



LFW

G r a p e v i n e

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Best Annual Meeting / Cellar Treasure Dinner Ever?

By Eric K. Behrens, President, LFW

This year's Lawyer Friends of Wine Annual Meeting and Cellar Treasure Dinner took place at the Villa Taverna in the Jackson Square Historic District on March 16, 2013.



Attendance at this important event has been a little disappointing the last few times, yet this year's event sold out.

Why is that?

I believe two factors led to the popularity of this year's event: the well-described location, and the superior quality of the wines which were served.

Our former President Christopher Blunden has prepared nearly all of our event announcement flyers and newsletters for many years.

His research revealed some fascinating historic descriptions for Villa Taverna which he passed along in our flyer with minor tweaks.

"It is the private venue of movers and shakers like ... former Chair of UC Regents, Richard Blum and his wife, Sen. Dianne Feinstein ... former Secretary of State, George Schultz and his wife, Protocol Chief Charlotte Schultz, Gordon and Ann Getty ... to namedrop a few. ... Villa Taverna [is located] on Hotaling Place. The one-car-wide street was once surrounded by Barbary Coast warehouses and was an

artery to the beating heart of old San Francisco. This is your chance to visit this now-stylish promenade on which has long trod a panoply of the city's cultural elite: bohemians, blue bloods, legends and lawyers. The black-and-white harlequin-patterned tile floor is framed by soaring whitewashed brick walls and accented with table linens, all of which, as the San Francisco Chronicle noted, 'exudes a chic La Dolce Vita vibe.'" Who could resist?



I would be remiss if I didn't thank one of LFW's founding and longest continuous members, Ted Kolb (pictured from left: Ted Kolb, Eric Behrens, Doris Kolb), for providing the club access to this terrific site.

The second popularity factor was the wine. In the LFW cellar were perfectly-aged bottles of the 2004 Shafer "Relentless", named in honor of winemaker Elias Fernandez's persistent dedication.

The 2008 vintage of this same Syrah / Petite Sirah blend was recognized as Wine Spectator's "Wine of the Year" for 2012.

Added to that was a delicious 2010 Ramey Sonoma Coast Chardonnay, provided by Cellar Master Rod Santos, along with bottles of sweet Tokaji, the famous Hungarian dessert wine.

Like most Lawyer Friends of Wine events, this one delivered by living up to its hype.



Festivities began with LFW former President and Barbary Coast expert Paul Gutierrez

(pictured with wife, Ellen) describing the event's unique location and concluding his remarks by reciting the doggerel verses from a plaque on the nearby Hotaling Warehouse:

"If, as they say, God spanked the town for being over-frisky,

Why did he burn the churches down and spare Hotaling's Whiskey?"

Villa Taverna has a new chef, and the crowd's consensus is that the preparation of the main courses (Sea Bass or Lamb) and the dessert (Caramel Cake with Strawberry and Rhubarb Compote, Crème Fraiche Sorbet and Granola) was first rate.

First rate food and first rate complementary wines, who could ask for anything more?

I had the pleasure of presenting certificates of appreciation to retiring Board members



Neil Bardack and Mike Carbone, both of whom dedicated many hours to help our club run smoothly.

I also presented a nice

bottle of red wine to our tireless Program Chair, Steve Martin, as a small token of LFW's appreciation for his extraordinary

efforts in organizing most of the monthly events which our members have been enjoying.

Board Member Skip Walker aptly summed it up: "The venue ... was excellent; the wines were superb; Paul Gutierrez's speech was delightful; and the company was as convivial as I can ever remember. Bravos all around!"

[Editor's note: Bravo also to Eric's wife, Joyce Hicks, photog extraordinaire, for her flashy tuxedo pics contributing to this article.]

San Francisco Barbary Coast Tour & Tasting Scores Again!



That handsome twosome (Paul & Ellen) pictured on the left, that handsome lad Steve Martin (pictured below left) and stellar Cellar Master Rod Santos combined forces for our hearty hike, dramatic storytelling (with Paul acting out the parts in the historic locations), and wonderful wine tasting and hors d'oeuvring event.

Our detailed June event flyer listed the fabulous LFW cellar remnant wines attendees saved from going past their prime by timely consuming them, and Guide Gutierrez is on notice to prepare his acceptance speech for the next Wine-academy Awards. Kudos to all for a memorable, fun, only in SF event.

Welcome New Members!

