



# LFW Grapevine



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## LFW – A Toast to 2015

By Christopher B. Blunden

2015 got off to a fun and lively start with our 15th Annual LFW Winter Follies, generously hosted by James and Beryl Potter in their beautiful home in the Berkeley Hills.



Our esteemed Cellar Master Rod Santos officially judged our blind tasting contest for attendees who entered a bottle in our contest and proclaimed the Cellar Master

Awards to be: White: 2013 Chateau Gravielle Lacoste Blanc, Graves, France; Red: 2009 Canihan 'Exuberance' Syrah, Sonoma Valley.

Our People's Choice Awards (judged by our attendees) went to two more Sonoma wines: White: Highway 12 Carneros Highway Chardonnay 2013; Red: 2011 Kunde Barbera, Sonoma Valley,

The over-the-top hospitality of James and Beryl, wonderful wines, great food, and gorgeous panoramic views of the San Francisco Bay, along with the help of our volunteers combined to make this a truly memorable event.

In February, continuing our Club's tradition of weekday San Francisco luncheons featuring wines from expert producers, we welcomed [John Robert Eppler](#) who provided us four of his delicious wines to please our palates.



John shared insights about his award-winning hand-crafted wines that are primarily from Napa and Sonoma Counties and told us about the artwork he purchased in Paris many years ago that appears as labels. John's wines and interesting information

reminded us why these meet-the-winemaker luncheons are so popular with our LFW members.

In March, we returned to San Francisco's Villa Taverna for our Cellar Treasure Dinner & Annual Meeting.



Our President, Eric Behrens, (left) presiding over the final meeting of his term, opened the meeting with a toast to Ted Kolb, the last surviving founding member of Lawyer Friends of Wine who passed away on March 1,

2015. Mike Marron then read a poem he wrote in Ted's honor.

Our LFW Board members for 2015 – 2018 election results were reported: Geoff Dugan, Steve Enochian and Beryl Potter.

Our officers for 2015 – 2016 elected by the Board were also announced: President: Rod Marraccini; Vice President/Secretary: Chris L'Orange; Vice President/Treasurer: Suzanne Boucher.

Congrats to all and to Lawyer Friends of Wine – these key people will help guide our club as we begin our second half century!



Tastevins were awarded to deserving members: Everett Hewlett, Marshall

Johnson, Chris L'Orange, and Ronald Wecht.

On behalf of our club, Mike Marron presented Certificates of Award and Appreciation to our terrific outgoing President, Eric Behrens, and to our outgoing Directors Skip Walker and Ray Bergez.

Our Summer Sojourn in June was one of those exceptional LFW boutique winery events that are so special in that one might never discover the winery, wines, and people behind them absent our membership in our unique club. Our small group (limited to twenty) met in Napa at [Mi Sueño](#) on a beautiful Saturday morning.



Beginning with a crisp Chardonnay, we learned Rolando Herrera's fascinating entrepreneurial backstory, enjoyed a tour of the premises located in the self-described funky Crusher Wine District, then enjoyed an authentic Mexican "almuerzo" (lunch) and tasting of Mi Sueño and limited-production, winery-only Selección Herrera wines in style-specific glasses.

Some of us achieved a new personal wine purchase record acquiring the 2011 Herrera Cabernet Selección Rolando Jr.

Note to members: these "small group" trips are some of the best!

Our July event in France is reported below in this issue by Eric Behrens.

LFW's inaugural "Liquidation Luncheon", occurred in August where up to twenty-four attendees had the chance to taste a handful of wines our Cellar Master, Rod Santos poured from the remaining few bottles of sparkling, white and red wines that were featured at past Cellar Treasure (Annual Meeting) or Holiday Dinners.



In a private room atop the quaint [City Winery](#) in Napa, our enthusiastic group sampled Schramsberg Blanc de Blancs, La Cana Albarino, 2009 Rivetto Barolo Serralunga d' Alba, 2007 Miner Family Merlot Stagecoach Vineyard, 2009 Can Blau "Mas de Can Blau" (Rhône blend from Montant, Spain) and a few "bonus" bottles from our Cellar Master's private collection. All of these events require time, energy, skill, and knowhow to put together. In addition to the names you see here, there are others in our group who make Lawyer Friends of Wine the VIP ticket to genuine comradery, good food, great wine, and fun.



