



December, 2016

Dear Members,

Every year we do a Holiday Issue of this newsletter because this is a special time of the year for many reasons. We hope everyone is enjoying a Merry Christmas, Happy Holiday, Happy Hanukkah, Happy Kwanza, Happy Festivus and we hope that all will enjoy a Happy, Healthy, Productive and Prosperous New Year! **Joyeuses Fêtes de fin d'année !!!!!**

Wine Spectator Top 100 Wines



One of the special things that happen now are all the “Best of the Year” lists that one sees published. This is also true in the wine business where the “experts” have been rating all the wines released during this year and now take a second look at them to come up with their “best”. As we have said before, a rating is simply some wine “expert’s” idea of how a particular wine scores relative to that person’s opinion of the characteristics of the ideal wine that would receive a perfect score in that wine category, using whatever scale they want to use.

Robert Parker, who publishes the “The Wine Advocate” and who is considered to be one of the most respected wine experts in the world, uses a 100-point scale that is widely used in the wine world and is sometimes called the “Parker Scale”.

The “Wine Spectator” uses this 100-point scale in its ratings. They discuss their scale stating: “Ratings reflect how highly our editors regard each wine relative to other wines in its category and are based on potential quality-how good the wine will be when at its peak. The score summarizes a wine’s overall quality; the tasting note describes the wine’s style and character.” The wine scores reflect the following:

- 95-100 points Classic: a great wine
- 90-94 Outstanding: a wine of superior character and style
- 85-89 Very Good: a wine with special qualities
- 80-84 Good: a solid, well-made wine
- 70-79 Average: a drinkable wine that may have minor flaws
- 60-69 Below average: drinkable but not recommended
- 50-59 Poor, undrinkable: not recommended

The main objective of looking at wine scores is to help us determine value. You want to find wines that are worth the price you pay for them, in your opinion. You would like to be able to find a wine to complement the food you are enjoying, at a reasonable price. You can find “deals” or at least value, if you know your wines.

The “Wine Spectator” just came out with their Top 100 Wines Of 2016. Their editors blind-tasted thousands of wines and those that received scores of 90 points or higher became candidates for their Top 100. They used four criteria to determine the final selections: “quality (as represented by score); value (as reflected by release price); availability (measured by case production, or, for international wines, the number of cases imported {into the US}); and an X-factor they call “excitement.” They used no equations but the selections reflected their “judgment and enthusiasm about the wines ---.” We might disagree as to what wines should have been listed in the Top 100, but I have always found these wines to be very good and certainly interesting. Try them!

You can get the list on their web site: www.winespectator.com or more specifically: <http://top100.winespectator.com/lists/> Click on each wine and you can get the tasting notes. You can also purchase their December 31, 2016 issue of the “Wine Spectator” for tasting notes and a whole lot more information.

Here is the 2016 WS Top 10:

Rank	Year	Name of Wine	Score	Price
1	2013	Lewis Cabernet Sauvignon Napa Valley	95	\$90
2	2014	Domaine Serene Chardonnay Dundee Hills Evenstad Reserve	95	\$55
3	2014	Beaux Frères Pinot Noir Ribbon Ridge, The Beaux Frères Vineyard	94	\$90
4	2013	Château Climens Barsac	97	\$68
5	2011	Produttori del Barbaresco, Barbaresco Asili Riserva	96	\$59
6	2014	Orin Swift Machete California	94	\$48
7	2012	Ridge Monte Bello Santa Cruz Mountains	94	\$175
8	2013	Antinori Toscana Tignanello	94	\$105
9	2013	Château Smith-Haut-Lafitte Pessac-Léognan White	96	\$106
10	2014	Hartford Family Zinfandel Russian River Valley Old Vine	93	\$48

We always encourage and appreciate members’ contributions to this newsletter and the following is from John B. Donovan, a new Lifetime Member from Dubuque, Iowa, who also wrote an article for the November newsletter (note the correction in John’s name).

Wine Friends & Gifts

Nearly everyone has someone in their circle of holiday gift-giving friends, who enjoys wine. And, it would be my guess that you have fretted over what holiday gift to buy for that person. To further complicate the matter, you may or may not even know their favorite style of wine. In that case buying a bottle isn't always the best option. Therefore, the dilemma before you is...what do you buy?

Let me see if I can help. As a wine person and one who it's been said is a challenge to buy for, what follows are some items that I would enjoy receiving.

