruit. The 2005 Pinot Noir ryan Green Valley was a bigger wine with plum, cherry and raspberry flavors and an earthy nose of truffles and smoked meat. The 2005 Pinot Noir finn Russian River Valley was very structured and complex, a very serious wine. The 2005 Syrah jack robert’s run Russian River Valley and 2005 Syrah eddie’s patch Russian River Valley were both hand harvested, fermented with native yeast, unfiltered, unfined, and aged 17 months in French oak. Both wines were purple-black, aromatic and well structured.

After tasting these fine wines, we toured the country club with Kelly. A fun place was the wine cellar where members have their own wine lockers.

Author’s Note: As a veteran of 16 CMAA wine tours, I would recommend that you sign-up for one or more in the future. Believe me there is not a better way to learn about wine, make new friends and have an experience of a lifetime. Don’t forget that these workshops are worth 30 education points!
Making the Most Out of Your Local Chapter

By Christina Toups, CCM

Are you getting the most value from your International Wine Society (IWS) local chapter?

The International Wine Society hosts 50 local chapter representatives who oversee approximately 400 IWS members. The goals of the Chapter Representative include encouraging their chapter to conduct educational wine programs; serving as the conduit of IWS related information; soliciting donations for the wine auction and, in my mind most importantly, serving IWS members on a local level by increasing their value in the membership. The last goal is where I am going to focus this article.

As it is always easier to write from experience, I am going to use the Texas Chapter of the IWS as my point of reference. I do understand that there are a lot of very active and successful IWS chapters across the country, but my goal is to offer a starting point for those chapters who would like to increase their participation and value for their members.

In Texas, we were fortunate to have our representative, Mr. Oliver Boudin, CCM, be a true lover of wine and wine education. Oliver decided that the Texas Chapter (TLSC) really needed to get its IWS members excited about belonging, so he began to outline a plan.

The first step was to create a local chapter of the IWS. This meant that he needed to recruit a board of directors to help with his vision. He personally called on managers from all over the state who belonged to the IWS to serve on this board. The first board meeting was held to establish the goals of the local chapter and the following action plan was put into place:

- Establish an identity for the local chapter within the IWS;
- Offer wine education for both Grapetomers members as well as their club employees;
- Increase managers’ appreciation of wine by offering local wine events throughout the year, in addition to the National dinner;
- Create a sense of exclusivity and camaraderie within this group; and
- Support the IWS.

The first plan of action was to establish an identity for the local chapter by determining a name. This would help to create its own identity within the IWS. That day, the Grapetomers was officially formed and a logo representing the Grapetomers was created. The Grapetomers Board then went to the Texas Lone Star Chapter Board of Directors to request financial support in helping get this chapter off the ground. The TLSC was more than happy to add a yearly line-item for the Grapetomers to their budget, as it also added additional value to TLSC chapter members. It was also further decided that there would be no annual dues associated with the Grapetomers, but the one requirement was for each member who belonged to the Grapetomers to also belong to both the IWS and the TLSC.

Secondly, to address the goal of wine education, Oliver created a basic training CD on wine and wine service. Each manager who joined the Grapetomers was given a copy of the CD to take back to his or her club to use in their staff training. It has served to be a useful tool to many managers as they try to get their staff excited about wine sales.

The next goal was to increase managers’ appreciation of wine by offering wine events throughout the year. At the beginning of each year, the Grapetomers Board meets to establish five to six wine events for the upcoming year. These events, although by invitation only to Grapetomers members, are publicized to all TLSC members in hopes to increase membership and participation. The events are scheduled at various clubs across the state, and many times are scheduled to coincide with our TLSC meetings to increase participation. There is a fee to attend these events, but to keep the costs minimal, each club tries to get donations from local wineries and vendors. As word of these phenomenal dinners spread through the TLSC, participation in the Grapetomers, and therefore the IWS, has increased. Each club who hosts an event is asked to...
Making the Most Out of Your Local Chapter

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determine the menu, wines, décor and theme. Past dinners have ranged from a “Sideways” dinner to a dinner where we arrived in style to our “Winter Wonderland” dinner in Wichita Falls, TX by limousine. To combine wine education with these dinners, managers are asked to research the wines served that evening and present the details as the wines are being enjoyed. Along with local events, members of the Grapestomers have traveled to Napa and Sonoma, CA as well as to Walla Walla, WA to further their education and appreciation for wines and are scheduled to visit Tuscany, Italy this September.

