



LFW

G r a p e v i n e

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Incoming President's Message

– by **Bill Smith**



I am deeply honored to become the new President of Lawyer Friends of Wine. I have big shoes to fill.

Paul Gutierrez was a wonderful leader of our Club. During his three year tenure he brought us a regular *Grapevine*, a

new website, a logo, and our own shirts. He and his lovely wife, Ellen, also generously opened their home to us every January for our kick off event of the year. Thanks, Paul!

I first became a member of LFW in the mid-1970's at the time Lou Gomberg was our cellar master. The Club was appealing then, but it has come so far since those years.

Much of its recent renaissance should be credited to Mike Marron who led the Club to its current level. We are blessed to have Denise Malatesta to help us administer the Club. Christopher Blunden has worked overtime to write the *Grapevine* and develop our new logo and website. We have the best cellar master anyone could imagine in Steve Pitcher who tirelessly plans events, educates us, and stocks our cellar with fine wines. Thanks to all of you on behalf of the entire membership.

What makes our Club great is our members. We share a common love for wine and everything that surrounds the world of wine that is in our backyard.

This year we are doing something new . . . we are going international!



In June 2006 we are planning a sojourn to the southwest of France to

visit the Bordeaux area. We will have a few planned events and then we will be on our own to explore everything that area has to offer. Of course, we will look at it as just another California vineyard because we know the source of the rootstock. Read future issues of the *Grapevine* for interesting facts and tips about visiting that area.

We hope to offer some creative events where we will explore wines from other regions and countries. It is always interesting to broaden our palates. One idea we are considering is an event to introduce you to the wines of Bordeaux.

My goals for the coming year are to continue to provide affordable, first class events for our members, to increase our membership to the 100 member level (we are close), and to make sure that our website is completely developed and useful to the membership. We are financially sound and I want to continue that tradition, as well.

This also is a memorable year for me because I will be getting married this summer to Laureen Ryan. Laureen is already a vital member of our group and loves it as much as I do. We hope to see you during the events we have planned for this year. Let's all look forward to a fun filled 2005. A bientot . . .



Lawyer Friends of Wine Website – by *Christopher Blunden*

At one of our board meetings I suggested we consider creating a website (without thinking of the consequences that I would wind up being the one to tackle the project). Your board members embraced the idea, and LawyerFriendsOfWine.com is now a reality.

Like Walt said about Disneyland, “It will never be finished.” The website is in phase one, with unlimited opportunities for suggestions from you, our members, for tweaks and improvements.

Our new website is a virtual place for us to gather useful information about our group, and (when the password protected area is completed – experienced volunteer programmers, contact me!) will eventually ripen into an interactive gathering place for us to learn more about our common interests in wines and our members.

Click on the home page and discover a banner of photos I assembled to give an instant word-picture of our group’s essence.

You’ll also find words that I think express it: [Festive events for lawyers who appreciate great friends and great wine.](#)

Website Benefits Click through the different sections. You’ll discover the [Newsletter](#) page with the current issue of our newsletter you’re reading now. In case you misplace it, you’ll be able to refer to the website copy.

I’ve also included an archive of available recent newsletters enabling you to look up items of interest from past issues.

Potential new members can also peruse our newsletters to give them some perspective on what they’ve been missing and an added incentive to join.

Since every member is eligible to sponsor new members, I encourage you to refer your candidates to our website.

Potential sponsors of future events (local and international) can glean the cost/benefit of their participating in underwriting our events by reviewing our newsletters. (With the per capita expenditures our group provides, there is a lot of benefit in store for these sponsors who can establish life-long customer relationships from supporting just one of our events. (Our Roster will remain private to members only.)

Other “public” areas of the website include [Next Event](#) featuring an edited version of what’s next (without certain private details of cost, etc.), [About Us](#) giving an overview of our club events, history and goals, [Cellar Master](#) about Steve Pitcher’s participation and credentials, and [Contact Us](#) which can help us discover potential new members we might have missed.

The [Winery Inquiries](#) page invites and enables those in the business of strategically marketing fine wines to consider hosting or sponsoring our discerning group.

Scroll down the [Members Only](#) page to see my initial suggested master plan for future password protected areas that include our [Cellar Stock](#), a photo [Gallery](#) (with any photo subject to veto subsequent by the subject pictured in said subject photo) [how’s *that* for lawyer speak], a [Suggestion Vat](#), our [Roster](#), and even a [Wine Blog](#).

Other benefits of electronic sign up and payment for events, paying dues online, purchasing logo items, and even voting are also possible. The Grapevine will keep you informed as new features “come online.”

New Member Sponsors

Contact Bill Smith to be awarded a free LFW polo shirt: e-mail WBSAS@aol.com.

Next Event

April 30, 2005: Luxury Coach Excursion to Shyster Creek Vineyards