

LFW

G r a p e v i n e

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Harvest Moon Event Shines



Our September 17th Harvest Moon Dinner at Paraduxx in the Napa Valley was one of our best events ever according to many members who attended.

As reported by our president, Bill Smith, sixty two of us followed the bright glow in the sky to the east which became the brilliant harvest moon.

We watched it rise while we were dining beneath the oaks behind Paraduxx's new visitor center and in full view of its signature decagon (10 sided) chai. In fact, LFW was the *first* group to visit the winery and dine on its lovely grounds.



This would not have been possible without the influence and reputation of Steve Pitcher, our Maitre du chai.

We started the evening with Schramsburg sparkling wine. The Paraduxx investors wisely invested in Schramsburg and own 30% of it. This was a nice surprise followed by abundant scrumptious hors d'oeuvres.

We also visited the new chai for a fun taste of some one week old zinfandel juice from the tank. After this rather "earthy" sweet concoction, the winemaker invited those of



us who did not like it to simply pour it out on their brand new, spotless cement floor because it needed some christening.

We also barrel tasted a Paraduxx blend that had been in a barrel for about a year. The rough edges of its youth had lots of potential with further blending.

We started our dinner by learning more about our many new faces in attendance. We also learned a lot more about Duckhorn and Paraduxx from its general manager, Alex, who joined us for dinner.

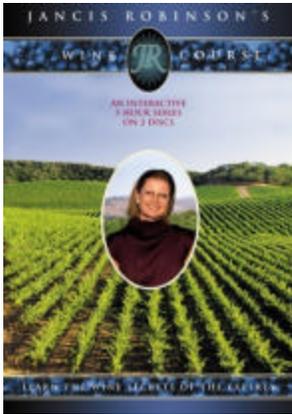
The dinner menu was pared beautifully with just the right wines thanks again to Steve Pitcher, who was able to join us just before departing to France. No one complained about not having enough wine!

One of the highlights of the event was Steve Martin's impromptu rendition of *Shine On Harvest Moon*. Perhaps we have developed a new tradition for our annual Harvest Moon dinner?

As our bus pulled out of the Paraduxx driveway in the shadow of the Harvest Moon, a very satisfied and tired group of LFW oenophiles appreciated that we are members of a very special organization with top notch events and wonderful people.

Interesting Wine DVDs

By Christopher Blunden



Beyond the basics of how wine is made, and how to taste it, store it, and drink it, recent DVD releases also reveal an intriguing world of winemaking cultural history, logistics, and plenty of juicy scandals and politics.

Jancis Robinson's Wine Course (2-Disc Series) (2004) is really a wine travelogue about the history of various grapes, how they got started in certain parts of the world, and methods by which they are grown, cultivated, made into wine, and marketed and consumed all over the globe.

British hostess Jancis Robinson is editor of *The Oxford Companion to Wine* and a columnist for *Wine Spectator*.

Your visual senses will not be disappointed while visiting gorgeous vineyards and Chateaus in California, France, Australia, and South America.

In stark contrast is *Mondovino* (2005) an anti-Mondavi (big business) Official Selection of the Cannes Film Festival and a "must-see" for all those attending the Lawyer Friends of Wine event in France.

For the record, a cinematographer is the person who determines the exact nature of the lighting, camera placement, exposure and movement that is performed during the filming of live or motion controlled photographic elements in a media project.

Mondovino has no cinematographer. It does have dogs; lots of dogs. In fact, I think I've discovered *Mondovino's* secret: a dogcam. This entire home video was filmed using a camera-mounted dog.

So why is it a "must-see" (or more accurately, a "must-listen" because even the identifying captions and subtitles are virtually invisible)? Because the dog-owners we meet are wine growers, makers, critics,

and sellers who reveal fascinating dogma about the worldwide dog-eat-dog wine industry.

We meet the world's most revered and feared wine critic (and fellow lawyer), Robert Parker (whose palate suits mine



perfectly) at home having wine in the presence of his doggy-medicine-induced foul-tooting dog, George. (I prefer my wine, *sans* George.)

The *Mondovino* message is that wine is the most complex and nuanced beverage in the world. Absent high points from Parker, winemakers can't compete. Therefore, winemakers worldwide conform to Parker's toasted oak & vanilla tastes (except for a few, but not all, dogmatic Frenchmen).

The French insist the character of a wine is all about Terroir (not to be confused with "Terrier"). Terroir, pronounced "tair-wha" is the French term literally meaning "soil" or "earth" and generally refers to all the physical/environmental characteristics in and around a particular vineyard that influence the flavors in the wine including soil (depth and type), slope, microclimate, drainage, exposure to sun and wind, wind direction, humidity, water table, and rootstock (really an intrinsic part of the vine, even if it is grafted) that give wines their character.

Mr. Parker counters the taste of the wine should speak for itself, instead of the label or the stranglehold its landowners and producers (the terroirists?) have had on the wine world for successive generations.

The irony is Counselor Parker insists French Oak is the only proper oak for barrel-aging. Doggone!



**Next Event: October 28, 2005
Friday, 5:00 p.m.**

An evening of friends, fine Sonoma wines and wonderful Italian food at the classic Italian private dining club Villa Taverna. Check your private flyer for details.