



LFW

G r a p e v i n e

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Follies Review

On January 31, 2004, President Paul and First Lady Ellen Gutierrez hosted our 4th annual Lawyer Friends of Wine "Winter Follies" party which featured more great wine than even our group could handle.

The response to the invitation to bring "at least" one bottle per person resulted in a cornucopia of excellent reds and a lonely two or three (but wonderful) whites.

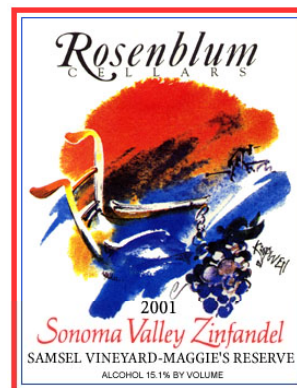
Members and guests registered their votes and cheers to rank the three favorites, and the applause meter led to prizes being awarded. All of us as tasters, however, reaped the real rewards of the many generous offerings our members shared from their cellars, dust and all.

Third place was brought by yours truly, Christopher Blunden: Emilio Moro, Ribera del Duero 2000, "Red Wine." Wine Spectator declared it one of the year 2000's "Top 100" wines and rated it "91." Writer Robert Parker described it as exhibiting "an excellent ruby/purple color along with a sumptuous bouquet of licorice, underbrush, black currants, and jammy cherries, a medium to full-bodied, elegant, plush personality, and a moderately tannic finish." (That's exactly what I was going to say . . . uh huh.)

1,000 cases were imported to the U.S. from Spain. Even though it's rationed at 3 bottles per buyer at some places (if you can find it), after calling inventory control at Costco (none was displayed in the store) I discovered the Danville store had 106 bottles for less than \$20 each (retails for \$28). They had 12 fewer after I went back.

Second Place was brought by Ray Bergez from his own Orinda cellar: Louis Martini Cabernet Sauvignon 1978. For a little perspective, 1978 was the year "The Deer Hunter" won five Oscars, and the Eagles won Record of the Year at the Grammy's for "Hotel California."

The Cab was decanted and displayed on our table of plenty, and those who ventured a taste did not hesitate to rank it among the highest of our offerings. I can't find any official descriptions for this 26 year old, but money talks. If you want some, and don't know the secret combination to Ray's cellar, I found it at <http://www.wine-searcher.com/wine-select.lml?ID=C2C3B0THMS3001F> for \$65 to \$75.



First Place was hand picked for us and brought by John Roveda: Rosenblum Cellars Sonoma Valley Zinfandel 2000, Maggie's Reserve Zinfandel, Samsel Vineyard, The winemaker

proclaimed, "This vintage may be the most lush and jammy example of Maggie's we have ever produced. This vineyard, which approaches 100 years old, has a very distinctive clone of Zinfandel and is intensified with Petite Sirah, Alicante Bouschet and Semillon. '00 was the first year we experimented by including the Semillon (white wine grape) in small amounts in the fermentation process.

(Continued from reverse side)

The theory was that enzymes in the white grape would help extract color and phenolics from the red grapes. It worked!”

How would John describe it? “It is at once both superripe and filled with lush, concentrated blackberry fruit redolent of blackberries, boysenberries, vanilla extract and a hint of loamy richness. Full in body and flamboyantly outgoing in its immense, mouthfilling flavors, this lovely wine comes with the one caveat that its 15.6% alcohol.” Well, that’s how I think he would have described it, but by the time the vote was being taken, the hidden caveat was earning first place from our group.

As I’m writing this, there are 6 bottles available at <http://www.wine-searcher.com/wine-select.lmi?ID=C2C3B0THMS3001F> (\$49).

There were many honorable mentions generously provided by our members, and you all know who you are. One of the most unique wines was specially blended by Steven Pitcher, who shared two bottles of his Benziger, 1988 Estate Cabernet Sauvignon, Sonoma Mountain. If you missed this one, perhaps we can coax him to bring just one more at a future event.

Save this Date Our Annual Cellar Treasure Dinner is on March 27, 2004 at *The Boulevard*. Mark your calendar!

Favorite Wine Accessories

By Christopher Blunden



Lever style cork screws are very popular for good reason: they work quickly (in three seconds flat) and easily. (The Rabbit cork puller and foil cutter are shown here.)

It may take over 100 pounds of pull to extract a cork, and even more if the cork is synthetic or somewhat oversized for the

bottle neck. Lever model corkscrews utilize a single lever, plus 2 gripping handles to hold the bottle and can reduce the force required by anywhere from a factor of 4 to 10 according to San Francisco based corkscrew.com (a fun website).

If you don’t have a lever corkscrew, you’re missing out on the benefit of the up to 31 precision parts assembled into these powerful high-tech tools. They all perform about the same, but prices and goodies packed with them vary. Here are some resources for getting one:

★ Brookstone sells the Connoisseur brand corkscrew (which I have, and it works great). It includes a foil cutter, display base and an extra replacement corkscrew “worm.” (You replace your worm after 800-1,000 cork pulls. Of course, your mileage may vary.) \$35

★ Costco has a great bargain on a special kit that includes the Rabbit corkscrew, a drip-stop ring, a champagne and wine sealer, a foil cutter, a Wax Whacker™ that whacks away wax seals on bottles (preventing corkscrew damage), and an extra “worm” replacement corkscrew, \$50.

★ Beverages & More (BevMo) has virtually the same Rabbit kit as Costco “on sale” for almost double the price of Costco: \$90. BevMo also sells the Screwpull brand plus foil cutter for \$99.

Reminders: Members in good standing, send executed Ballots to Denise by the due date shown. Dues are due before February 29. If unpaid, your name will be removed from the active membership roster.

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS!



James Hazard
sponsored by
Ray Bergez and
Bill Smith

Linda Ross
sponsored by
Bill Smith

Robert Simon
sponsored by
Steven Pitcher