Extra special thanks are owed to our Program Chair Steve Martin who has been performed a masterful job

researching, planning, and organizing countless events for our group. If you're interested in helping, please contact him or the [Board](#).

*In our next issue of the Grapevine, we'll continue reporting on Lawyer Friends of Wine's 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary year in progress.*



At this writing, our next event is our annual Harvest/Hunter's Moon dinner (this time at [Testarossa Winery](#)) with a next day visit to [Ridge Vineyards](#).

Mike Marron will be providing a historic perspective of where we've been and some hopes for the next fifty years.

If you know some like-minded lawyers who enjoy the activities you're reading about here, in past issues, and on our [website](#), encourage them to join us!

## Lawyer Friends of Wine Return to France

By Eric K. Behrens

Lawyer Friends of Wine began celebrating its fiftieth anniversary this summer in July 2015 when twenty-six fortunate LFW members (including a few relatives – my son, his spouse, my daughter and her fiancé) spent an unforgettable four days together in Southwest France.

Nine years had passed since former President Bill Smith organized (and he is organized!) the first LFW France event centered on his stone home in the breathtakingly beautiful walled hilltop town of Montflanquin.



Montflanquin was founded in 1256 and has been named as one of the "Most Beautiful Villages in France" by the French themselves, who have plenty to choose from. Once again, this was our base of operations.

**Half Day One:** The festivities began on the evening of July 8, 2015 with a sumptuous opening dinner just outside of Montflanquin at the Château Ladausse.



The dinner, which took place outdoors at the grand driveway in front of the Château was prepared by the co-owner of the Château, Paris trained Chef Diane Anthoniessen – and it was spectacular. It didn't hurt that each course was accompanied by local wines selected by Diane's husband, Eric, who is a trained Sommelier.



I don't think anyone will forget the Duo de Foie Gras, followed by the choice of a local specialty, Duck with Sauce Cerise (cherry sauce)

or Mediterranean Sea Bass Filet, followed by local cheeses and a small salad, all capped off with a chocolate caramel tart with a hazelnut piecrust and freshly prepared ice cream.

The wine accompaniments were, in this order: Sieur d'Arques, Blanquette de Limoux (a sparkling wine from a vineyard which we later visited) for the two types of foie gras; the following *White Wines* for the fish choice and the cheeses and salad: Château Bellingard, Monbazillac, Bergerac, 2011 and Château Le Sartre, AOC Pessac-Léognan Bordeaux White, 2012; and the following *Red Wines* for the duck choice and the dessert: Domaine de Lancement,



IGP Thézac-Pérricard, 2011 followed by Château Tiregand, AOC Pécharmant, 2011 (attendees of the last trip to France will remember the

Château Tiregand).

**Day Two:** The next morning, some of us joined a cooking class led by Diane, which confirmed again that she is a terrific chef.



The lucky participants ate the delicious results of our work (ribeye steak with real French fries twice cooked in duck fat, a fancy vegetable dish and crème brûlée for dessert). The main course was accompanied by a 2012 Château Le Sartre (magnum) and the dessert by a Muscadet whose name escapes me.

By the way, the consensus was that all of the wines provided by the Anthonissens were first rate.

Other LFW members who were not on the previous France trip went to St. Emilion, the picturesque wine capital of the Bordeaux region, some did wine tasting, and others visited some of the nearby towns and countryside.



Lawyer Friends of Wine – the wedding of

In the afternoon, a number of us witnessed what was probably a unique event in the fifty year history of

member Fletcher Alford and Shari Covington (which I had the honor of performing) on Château Ladausse's beautiful grounds.