Customized or personalized wine glasses: If you're a wine person, you can never have too many wine glasses. However, a couple of caveats apply. As one who enjoys wine, I prefer glasses with a cut edge lip, not a rolled edge. A cut-edge glass is usually more delicate and, with the straight edge, less apt to drip. However, the rolled edge glass is usually sturdier and less likely to break. Either style can be engraved with a monogram, a last name or maybe a favorite sports team. A medium sized tulip design could be used for either red or white wine, and the person would think of you each time they were used.

Glass charms (something you put around the stem of a glass at a party so you remember which glass is yours): This idea may be a bit hokey but if you find a set of glass charms that has a set of baseball things with the Cubs name on them, and your friend is a Cubs fan, you will score a major run or two. For the skier, a set of charms that is made up of ski paraphernalia will be a hit. You get the idea!

Wine Stoppers: While we are talking about bottle things, there are all sorts of bottle stoppers out there with a wide assortment of designs or figures on top. For me, I use a set of silicon corks to seal the bottle in case I don't finish it in one night, and they work great. But there are many options to fit any budget and creativity.

CorksicleR: The Corksicle is a cute little invention that is used primarily for white wines. It is a narrow rod that you store in the freezer until it's needed. You insert the Corksicle into an opened bottle to keep the wine chilled. I don't think it would cool a bottle, but it would certainly keep a bottle of white wine, cooler longer, if the bottle was already chilled. This is perfect gift for the person who likes picnics, taking a bottle of wine to the arboretum on Sunday nights for music, or loves to enjoy wine on the patio with friends.

Decanters: Decanters are a wonderful gift idea, and useful. They can be as plain and simple as a vase-like glass bottle or a fancy shaped one made of crystal that might look like a swan. If you know someone who often drinks older wine, a decanter, which allows a wine to breathe a bit more than simply opening the bottle an hour before you serve it, would be a lovely gift.

Wine Glass and Bottle Caddy: I saw a nice wood one in the Crate & Barrel catalog that is perfect for the patio or a picnic. The one I saw holds six glasses and four bottles of wine. Now that is a picnic I wish to be invited to. On a similar note, a Wine Tote that I saw has two sides that hold a couple glasses and a bottle of wine with corkscrew etc. all in a zipper case.

Cheese slate: Wherever you have wine, cheese will be close by. There is a fine assortment of slates for serving cheeses, and many of them you can write the cheese descriptions on. Some come with a metal band for slicing cheese or matching knives for that perfect sliver to fit on the cracker. Most of these can be used for meats as well. One can never have too many serving trays so this is a gift that will always be appreciated.

Chocolates/Cheese/Meats: Since I mentioned serving trays, giving someone something special to serve on the trays is a nice way to share what you enjoy. A selection of special cheeses you like, or some high-end chocolates will warm any wine lovers heart. Though I usually suggest not to plan on someone opening a bottle of wine given as a gift, if you are going to a party and bring cheese, chocolate or meats, they will likely be opened and shared with party attendees.

Books and/or Magazine subscriptions can also make very special gifts. Three top magazines to consider are *Wine Spectator*, *Wine Enthusiast*, or *Wine Advocate*. If the person also likes to cook, you might want to consider Food & Wine, which is one of my favorites.



There are also some fine books available but you'll want to know what books are already in your friend's library. Some that I have read, or can recommend are: *Making Sense of Wine* by Matt Kramer. This is a marvelous example of Matt's writing and explains everything you need to know about wine-I recommend this one highly. The *Wine Bible* by Karen MacNeil is the definitive textbook on wine and should be on every oenophile's shelf. On the other end of the scale, *Wine for Dummies* by Ed McCarthy and Mary Ewing-Mulligan is a delightful entry level course into the world of wine. If your wine-loving friend likes to entertain, then he/she will love *Wine Bites: Simple Morsels That*

Pair Perfectly with Wine by Barbara Scott-Goodman. Using lovely photographs this book matches easily made snacks and suggestions for wine specifically for entertaining. You will come out the winner for the next time you visit—I guarantee there will be something from this book on the table. Three other books worth considering are *Wine - A Tasting Course* by Marnie Old, *Wine Folly: The Essential Guide to Wine and How to Taste: A Guide to Enjoying Wine* by Jancis Robinson. Each of these three do an amazing job at covering the basics with excellent diagrams and pictures.

There are also a number of wine journals or logs that allow the wine lover to record details of the wines they've tasted or foods paired with favorite wines. They come in all sorts of shapes, some with leather covers and others with drawings and quotes regarding the enjoyment of consuming wine with friends.

