



LFW

G r a p e v i n e

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April 2004

Cellar Dinner Dance Treasured

On March 27, 2004, our members and guests experienced nonstop enjoyment in our sold-out annual event at the Boulevard in San Francisco.

Steven Pitcher was right on target with wonderfully impressive wines tastefully matched to the fine food. Several people gained a new appreciation for Riesling once they sipped the fabulous, very dry, 2001 Penfolds Eden Valley Reserve Riesling.

We moved on to a terrific 1994 Spottswoode Cabernet Sauvignon, St. Helena, followed by the group favorite 1995 Joseph Phelps "Insignia," Napa Valley. Steven let us know we had expensive taste, as the Insignia now sells for \$400/bottle.

Our 1997 Taylor-Fladgate Late Bottled Vintage Port capped the evening imbibing which began with our ever popular Roederer Estate Brut Sparkling Wine, Anderson Valley.

Tastevins (pronounced "taht-van" by people who speak with one raised pinky) which are the symbol of our club membership were awarded to new three-year members: Eric Abramson, Gary Johnson, Walter Walker, and yours truly, Christopher Blunden. Others eligible for receipt, but not present to accept are: Andrew Clark, Scott Kalkin, Robert Pave, Constantin Roboostoff; Cynthia Scribe, and Joel Siegal.

Certificates expressing our club's appreciation for service performed by our dedicated Board members were awarded to: Debra Bogaards, Paul Gutierrez, Steven Pitcher, Bill Smith, Don Sullivan, John Roveda, and R.J. Waldsmith.

Dancing and lively conversation were the final courses to this special evening which next year is scheduled for March 26, 2005.

LFW Election Results Announced

If you have ideas for events, connections to wineries, or suggestions that will benefit our group, please communicate them to our decision-makers.

The Board of Directors election results for 2004 – 2007 are: Christopher Blunden, Michael Carbone, William Smith, and John Roveda. New **Officers** for 2004-05 are: President: Paul Gutierrez; VP/Secretary: R.J. Waldsmith; VP/Treasurer: William Smith.

Spanish Wine Tasting + Tapas

Live Flamenco music, two dancers, and six Spanish wines chosen chiefly by our chief Paul Gutierrez will punctuate our event Saturday, April 24, beginning at 6:30 p.m.

We will start with Tapas (small plates of Spanish specialties) selected by the restaurant to pair with our wines. We will progress to a paella meal and famous bread pudding dessert.

The paella will be made in front of us in a big vat with an oar (yep, I spelled that right) manned by the chef. Fare: \$65/person.

The restaurant is loaning us the front room, next to the bar. Avance Restaurant, 200 Merrydale Road, San Rafael. 415 472-7101 North San Pedro exit off 101 in Marin County, just across the highway from the Marin Civic Center. Our Hosts are David and Atilla. (A Spanish wine won third place at our Winter Follies, so come enjoy more!)

(Continued from reverse side)

LFW Cellar Master Awarded German Medal



On December 1, 2003, in the German capital Berlin, the President of Germany, Johannes Rau, awarded Steven Pitcher the Merit Cross of the German Order of Merit (Verdienstkreuz am

Verdienstordens der Bundesrepublik Deutschland) in recognition of special service to the Federal Republic of Germany.

The award was conferred on "Herrn Dr. Stephen R. Pitcher" by the German Consul General, Bernd Westphal, on February 20th, in a ceremony at the German Consulate General in San Francisco, California, on the occasion of the 10th Annual New Vintage Tasting of German wines, produced by the San Francisco Bay Area Chapter of the German Wine Society, a national nonprofit organization, of which Steven has been chapter president since 1994, and a member since 1987. Steven attained his J.D. from Hastings College of the Law in San Francisco, which of course explains the "Dr."

The Consul General nominated Steven for the award "in recognition of his outstanding work for the activities of the German Wine Society in the Bay Area and for his success as a wine writer in informing the public of the quality and attraction of German wines."

The nomination was channeled through the German Embassy in Washington, D.C., which sent it with a favorable recommendation to the Federal Minister for Foreign Affairs in Berlin, who made the nomination to the German President.

Steven is a contributing editor of The Wine News magazine as well as a freelance wine writer whose articles appear in several

publications, including the Wine Section of the San Francisco Chronicle, which is syndicated nationally.

The Order of Merit is the only honor that may be awarded in all fields of endeavor and is the highest tribute the Federal Republic of Germany can pay to individuals -- both German nationals and foreigners -- for services to the nation. There are eight different levels of the Order of Merit, of which the Merit Cross is the second. Steven is the first American wine writer to receive the decoration. Congrats Steven!

Save these Dates May 22: Summer Wine Country Tour & Lunch (Provenence Winery for tasting + Peju Province for tasting and lunch); **June 2005**, a fabulous event in the Bordeaux region of France, with a get together at La Maison du Bill Smith. Details soon. Mark les calendars!

Favorite Wine Accessories

By Christopher Blunden



Vacu Vin Wine Saver

One of the greatest gizmos going is this little hand pump and wine stopper kit that enables you to keep open

wine fresh for two weeks. Instead of guaranteed spoilage from simply recorking the bottle with its original cork, you can preserve the remaining wine by taking the air out of the bottle.

You simply put the stopper in the wine bottle, put the pump on top and pump gently a few times until you feel resistance. This puts an end to the oxidation process. Wine by the glass is the happy result.

There's no waste having several different "open" bottles from which to choose from night to night. It works great.

BevMo sells the pump + one stopper for \$10; Amazon.com sells the pump + six stoppers for \$10 (special deal through May 9, 2004). Quit dumpin' and start pumpin'!