ROCC Wine Dinner.

The fourth step encompasses the previous three plans of action by offering wine education, wine tasting and camaraderie through dinners, events and travel.

The final goal of the Grapestomers is to support the IWS. Although the Grapestomers has yet to win the coveted “Bucky Award,” our chapter members do their best to donate wines to the IWS Wine Auction as well as to donate their time and efforts to IWS as a whole.

Overall, my goal with this article was to share with each of you an easy way to kick start your local IWS chapter. With a little effort, you and your chapter representatives will be able to create a sense of camaraderie, while offering both educational opportunities as well as overall wine enjoyment opportunities throughout the year. You do not have to recreate the wheel; use Oliver’s and the Grapestomers Board of Directors’ vision as a tool in creating the direction for your chapter.

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2007 Harvest Report: California Vintners Praise High Quality 2007 Winegrape Harvest

Early Harvest, Extended Season, Lighter than Normal Crop

California’s 2007 wine grape harvest began early, stalled mid-way due to cool weather and finished in late October to vintner accolades. A mild winter with below normal rainfall, coupled with a dry spring, led to early bud break. Although cluster counts were high in most locations, a sparse berry set in spring resulted in loose grape bunches. Additionally, berries were small, creating a greater skin to juice ratio, enhancing quality. The California Department of Food and Agriculture’s latest wine grape crop forecast in October was 3.2 million tons, up less than one percent from 2006.

“The 2007 year is one of the better vintages in recent history,” said Vince Bonotto, Diageo Chateau & Estate Wines Vice President Vineyard Operations overseeing vineyards in Napa and Monterey. “There was a lighter crop and yields were down from the past few years, but quality is extremely good,” he enthused. Mark Gabrielli, Woodbridge Winery Vice President/General Manager in Woodbridge, was also excited about the vintage. “The good news is that we are extremely pleased with the quality of the 2007 harvest. Berry size was small, smaller than we have seen in more than 10 years and the fruit developed intense varietal flavors with rich, mouth-filling tannins.” Winemaker Ted Seghesio of Seghesio Family Vineyards in Sonoma also noted a crop smaller than previous vintages. “Overall quality at this point appears to be excellent. Deeply colored and dark-ruited young wines possessing balanced acidities promise a successful vintage.”

A cool, moderate growing season heated up the latter part of August, causing multiple varieties to ripen at the same time. “At first it was run, run, get the grapes in before the sugars get too high,” commented Glenn Proctor of Ciatti Company in San Rafael. When the weather turned cool the second week in September, harvest went on hold in many locations, allowing for a less hectic pace. “The cooler weather and rainfall affected the entire state, although the North Coast saw the most significant precipitation,” said Proctor. “It was like two crushes. Everyone was running in the beginning, waiting in the middle, then running at the end to get the grapes off before the rains in October.”

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"Around the first week in October, the jet stream dropped into Northern California, and we began experiencing periodic rain events every several days," said Hal Huffsmith, Trinchero Family Estates Senior Vice President Vineyard Operations. "Between the first of September and the first of October, the majority of our vineyards were harvested, while several properties in the Napa Valley were still being evaluated for flavor development in mid-October."

"About 90 percent of the white grapes were in by the time it rained on the North Coast," said Bill Turrentine of Turrentine Brokerage in Novato. The thicker-skinned Cabernet Sauvignon and other Bordeaux varieties are less susceptible to moisture and remained on the vine until late October, developing mature, intense flavors. "Approximately 98 percent of the grapes were harvested by October 25."

"In the interior Sacramento and San Joaquin Valleys, the crop was average in size and above average in quality," remarked Turrentine. "In the Central Coast, it was about 35 percent below average in quantity and the quality is very promising. The North Coast quality also looks very good and the quantity is about 10-15 percent below average. 2007 promises to be a good year with concentrated fruit. Harvest started early but cool harvest temperatures delayed maturation and ripe, luscious flavors developed, often at lower sugar levels than usual."