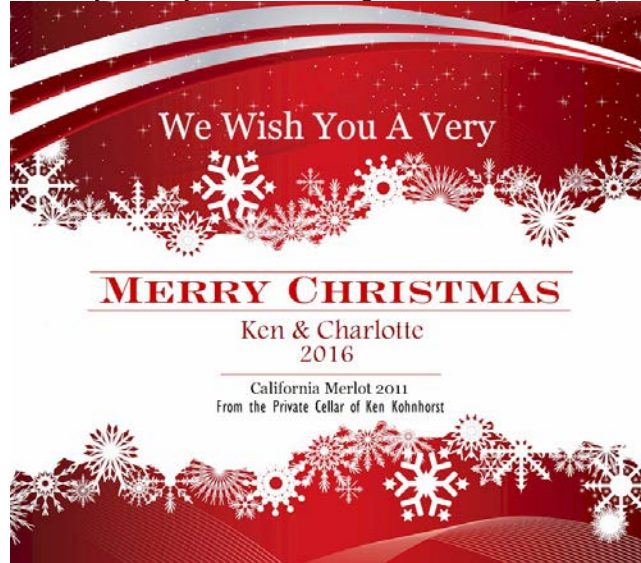
I would be remiss if I didn't mention that we have a wonderful, local resources for finding the perfect gift. Any of our wine retailers can help you with finding that special wine or accessory. Our local, downtown bookstore, River Lights Books, whose owner Sue Davis, not only enjoys wine, but appreciates reading about wine as well. Sue, and her staff, would be more than happy to help you select a wine related book or magazine to help you find a unique gift for your friend!

Salut,

Julien's Journal Wine Guy

Editor's note:

Here's what I have done for Christmas: I purchased a case of wonderful Merlot wine and designed my own label and had it printed with self adhesive backing. Easy! Put them in nice wine bags and set them under the tree!! Ready for my friends and guests. Great for your Rotarian friends as well.



WHAT'S THE DEAL WITH THAT STAR ON CHAMPAGNE CORKS?

If you've ever popped a halfway decent bottle of Champagne or sparkling wine (bubbly, bubs, champers, champlizze, spizarklizing wizine etc.) you may have noticed a shooting star printed on the bottom of the cork. Upon popping more bottles, you may have come across that very same star again and again. Ever the critical thinker, you probably noticed that a large number of bubbly corks from different brands, countries and even continents all display that very same star. So many different kinds of sparkling wine, but always the same old shooting star. It's highly likely that at this point you simply said "s*%k it" and poured yourself some sparkling wine, and not a soul can hold that against you.

But, if your thirst for the good stuff matches your thirst for knowledge you may have wondered why this star is omnipresent when it comes to those corks. This one's for you, thirsty learners...



Now, as human beings, we tend to believe that putting stars on things automatically makes them look sweet. That is, until we are forced to confront former French soccer star Philippe Mexes' neck tattoo, which disproves that theory with one resounding cringe.



Stars don't always look cool, kids.

The next common misconception about Champagne's iconic shooting star has to do with a familiar figure in sparkling wine lore, old Dom Perignon. Perignon is the guy who is said to have invented Champagne. Legend has it that as the semi-alcoholic monk tasted the first sip of his sparkling invention he exclaimed "Come quickly, for I have just tasted the stars!"

Though wonderful and poetic, this too is false. Dom Perignon didn't even invent the stuff. The real reason behind that shooting star? A damn good grape harvest back in 1811. In 1811, a large comet passed through the sky during harvest. The bubbly turned out in 1811 was so tasty that makers of sparkling wine decided to memorialize it forever. That star is technically a comet, cometed long, long ago, way before Philippe Mexes had to go and ruin the fun for everyone. So, the next time you sip on some delicious sparkling wine, imagine yourself in 1811, when there was no plumbing and tons of disease but very, very, very good Champagne.