The romance of the place was enhanced when Fletcher and Shari pulled up in a vintage Rolls Royce, Fletcher in tails and Shari in a beautiful wedding dress which must have been a challenge to bring to southwest France. More delicious wine, champagne and hors d'oeuvres were served at the reception which followed.

I don't know how Bill found Diane and Eric Anthoniessen and their Château, but I enthusiastically recommend them if you are looking for a place to stay, eat and drink some fine local wines in southwest France. If you tell them you are a member of Lawyer Friends of Wine you are guaranteed to get the royal treatment.

That evening, we met at Bill's hilltop house in Monflanquin for (more) wine, hors d'œuvres and a spectacular sunset.

Then, many of us experienced a uniquely French cultural event in downtown Monflanquin, the Marché Nocturne (the night market).

We could pick and choose selections from tables set up by various purveyors of french local fresh foods and desserts and eat these delicacies, picnic style, on tables set up in the town square.

**Day Three:** We travelled 3 hours to the spectacular double walled town of Carcassonne, one of France's top attractions, which we toured on our own.



If you haven't visited Carcassonne, you should look up this amazing World Heritage Site where visitors can walk around most of the 3 kilometers of walls which contain 52 (!) towers.



Later that day we met for a thorough, multi-glasses wine tasting and dinner at Domaine Gayda, another find by Bill.

I will never understand how the French can make such delicious wine at such reasonable prices (as long as you stay away from the big named Bordeaux, Burgundies and Champagnes). At Domaine Gayda, most wines cost under \$20.00 and some less than \$10, which one would never have guessed in a blind tasting. At the end of that expedition, sated and satiated, most of us repaired to the Château Gramazie. This was an elegant château, modeled on the White House, which Bill discovered for our pleasure.

**Day Four:** On this final day, Bill added mystery to the trip when we visited Rennes-le-Château, a small town high up in the hills with spectacular views of the valley below and of the surrounding peaks. This unique town includes a library, a lavishly restored church and other buildings all built by Father Berenger Saunier – and no one knows where he obtained the money for these projects. This is also the area where legends say Jesus lived after he supposedly survived his crucifixion, legends which Dan Brown fashioned into his DaVinci Code.



For those who wanted to study this legend in depth, Bill provided a reading list and a DVD by Henry Lincoln, a British ex-pat who meticulously (and creatively?) analyzed symbols and clues about the Jesus legend

which he found interspersed in Rennes-le-Château and its surroundings. Lincoln later unsuccessfully sued Dan Brown, claiming Brown's famous book "plagiarized his years of research."

That afternoon we toured a famous maker of sparkling wine, Sieur d'Arques, located in the town of Limoux. The sparkling wine

from this region, invented in 1531, is known locally as mousseux, and predates the invention of Champagne.

The French enjoy this mousseux because it is reasonably priced and delicious. If you look back at our opening dinner, this was the sparkling wine which accompanied the Duo de Foie Gras, and it was, indeed, delicious. (I once found sparkling wine from Limoux at BevMo, but whether they have it is hit or miss.)

The evening concluded with our final dinner together, featuring quail prepared by Hugues Michau, the owner of Chateau Gramazie, who is also a chef. He served a red wine which everyone seemed to love, but when he was asked what grapes created this delectable wine, to our frustration Hugues told us that the owners kept that secret.

We partied late into the night until sleepless (and probably annoyed) guests forced our rowdy group to retire. The next day, many of us continued our vacations, sadly knowing that whatever awaited us could not match the camaraderie and sheer fun which Bill and the members of LFW provided for us.



## Welcome Our New Members!

*Megan Oliver Thompson*, sponsored by Rich Stratton; *Derek Windham* sponsored by Beryl Potter; *Amy Foscalina*, sponsored by Rod and Pam Marraccini.

## 2015 Save the Date!

### Saturday, December 5

Annual Holiday Cellar Dinner in San Francisco. Other dates will appear in our next issue.

## Et Al. / Member Suggested Events

If you have a personal thumbs-up opinion on an upcoming event that our members are likely to be pleased you've alerted them to discover, [let us know](#) what it is and why you like it.