"The lower wine grape tonnage in 2007 will have a tightening affect on the market," said Proctor. After the larger than normal 2005 vintage, the wine market has had plenty of supply. "This will bring things back to a more balanced perspective."

Accounting for two-thirds of all wine sold in the U.S, California wine sales in the U.S. reached another all-time high of 449 million gallons in 2006 with a retail value of $17.8 billion, according to wine industry consultant Jon Fredrikson, publisher of the Gomberg-Fredrikson Report. "California wines are benefiting from the growing U.S. wine culture," said Robert P. (Bobby) Koch, President and CEO of Wine Institute. "More Americans are enjoying wine than ever before. They can look forward to the exceptional quality of the 2007 vintage."

Whether wine is a nourishment, medicine or poison, is a matter of dosage.

Paracelsus (1493-1541),
German physician and father of modern pharmacology.

The International Wine Society would like to Welcome its Newest Members:

Mr. David Conroy
University Club of Washington

Mr. William Fox, CCM
Bath & Tennis Club

Mr. Franz J. Mair
Town & Country Club

Mr. Frederick H. Nixon
Chevy Chase Club

Mr. Paul Nowak
Tippecanoe Lake Country Club

Ms. Heather M. Price, CCM
Oklahoma City Golf & Country Club

Mr. Charles W. Ross, CCM
Portland Country Club

Mr. Micah Wilkes
Memphis Country Club

Mr. Benjamin Yamanaka
St. Francis Yacht Club
Test your Knowledge

Answer the following 10 questions correctly in under a minute to prove your wine knowledge genius! Questions will test your range of knowledge from wine region geography to grape trivia and more. Good luck!

1. Why are wine bottles colored?
   a. To retard ageing
   b. Because it looks pretty
   c. Tradition
   d. Ease of recycling

2. Which is the odd one out here:
   a. Juliénas
   b. Chenas
   c. Morgon
   d. Chinon

3. Where are the finest Dolcetto grapes grown?
   a. On the right bank of the River Tauro
   b. On the left bank of the River Seine
   c. On the banks of the River Thames
   d. At the source of the River Rhone

4. Where does Chateau Musar come from?
   a. France
   b. Lebanon
   c. Romania
   d. Turkey

5. What is the main red wine grape in Burgundy?
   a. Gamay
   b. Pinot Gris
   c. Pinot Noir
   d. Cabernet Franc

6. What is the predominant wine region of Argentina?
   a. Sosneado
   b. Maipo
   c. Mendoza

7. Which of the following grape varieties is most associated with ageing in oak?
   a. Chardonnay
   b. Sauvignon Blanc
   c. Gewurztraminer
   d. Zinfandel

8. What wine is the classic partner for goat cheese?
   a. Sancerre
   b. Goats do Roam
   c. Port
   d. Chardonnay

9. What is the main river running through Alsace?
   a. Loire
   b. Marne
   c. Rhine
   d. Rhone

10. What is a normal alcohol percentage for table wines?
    a. 7%
    b. 12%
    c. 17%
    d. 23%

Answers to Test Your Knowledge:
1. a. To retard ageing. The color of the glass will help prevent UV penetration and therefore prevent premature ageing and oxidation.
2. d. Chinon. The other three are all from the Beaujolais region. Chinon is from the Loire region.
3. a. On the right bank of the River Tauro. The soils here are rich with white marls, which produce the finest Dolcetto grapes.
4. b. Lebanon. Chateau Musar is a full-bodied red, and the best known Lebanese wine.
5. c. Pinot Noir. This is a thin-skinned grape variety that is notoriously difficult to grow. Burgundy’s continental climate provides shelter from climatic extremes.
6. c. Mendoza. Luján de Cuyo is the wine region in Argentina that is known for its Malbec.
7. a. Chardonnay. Chardonnay is a full-bodied red, and the best known wine from the Luján de Cuyo region.
8. a. Sancerre is the recommended wine to pair with goat cheese.
9. c. The Rhine (Rhein in German) runs along the border between France and Germany.
10. b. 12%. Some low alcohol wines are made with about 6%, but wines are more normally in an 11-13% range.