Humor:

Humor:

Not every wisdom has to be some profound train of thought that evokes a deep emotion or understanding toward something. A notion that is illustrated perfectly by these Zen phrases, each of which captures the lighthearted, humorous side of a life that gets dark sometimes. Here are the first 11 of 22:

1. Do not walk behind me, for I may not lead. Do not walk ahead of me, for I may not follow. Do not walk beside me either. Just pretty much leave me the hell alone.
2. The journey of a thousand miles begins with a broken fan belt and leaky tire.
3. It's always darkest before dawn. So, if you're going to steal your neighbor's newspaper, that's the time to do it.
4. Don't be irreplaceable. If you can't be replaced, you can't be promoted.
5. Always remember that you're unique. Just like everyone else.
6. Never test the depth of the water with both feet.
7. If you think nobody cares if you're alive, try missing a couple of car payments.
8. Before you criticize someone, you should walk a mile in their shoes. That way, when you criticize them, you're a mile away and you have their shoes.
9. If at first you don't succeed, skydiving is not for you.
10. Give a man a fish and he will eat for a day. Teach him how to fish, and he will sit in a boat and drink beer all day.
11. If you lend someone \$20 and never see that person again, it was probably worth it.

Wine Quote of the Month:

"Drinking good wine with good food in good company is one of life's most civilized pleasures."
Michael Broadbent

Calendar of Events:

In this section, we want to publicize any upcoming events that either the RWAF or local chapters are planning. An even quicker, better way is to list them on our Facebook page: Rotarian's Wine Appreciation Fellowship or contact Claire Larson: clarson@mail.telepac.pt

June 11-14, 2017: Rotary International Convention in Atlanta, Georgia, USA. Register early so there will be less chance of a conflict between our dinners and the opening and closing ceremonies. We are planning to have another good convention experience for RWAF members. Stan Galanski has again volunteered to set up the dinners but he needs help in identifying great venues. If you have any suggestions and/or would like to help Stan, please contact him at: stan.galanski.jr@gmail.com.

We will also host a booth in the House of Friendship. Our RWAF Secretariat (PDG Jerry and Katherine Wall, jerrywallrotary6190@gmail.com) will organize the staffing of the booth. Jodie-Beth Galos (jodie-beth@jbgalos.com), head of the D-7770 Local RWAF Chapter in the Charleston, South Carolina area, has volunteered their chapter members to help in the booth. As those of us who have done this in past conventions know well, manning the booth is a wonderful experience – you get the opportunity to meet the neatest people from all over the world – and they share your interest in Rotary, great wine and good food. Anyone wishing to join us in the booth should contact Jerry now and/or come by the booth when the House of Friendship first opens on Saturday morning or as soon as you can.

As we continue to do, we will list about ten value wines with each newsletter. These are wines from around the world that are readily available in many markets, are rated by some “expert” as being at least 88 points (out of 100) and which cost \$20 USD or less. We would appreciate any additions suggested by any member. We feel that no matter what type of wine you enjoy, you ought to be able to find a good one at a reasonable price.

Recommended Value Wines:

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Year	Name of Wine	Specific Designation	Type	Cost	Rating	Rater
2012	Recuerdo	Uco Valley Terroir, Argentina	Malbec	\$13	90	WA
2012	Echo de Lynch Bages	Pauillac,FR	Bordeaux	\$19	89	WS
2014	Landmark	Overlook, Sonoma, CA	Chardonnay	\$19	90	WS
2014	Peter Yealands	Marlborough, NZ	Sauvignon Blanc	\$11	88	WS
2014	Morgan Highland	St. Lucia Highlands	Chardonnay	\$19	93	WE
2014	Seghesio	Sonoma, CA	Zinfandel	\$19	93	WE
2013	Rodney Strong	Knutty Vines, CA	Zinfandel	\$12	90	WE
2014	Mother's Milk	Barossa, AU	Shiraz	\$16	92	WS
2014	Calera	Central Coast, CA	Pinot Noir	\$20	91	V
2013	Zuccardi	Mendoza, AR	Malbec	\$13	91	WA

A Few Special Wines:

Year	Name of Wine	Specific Designation	Type	Cost	Rating	Rater
2013	Bachelet-Monnot	La Fussiere, 1er Cru	White Burgundy	\$32	91	WA
2010	Ch. Lilian Ladouys	Saint-Estephe	Bordeaux	\$29	94	WE

WS = "Wine Spectator" - WA = "Wine Advocate" (Robert Parker) - WE = "Wine Enthusiast"
V = "Vinous" (now including IWC, International Wine Cellar) - CCH = Not yet rated, my score

We will always appreciate your comments and suggestions. You are receiving these newsletters because you are members of the RWAF and publishing a newsletter is one of the duties of a Rotary Fellowship. If you would like to discontinue receiving these newsletters, please so indicate by return email and you will be removed from our address list.

Thank you for the continued opportunity to serve.

Conrad C. Heede, PDG
President
RWAF