Tony David, sponsored by Rich Stratton; *Mitch Rosenfeld*, sponsored by James Morando; and *Michele Trausch* (a returning member), sponsored by Eric Behrens; *Beau Burbidge*, sponsored by Skip Walker; and *Scott Jenny*, sponsored by Suzanne Boucher.

LFW Goes To Paradise!

By Christopher Blunden

Our Lawyer Friends of Wine May event at Al Brayton's [Paradise View Vineyards](#) was an absolute winner.



Start with perfect weather (pictured below on that day from *inside* Al's abode).



Note one of the many white tables outside the window from which we had a terrific catered lunch overlooking Al's gorgeous gardens, vineyards, and the San Francisco Bay beyond.

Top it off with a wide variety of unique award-winning wines, including Sonoma Coast Albariño and Tribute to the Hermit – personally served and backstori ed by our host and Lawyer Friends of Wine member Al Brayton – a guided walking (while tasting) tour of the vineyards (shown in top photo), a visit to the wine cellar, and a “raid the garden” for fresh veggies and greens invitation from Al, and you've got your typical, private, friendly, fun, one-of-a-kind, lucky to be alive, LFW event. Thank you Al, Steve Martin, Mike Marron, and all responsible for this superb introduction to Al's winning wines.

LFW 2013 Election Results

Our Bylaws specify our Board of Directors shall be elected from the Membership and shall hold office for a period of three years; provided, however, no member shall be elected to the Board of Directors for more than two consecutive three year terms.

Three vacancies arose for the 2013 – 2016 term, and the winners in alphabetical order elected to serve are: Suzanne Boucher, Rod Marraccini, and Ralph Zappala.

In addition, officers are elected by the Board, and the results for 2013 – 2014 are: President: Eric Behrens; First Vice-President/Secretary: James Morando; and Second Vice President/Treasurer: Ray Bergez.

President Behrens, with unanimous approval of the Board of Directors, reappointed Steve Martin as the Program Committee Chair.



The Program Committee is responsible for preparing a calendar of events for each year, with the advice and consent of the Board of Directors, and for implementing such events, including luncheons, dinners, trips, tastings, presentations, visits and other activities related to the purposes and objectives of the club.

In order to be eligible for election to the Board, one must be an “active” member. One of the best ways for any member to show s/he is active is by serving on the Program Committee. Steve Martin is already preparing to start the planning sessions for next year's events (as timely reservations, deposits and contractual obligations require early bird attention). He is *actively* seeking your help, so if interested, consult your roster and notify Steve. Congratulations to all who are contributing to the success of our club!

Save the Dates!



Sunday, July 21: We will visit Artesa Vineyards & Winery in Carneros for a catered buffet lunch featuring their award-winning Reserve Chardonnay and Pinot Noir. Sparkling wine will be served upon arrival, followed by a tour of the facility and Lunch and Wine Tasting. Please check your e-mail for the flyer.

Saturday, August 31: Mark your calendars for a bus trip to Forestville for visits to [Vision Cellars](#) and [Everett Ridge Winery](#) where we will enjoy their wines, and possibly, wines from Esterlina Winery (same owners as Everett Ridge). All three of these first rate wineries are African American owned.

Saturday, September 21: Annual Harvest Moon Wine-Country Dinner. This year a bus trip to [Lambert Bridge](#) on West Dry Creek Road near Healdsburg for a sumptuous dinner under the moon and stars. "Oh, Shine On, Shine On . . ." Your flyer will arrive in late August.

Friday, Sunday, October 25-27:

Excitement is building for our weekender in the blossoming wine country of Paso Robles. Rooms have been reserved at the FogCatcher Inn in nearby Cambria on the Coast. You will be able to drive separately and reserve your own room at a special rate of around \$200 per night. The LFW charge will be for a bus to pick us up Saturday morning, Oct. 26 to take us to Paso wineries selected by our Cellar Master, Rod Santos, plus to a banquet at a restaurant in Cambria Saturday evening. We will likely stop at another winery Sunday on our way home. Total per couple estimated at \$700, including your room.



November: No event is planned.

December 7: Save your first Saturday in December for our annual, festive Holiday Treasure Dinner – wines from our cellar and prime rib at the St. Francis Yacht Club. Last year's gala there set an attendance record, and earned unanimous praise, and we'll have enough space for all!



[Refer potential new members to our website [LawyerFriendsOfWine.com](#) with years of back issues of our newsletter.]